

WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre and Milne's High School



SCILT's Business Language Champions programme helps schools and businesses to build exciting and sustainable partnerships that equip young people with the international communication and employability skills they need for their future careers.

Background

Milne's High School is a small, six year comprehensive school located in the town of Fochabers. The school serves the community of Fochabers, Mosstodloch, Lhanbryde, Garmouth, Spey Bay, Kingston and Urquhart as well as a number of smaller inland communities. The school roll is presently around 460.

At Milne's High School, learners study French from S1 to S6 and have the opportunity of studying for a full range of qualifications from National 4 to Advanced Higher. The school also offers the same range of courses in German. A number of S6 pupils will do the [Open University Young Applicants in Schools](#) (YASS) modules in Spanish, Italian and Mandarin next session.

For more information about the school, visit [Milne's High School website](#).

Aims

The project with WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre gives the young people in S2 a real and engaging context for their learning and provides them with an insight into the world of work. It shows them how the learning of a language can enhance their career prospects within their own local community, as well as developing their skills for learning, life and work.

Partners

SCILT and the Modern Languages Department at Milne's High School worked in partnership with the staff at the WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre in Spey Bay.

The WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre

The WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre is located on the edge of a beautiful nature reserve. It features an exhibition about the Moray Firth, Dolphins and Local Wildlife. There are frequent sightings of dolphins, seals, otters, osprey and wildfowl. The centre offers guided tours of the UK's largest remaining Icehouse building and also beautiful guided walks along the River Spey.

The centre attracts tourists from various countries and they do not always speak English well. Linking with the centre showed that languages are necessary in the tourism industry.

Project

The partners worked together to devise a project which would see pupils teaching café staff in the centre French so that they could interact with French visitors in their own language. Pupils study the topic of food and drink in S2, providing an excellent context for this challenge, which would enhance teaching and learning in the S2 curriculum.

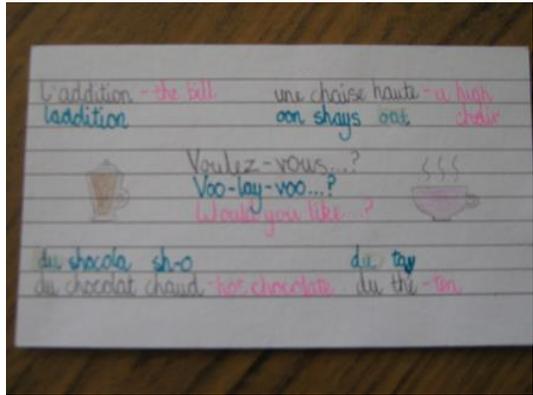
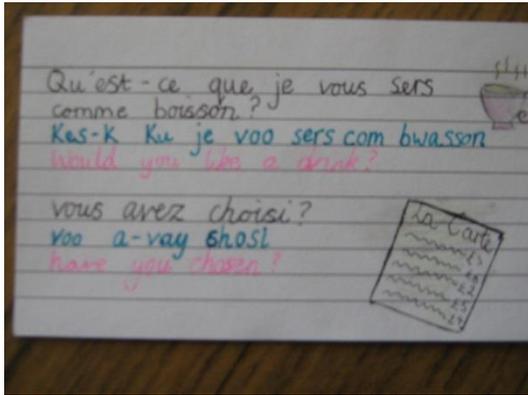
The Centre Co-ordinator from the WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre visited the school to speak to all S2 classes. The pupils learned that the WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre is a world-leading charity for whales and dolphins, and that the centre recruits seven new members of staff every year, favouring applicants with additional language skills. This is because of the range of people who visit the centre. When staff can speak to them in their own language it makes them feel welcome, helps the staff relate to the customers and improves the overall visitor experience.

The pupils responded very positively to this message. They were particularly impressed by the different opportunities available locally for those with knowledge of French, and by the relevance of language learning within their community.

Cue Cards

WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre set pupils the challenge of creating 'cue cards to' support café staff to greet customers and explain items from the menu in French. Pupils worked in teams and enjoyed the opportunity to be creative with their choice of language and cue card design.

Higher French pupils judged the presentations and decided on 13 finalists. These finalists visited WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre and presented their cue cards to café staff, using this opportunity to teach them staff basic French phrases.



The pupils who produced the best phrases and training were selected as the winners. All finalists received a certificate from the centre, and the winning group won afternoon tea in the café.



Impact

Learners enjoyed the experience. The project made the real-life context for their topic on food and drink more engaging and relevant. S2 pupils particularly liked the involvement of Higher French students.

The staff at Milne's High School thought the project was a great opportunity for the learners to see the relevance of learning French for the world of work. Pupil feedback was very positive, and staff agreed that the project had been very worthwhile.

Next steps

The staff at Milne's High School would like to develop this project for the next session. The principal teacher is already looking at pupil feedback and other evidence to identify areas for improvement. These include evolving the presentation element of the project so that pupils will teach café staff a short lesson rather than present their cue cards.

The staff at WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre also benefited from the project and are keen to continue working with the school.

"All of the staff and residential volunteers... thought the pupils did very well and it was obvious that they had given a lot of thought to their phrases. Their research on French social culture was also good and they were able to give the café staff an idea of what to expect if we have French visitors dining in the café. The café staff also liked the fact that the winning group helped them with the pronunciation of the relevant phrases and also gave them a few funny ones too!" (WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre Co-ordinator)