

Humanities and MFL at West Silc

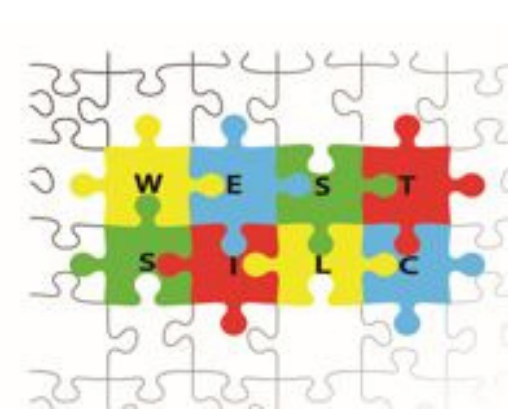
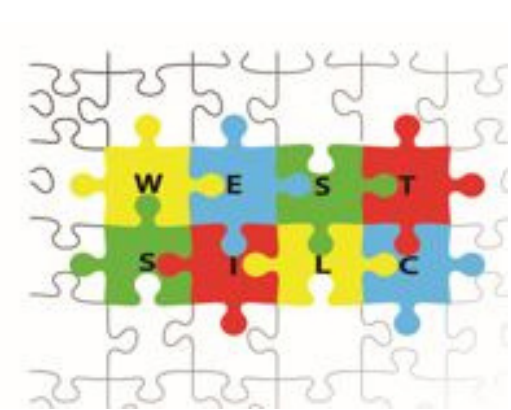


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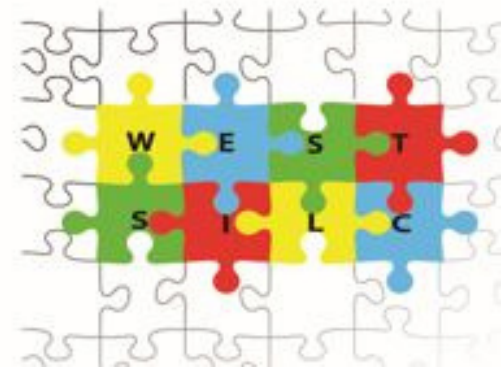
Overview

At West SILC, Humanities is a broad area of learning that encompasses History, Geography, and Modern Foreign Languages (MFL). Recognising the diversity of our learners' cognitive, communication, and sensory needs, Humanities is delivered through highly personalised and differentiated approaches. The delivery varies significantly between pathways—ranging from informal, sensory-rich experiences to more structured, academic teaching—ensuring equal access and meaningful engagement for all learners.

Across all subjects, the emphasis is on developing curiosity, understanding of the world, and meaningful communication. We prioritise relevance, accessibility, and individual learner interests, building key knowledge and skills in ways that suit each learner's developmental stage, communication profile, and preferred learning style.

Humanities is taught either as discrete subjects (in more formal settings) or through thematic, integrated topics and continuous provision (in more informal and early years pathways). Cross-curricular learning is a key strategy, with Humanities often linked to life skills, communication goals, EHCP targets, and social and emotional development.

Subject Intent



Explore, Aspire and Engage pathways:

- To foster curiosity about people, places, and events through sensory-rich experiences.
- To enable learners to interact with their environment, engage in cause-effect activities, and respond to cultural stimuli (e.g. festivals, food, sounds).
- To promote communication development and emotional engagement through familiar stories, visuals, objects of reference, and multi-sensory exploration.

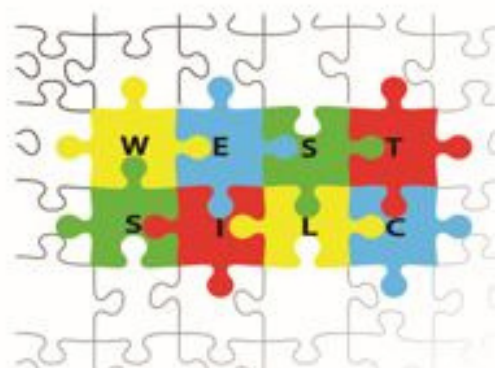
Connect and Climb pathways:

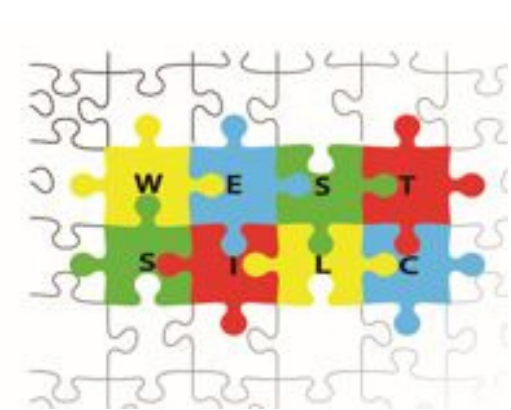
- To introduce historical and geographical concepts in a meaningful, accessible way.
- To help learners make personal connections to the past, places, and cultures.
- To build vocabulary, sequencing, memory, and life-relevant knowledge (e.g. understanding their community or recognising cultural traditions).
- To develop early map skills, timelines, and awareness of change over time through visual supports, symbols, and repetition.
- In MFL, to support functional communication through basic vocabulary, repetition, and symbol-supported language use.

Elevate and AIP pathways:

- To deepen understanding of historical events, world geography, and cultural diversity using scaffolded academic content.
- To develop critical thinking, enquiry, and respectful discussion, supporting learners to form their own views and understand different perspectives.
- In MFL, to build confidence in using basic spoken and written language, supporting memory, communication, and self-expression.
- To promote community awareness, identity, and preparation for adulthood through understanding their place in the wider world.

Implementation by pathway





Explore pathway

In Explore, Humanities is not taught as a discrete subject. However, learners are exposed to many foundational elements of History and Geography through carefully planned continuous provision and child-initiated learning.

Within the 'Understanding the World' area of the EYFS curriculum, learners begin to explore key concepts related to people, communities, places, and time. Through role play, story time, and thematic exploration, they start to build an awareness of the past and present, and of their own environment and the wider world.

Examples include:

- Using old and new photos or artefacts in play to explore how things change over time (early history concepts).
- Playing with maps and globes in the construction or small world area to encourage awareness of locations and directions.
- Exploring seasonal changes, weather, and natural environments during outdoor play and nature walks (geographical awareness).
- Celebrating festivals and cultural events to develop an understanding of different communities and traditions.
- Storytelling activities that include family members, daily routines, or significant life events, supporting temporal understanding.

These early experiences lay the groundwork for historical and geographical thinking in later years and are delivered in a way that is accessible, engaging, and relevant to the developmental stage of each child.

Engage and Aspire Pathways

Humanities is not taught as a discrete subject. These learners are often at a pre-subject specific stage of development, meaning that traditional teaching of History, Geography, or Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) would not be meaningful or accessible in the conventional sense.

Although not taught discretely, elements of History, Geography, and cultural awareness are subtly and intentionally embedded into everyday learning experiences. These may include:

- Historical Awareness

Exploring cause and effect (e.g., pressing a button to make a sound, linking to understanding change).

Developing early memory and anticipation through repetitive stories, songs, or routines.

Marking seasonal or cultural events (e.g., sensory activities themed around Diwali, Bonfire Night, or Remembrance Day).

- Geographical Awareness

Using sensory play to explore environmental stimuli, such as cold/warm water, wet/dry textures, or indoor/outdoor light.

Developing a sense of place and routine (e.g., recognising classroom, hydrotherapy, or rebound spaces).

Mapping routines or transitions using photos or tactile symbols, promoting early navigation and spatial awareness.

- Cultural and Language Awareness (MFL)

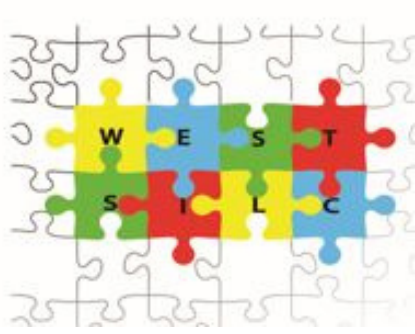
Experiencing music, sounds, and food from different cultures as part of thematic sensory stories.

Listening to rhythmic language sounds in different languages to support auditory discrimination.

Participating in culturally themed Attention Autism sessions or drop-down days (e.g., Spanish Day with music, colour, and food).



Connect Pathway



Humanities is taught in separate subjects, one per half term, so each subject is taught three times per year.

Geography is taught through a thematic, topic-based curriculum that is carefully adapted to meet learners' developmental needs. The emphasis is on highly practical, sensory, and experiential learning, with geography embedded into everyday routines and community exploration. Teachers use simplified geographical language—such as “near”, “far”, “hot”, “cold”—throughout the day and reinforce it using visual supports, sensory resources, and repeated exposure to environments. learners learn through local visits, interacting with spaces like parks, shops, and public transport to understand their immediate world. Activities are often supported with photographs, maps with symbols, and structured exploration using tools like compasses or weather charts.

History aims to help learners develop an understanding of time, chronology, and cause and effect, with adaptations based on cognitive level and learning needs. History is taught through sensory storytelling, repetitive routines, and role play, enabling learners to connect to the past through highly immersive experiences. Teachers embed historical vocabulary like “yesterday”, “today”, and “long ago” into daily life, and use visual timelines, props, costumes, and multimedia to help learners experience historical periods in a meaningful way. Concepts like cause and consequence are introduced through simple sequencing (e.g., “The fire started. The house burned. People moved away.”) and reinforced through repetition and concrete examples. Educational visits to historical sites or themed classroom days are central, helping to bring history to life.

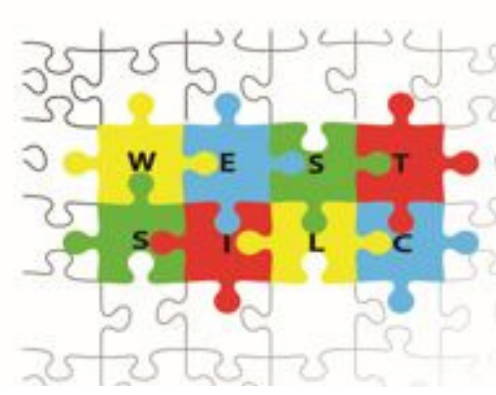
MFL is taught through focused drop down days, where learners are introduced to simple greetings and key vocabulary in a fun and accessible way. Each session focuses on a different country, which alternates throughout the year, providing a rich cultural experience. learners access MFL through multi-sensory and meaningful activities, such as tasting traditional foods, listening to music, exploring cultural artefacts, participating in themed art and dance, and engaging in interactive storytelling and role play. These immersive experiences help learners connect with different languages and cultures in a way that supports communication, engagement, and real-world understanding.

Connect Pathway- Primary

Cycle year	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
1	History All About Me & My Family – How has my life changed?	History Local History Study – What happened here in the past?	Geography Where Do Animals Live? – What are different animal habitats?	History Castles and Knights – What were castles used for?	Geography Weather and Seasons – How does the weather change?	Geography The Seaside and Ocean Life – What animals live in the sea?
2	Geography Deserts – What is life like in extreme environments?	History Toys Through Time – How have toys changed?	History Famous Inventors – Who made important discoveries?	History Traditional Tales and Legends – What stories were told in the past?	Geography Volcanoes and Earthquakes – How do they work?	Geography Map Skills and Simple Navigation – How do we find places?
3	Geography Africa – A Closer Look – What is life like in Africa?	History Famous Explorers (Columbus, Armstrong, Ibn Battuta) – Who explored the world?	Geography My Local Area and Landmarks – What is special about where I live?	History People Who Help Us: Past and Present – How have jobs that help us changed over time?	Geography UK Countries and Capitals – What makes each part of the UK unique?	History The Olympics – Then and Now – How have the Games evolved?
4	Geography Exploring the Arctic and Antarctic	History – Transport Through Time – How have transport methods changed?	Geography Rainforests – What is life like in extreme environments?	History Dressing Up: Clothes Through Time Compare clothing from the past (Victorian, Tudor)	History Homes in the Past – How did people live long ago?	Geography At the Farm: Exploring Where Our Food and Animals Live

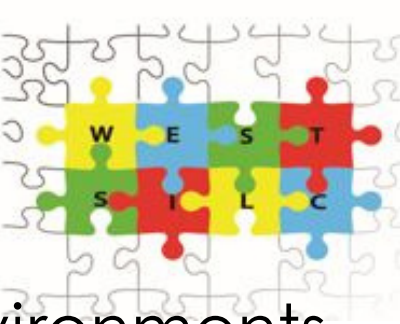


Connect Pathway- Secondary



Cycle year	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
1	Geography Coasts	History WW2 – What was life like during WWII?	Geography Africa and Our Amazing World – Where is Africa and what is it like	History Ancient Greece	Geography How can we look after the planet?	History Entertainment Through Time
2	History Ancient Egypt	Geography Weather and Seasons – How does the weather change?	Geography Habitats	History Famous Explorers	Geography Map Skills – How do we use Directions?	History The Great Fire of London – What happened in 1666?
3	Geography Compare two cities Leeds and Paris.	History Marvellous Machines: History of trains.	Geography Rivers	History The Romans	Geography Journeys and Transport – How do people travel?	History Henry VIII Life in tudor times
4	Geography Natural Disasters – What causes earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis?	History Significant Individuals – (e.g., Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole)	Geography My Local Area – What is special about where I live?	History Kings and Queens – Who were Britain's greatest rulers?	Geography Comparing a UK and Non-UK Location – How is life different? UK and India	History The Victorians – How did the Victorians shape Britain?
5	History The Changing World of Work: From the Past to Present What kinds of work did people do in Ancient Civilizations, during the Industrial Revolution, and in more modern times?	History Crime and Punishment	Geography The Seven Continents –Explore one per week.	History Vikings	History Ancient China:	Geography Exploring Our Planet

Climb pathway

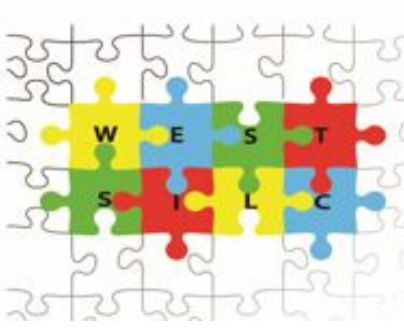


Geography lessons introduce more abstract and comparative concepts such as differences between environments (e.g., towns vs. countryside), basic map-reading using atlases and coordinates, and enquiry-based activities such as planning a journey or investigating climate zones. These learners are encouraged to use more sophisticated vocabulary and participate in more structured group discussions, short research tasks, and reflective activities following trips or fieldwork.

Learners explore more structured historical content, such as studying local or national historical events and figures in greater depth, and begin to understand how the past influences the present and future. Teachers use timelines, historical sources, and guided enquiry to encourage learners to ask questions and draw conclusions. learners might engage in basic research projects or discussions about the significance of events, exploring ideas like “What if that hadn’t happened?”.

MFL focuses on functional, everyday language acquisition (e.g., greetings, colours, numbers, food) using highly repetitive, engaging approaches. Songs, rhymes, visual symbols, and Makaton or other augmentative communication tools are used to support vocabulary learning. The emphasis is on recognition, sound patterns, and enjoyment, not on formal reading or writing. Learners may participate in daily routines in the target language (e.g., starting the day with “Bonjour!”) and associate new vocabulary with actions, real objects, and familiar contexts. learners might engage in short conversations, participate in cultural learning (e.g., learning about festivals or food traditions), and use ICT to reinforce learning through interactive games and videos.

Climb pathway



Pathway:	Cycle year	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Climb Primary	1	Our School and Its Surroundings – What is near our school?	All About Me & My Family – How has my life changed?	Where Do Animals Live? – What are different animal habitats?	Famous Inventors – Who made important discoveries??	Introduction to French – Greetings and basic phrases	People Who Help Us: Past and Present – How have jobs that help us changed over time?
	2	My Local Area and Landmarks – What is special about where I live?	Toys Through Time – How have toys changed?	Weather and Seasons – How does the weather change? UK vs Non-UK	Traditional Tales and Legends – What stories were told in the past? UK vs Non-UK	Food and Culture – What do people eat around country?	Volcanoes and Earthquakes – How do they work?
	3	Map Skills and Simple Navigation – How do we find places?	Homes in the Past – How did people live long ago? (Victorian)	Deserts and Rainforests – What is life like in extreme environments?	Famous Explorers (Columbus, Armstrong, Ibn Battuta) – Who explored the world?	Animals and Family – Naming animals and family members	The Olympics – Then and Now – How have the Games evolved?
	4	UK Countries and Capitals – What makes each part of the UK unique?	Local History Study – What happened here in the past?	Our World – Continents and Oceans	The Great Fire of London – What Happened and Why Does It Matter?	Festivals and Traditions – Learning about French celebrations	The Seaside and Ocean Life – What animals live in the sea?
Climb Secondary	1	Kings and Queens – Who were Britain's greatest rulers?	My Local Area – What is special about where I live?	Castles and Knights – Why were castles built?	Journeys and Transport – How do people travel?	Introduction to Spanish – Greetings and basic phrases	Significant Individuals – (e.g., Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole)
	2	Famous Explorers – Who were the greatest explorers?	Weather and Seasons – How does the weather change?	The Great Fire of London – What happened in 1666?	The Seven Continents – What makes each continent special?	Food and Culture – What do people eat around country?	Energy and Sustainability – How can we look after the planet?
	3	Ancient Egypt – What made Ancient Egypt special?	Rivers and Water – How do rivers shape the land?	Vikings – Raiders or settlers?	Comparing a UK and Non-UK Location – How is life different?	Animals and Family – Naming animals and family members	The Olympics – Then and Now – How have the Games evolved?
	4	The Romans – How did the Romans change Britain?	European Countries – What are the differences between European countries?	WW2 – The Home Front – What was life like during WWII?	Biomes – How do different environments support life?	Festivals and Traditions – Learning about Spanish celebrations	Coasts – How do coasts change?
	5	Crime and Punishment – How has justice changed over time?	Natural Disasters – What causes earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis??	The Victorians – How did the Victorians shape Britain?	Map Skills – How do we use maps?	Cultural Stories and Myths – Traditional tales from Spain	Ancient Greece – What did the Greeks do for us?



Elevate pathway

All year groups receive three **geography** lessons per fortnight. In Key Stage 3, learners study how geography has developed over time, celebrate global diversity, and explore environmental fragility, conservation, and stewardship. Students are taught within partnership classes, following a differentiated version of the mainstream curriculum. In Key Stage 4, while some learners may pursue a GCSE in geography, most West SILC students continue within the partnership pathway, working towards an Entry Level Certificate that includes assessment, fieldwork, and a personal project.

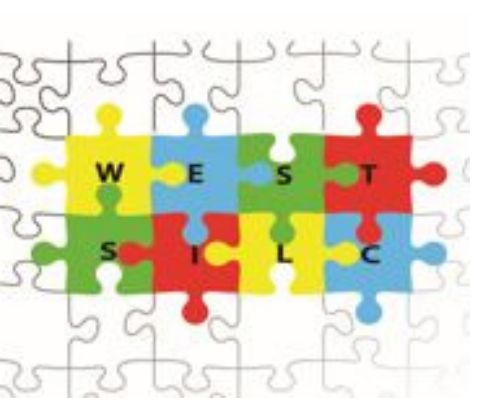
All year groups receive three **history** lessons per fortnight. In Key Stage 3, students explore British history and its global connections from the Stone Age to the post-war era, developing skills in interpretation, analysis, and independent thinking. Learners are taught within partnership classes, following a differentiated version of the mainstream curriculum. In Key Stage 4, students have the option to study GCSE History.

MFL is delivered through meaningful, practical experiences rather than through a designated timetabled lesson. This approach ensures that language learning is accessible, relevant, and connected to pupils' wider knowledge and life experiences.

MFL is introduced through immersive, topic-linked, and cultural activities that allow pupils to develop an awareness of different languages and cultures in a purposeful way. For example, pupils learning and practising basic French greetings and expressions, applying their new vocabulary in a real-world context when ordering food and saying 'thank you' in French. This experience gives pupils the opportunity to use language authentically, promoting confidence, curiosity, and communication skills.

Other examples include incorporating short, themed MFL projects and enrichment activities throughout the year to explore different languages and cultures. Opportunities for mini MFL trips and community-based experiences are also in place to allow pupils to practise simple phrases and cultural understanding beyond the classroom.

In addition, elements of language learning and cultural awareness will be embedded across other curriculum areas—for example, through group activities, celebration events, and cross-curricular themes—so that pupils continue to experience and value different languages in a natural, engaging, and inclusive way.



WAIP

At Key Stage 3, learners engage with geography through practical, immersive experiences that bring abstract concepts to life. Topics like map skills and country studies are taught through orienteering, interactive maps, and sensory exploration of different cultures. Complex ideas such as the water cycle, renewable energy, and extreme earth are made accessible through experiments, simulations, and model-making. Learners explore biomes and rivers using visuals, creative tasks, and outdoor learning, while also linking global issues like flooding and climate to real-world relevance. Lessons are tailored to encourage curiosity, discussion, and meaningful connections with the environment.

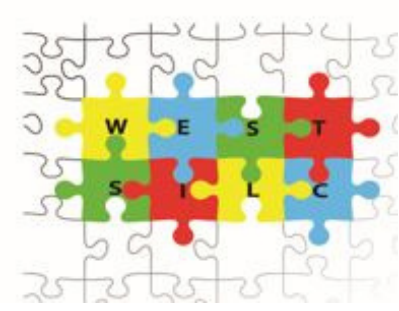
History is taught through story-driven, experiential learning, enabling learners to understand key historical events by stepping into the shoes of those who lived them. Topics like WWI, WWII, and the Middle Ages are explored using role play, timelines, drama, and visual media, while sensitive topics like the slave trade and suffragette movement are approached with empathy and creativity, using art, diary writing, and debate. learners develop a sense of chronology, cause and effect, and social change through interactive and reflective activities that make the past engaging, accessible, and personally relevant.

MFL is taught through drop down-days, incorporating meaningful and engaging activities.



WAIP

Pathway:		Cycle year		Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
AIP	West 11	7 8 9	Geog	Map Skills and My Country Study-Directions, compass Continents, the UK. Country study	Renewable Fuels - Renewable and non renewable sources, future of energy. The advantages and disadvantages of renewable/ non renewable.	Biomes- What do different places around the world look like? What is it like to live there? What survives there? What animals and plants can you find there	Water Cycle Process Flooding- cause and impact Humans use of water Rivers - erosion & transportation	Extreme Earth - Layers of the Earth and Volcanoes. How they occur, the effect they have and what is left behind.	Extreme Earth - Earthquakes and Tsunamis How does it affect people and how and where they choose to live.
			Hist	WW1- Europe before the war. What were the causes of the war? War efforts at home. The Battle of the Somme. Treaty of Versailles, why is happened and was it fair?	WW2- Chronology of events, What were the causes? Leaders of WW2, and the rise of Hitler. Propaganda used from both UK and Germany. Atomic Bomb.	The Middle Ages and The Black Death. What was life like in the middle ages? Villages and towns. The feudal system. Crime and punishment Power- Crown vs Church. Health and medicines.	Industrial revolution	The Slave Trade- middle passage, auctions, resistance and abolishment.	The Suffragettes- What did the suffragettes do and who were they? How have women's right changed over time?
	West 14	10		Country focus: Italy	Country focus: Mexico	Country focus: Around the world in celebrations. (Day of the Dead/Halloween/Diwali/Christmas)	Country focus: China	Country focus: Spain	Country focus: Brazil



Impact

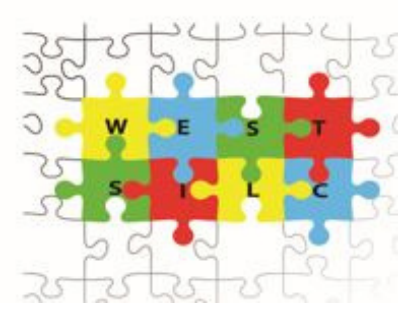
In Geography, learners will:

- show deep engagement during geography activities
- be able to transfer the skills they have learnt during geography sessions to real life.
- have had a broad experience of the world outside the classroom.
 - have a working awareness of their place in the local community and an increasing understanding of how they impact and interact with the world around them.
- have developed geographical skills such as creativity, enquiry, evaluation, problem solving etc. creativity, enquiry, evaluation, problem solving etc.

In History, learners will:

- show deep engagement during history activities
- who can, show an understanding of the passage of time. (i.e. now and next, today and tomorrow)
 - have an understanding that the past impacts on the present and the past impacts the future and know that actions have consequences
- be able to transfer the skills they have learnt during history sessions to real life



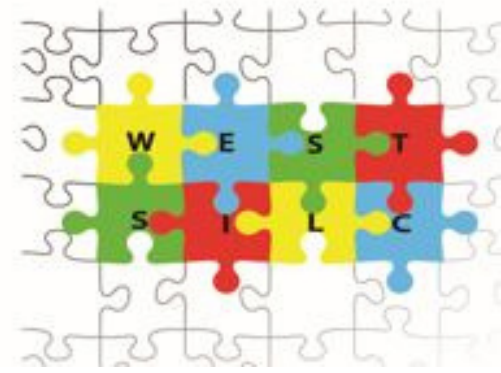


Impact

In MFL, learners will:

- be able to respond to and use a small bank of familiar words and phrases in the target language (e.g., greetings, numbers, colours), either verbally, using AAC, or with visuals.
- begin to recognise and match spoken words to symbols or pictures (e.g., identifying 'bonjour' with a waving hand or French flag icon).
- participate in cultural celebrations (e.g., tasting traditional foods, joining in festivals) and demonstrate an awareness that people live differently in other countries.
- show increased confidence and willingness to take part in group MFL activities, such as call-and-response games, performance, or interactive storytelling.

Assessment



Assessment in humanities is adapted to suit the needs and curriculum pathways of each learner. While humanities are not assessed as discrete subjects for all learners, progress is tracked through a combination of holistic and formal systems tailored to each pathway.

Connect and Climb Pathways: learners' progress in humanities is tracked using Evidence for Learning (EfL). Assessment places emphasis on practical skills, personal reflection, and the application of learning in real-world contexts.

Elevate Pathway: learners are assessed using mainstream school tracking systems. They access the full humanities curriculum and work towards qualifications including GCSE History or Geography, ensuring consistency with their mainstream peers.

WAIP: learners at the AIP are supported by West SILC staff but remain on the roll of their home mainstream schools. Humanities progress is reported directly to home schools, with learners continuing to access mainstream qualifications, such as GCSEs, where appropriate. Learning is further supported through adaptive delivery approaches that promote engagement and understanding.