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**Below is a selected update from programmes and opportunities available through British Council. More detail on the full range of opportunities can be found at [schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org](http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org)**

### **Erasmus+**

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For 2018, €30m will be available to UK schools to apply for Erasmus+ activities, compared to €21m in 2017. This provides a significant opportunity for many more schools to access Erasmus+ funding for a range of international activities that can develop key skills in both teachers and pupils, enhance the curriculum, and support education policy priorities.

Also in 2018 is the introduction of **School Exchange Partnerships** to the Erasmus+ programme. Supported by a 40% increase in funding and a simpler application process, schools will be able to run short-term exchanges of pupils, enabling many more pupils to benefit from an international experience. Pupils of any age can visit another country for as little as three days at a time, and pupils aged over fourteen can stay for up to a year. The funding can also be used to support teacher exchanges between schools from different European countries. Read more about this exciting new opportunity in the Erasmus+ November [school blog](#).

The deadline to apply for Erasmus+ funding to take part in school partnerships is **21 March 11am (UK time)** and the application forms are available on our website. If you would like some last minute help with your application, we have a few places left on our one-to-one support calls in early March, so [book your place](#) today! We would encourage everyone planning to apply to read our recent blog on [tops tips to applying](#) and look out for our new Key Action 2 Application Guidance.

The EC has also produced a new handy [schools leaflet](#) that you may find helpful.

**Brexit** - The UK Government has made clear that it values international exchanges and has stated publicly that the United Kingdom is committed to continuing full participation in the Erasmus+ programme up until we leave the European Union. UK organisations wishing to apply for funding in 2018 should prepare for participation as usual ahead of the 2018 application deadlines. Successful Erasmus+ applications which are submitted while the UK is still a Member State, even if they are not approved until after we leave, can continue beyond the point of exit. To keep up to date with the latest information please see [www.erasmusplus.org.uk/brexit-update](http://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/brexit-update) or [sign up to our newsletter](#).

### **eTwinning**

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Applications are now open for teachers of pupils aged 3-19 across a range of subject areas to attend a fully-funded 2-3 day professional development workshop in Turkey, Latvia, Norway and Armenia. These events are designed to facilitate new eTwinning projects through partner-finding and project planning activities. Workshop themes and subject areas are varied, spanning cultural diversity to SEN and the environment. More details can be found [here](#).

UK teachers who sign up to eTwinning before 31 March 2018 will receive eTwinning wall maps, homework and passport challenges for the whole class and an eTwinning webcam cover via post. The resources contain pre-prepared, cross-curricular homework challenges spanning multiple levels, all designed to help you kick-start your first international project with eTwinning!

### **Connecting Classrooms**

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There are a number of fully-funded Connecting Classrooms Professional Development courses starting in spring. The GTCs-accredited course, run in partnership with Moray House School of Education, focuses on embedding the teaching of Learning for Sustainability and critical thinking & problem solving across the curriculum. Forthcoming course dates are as follows:

Fully online course – 16 March-26 May 2018  
Face-to-face course, Glasgow – 24 March-  
Fully online course – 20 April 2018-29 June 2018

Find out more and sign up [here](#)

Teachers and pupils from Williamston Primary and Penicuik High School feature in a new Connecting Classrooms video. Hear about how Connecting classrooms is helping them to develop their classroom practice and share ideas with like-minded teachers all over the world [here](#).

In February, teachers and school leaders from 17 schools across Scotland travelled overseas to meet their partner schools as part of the Connecting Classrooms programme. The Scottish schools visited partners in Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Jordan and India to compare and exchange knowledge and techniques on embedding core skills in the classroom. Follow their journeys on Twitter under #connectingclassrooms

## **Modern Language Assistants**

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Applications to host a language assistant for the 2018/19 academic year are now open. **Apply Now!** We encourage local authorities and schools to think creatively in how they use and allocate their MLAs to get the maximum benefit and can offer advice and guidance to individual schools, clusters and authorities. In terms of funding for MLAs, both 1+2 and PEF funding can be used to meet the costs of a classroom assistant. Get in touch at [languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org](mailto:languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org)

Here are a few ways modern language assistants can be of use to pupils in your schools.

### **1. A cultural resource**

Language assistants can share experiences and stories of life in the country where the target language is spoken. By inviting students to compare their experience of life in the UK with that of the target-language country, modern language assistants can play a significant role in giving students an understanding of other cultures.

### **2. A way to help disadvantaged pupils**

Modern language assistants can lead small groups or one-to-one sessions, on behalf of the teacher, with disadvantaged pupils who lack confidence with languages. For students who do not have the opportunity to go on holiday in a foreign country, a language assistant might be the first chance for them to talk to a native speaker and close an opportunity gap with more well-off peers. Use of MLAs in a primary setting or broad general education phase can be particularly impactful.

### **3. A source of spontaneity**

The ability to speak with confidence is emphasised in the [curriculum](#). However, opportunities for spontaneous talk in the classroom are not always available. Other than helping pupils produce, prepare and practise dialogues, modern language assistants can help students participate in more authentic exchanges. These exchanges mean that students get to use the target language for real communicative ends and build their speaking confidence in the process. At secondary level, you can also use modern language assistants for mock interviews.

### **4. A source of creativity**

A lot of educators are talking about the **WAGOLL** technique (What A Good One Looks Like) of using example texts for speaking and writing that helps pupils identify good features of a text and compare it to their own. Language assistants are a fantastic source of WAGOLL material. They can write and record tailored, up-to-date listening materials and find authentic target language material (for example on YouTube) of the type that interests young people.

### **5. A source of continuing professional development**

Contact with modern language assistants is not just valuable for students, but also for teachers and heads of department. As staff have limited opportunities for conversation in another language, language assistants can help maintain teachers' fluency and refresh their vocabulary. They can also help staff develop their knowledge and understanding of the country where the target language is spoken. Becoming a mentor for an MLA in school can also help teachers gain valuable experience in mentoring.

## **Chinese New Year resource pack**

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The 'Year of the Dog' primary schools pack is available to download for free on the British Council's Schools Online site here: <https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/classroom-resources/list/year-dog-primary-teaching-resource>

Highlights include a virtual dog 'Dumpling' the pug who encourages young learners to try out basic words in Mandarin by responding to voice commands via an interactive website.

