How learning builds in French

A guide for parents and carers | Years 3 to 6

Children learn to understand and communicate in French. Across Years 3 to 6, they build their knowledge of sounds, vocabulary and grammar, applying it through listening, speaking, reading and writing with increasing confidence and independence.

Area	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Listening and understanding	Listen to greetings, songs and instructions. Show understanding through actions, pictures and responses about numbers, age and familiar objects.	Identify people, clothes, dates and weather from spoken descriptions. Follow questions and take part in supported café conversations.	Identify key information in longer passages. Understand descriptions, opinions and questions about families and the French-speaking world.	Understand player profiles, directions and travel information. Use familiar language and context to follow the main meaning of longer passages.
Speaking and pronunciation	Imitate French sounds and use appropriate intonation. Take turns in simple exchanges and describe pictures using modelled phrases.	Ask and answer questions about birthdays and food. Describe appearance and clothes, express musical preferences and perform a song.	Build fuller sentences, express opinions and ask for information. Use different verb forms and adapt familiar phrases with growing confidence.	Present a football profile, justify sporting preferences and role-play buying tickets. Describe homes, journeys and holiday plans in sentences.
Reading and finding meaning	Recognise familiar words and similarities with English. Match text to pictures and use a bilingual dictionary to find animal vocabulary.	Read descriptions, dates, food vocabulary and music preferences. Use known words, pictures and dictionaries to understand simple texts.	Read longer descriptions and stories. Recognise sentence patterns and word endings; use dictionaries and context to work out new vocabulary.	Read profiles, letters and travel texts. Understand key details and the overall meaning, and begin to recognise present actions and future plans.
Writing and building sentences	Build phrases and simple sentences using models and word cards. Choose suitable vocabulary and begin to use French accents.	Write linked descriptions and short texts with support. Choose suitable adjective endings and place describing words in the correct order.	Adapt models to write structured paragraphs about monsters, space, activities and families. Select appropriate articles, pronouns and verb forms.	Write an Olympic account, a house letter, holiday plans and a town description. Combine familiar structures and add detail, questions and opinions.

Revisiting knowledge

Children meet familiar words and sentence patterns in new contexts. Year 3 work on colours and shapes supports descriptions of people in Year 4 and monster pets in Year 5. Number learning develops from age to dates, prices and temperatures.

Applying learning in new contexts

The units provide different reasons to use French. Children build from greetings and short phrases towards descriptions, conversations, presentations and connected writing. Support is gradually reduced as their knowledge becomes more secure.

Area	Earlier learning	Later application
Sounds and spelling	Year 3 · Greetings and playground games Connect spoken sounds with written letters and practise pronunciation through songs, rhymes and repeated phrases.	Years 4 to 6 · Speaking and reading Apply familiar sound patterns when reading new words, performing songs, giving descriptions and presenting a football profile.
Vocabulary and numbers	Year 3 · Colours, shapes, numbers and age Learn describing words and numbers to twelve. Ask and answer a question about age.	Years 4 to 6 · Dates, shopping and travel Extend numbers to dates, temperatures and prices. Reuse vocabulary in descriptions, shopping and holiday contexts.
Grammar and sentence patterns	Years 3 and 4 · Classroom objects, portraits and clothes Notice masculine and feminine nouns. Learn how adjective endings and word order change within descriptions.	Years 5 and 6 · Monsters, verbs and sport Apply agreement in longer descriptions. Explore how verbs change with the person and use them to describe activities and express opinions.
Culture and communication	Years 3 and 4 · Greetings, birthdays, food and music Learn suitable greetings, compare birthday traditions and use French in café conversations and songs.	Years 5 and 6 · French-speaking world and travel Explore French-speaking countries and identity. Apply language to passport questions, holiday planning and conversations about travel.
Strategies for independence	Year 3 · Transport and a circle of life Use pictures, familiar words, similarities with English and bilingual dictionaries to work out meaning. Build sentences from models.	Years 4 to 6 · Longer texts and personal responses Combine clues from vocabulary, grammar and context. Adapt models to communicate new ideas and find information for a planned holiday.

Understanding language and culture

Children explore how French works and how it differs from English. They learn about life in France and the wider French-speaking world through contexts such as birthdays, music, sport and travel.

Developing confidence and independence

Children use pictures, actions, word banks, sentence models and bilingual dictionaries to support understanding. They increasingly select and adapt familiar language, check meaning and communicate their own ideas.

Based on Kempshott Junior School’s French overview and progression document, informed by the Kapow Primary French scheme.