GCSE content and the NCELP SOW

	Features of the new GCSE subject content	How NCELP resources help prepare students for the new content	Underpinning research that supports the features of the GCSE content and pedagogy needed to deliver it
Introduction	GCSE specifications in MFL …will build on the foundations of grammar, vocabulary and linguistic competence envisaged by the programmes of study for key stages 2 and 3. Courses … will ensure systematic, well-sequenced coverage of the specification's linguistic content, avoiding overloading pupils at any given point, and with ample opportunities for practising the content taught at each stage receptively and productively.	In our SOW, phonics, vocabulary and grammar are practised in both comprehension and production, and oral and written modalities. Practice is frequent, spaced, meaning and form-focused, and involves an element of struggle. Learning is carefully planned to support progression for the vast majority of learners at KS3 within a low exposure foreign language setting. Progression is determined by the functions of grammar, and the frequency and usefulness of vocabulary and phonics, and avoids introducing too much language too fast. For the majority of learners aged 11-13, introducing no more than one new main grammatical function every two weeks is considered to set a sufficient amount of 'desirable difficulty'. NCELP has taken as guiding principles that revisiting must be: frequent enough to prevent forgetting; spaced enough so that recall is challenging; and systematically planned into the SoW so that it happens. Grammar features (and high frequency vocabulary) are recycled in new semantic fields (e.g. themes, clusters of related vocabulary) and different contexts, which	Practice is a wide array of activities that are "engaged in systematically, deliberately, with the goal of developing knowledge of and skills in the second language" (DeKeyser, 2007, p.8). Practice is meaningful when it is not mechanical, i.e. when learners need to attend to meaning as well as form (Paulston, 1970). Meaningful practice "is better at driving the brain processes that result in successful recall" (Anderson, 2005, p. 198) Experiencing language in different contexts at different times, and needing to do different things with it, known as encoding variability, are thought to be key characteristics for successful learning, (Anderson & Crawford, 1980)

Peter Watson / Emma Marsden

UNIVERSITY of York

		strengthens the knowledge base.	
Subject aims pts. 4-6	GCSE specifications in MFL should provide a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study. They should encourage pupils to develop confidence in, and a positive attitude towards, MFL… They should also provide a strong linguistic and cultural foundation for pupils who go on to study MFL at a higher level post-16. Through studying a GCSE in a modern foreign language, pupils should develop their ability and ambition to communicate in speech and writing with speakers of the language for authentic purposes and about subjects which are meaningful and interesting to them. Pupils should be taught the language in the context of the countries and communities where the language is spoken… Pupils should become familiar with aspects of the contexts of the countries and communities in which the language is spoken.	Our SOW are informed by the recommendations of the MFL Pedagogy review. NCELP works to improve pedagogy, strengthening language development and learners' sense of progression thereby improving self-efficacy which in turn increases intrinsic motivation to study languages at GCSE. A typical NCELP lesson resource includes receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) tasks and is structured to enable students to understand meaning by actively recalling and manipulating grammar and vocabulary taught. NCELP lessons in KS3 also include rich texts such as poems, stories and non-fiction texts and develop pupils' knowledge and their ability to use that knowledge to understand and appreciate such texts. 'Cultural content' is integrated throughout the SOW, to reinforce meaningful use of phonics, vocabulary and grammar. In addition to activities based around the geography, history and contemporary culture of the French, German and Spanish-speaking worlds, there are regular callouts giving information about festivals, traditions and sociolinguistic aspects of language use and contexts where the language is spoken.	Learners' perceptions of 'ease' and sense of 'achievement following effort' lead to increased motivation (Graham 2004) "The strong role of perceptions of FL lessons as reliable predictors of uptake, which corroborates previous evidence that, in adolescence, personal interests and intentions are inextricably linked to students' immediate perceptions of their classroom experience" (Taylor & Marsden 2014, 913; see also Goodnow, 1992). Research has found "an important link between young beginner learners' inability to decode French, their sense of self-efficacy with decoding-related tasks, and their desire to continue learning the language beyond the compulsory phase of education in England" (Erler & Macaro 2011, 513).

Subject content pt. 7a	Learn, and be able to recall readily and use, the range of vocabulary required for the level at which they are studying.	Approximately 360 words are taught on average per year at KS3 and KS4 with systematic revisiting of vocabulary within about a month, within a term, and within a year. This vocabulary is integrated into lessons alongside grammar in comprehension activities, in a variety of contexts, in oral and written modalities. NCELP has created Quizlet vocabulary sets and audio homeworks to support the learning of vocabulary prior to the lesson in which it will be practised in context.	"Intentional vocabulary learning (i.e. when the specific goal is to learn vocabulary, usually with an explicit focus) almost always leads to greater and faster gains, with a better chance of retention and of reaching productive levels of mastery" (Schmitt 2008) Learners need multiple encounters with language to embed it in memory (research has suggested between 8-20 encounters can be needed for long-term learning of vocabulary (Schmitt, 2008)) but a wide range of factors can affect this number (Uchihara et al. 2019) "With increased experience of the foreign language, decoding becomes more automatic and the learner is better able to access his or her higher-level processing skills… Research has shown that for efficient reading, skilled readers need to be able to recognize rapidly 95% or more of the words in a text" (Swan 2008, 267; Grabe and Stoller 2002: 186). A range of activity types and sustained practice in different contexts is needed (Webb et al 2020)

Subject content pt. 7b.	Learn and be able to use the grammar specified to understand and produce meaning accurately, in oral and written modalities, and to speak with increasing fluency	High frequency grammar functions are taught and revisited several times over KS3 and KS4, in particular features for persons, subjects, tenses and aspect and a range of key syntax (word order and relations between words). The usefulness of grammar drives the activities in each lesson and is practised in reading, listening, speaking and writing activities.	Providing plentiful practice of one grammatical structure but in different lexical contexts helps to strengthen knowledge of a grammatical system. That is, varying the vocabulary whilst practising the same grammatical structure helps oral fluency and accuracy (Sato & McDonough, 2019). Learners need to encounter grammar with a varied lexicon (vocabulary) (Marsden & David, 2008). Orienting learners' attention to the function of grammar in the input helps to develop comprehension and also production of grammar (Marsden, 2006; Marsden & Chen, 2011; McManus & Marsden, 2019)
Subject content pt. 7c	Know and be able to apply the principles by which spelling represents sounds in standard or widely used forms of the language, and use clear and comprehensible pronunciation	Confidence in understanding and producing the key Sound-Symbol Correspondences (SSCs) is developed throughout KS3 by the planned and highly systematic revisiting of SSCs. They are introduced, practised, explicitly tested, and revisited. The approach builds student understanding that small phonemic differences often make a difference to meaning.	"Being able to decode from the written form and read words aloud correctly may bring about additional benefits such as acquiring, consolidating, and retrieving vocabulary, as well as being able to recognize what would otherwise be apparently unfamiliar words" (Erler & Macaro 2011, 500). "Being able to generate phonological forms for unfamiliar written words […] provides a key to acquiring new vocabulary; vocabulary knowledge,

Peter Watson / Emma Marsden

UNIVERSITY of York

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			in turn, underpins all other aspects of L2 proficiency" (Woore 2009, 5).
Subject content pt. 9c	Write text in the language in a lexically and grammatically accurate way, based on simple and familiar stimuli	NCELP include writing tasks within every lesson. Writing activities are provided to help learners establish and practise accessing knowledge (sound-spelling relations, vocabulary and grammar); such activities come after lots of practice of understanding the vocabulary and grammar in input (listening and reading). That is, pupils hear and see the language plenty of times before being asked to write it.	"DeKeyser (1997) found that the learning of morphosyntactic rules was highly skill- specific, that is, large amounts of practice in comprehension and production led to great improvements in the practiced skill" (Rebuschat 2013,3; DeKeyser &Prieto Botana 2015; see also Shintani 2015).
Subject content pt. 9d	Translate in writing vocabulary items and short sentences or texts, from the language to English and vice versa	NCELP lessons regularly include translation exercises of this nature, building on the introduction and regular revisiting of vocabulary and grammar features.	Learners need to encounter grammar with a varied lexicon (vocabulary) (Marsden & David, 2008). Learners need rich meaningful practice in translating in both directions, including L2 retrieval practice, particularly in the early stages of learning when the L2 lexicon is closely related to the L1 lexicon (Rice & Tokowicz, 2020)
Subject content pt. 9e	Read aloud, using clear and comprehensible pronunciation, short sentences from the written form of the language and demonstrate understanding of them	Practice in understanding and producing the key Sound Symbol Correspondences (SSCs) is covered by the end of KS3. Phonics knowledge, starting within single symbol-sound correspondences (SSC) and other aspects of the sound system (e.g., stress) is built slowly and	Phonics instruction may be particularly important in vocabulary learning, which underpins all language learning (Owen & Woore 2019) "An intact knowledge of the GPC [Grapheme-phoneme

		carefully lesson by lesson through introduction, consolidation and development activities.	correspondence] system of the language that can be applied successfully to word reading is essential for effective phonological decoding from print to sound. Additionally, language processing and storage, word access and productive language use all rely on efficient phonological decoding ability" (Erler and Macaro 2011, 498). "The ability to generate pronunciations for words on the basis of their written form provides learners with a self-teaching mechanism which unlocks the potential of reading as a source of vocabulary acquisition. Further, there is emerging evidence of a link between L2 decoding proficiency and the desire to continue learning the language" (Woore 2009, 6). The ability to decode words is a core component of reading (Segalowitz & Segalowitz, 1993; and, although about L1, Ehri et al, 2001)
Subject content pt. 12	Themes and topics: Because vocabulary specified in this content is informed by the frequency of occurrence in the language it will be well suited to	NCELP proposes an explicit spine of grammar and high frequency vocabulary. It is not driven by a need to cover pre-determined topics or communicative functions via a holistic approach to sentences, but rather via a focus on the	Knowledge is often thought to be context-specific. That is, learners might be able to access their knowledge in one kind of task or test, but not in another situation (DeKeyser,

	communication about a wide range of common themes and topics, and for different purposes	functions of grammar. Vocabulary chosen for our lessons is frequency-informed, and is revisited across various contexts rather than being limited to one topic.	2015; Lightbown, 2008). They need the opportunity to 'proceduralise' their knowledge in different contexts.
Vocabulary pts. 13-20	The vocabulary which pupils will be expected to know, for both comprehension and production, will be compiled with close and explicit reference for each item on the list to frequency of occurrence in the language.

At least 90% of words selected must be from the 2,000 most frequent words occurring in the most widely used standard forms of the language.

At higher tier pupils are expected to read texts that may include a small number of words outside the vocabulary list defined by the awarding organisation. English meanings of such words must be supplied adjacent to the text for reference. No more than 2% of words in any given higher tier text may be glossed in this way.

There will be an explicit and representative balance of different parts of speech. | The NCELP SOW use a corpus of the most frequent 2000 words for each language, and our lessons within the SOW privilege the most frequent vocabulary. Our resources highlight the frequency of words introduced and revisited each week in the teacher notes.

Words outside of the most frequent 2000 words are also taught in NCELP lessons. Such vocabulary represents about 10% of the words taught in a year. Words in texts beyond these are glossed.

Our SOW focus on a balanced coverage of different parts of speech across the term and year. The part of language of each word taught is labelled in the SOW. Words that have not yet been taught are included in NCELP lessons and glossed on slides.

NCELP has created a Multilingual profiler (https://multilingprofiler.net/) that allows teachers to check self-produced or authentic texts for the frequency of words included within the text and if they have been taught by a given week of the SOW. | According to some estimates, the most common 2000 words represent around 80% of the words in any written text and an even greater percentage of the words in speech (Nation, 2001; Nation & Waring, 1997), highlighting the importance of word frequency in informing vocabulary learning.

The most useful vocabulary for learners reflects the needs and interests of learners themselves, and is also informed by the frequency with which words occur in real language use (Nation & Meara, 2002).

For complete comprehension, a coverage of 98% is considered optimal and 95% minimal (Hu & Nation, 2000; Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010; Schmitt, Jiang, & Grabe, 2011). So, to be sure that a reading or listening text is actually testing the words on a vocabulary list, then words that are expected to be 'known' should make up at least 95% (and ideally 98% or more) of the text. Thus, glossing should |

	At higher tier pupils are expected to read texts that may include a small number of words outside the vocabulary list defined by the awarding organisation. English meanings of such words must be supplied adjacent to the text for reference		be used to increase 'expected-to-be-known' words to at least these levels. Research has identified disparities between the words taught and used in textbooks and classroom environments on the one hand, and the frequency with which they occur in real-life use on the other (Anderson, 2007b; Biber & Reppen, 2002; Häcker, 2008; Holmes, 1988;) "Vocabulary knowledge, and vocabulary size in particular, are clearly a very major contributor to success in language performance. It has emerged that knowledge of the most frequent 2,000 words, in particular, is an important feature in successful communication through a foreign language" (Milton 2013, 72). "Vocabulary development, however measured, appears to mesh very closely with other features of language such as grammatical development, and also with overall language ability. Developing learners' vocabulary knowledge appears to be an integral feature of developing their language performance generally"

Peter Watson / Emma Marsden

UNIVERSITY of York

			(Milton 2013, 75; Marsden & David, 2008).
Grammar pts. 21-23	The grammar requirements are set out in two tiers: foundation and higher. The requirements set out for higher tier include everything specified for foundation	The grammar focus and rationale of NCELP SOW ensure a coherent, systematic progression of learning that introduces part paradigms and then practises grammar features in pairs of different meanings with a focus on function and meaning in activities that make the grammar 'task essential', in all modes and modalities. Our SOW are planned to cover the full grammar content of the GCSE. Teachers can see the grammar progression and coverage on the SOW for each language, including when each of the grammar features are revisited.	Learners tend to pay attention to a limited number of new features at any one time (Robinson, 2003; VanPatten, 2004). There is also very strong evidence that grammar systems, such as verb inflections, are not learned linearly, in neat, holistic packages (such as "present tense '-ar', '-er' and '-ir'; then perfect tense; then imperfect tense), rather morphological systems emerge gradually and this emergence can depend on difficulty of the grammar system in question (e.g., difficulty, regularity, frequency) (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2019). Input (listening and reading) practice for grammar should make understanding the meaning of the feature *task-essential* (Marsden & Chen, 2011; VanPatten, 2002)
SSCs pt. 24	The requirements for knowledge about sound-symbol correspondences (SSCs) are the same for both foundation and higher tiers	Confidence in understanding and producing the key Sound Symbol Correspondences (SSCs) is established by the end of KS3. Revisiting and practising these SSCs is built into all of our weekly lessons.	There is "a need for regular, ongoing practice in FL phonological decoding (converting print to sound)" (Porter 2020, 667)

Appendix 1: grammar content	For some grammatical features… items are given that fall on the borderline between being categorised as 'grammar' or 'lexicon' – in all such cases, these items must *also* be listed in the Vocabulary List. The Vocabulary List must also specify frequent highly irregular forms, within a grammatical subsystem (i.e., subparts of paradigms where only some forms are irregular).	High frequency irregular features of grammar are taught (and assessed in the NCELP tests) as though they are vocabulary items, introduced in learning homeworks and practised in classroom activities as part of the lexicon and so are included in our vocabulary lists.	"A word that is recognised as a word in a language, but where nothing more is known about it, has no links and is not networked. Once a meaning is attached to that form and some idea is gained as to how the word can be used, then it develops links with other words and begins to network and it does not matter whether these are grammatical or associational or collocational links. Words, which have this network of links around them can be said to be known more deeply than those, which are not known in this way" (Milton 2013, 61; Meara and Wolter 2004). Frequency and (ir)regularity affect how we store and access words, with words with irregular morphology often being stored 'holistically'. Holistic storage is particularly more likely among L2 learners (see Marslen-Wilson 2007 and Ciaccio & Clahsen, 2020 for useful reviews/an example study)
Annex A/B/C: Grammar and SSC content French /	Detailed list of grammar and SSC content for each language	The grammar spine is driven by the need to connect grammar to its meaning. NCELP resources give students plenty of practice in experiencing how small changes in sounds and spelling (grammar) radically change the meaning. Although the grammar spine is not	"Explicit learning processes are a necessary condition for achieving a high degree of proficiency in the L2 … there is, in fact, a place for systematic and extended practice of rules in the teaching curriculum" (Rebuschat on

Peter Watson / Emma Marsden

UNIVERSITY of York

German / Spanish		driven by a need to cover full traditional 'paradigms' all at once (e.g., full sets of verb, article or adjectival agreements), in its *totality* the KS3 grammar spine covers (and the KS4 spine will cover) all of the features for persons, subjects, tenses, and aspectual functions ('complete' versus 'ongoing'), and a range of key syntax (word order and relations between words), as specified in the revised Subject Content. NCELP SOW systematically ensures that these features are all covered and revisited. Details can be checked against the French, German and Spanish SOW to see where the grammar or SSC feature is covered and practised. The SSC content is covered by the end of KS3.	DeKeyser 2013, 4). "The learning environment is very important: explicit language instruction leads to explicit language knowledge … Relying on explicit knowledge and benefitting from explicit instruction [are] hallmarks of classroom L learning at any age" (Lichtman 2016, 728)

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