

## Strengthening links to literacy across languages: A professional learning partnership

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| <b>Authority:</b>         | <b>West Lothian Council</b>                                       |
| <b>Case Study Focus:</b>  | <b>Strengthening links to literacy across languages</b>           |
| <b>Establishments:</b>    | <b>Southdale Primary, Springfield Primary, Windyknowe Primary</b> |
| <b>Learners' stage/s:</b> | <b>All stages</b>   |

### Introduction

In 2018 SCILT was approached by the 1+2 Development Officer and QIO with responsibility for languages in West Lothian Council. They had identified the need to make connections between literacy learning and learning additional languages at primary level. The aim was to demonstrate how skills and activities could be transferable in learning both English and additional languages. In doing so primary teachers, children and their families would come to a deeper understanding of how learning and using more than one language supports the development of literacy skills across the board, including in a child's home language. The idea was to win hearts and minds among primary teachers and families, by making explicit connections between literacy skills development in home and taught languages. Following meetings over several months, it was decided to undertake a Professional Learning Partnership (PLP). PLPs are a means of challenging thinking, considering practice and bringing about improvement through collaborative and enquiring approaches. Schools, clusters and local authorities work with a SCILT Professional Development Officer and other relevant partners over an extended period of time - typically an academic session - to improve an aspect of learning and teaching that schools have identified as requiring development.

[Listen to Lynne Jones](#), SCILT Professional Development Officer explain what a Professional Learning Partnership is.

Year 1 of this particular PLP was 2018-19, during which a group of seventeen primary teachers from different schools met six times. The group were supported by the authority 1+2 Development Officer and QIO with responsibility for languages, the WLC Literacy Development Officer, WLC Language Centre Lead, SCILT Director and one SCILT Professional Development Officer. [PLP Project Outline](#).

In a mix of face-to-face and virtual sessions, together partners explored and narrowed down:

- the focus of the approach, activity or resource that each of the schools use
- who would be involved – pupils, colleagues, families
- the intended outcomes and what success criteria would be
- what evidence would be gathered/reviewed
- the timeframe for the process and sharing

Teachers from schools with a similar focus were encouraged to buddy up, communicate and share with each other in and between the PLP catch-up meetings. Of the original eleven schools that joined the project, the following primary schools completed the collaborative development process Howden St Andrew's PS, Linlithgow PS, Southdale PS, Springfield PS, St John Ogilvie's PS, St Mary's PS (Bathgate), St Ninian's PS, Windyknowe PS and Westfield PS.

Explore some examples of the school project summary documents below.

- [Example 1](#): P5 transferable storytelling skills in English and L2
- [Example 2](#): P7 Word Boost in Spanish and English
- [Example 3](#): whole school L2 phrase of the fortnight, shared with families
- [Example 4](#): a daily menu of short French activities in P1 and P3

The Year 1 PLP experiences were shared by the teachers or by the 1+2 Development Officer on their behalf at the annual WLC 1+2 Conference for lead language learners in May 2019.

The stories shared were well received by colleagues across the authority.

← **Tweet**



**Lynne SCILT** @Lynne\_SCILT · 24 May 2019

Fab @1plus2\_WLC Primary #PLP participants leading conversations at #wl1plus2conf19 sharing their projects aimed at 'Developing literacy skills across languages' #fiveaday #wordboost #readingintargetlanguage & more



↻ 2

♥ 7



Then, in Term 1 2019-20, the new local authority 1+2 Development Officer, who had been involved the previous year as a teacher and cluster languages lead, proposed an extension to the PLP that would build on learning from Year 1.

In Year 1, schools worked on self-contained projects under the umbrella theme of strengthening literacy skills across languages. In Year 2, schools closely collaborated on one project that developed reading and performance skills in the target language with an element of pupil leadership.

Three of the schools involved in Year 1 worked together in the Year 2 project. French was the additional language taught in all three. This time, to establish parameters from the outset, a [PLP agreement document](#) was drawn up between all partners outlining the roles, responsibilities that each partner could commit. This became a working document that was revisited and amended as necessary during the project.

## Background

The schools involved in Year 2 of the Strengthening links to literacy across languages PLP were:



### Southdale Primary School and Early Learning Centre

Southdale Primary School is a mainstream, non-denominational primary school situated on the outskirts of Armadale that opened in 2016. The school roll in 2020-21 was 227 children in P1-7 and 68 children in the Early Learning Centre.

At Southdale, literacy, including Modern Languages, is pursued through an integrated programme of work involving listening, talking, writing, and reading. More broadly, children are provided with planned experiences across all levels to develop and demonstrate a variety of skills for learning, life and work. These skills and attributes should provide them with a sound basis for their development as lifelong learners in their adult, social and working lives. For example, there are opportunities for children to take on additional responsibilities these include Buddies, 1+2 Language Ambassadors, Monitors, House Captains and Digital Leaders.



### Springfield Primary School and Bonnytown Nursery

Springfield Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the historic town of Linlithgow. The school was opened in 1981 and accommodates 14 mainstream primary classes. The school roll in 2020-21 was 329 with 60 children in the Early Learning Centre. Under the Scottish Government's "1+2 Languages" programme children

learn French from P1 to P7 and Spanish from P5 to P7. These additional languages link into the programme of study at Linlithgow Academy.



### Windyknowe Primary School and Early Learning Centre

Windyknowe Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the community of both Bathgate and Armadale and is part of the Armadale Academy cluster. In 2020-21 the school roll was 403 pupils with 78 children in the nursery. The school handbook recognises that:

*"Today's children are growing up in a multilingual world and the ability to communicate effectively in social academic and commercial settings is crucial if they are to play their full part as global citizens."*

## Implementation

### ← Tweet



**Lynne SCILT** @Lynne\_SCILT · 13 Nov 2019

Tidying up my notes from v exciting meeting yesterday with @1plus2\_WLC colleagues from @SpringfieldBonn @windyknoweps & @southdaleps about newest #ProfessionalLearningPartnership looking to develop pupils' skills in reading stories and performing drama across languages. ❤️ #PLPs



In this section of the case study, Zoe Gordon, 1+2 Development Officer West Lothian Council outlines the implementation of the second phase of the PLP.

Following on from successful literacy across languages projects with SCILT in session 2018/19 we decided to pursue part 2 of our project.

A member of staff from each of the three schools came together to brainstorm the idea of using literacy across languages with a familiar story.

We became "les trois petits cochons" and began our journey. Watch the [introductory video](#) to find out more.

We started by creating a four lesson sequence at Early, First and Second Level. Each school took the lead in one stage whilst collaborating on the content to ensure progressive and relevant resources. Our next stage was the creation of the resources to support the lessons, these were multi-sensory, easy to follow and easy to prepare. The last piece in the puzzle

was to create our version of “Les trois petits cochons” story which would be performed as a play in lesson four.

We were advised in our script development and drama activities by Marion Geoffray, the Director/Founder of [Theatre sans Accents](#), a bilingual theatre company based in Edinburgh.

In early March 2020 we were very lucky to be able to deliver a cross-school French drama day at Southdale PS. Twenty four children from P4-P7 in the three schools joined together and took part in French activities culminating in a fabulous French performance of "les trois petits cochons". We practised acting our scenes using such techniques as Freeze Frame. We used three people – one from each school - to play each part which helped when learning vocabulary and with confidence. It was a wonderful experience for the children and the teachers to share and collaborate with other schools in our authority.

← **Tweet**



**Lynne SCILT** @Lynne\_SCILT · Mar 2, 2020

☀️ Acting & directing workshops with pupils from Southdale PS, Windyknowe PS & Springfield PS as part of the newest @1plus2\_WLC @scottishcilt @TheatreSAccents Professional Learning Partnership #PLP #literacyacrosslanguages #reading #performance 📖🎭



**Southdale Primary School and ELC** @southdaleps · Mar 2, 2020

Our French ambassadors have teamed up with Windyknowe PS and @SpringfieldBonn to make a production of “Les Trois Petits Cochons” (the 3 Little Pigs). They had so much fun learning with each other and we look forward to seeing the performances! @1plus2\_WLC @scottishcilt



In the Summer term 2020 there would have been a performance within our own schools and a roll out of the resources. We had also planned a performance by the original three schools to an audience of invited guests at a national languages forum. Unfortunately, due to lockdown, we were unable to complete these steps. However, we did manage to make a socially distanced recording that you can get a sneaky peek of [here](#).

## Impact

Although lockdown in March 2020 and subsequent public health restrictions curtailed the project, impact from this creative collaboration was evident at various levels.

For example, pupils said:

*“It was fun to do drama in French instead of English and I learnt lots of French too.”*

*“I liked how there were different schools. I liked how we all got a part and how we all worked together for the performance.”*

*“I enjoyed the chance to meet new people and to learn more French.”*

*“I liked how the people from the different schools got together to make the play. I learned lots of new French words.”*

*“I liked meeting new people and I liked the song. It was very funny.”*

Listen to what teachers and pupils involved had to say about their involvement:

### [Pupil feedback](#)

### [Teacher feedback](#)

The impact on SCILT has been notable too. Having witnessed the teachers sharing their projects with colleagues at the local authority showcase at the end of Year 1, SCILT has increased its own knowledge exchange repertoire. SCILT regularly invites class-based teachers to co-lead and contribute to knowledge exchange activities and innovative [bitesize/drop-in professional learning sessions](#) in partnership with Professional Development Officers.

From the first year of the project in 2018, partners were communicating and collaborating via MS Teams beyond the face-to-face sessions. Proving, even in pre-pandemic times, that it was possible to plan and carry out meaningful partnership work remotely. *‘Without this experience, I doubt I would have been so comfortable with the whole pivot to online working to the extent that I was, when it became unavoidable due to lockdown.’* explained one SCILT Professional Development Officer.

Since contributing to this project, Theatre sans accents has developed new activities for primary aged children, including their Easter Outdoor French Holiday Camp and My French Wee Box.

## Next Steps

### Schools

- Roll the project out within their own setting using the original P4-7 pupils to lead where possible.
- Create a community performance for parents and members of the local community.

### West Lothian 1+2 Team

- Arrange to share a performance by pupils beyond the authority.
- Share project resources and offer professional learning to local authority, RIC and other colleagues on request.

### SCILT

- In 2021-22 support a new Professional Learning Partnership involving creative puppetry and storytelling.

## Resources

For more ideas on drama-based language learning pedagogies see [All the World is Our Stage](#) and [Multilingual Performances Project](#), both funded by the [Creative Multilingualism](#) research programme run from the University of Oxford.

[Check out this Sway](#) for the Interdisciplinary French/STEM/Outdoor ideas for Early, First and Second level learning developed by the teachers at Southdale, Springfield and Windyknowe Primary Schools during the second year of the project.

For more information about the Strengthening literacy across languages PLP, please contact [scilt@strath.ac.uk](mailto:scilt@strath.ac.uk) putting 'Strengthening Literacy PLP' in the subject line.