

*"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head.  
If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."  
Nelson Mandela*

# Why choose MFL at PCS?



*"Learning a foreign language, and the culture that goes with it, is one of the most useful things we can do to broaden the empathy and imaginative sympathy and cultural outlook of children."*

*"It is literally the case that learning languages makes you smarter. The neural networks in the brain strengthen as a result of language learning." Michael Gove*

## Why choose MFL?

Pupils often tell us how much they enjoy learning languages at Porthcawl Comprehensive, and sometimes ask which career they may have, if they choose to study a language. The list is endless! A modern foreign language can combine well with a wide range of subjects, from History or Politics to Economics and Engineering, and languages GCSEs and A-levels are well respected by universities in today's competitive environment. Learning a language is far more than just a subject or qualification - it is a skill for life, one which has both academic and social advantages.

## Did you know?

- 75% of the world's population speaks no English at all.
- With the growth of the European Union, there is a much greater need for people who have a foreign language.
- 60% of all UK trade is with non English-speaking countries and 1 in 5 UK companies say they are losing business due to language barriers.
- In most careers nowadays, language abilities are highly valued and there is a particular shortage of people with languages in Engineering and Finance.
- 86% of the UK's richest under 30s speak a foreign language.
- French, along with English, is the official working language of The United Nations, The International Olympic Committee, The International Red Cross, The Council of Europe, The European Court of Justice and is also spoken in more than 60 countries throughout the world. French is also the only language other than English to be spoken in five continents across the world.
- Within the European Union, more Europeans are native speakers of German than any other language. German is spoken by more than 120 million people in Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Switzerland, parts of Belgium, Northern Italy and Eastern Europe. German is the second most commonly used scientific language, and Germany is the largest exporter in the world.

## How will languages help me?

- **Journalism and Media** - Being able to speak a language opens doors for journalists all over the world. The BBC's Andrew Marr has used his French and Spanish skills throughout his career, and says there's no substitute for speaking the language of the country.

- **Business, Finance and Marketing:** A Bloomberg representative told us “Bloomberg recruited 425 graduates to their graduate training scheme last year (2012), all of whom had a language other than their mother tongue at A level (and equivalent) or above. As a global company with global clients we recognise the best way to build lasting relationships is by having a workforce who can converse with their clients in their mother tongue and who can understand and are comfortable working in their client's culture. Following training, Bloomberg employees are typically allocated a country and spend two years managing client relationships within their territory. They are then rotated globally every two years, managing new territories, being exposed to new cultures and handling new challenges. Over the past 30 years we have found that multi-lingual employees adapt fastest and easiest to these challenges and have the global outlook most aligned to Bloomberg's global culture.”
- **Technology:** The computer gaming industry has seen huge growth over the last few years, and the demand to produce software for local markets means that language skills are in increasing demand. Your languages would be a great asset in this sector.
- **Engineering:** Engineering companies in Britain are having to recruit from France and Germany because British engineers don't have language skills.
- Not to mention other fields like **Tourism, Politics, Retail, Banking...**

To help understand why languages are a good choice, we asked some former pupils to share their experiences of learning languages. Here's what they told us.....

### Where are they now?

**Name:** Grace Chubb

**Language(s)/Level:** French to A level

**Higher Education:** Oxford University Graduate (Law) 2012

Throughout my time in Oxford I was keen to keep up the French that I had learned and I attended classes at the language centre there a couple of times a week. I even chose a French law module that was available only to those who had an A level in the language and was able to read French cases and statutes and compare how their legal system differed from ours. In the work experience placements I carried out in the legal profession, I was encouraged to hear that a great deal of value is placed on the knowledge of modern foreign languages since so many of the larger law firms are now international. The growth of EU law has also raised the profile of multilingualism in the law, making it more important than ever to be able to communicate internationally in this field.

In the summer of my penultimate year in University I went to work in a hotel near Biarritz for the summer as a way of combining travelling and earning money. It was a truly incredible experience and allowed me to make friends with French people my age and to fully experience the culture. Although, to begin with, it was difficult being alone in a new

place where no one spoke my first language, I found it exciting and challenging having to communicate in both a social and professional capacity through a language other than English. It was this experience that encouraged me to further my learning of modern foreign languages even more. I am now doing a course at Reading University to study French to degree level and cannot wait to look at the language in greater depth and learn more about French culture.

**Name:** Lowri Patterson

**Language(s)/Level:** GCSE French and German, A level German and Welsh

**Higher Education:** Exeter University student (Law and German Law)

By doing my degree of Law and German Law, I work towards my British LLB law degree, and in addition also simultaneously do some modules on German Law. Then, in my fourth year, I will be going to do my Magister (Master's) at the University of Saarbrücken in Germany, which not only means I leave with two degrees, but will also have the knowledge to pass the aptitude test which enables me to practise as a lawyer in Germany. Given the competitiveness of the field of Law, anything that makes you stand out, and distinguishes you from other candidates is crucial. An article in the Huffington Post recently said that German is the most sought after language by employers and it's not surprising, not only in terms of the economy, but in addition the EU Law is becoming ever more important and relevant. [[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/tom-wadsworth/learning-german-and-portuguese-could-help-uk-economy\\_b\\_1587868.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=tw](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/tom-wadsworth/learning-german-and-portuguese-could-help-uk-economy_b_1587868.html?utm_hp_ref=tw)]

**Name:** Sarah Benjamin

**Language(s)/Level:** French and German A-level

**Higher Education/Career:** BA French and German, post graduate Law degree, works in programme finance at the BBC

In my first job, I worked at Enfis Ltd as a Marketing Coordinator. Part of the criteria for the role was speaking German (and French too preferably). I was responsible for translating French and German data sheets into the respective languages and then I translated part of their website in French and German too. I also liaised directly with our French and German customers on behalf of the company. As an aside, I started a German language class at the company to help some of my colleagues with conversational German to better working relationships with our customers. I now work in programme finance at the BBC and have recently finished a post grad law degree and have been applying for law roles at the BBC.

**Name:** Elizabeth Wren-Owens

**Language(s)/Level:** GCSE French, German and Welsh, A-level French

**Higher Education:** BA French and Italian, MA Italian, PhD Italian

As a result of studying languages at University I spent a year, and two summers, living, working and studying abroad.

I worked in Normandy and in Paris one summer, then travelled to Rome where I lived and studied for 6 months. As my friends from University were also living in Italy at this time I travelled around various Italian cities visiting them. I then went to Paris, where I studied at the Institut Britannique. In the summer before my finals, I won a scholarship to study at a summer school on the banks of Lake Garda. This was an amazing experience, as it was also attended by people from all over the world - Brazil, Cuba, Argentina, Estonia....and I was able to learn about their cultures and ideas by spending time with them. I then travelled to Dijon, where I studied at another summer school, this time meeting people from America and northern Europe, some of whom I am still in contact with.

I work now at the University in Cardiff, teaching in the School of European Languages, Translation and Politics. In addition to teaching I spend about a third of my time doing research, which means I am constantly learning new things and am always excited by my work. It also means I am able to travel to conferences to present my research, across Europe and America, so am still able to travel extensively!

Learning languages, at whatever level, allows you to communicate with people and opens you up to new ideas and experiences. In the new 'global village' it enables you to make new friends, network to enhance your career, and make the most of all the wonderful possibilities out there!

**Name:** Becky Howells

**Language(s)/Level:** French and German A-level

**Higher Education/Career:** BA International management and French (2004)

I studied French and German to A-Level in PCS and then went on to do a degree in International Management & French at Bath University in 2004, which wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for my A-level in French. The four years I spent at university were amazing & my French really improved! I became friends with lots of native speakers and spent a year in Paris as part of my course. This really helped me with the language and I met so many people... I'd definitely recommend it! My degree helped me to get a job at Zurich, a big international insurance company which is where I now work as they were attracted to the fact that I could speak French. Working for a big global company is amazing as there are lots of opportunities both in the UK and abroad and it helps that I can speak another language. I am so glad that I chose to study languages all those years ago at school as it really has not only helped me at university, but also in my career and I have made so many friends along the way! I would definitely recommend it!

**Name:** Jessica Davies

**Language(s)/Level:** French and German A-level

**Higher Education/Career:** BA German, PGCE MFL

I studied French and German at a level and I did a degree in German at Kings College London. Before I went to university I lived in Berlin for a year - definitely the most exciting time of my life! Studying German has meant that I've met people from all over the world, I've made lifelong friends in Germany too and I've been able to use my knowledge of languages to help me to get to know other cultures and places 'like a native'! What I love about knowing other languages is being able to talk to other people - at home or abroad - in their mother tongue. People are generally surprised and impressed that a British

person has bothered to learn their language! It's also fun to eavesdrop on the train and have secret conversations with people when nobody else around you knows the language .

**Name:** Caroline Evans

**Language(s)/Level:** French and German A level

**Higher Education/Career:** University of Southampton Law graduate

“Studying languages in school helped me to develop many skills which were useful at University. These skills will be looked upon favourably by future employers, for example communication skills, interpersonal skills, analytical skills and the ability to form coherent argument. I would recommend the study of a modern foreign language to anyone who wants to gain an international perspective. During University I lived with numerous students from around Europe and found that my study of French and German provided me with an understanding of their way of life. Most students from other European countries speak at least three languages; I think that nowadays it is important to study a language to remain on par with your European counterparts.”

**What they said they enjoyed about AS and A2 MFL in PCS:**

“One of the many reasons I enjoyed languages was that it was fundamentally a skills based subject. Unlike other subjects, where you learnt a topic off by heart for the exam and then forgot about it for the rest of the year, with languages you are constantly having to remember everything you have ever done. This makes it challenging, but soon enough everything just clicks. Doing a language gives you an incredible sense of achievement because you have learnt a useful skill, and holding a conversation with a native speaker, or reading an article and understanding most of it, is so satisfying. I also found that learning a language was incredibly diverse. Some subjects are constantly recalling the same skills, essay writing, solving maths problems etc. but with a language your lessons were always different, from essay writing, to your communication in oral exams, to the complexity (and often logic) of grammar, and even to watching films and reading books. This not only meant that there was something for everyone, but when all these elements overlap, you find yourself with the ability to speak a whole new language. This is even more satisfying when you think that you've developed this proficiency in the few years between year 7 and A Levels. “ **Lowri Patterson**

“I took part in a French exchange for a week to the town of St. Sebastien sur Loire which is twinned with Porthcawl. I stayed with a French family and attended the local school with my correspondent for a few days, and then he came as part of the twinning association to stay with me a few months later. I also did my work experience for year 12 in Germany. I stayed with a German family and worked in a school giving presentations about Welsh culture to many students. These experiences really gave me confidence in my speaking and I learned so many new things! Learning about different cultures and the mechanics of learning a new language really interested me. It's great that I'm able to hold conversations with natives of France and Germany in their languages!” **Tom Beer (A level French and German)**

“I cannot emphasise enough how much I loved learning modern foreign languages and how excited I am to have the opportunity to continue in my study of them. I have seen that there are endless advantages of knowing about another language and culture, no matter what a person’s interests or strengths are.” **Grace Chubb**

“ I really enjoyed taking part in the school’s French exchange trip to Saint Sébastian sur Loire in Year 12. It was lots of fun and I got to meet new friends and practise my French at the same time. The A-level course is really varied and exciting, I particularly enjoyed studying the French film ‘Les Choristes’. I believe that having another language makes you stand out when applying for a place at university, or even when applying for a job.” **Bethan Perry (A-level French student)**

“ I’ve found over the course of my A-level studies that a language A-level covers far more than just the language itself. For example, both literature and film are studied at A2. There are also many changes in comparison to GCSE, as A-level studies require you to develop your knowledge beyond yourself and your own interests, towards the wider world and problems facing it, such as the role of the media in society, terrorism and the environment.” **Jamie Lees (A level French and Spanish student)**

“Although I’m hoping to study medicine at university, I decided to study French at A-level so that I would have a wider range of subjects as an academic foundation. I’ve really enjoyed French A-level as it is very much a skills-based subject, which allows you to build on knowledge you already have. The biggest difference between GCSE and A-level French, is that the topics become more about society than about you – this is really interesting. I have really enjoyed studying French literature, as I love reading and being able to read in a foreign language is really exciting for me. When I was researching medical schools, I was really surprised to find that you need a Grade C in a GCSE in MFL in order to study medicine at UCL. Whilst this is unique to UCL, most universities do like students to study a wide range of subjects, and I think a subject like French, which teaches you so much about the wider world, is a great subject to have.” **(Jemimah Williams-Rumble, A-level French student)**

“Studying languages to AS and A level helped get me a place at the University of Exeter. I hope to pursue a career in journalism/PR and believe that being able to speak foreign languages will make me more employable in this sector. I love languages because I enjoy being able to talk to whoever I want without having to use silly hand gestures, being able to talk about people without them knowing what I'm saying, discovering similarities between languages and why certain words are what they are, and being able to watch foreign films without getting a headache from the subtitles.” **(Georgina Dorr, AS level French and German, A level French, French and Spanish undergraduate)**

**Sir Alex Ferguson CBE:**

**“All I can advise, is that you keep working at your languages. Foreign languages are exciting and interesting - keep up the hard work, it will be worth it in the end.”**

**Grace Chubb, (A level French student, PCS Head Girl, 2009)**

**“ When I talk to friends and family members about the study of modern foreign languages, I frequently hear that they wished they had appreciated the value of learning languages when they were in school and had taken full advantage of the chance to learn them while it was free of cost and they did not have full-time jobs.”**

**Arsène Wenger (manager of Arsenal football club, speaks French, English, German, Spanish, Italian and Japanese)**

**“The value [of learning a language] is that it opens a lot of possibilities for you individually, secondly, it helps the world develop in mutual respect, in understanding of each other, [this] is our social responsibility”**

**([www.ukgermanconnection.org/?location\\_id=705](http://www.ukgermanconnection.org/?location_id=705))**

**“every time you learn a new language, the next one is easier to learn.”**

**([www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzZENzIJSpc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzZENzIJSpc))**