

# Scotland's National Centre for Languages Newsletter



Languages for a  
sustainable world  
#LWS24



# Welcome to the SCILT newsletter

## Editorial

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2024 edition of the SCILT Newsletter!

We are delighted to share the latest developments, insights and success stories from the world of language education.

This edition highlights the innovative approaches and remarkable resilience demonstrated by educators and learners alike. It includes inspiring examples of how language learning can adapt and thrive, even in challenging circumstances.

**Language initiatives:** Discover creative projects making waves in our schools and communities. From the learning of languages such as Polish and Arabic to indigenous ones such as Gaelic and BSL, these stories showcase the transformative power of language education.

**Educator experiences:** Hear directly from teachers who are pioneering new methods and strategies to engage students in language learning. Be inspired by the trauma-informed work being undertaken with vulnerable young people who have experienced conflict and displacement. Be motivated by learners demonstrating their love of languages through drama, art and poetry.

**Student success stories:** Celebrate the achievements of students who have excelled in their language studies. Their dedication and passion remind us of the importance of fostering a love for languages from a young age. I promise you will be moved by the story of Bahadar, who arrived unaccompanied in Scotland from Afghanistan aged 11. In 2018 he received a "highly commended" in SCILT's Mother Tongue, Other Tongue competition. Written in Pashto, his poem was entitled Man of the Match. Please read on to find out just how prophetic this was to be for young Bahadar...

**Research-informed practice:** Develop your understanding of multilingual approaches and find out about free materials developed by SCILT with researchers and teacher educators at the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde.

As we navigate the evolving educational landscape, the importance of languages cannot be overstated. They are not only tools for communication but also gateways to understanding different cultures, fostering empathy, and broadening our global perspectives. At SCILT, we remain committed to supporting educators and learners on their linguistic journeys.

We hope this newsletter serves as a source of inspiration, information, and connection for you. Thank you for your continued dedication to promoting language learning. Together, we can create a future where every young person can become a confident and competent communicator, able to flourish in a globally interdependent world.



Fhiona Mackay, Director

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Languages beyond school

At the University of Strathclyde, SCILT has a number of partnerships with key organisations in Scotland, UK and further afield.



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Disclaimer - SCILT's newsletter is published twice a year and contains contributions from schools, local authorities and cultural organisations. It provides a forum for contributors to share some of the interesting work being carried out by the languages community across Scotland. SCILT, however, does not necessarily endorse or promote the practice described in these pages.

# SCILT News

## Arabic: a whole new world!

As the fifth most spoken language in the world, Arabic language and cultures play a key role on the international stage. The Arab world has had an indelible influence on areas of civilisation such as language and literature, mathematics and numbers, food, art and architecture. Opening the door to the world of Arabic allows children and young people to understand these connections and influences more clearly and see how interconnected we are.

Since the launch of Discovering the World of Arabic in 2020-21, our courses have adapted and grown, becoming a regular feature of the curriculum in several Scottish primary and secondary schools. Our team of Arabic teachers has grown, too, and we are now well-placed to offer online Arabic classes to schools at bespoke times. For primary classes, this allows classes to learn one-to-one with their teacher, and the work that they have been producing shows how engaged they have been in their Arabic learning. For secondary schools,

holding lessons within dedicated slots in each school's timetable has obvious practical advantages, which makes this opportunity more easily viable for more schools.

Lessons at beginner level cover topics such as greetings and introductions, family, hometown, food and daily routine, all with a core focus on communicative competence. Woven into these topics is a flavour of the rich diversity of Arab countries, cultures and traditions that make this language such a fascinating one to learn.

As we move into the fifth year of our partnership with Qatar Foundation International, we now offer:

- Arabic as L3 for primary schools (10 weeks)
- short courses for secondary learners in S1-3 and S4-6 (8 weeks)
- long courses for secondary learners in S1-3 and S4-6 (September to March)

We also offer class teachers a 'Taste of Arabic'. This short series of lessons is designed for classroom practitioners whose classes have signed up to Discovering the World of Arabic 2024-25 to gain first-hand experience of how the online classes run – and so that they can astonish their class with their Arabic knowledge from the word 'go'!

Interested state schools can sign up for free by the end of April each year and there is a dedicated page [on our website](#) with an overview of this programme.

**Suzanne Ritchie, SCILT**

## Discovering the World of Arabic

Primary and secondary courses





# Getting creative with languages: free resource now available

Are you looking for a free resource that explores multilingualism and art? Then this might be the news you've been waiting for!

It has been a busy time for the Multilingual Approaches through Art (MtA) team as we've been developing a new resource: the MtA activity pack. This colourful and creative pack is part of the MtA project, funded by the Glasgow Knowledge Exchange Fund, which is a collaboration between SCILT, University of Glasgow, Bilingualism Matters and the University of Strathclyde. Teachers who have been involved in the MtA project have also contributed to the activity pack and we thank them hugely for their contributions.

The newly published pack provides background information about the MtA project and includes some details about adopting creative practices to support language learning and multilingualism



in the classroom. What's more, you can read feedback from teachers who participated in the MtA project and hear directly about their experiences in trying out art-based activities with languages in their school.

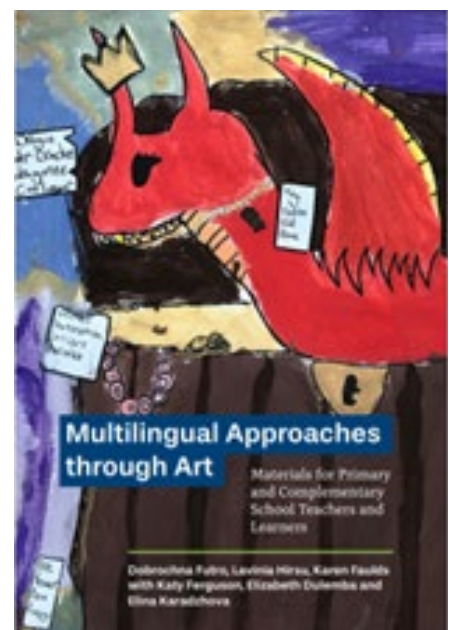
What else is included in the MtA pack? Well, we are pleased to share a series of 10 activity cards that explore language learning in fun, engaging and creative

ways. All the activities included have been tried and tested by teachers and educators in a variety of contexts and have proven to be interesting and motivating for learners. Each activity card contains a descriptor, a simple to follow step-by-step guide and a list of resources required.

So, whether it's creating an exquisite corpse in a group or producing an individual language portrait, there is a variety of activities to choose from, including some examples of practice too. The MtA resource aligns with the Curriculum for Excellence and for each activity, Es and Os are included at first and second level. Some of the activities can be tailored to suit other levels and teachers have the freedom to adapt an activity depending on the age and stage of their learners.

Copies of the [Multilingual Approaches through Art activity pack](#) are available to download for free now.

Karen Faulds, SCILT



## Krak(ów)ing on with Polish

Earlier this year, we welcomed a new group of primary teachers to the revamped 'Polish for teachers: an introduction to Polish language' course. More recently, during Languages Week Scotland 2024, we launched the updated version of the online teaching resource 'Ten Steps to Polish'. In both cases, SCILT has worked in collaboration with the Polish Social and Educational Society in Glasgow and has been supported by the Polish Consulate in Edinburgh.

We had a good response to the 'Polish for teachers: an introduction to Polish language' course and had teachers joining us from as far north as Shetland, all the way down to Renfrewshire. Over a 6-week period, the group met once a week to attend the online class. The lessons were expertly delivered by Ania Trusewicz, who has experience teaching Polish to adult learners at the Sikorski Club in Glasgow. In her lessons with teachers, Ania ensured that the classes were interactive and included

many opportunities for participants to practise speaking Polish. One teacher commented: "I enjoyed the ability to speak immediately in Polish with the focus on saying what we could, rather than what we couldn't say yet."

To consolidate the learning, Ania created sound files for each lesson so that the participating teachers could practise their Polish in between lessons. One participating teacher said that "hearing the Polish language and having the slides with audio available to recap what was covered in the lesson was so helpful". Thinking to the future, one of the teachers is keen to encourage more primary teachers to teach Polish as an L3, certainly within her school, and is keen to support them in their learning journey.

During Languages Week Scotland, we published the updated version of 'Ten Steps to Polish'. Although the format and lesson structure remain broadly the same, Ania has created new video

and audio files to aid pronunciation, and these have been included in the resource. We hope you find these new files a good addition to the resource, which is available to download for free on the [SCILT website](#).

If you plan to use or have used the resource in any way, please do share some feedback with us by dropping an email to [SCILT](#). We'd love to hear what you think! Dziękuję!

**Karen Faulds, SCILT**



## Languages, life and DYW Live

You probably know DYW as Developing the Young Workforce, helping children and young people develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the world of work. But do you know what makes DYW Live?

DYW Live provides live online learning that supports learners' development of those DYW employability skills, career pathways and industry connections. It brings industry experts and employers to schools via live and online sessions, beaming directly to classrooms and devices via eSgoil, the national e-learning service.

Following the recent success of SCILT DYW Live workshops for secondary pupils, the primary team felt it was time to get with the DYW Live programme this year. First, we invited an accomplished practitioner to share their

French-infused employability focused practice in an online CLPL input for primary teachers.

Second, we developed a brand new online workshop for primary pupils. In November, March and May, we beamed into primary classrooms up and down the country. Pupils took part in interactive workshops featuring astronauts that were also frogs and bees, alongside multilingual chefs, multilingual website designers, multilingual tour guides, multilingual engineers, multilingual ambulance dispatchers, multilingual doctors and multilingual fashion retailers. In our first DYW Live year, these three workshops actively encouraged almost 900 pupils to think about how all the languages in their repertoire make an important facet of the skillset and talent they possess right now, and that will serve them well in their community and later working life.

**DYW | Live**   
Skills | Employability | Pathways

A full one hundred percent of post-workshop evaluations received at the time of writing indicated all parts of the workshop were 'relevant' or 'highly relevant' to P4-7 pupils, with one teacher adding that the "children enjoyed interacting with the questions".

This enjoyable addition to our outreach work will continue next academic year. Come autumn 2024 keep an eye on eSgoil and SCILT social media for further details about the languages branch of the DYW Live offer in 2024-25, and reserve your place promptly before they disappear.

**Lynne Jones, SCILT**



**Sheila Gallacher, SCILT**

P7-S1. East Fulton Primary School (Pashto)

## Open Access for all



Our Primary Open Access workshops resumed in February, and we began the spring series with ‘An introduction to multilingual approaches to primary pedagogy’. We were delighted to welcome guest presenter Kirsten Barrett, EAL teacher at St Maria Goretti Primary in Glasgow and Chairperson of SATEAL to share her experience with attendees. Kirsten discussed the many ways in which she has supported bi/multilingual children over the years and shared some examples of the work she has done in this regard. Kirsten invited participants to share what languages were used by pupils in their classes and it was interesting to see the range of languages on display during this activity. It really did highlight the linguistic diversity in so many classrooms across the country.

March saw us launch into target language phonics, exploring their importance and relevance in language learning. This theme always raises so much thought and discussion amongst practitioners from all sectors and this workshop proved no different! Lots of ideas were shared and we hope that practitioners will try some of these out with their learners. Taking languages outdoors was the theme of April’s workshop. This new addition to the Open Access menu was a popular one, with a record number of participants registered to attend. Once again, we were delighted to welcome guest presenters to lead this event: Aimee Bainbridge, DHT at Frogston Primary and our very own Suzanne Ritchie from SCILT. Together they shared stories of firepits, forests and French, and led a jam-packed session which we hope left attendees feeling inspired and motivated to take the plunge and get outdoors with language learning.

At the end of May, we look forward to hosting our Early Years and Primary Languages Show & Tell event. This will be an opportunity for practitioners to share a nugget of practice around language learning or share a resource that has worked well. It can be something as small as an inspiring book or even a song, and practitioners can choose to present for 3 or 7 minutes.

We are looking forward to welcoming everyone to this celebratory online event on the 28 May and there is still time to [register to attend](#) if you would like to join us.

**Karen Faulds, SCILT**

## Scottish Languages Employability Award

The latest round of Scottish Languages Employability Award (SLEA) verification just before Christmas saw five submissions in total. These were:

- two bronze (Breadalbane Academy and George Heriot’s School)
- three gold (Balfron High, Beeslack Community High and Chryston High)

Huge congratulations to all our winners! Each of these submissions featured examples of really interesting projects with excellent business partners, from training baristas to filmmaking, science-themed work in languages to leading language learning in the primary school, and all sorts of career-focused inputs along the way. You can read all about their fantastic work on our [website](#).

The handbook and application form are also on our [website](#) – if you read these submissions and feel inspired, why not consider your own project? This could be for the original SLEA, or the new SLEA Local, which provides a model for in-school events organised at a wider local level by teachers, DYW officers or cluster leads and recognises and rewards employability-focused partnerships at this level. Its key aim is to encourage and support the development of partnership activities involving a number of schools within a local area or network.

The new [SLEA Green](#), focusing on partnerships with a global citizenship/sustainability focus, recently launched during our Green focus week around Earth Day 2024. If you have, or would like to develop, a project with a third sector organisation or similar then this could be the award for you! If you would be interested in being a pilot school for this award then please contact [Sheena Bell](#).

We are looking forward to continuing to develop our partnership award programme further next session, and have several exciting projects planned – watch this space!

**Sheena Bell, SCILT**



**SCOTTISH  
LANGUAGES  
EMPLOYABILITY  
AWARD**

DUAIS FASTADH  
CÀNAINÈAN NA H-ALBA



**SCOTTISH  
LANGUAGES  
EMPLOYABILITY  
AWARD**

DUAIS FASTADH  
CÀNAINÈAN NA H-ALBA  
GREEN - UAINÈ



**SCOTTISH  
LANGUAGES  
EMPLOYABILITY  
AWARD**

DUAIS FASTADH  
CÀNAINÈAN NA H-ALBA  
LOCAL - IONADAIL

## Sign here!



This year our online British Sign Language (BSL) classes resumed with a brand new teaching team: Emma McGowan and Jill Gallacher. Emma is an experienced BSL tutor who has worked with the National Deaf Children's Society as a Family Sign Language tutor. Jill is an experienced interpreter who interprets for Emma when delivering the weekly BSL online lessons. They really do make a fantastic team and we're delighted to have them on board.

Once again, we had a huge response to our BSL offer from so many schools across the country. Places were limited so it was a difficult task to select a small group of schools. The block of online classes began in January and ran until the end of March. The classes took place weekly on MS Teams with consolidation materials accessible to class teachers on SharePoint. The first lessons focused on deaf awareness where pupils got to learn more about hearing aids and cochlear implants. They were also introduced to fingerspelling and learned to sign the alphabet. By the end of the lesson, they were able to greet each other using BSL and sign their own name. Throughout the learning block, pupils covered a variety of topics such as colours, emotions, numbers, and time. Emma always finished off each lesson with a story that linked to the lesson's theme, and this allowed the pupils to consolidate their learning in a fun and engaging manner. The pupils have made so much progress in a short space of time and it's wonderful to witness. Emma said: "I really enjoy teaching a variety of schools and it is nice to see the children sign. Even if one person can sign to a deaf person this would make a difference."

We hope to be able to offer further online BSL classes in the new term so keep an eye out for news in SCILT's weekly bulletin for further information.

**Karen Faulds, SCILT**

## Tin for Ten

A symbol of strength and resilience, tin is the traditional symbol for a tenth anniversary. With 2024 marking a decade of Scotland's Languages Leadership Programme (SLLP), now is the perfect time to celebrate the ongoing strength of this flagship programme from SCILT and Education Scotland.

According to the GTCS, the programme is "a really outward facing professional learning offer which does not end with this programme but acts as a springboard to build capacity, creating learning networks for alumni and inviting those taking part to take on the role of critical friend."

Our tenth year has already witnessed plenty of highlights that are worth celebrating, including:

- the launch of the SLLP Alumni Network to reconnect the extended SLLP family
- an official endorsement from Education Scotland's Professional Learning and Leadership Team
- a deluge of insightful Recall Day presentations leading to GTCS Professional Recognition achieved by another twenty participants
- and most recently, offers made to all the successful applicants for the 2024-25 cohort

Long may this level of growth con-tin-ue! Sincere thanks to everybody who has played a part in the SLLP journey so far. Here's to the next ten years of capacity building!

**Lynne Jones, SCILT**

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## Top class tailoring

Rather than “haute couture”, here at the “House of SCILT”, tailoring relates to the way we design high quality professional learning for teachers and practitioners. For 2023-24 we committed to diversifying our designs.

In recent years, the professional development team has responded to numerous requests from teacher educators and local authority officers for inputs for student and newly qualified teachers. This year we adopted a more proactive approach to our support of early career teachers (ECTs), putting together two different collections of bespoke professional learning. In total, we hosted six Language Cafés for secondary ECTs, one primary ECT Get Together and four Signpost sessions, as well as group workshops in multiple universities and local authorities.

The group workshops were designed in both primary and secondary “colourways” and aimed to complement existing inputs on ITE courses and local authority probationer programmes. These were bookable by university tutors and local authority probationer support managers. Themes for secondary ECTs included skills development and interviewing for a languages teaching jobs. Meanwhile, themes for primary ECTs included first steps in teaching primary languages and digital tools to support language learning.

According to one student teacher, an aspect of their group workshop that they found particularly valuable was “gaining ideas of various pedagogical approaches I can use in my practice”.

In contrast, the second collection was more akin to online “prêt-à-porter”, with themed, sector-specific sessions that were a good fit for individuals. These less formal items offered new teachers the chance to engage in professional dialogue with colleagues from all over the country at a similar stage in their career.

“These sessions are a great idea,” confirmed one of the ECTs after the first primary session.

SCILT’s professional development team agree that it has been enlightening to connect with early career teachers in different ways this year. What a privilege it is to be a small part of the CLPL journey of the newest entrants to the best profession in the world.

Both these professional learning collections will continue to feature on the [Stepping Stones](#) and [SCILT](#) websites. They will soon be updated for 2024-25, so keep an eye on the SCILT ebulletin and social media for the latest information about new bookings and registrations.

**Lynne Jones, SCILT**

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# CISS News

## Professional learning day: Chinese Exchange Teachers and GTCS Mandarin Teachers

On 2 February 2024, GTCS Mandarin teachers and 2023-24 Chinese Exchange Teachers from across Scotland gathered in The Ramshorn for an engaging day of professional learning. Centring on the theme of pedagogy and practice of Mandarin, participants heard from the University of Strathclyde's Dr Alan Huang and Dr David Roxburgh, as well as Lik Suen from the SOAS China Institute. Karen Liddle, Susan Lawson, Lisa Hanna, Sheena Bell, and Karen Faulds from SCILT/CISS contributed to the day, where a variety of engaging topics were discussed, such as generative AI, Pinyin teaching, creativity in multilingualism, and social and emotional learning. The day concluded with an entertaining plenary from CISS Associate Colin Mitchell, followed by a celebratory Chinese New Year dinner to welcome in the Year of the Dragon, with traditional food and new year's gifts.

### Mobility: scholarship and immersion

Our mobility programmes for young people are due to run again this year for the first time since the pandemic, after China reopened its borders fully last year.

The learner immersion programme, which takes senior phase learners to Beijing and Tianjin for two weeks, will take

place in July. Nearly 1000 young people across Scotland have taken part in this opportunity since 2011, and this summer 47 learners will have an immersive language and cultural experience as they work towards the SQA Chinese Bridge Award.

The CISS scholarship grants selected school leavers the chance to go on a year-long scholarship to learn Chinese in Tianjin, China. Running since 2014, the scholarship is highly competitive and has seen hundreds of students from local authorities with a Confucius hub undertake an incredible year of Mandarin study at Tianjin Normal University. The opportunity is the only one of its kind offered to schools in Europe by our Tianjin partners and will see this year's cohort of 20 scholars leave in September for a life changing year.

### Mandarin Virtual Exchange Teachers

We were delighted to continue the successful Virtual Exchange Teacher programme in partnership with Southwest Jiaotong University in Chengdu, China – an 8-week block of live streamed Chinese language and culture classes for BGE, taught by Mandarin teachers based in China. Registrations for the spring term have now closed but keep an eye out for an announcement about the next block, scheduled to start in October 2024!

### Discovering China

Discovering China, our programme of free live-streamed Mandarin NQ classes, will continue in the 2024-25 session. We are delighted to be able to offer this opportunity to young people who would otherwise not be able to access Mandarin teaching. The offer comprises classes at National 4, National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher level in the senior phase. All classes are taught by CISS in-house GTCS registered teachers of Mandarin.

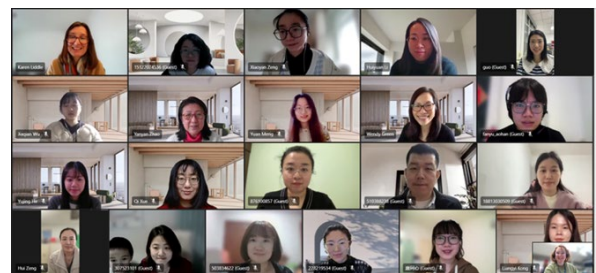
### Eric Liddell poster competition

Before Easter, we announced the winners of the Eric Liddell poster competition. The competition was open to all Scottish

primary schools, and we were delighted to receive over 750 wonderful entries. It was very difficult to narrow them down, but ultimately ten winners were chosen across three categories: P1-3, P4-5, and P6-7.

You can find all the winners [on our website](#), where you can also find some additional honourable mentions.

### Eco Learning Partners



Eco Learning Partners, our collaborative programme between P5-7 classrooms in Scotland and China, is continuing this term. Centring on an eco-learning framework, the programme integrates Mandarin into learning about climate change, carbon literacy, biodiversity and climate action.

Starting in April, learners from Scotland and China spend eight weeks getting to know their peers, sharing their discoveries, and planning actions which they can take on a path towards a more positive, eco-friendly future. Throughout the experience they will be developing teamwork, creativity, problem solving, and inter-cultural competences, as well as leadership, organisation, and linguistic skills.

Eight primary school classes from Tianjin and Scotland will take part this year. Find out how your school can become an Eco Learning Partner in 2024-25 on the [CISS website](#).

If you have any questions about any of our projects or events, [get in touch](#).

**Muzakira Farid and Alice Freeman, CISS**





# Languages Week Scotland

## Languages Week Scotland 2024

Languages Week Scotland 2024 (LWS24) ran from 29 January to 2 February.

The theme was 'Languages for a sustainable world' and the event aimed to celebrate how languages – spoken and signed – equip us as individuals and as a society to contribute to a sustainable world. Educational establishments, community-based groups, arts and sports organisations, social enterprises and businesses of all sizes were invited to join the celebrations.

Jenny Gilruth MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, opened LWS24 with a video message. In her message, Ms Gilruth stressed the importance of language and cultural skills as a fundamental aspect of our identity. She highlighted that these skills enable us to establish connections with people from all over the world, as well as within our local communities. Ms Gilruth also emphasised that language skills play a vital role in supporting our economy.

SCILT set a series of daily challenges for learners, classes, schools, families and communities. These were published at the start of January. The SCILT website recorded a high number of visitors on the page hosting the challenges.

Schools shared their celebrations on X and the theme of sustainability was visible throughout the week, with activities

including outdoor learning, multilingual campaign slogans, and research into the countries where some of our everyday belongings come from. Find out more on the [Languages Week Scotland X account](#).

Schools celebrated the languages spoken in their community, with one school creating a welcome frieze on their classroom door in wide range of languages.

We saw examples of pupils leading language learning across the school and parents sharing their own language knowledge with classes. Former pupils were invited back to some schools to explain how language skills had shaped their careers.

A range of our partners marked the week. Bookbug shared tips and resources for parents who have English as an additional language. The Scottish Parliament shared a video on Gaelic in the Scottish Parliament as well as putting on an event: The secret life of Gaelic and BSL. British Council launched its Celebrate Speaking competition. North and South Lanarkshire libraries took the opportunity to promote their collection of books in languages other than English.

For updates on Languages Week Scotland 2025, [sign up to the SCILT news bulletin](#).

**Sarah Macfarlane, SCILT**





# Languages Week Scotland in schools

## St Patrick's Primary

We invited local secondary Modern Languages colleagues and senior pupils to visit our school and deliver lessons. These visitors planned lessons around developing a culture of language, teaching French, Spanish and Portuguese to P5-7 pupils. Themes included cultural dance, art and appreciating language, and pupils rotated between these. Pupils reported very positively on their experiences!

We also liaised with parents and children in our school who speak another language and gave them the opportunity to teach their language to our school community.



## Beancross Primary



As a whole school, we completed a week's worth of fun activities designed to celebrate the different languages spoken in Beancross and the different cultures of our children. One teacher developed a grid of activities across first and second level, spanning literacy, languages, expressive arts, numeracy, social studies, art and health and wellbeing. Every day, classes chose an activity to complete, and each class received a certificate presented in assembly to celebrate their hard work.

Children with additional languages and other enthusiastic language learners put on a wonderful Eurovision-style show on Friday. The whole school enjoyed amazing performances in Yoruba, Ukrainian, Slovak, French, Greek, Urdu, Zulu, Arabic, Afrikaans, Scots and Shona. Performers will receive a special award and badge to mark their achievements and status as language leaders.

## St Maria Goretti Primary

We began LWS with an audit of the languages in our school, and as a result, 15 P7 pupils volunteered to deliver a variety of lessons and taster sessions across the school. This inspired pupils in other classes to deliver sessions showcasing their mother tongue.

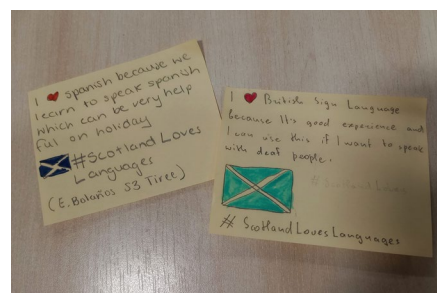
A parent helper read Polish stories to classes, and a BSL volunteer delivered a BSL taster lesson. The information, photos and videos will be displayed in the school and QR codes will allow other children to enjoy them. Two P7 girls are now planning to lead a BSL lunchtime club, which is already oversubscribed!



## Cathkin High

The Modern Languages department at Cathkin High celebrated Languages Week Scotland by asking pupils and teachers to share why THEY love languages.

We also launched our 5,4,3,2,1 task, which is a great way for learners to check, brainstorm, and get creative in Spanish and French. The task also enables active learning, collaborative work and differentiation.



# News from local authorities

## Chinese New Year

Our S1 pupils at The Glasgow Academy enjoyed watching performers from the Glasgow University Confucius Institute, who put on a great performance of various aspects of Chinese culture, to coincide with the Chinese New Year. Pupils had the chance to engage with authentic aspects of Chinese culture ahead of such an important time of year for the Chinese community. It was fantastic to see two of our own pupils join the performers on stage to sing 'Let It Go' in Chinese.

We also organised some culture lessons for our P7 and S1 pupils. The pupils made their own lanterns and learned how to greet people during springtime. The lanterns are still hanging in the corridor of the Modern Language department.

Mrs Hou, The Glasgow Academy





## Creative celebration for young people experiencing conflict

South Ayrshire EAL team and Welfare Officers partnered with charity [Never Such Innocence](#) (NSI) at Ayr Town Hall on 7 February for a spectacular showcase. The event was led by NSI practitioners, Will Dalziel and Nik Perring, and was targeted at pupils who have experienced conflict in their lives. Nine primary and eleven secondary schools were represented from South, East and North Ayrshire. One hundred and ten pupils participated in the event from many different countries including Ukraine, Afghanistan, Chad, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Syria and Scotland. Many of our young people are recently displaced and writing in a new language and we were delighted to be supported by South Ayrshire Community Interpreters, senior pupils and Ukrainian speaking Barnardo's staff. Pupils were guided through the creative process by Nik, who asked some simple questions relating to food, objects, language, experience and advice. Every participant did a fantastic

job at translating their answers into poetry to celebrate where they are from, what they miss and what they have discovered in their new home.

Following the workshop, pupils ate lunch together, before presenting their work to an audience of their peers, teachers, parents, local councillors, academics and Education Scotland. We also had some singing and musical performances alongside the poetry recital.

Orsolya Dunn, ESOL/Core Skills Lecturer at Ayrshire College commented on her students who attended:

"It was amazing to see how invested they were in sharing their thoughts and feelings, the power of poetry will never stop amazing me. I have seen a real drive and need from the students to tell their personal story, so this is definitely something that I will need to create safe opportunities for in our classes in the future."

The poems created by the pupils will be entered into the NSI 2023-24 [competition](#) which asks the question, 'How does war affect people's lives?'.

**Fiona Normansell, South Ayrshire**





## Employability fair

The Modern Languages teachers at Wester Hailes High, together with DYW, held a languages employability fair for our S2 and S3 pupils on Thursday 1 February. Pupils met with employers who use languages on a daily basis. They did a carousel of activities with employers from five sectors, the purpose of which was to give pupils a real-life opportunity to speak to professionals who have used their language skills to bring them success. Most importantly, this event sought to celebrate the importance of languages and inspire pupils while they explore future pathways. Pupils were engaged and a number of them were able to show off their own language skills.

**Calum Davis and Lucy Gee, Wester Hailes High School**



## Gaelic drama festival

*Air 29mh dhen Ghearran ghabh Fèis Dhràma Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu pàirt aig Bun-sgoil Chondobhrait.*

On Thursday 29 February Condorrat Primary hosted the Glasgow Gaelic drama festival for the first time ever. The festival has been running for nearly 30 years, but this is the first time it has been hosted in North Lanarkshire. Pupils from six local authorities and eight different primary schools took part in the festival, where families enjoyed performances written and then performed by the pupils themselves.

Events like these bring Gaelic Medium staff, pupils, and their families together to build connections and foster partnership working. The theme this year was 'traditional tales' and the audience thoroughly enjoyed reproductions of familiar tales such as Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel and The Enormous Turnip. There wasn't a seat left in the house and everyone is now looking forward to finding out where the festival will take place next year.

**Marina Macleod, Condorrat Primary School**



## Gàidhlig Dhuinn Uile Conference



On Tuesday 27 February, North Lanarkshire Council held its first Gaelic Language Conference. Over sixty schools signed up, with senior management representing primary schools from across the authority in attendance.

Education Scotland and Bòrd na Gàidhlig presented an overview of Gaelic in Scottish education and Professor Antonella Sorace from the University of Edinburgh, founder and director of Bilingualism Matters, presented the keynote on the benefits of bilingualism and language learning in children and young adults. Further inputs from North Lanarkshire Council's language leads showcased Gaelic language planners to help support delivery of Gaelic as part of Scotland's languages policy. Fèisean nan Gàidheal, eSgoil, and Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig, also shared a wide range of resources that are available for establishments to use to deliver Gaelic.

**Catriona Henderson, North Lanarkshire**

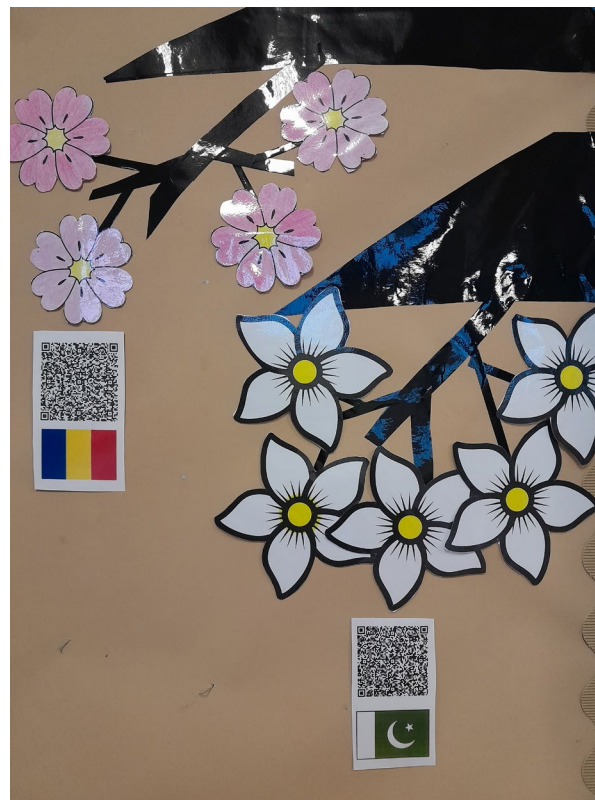


## Interactive displays

One of the main advantages of being a peripatetic teacher is that I get to work in a variety of schools. Each one has its own strengths, whether that be its surroundings, facilities, values, staff or of course pupil cohort. Within each pupil cohort I have found a unique blend of cultures and languages which form part of the DNA of each school, but this is not always visible to most of the school community. To change this, I have been working within my school cluster to improve the visibility of these home languages. Like all good projects, it started off as one thing and has evolved into something quite different.

The original idea was to make welcoming displays which were unique to each school and, most importantly, included the languages spoken within the pupil cohort. The results were well received by staff, parents and crucially pupils. While aesthetically pleasing, these displays were a bit static. So, to bring them to life we made videos of the learners speaking in their home language so everyone could hear how the words sounded. From those videos the idea that the display should be interactive has grown, and one group of pupils came up with the idea of the interactive language tree – a display with QR codes which can be scanned to hear the languages. The branches of the tree show the national flowers of the countries represented within the school and, like a real tree, it can grow with space for new flowers to be added when new pupils join the school. The QR codes can be updated at different times of the year to reflect cultural events and classes can visit the tree as part of their learning. The interactive language tree is still a work in progress, but it has already sparked positive conversations from curious learners and I look forward to monitoring its growth in the years to come.

**Jamie McGregor, Perth and Kinross**



## Le Foot et la Francophonie

On 30 November, the Modern Languages department at Biggar High was delighted to host the first ever South Lanarkshire final of the competition 'Le Foot et la Francophonie'. Learners from four schools – Biggar High, Lesmahagow High, Larkhall Academy, and Strathaven Academy – came together to put their French and football skills to the test! We were pleased to welcome Suzanne Ritchie from SCILT and Kathleen McCormick, Quality Assurance Lead from South Lanarkshire Council, as our judging panel, and after a fun morning of activities, we were delighted that Biggar High were announced as the winners.

In June 2023, our school had the opportunity to participate in the national 'Le Foot et la Francophonie' competition, run by SCILT. We were drawn to the competition as it sought to inspire S2/3 pupils by connecting the French language and the countries in which it is spoken to the environment of professional football. Although our pupils reached the final of the national competition, the real reward

was seeing how much this project had motivated our learners, and we saw an increase in uptake of French in S3.

After the competition, we were saddened to hear that SCILT would no longer have the funding to continue the national competition. Having seen firsthand the value of this project, we decided we wanted to continue with it, albeit on a much smaller scale. We approached other secondary schools in our local authority to gauge interest in an inter-school competition and were delighted that our colleagues in Lesmahagow, Larkhall and Strathaven were happy to participate.

One of the advantages of this project is that it can be approached in a number of ways to suit the needs of individual schools. Two of our participating schools approached this as a unit of work with a whole cohort, and two as extracurricular activities. Having the opportunity to establish connections between our schools and share resources and ideas was central to the success of this

competition. We were very thankful to SCILT for the high-quality resources that were made available last year, all of which were easily adapted to a smaller-scale competition.

We hope that our South Lanarkshire competition will continue to grow and are looking forward to 'Le Foot et la Francophonie 2024'!

**LeeAnne Murray, Biggar High School**





## Seachdain na Gàidhlig

This was the first Seachdain na Gàidhlig (World Gaelic Week), since Gaelic Medium Education (GME) provision was established as part of Thornliebank Primary, East Renfrewshire. With support from the Seachdain na Gàidhlig small grants fund supported by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, we were able to plan opportunities for GME pupils of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Thornliebank and the wider school community of Thornliebank Primary, to learn more about Gaelic language and culture.

The nursery class through to P7 learned a Gaelic song which was then performed together at our assembly, and learners also had a chance to try shinty and learn some Gaelic words that relate to the sport. Teaching staff explored other opportunities to use Gaelic through a variety of activities in PE and demonstrated ways that language learning can be introduced across

different areas of the curriculum. Pupils were encouraged to use Gaelic greetings around the school and there was a Gaelic bingo club that reinforced knowledge of numbers and colours in Gaelic. The Duolingo club was another avenue for pupils to learn new Gaelic phrases.

Gaelic Medium pupils visited their peers at Bun-sgoil an Iar, Paisley and Bun-sgoil Beinn Chamshroin, East Kilbride, where they tried step-dancing and had opportunities to play and explore Gaelic stories. Opportunities to meet with other Gaelic speakers are invaluable in increasing fluency and confidence in using the language. There were opportunities during Seachdain na Gàidhlig to explore Gaelic stories and songs with visitors and through online sessions delivered by the team at Seachdain na Gàidhlig.

A 'Story, Singing and a Cuppa!' session was delivered to our GME pupils and pre-schoolers, with families invited to share in the afternoon and learn more about GME. The week culminated in our Seachdain na Gàidhlig assembly showcasing the activities, singing and hearing traditional music from Ruairidh Buxton. It was a true celebration of language and culture.

**Adam McColgan-Smith, Thornliebank Primary School**



## STALOS: St Andrews Latin Outreach Scheme

In 2022, in a pub in Dundee, I met Henry Stead, a lecturer in Classics and Latin at St Andrews University. As the glasses were slowly drained, a plan was hatched...

As a first step to reviving Latin in the state sector, an outreach project was launched: STALOS, the St Andrews Latin Outreach Scheme.

In Tayside, outside the private sector, there is no provision of Latin available to pupils. None. This is not too remarkable given how far the language has declined in recent years.

Each week, for 10 weeks, a university Latinist came to Monifieth High, where 20 of our pupils had given up their lunchtimes. From absolute beginnings, the pupils learned to conjugate verbs, decline nouns, and learn exactly what Caecilius was doing *in horto*. At the end of the course, we all went to the University, where a certificate ceremony and lunch was provided. A wonderful finale to the project.



But it wasn't the end.

On the back of the visibility of STALOS, Monifieth High this session offered National 5 Latin for the first time. STALOS was an excellent means of demonstrating appetite to school leaders, and now we feel the comeback is on!

STALOS ran again this year, this time with a second school, Grove Academy in Dundee. It will go again next session, and

at Monifieth we will have a second year of National 5 Latin. Growth of visibility and uptake are the ultimate goals, while increasing access to a largely paywalled subject.

We hope that university outreach of this kind, with a concrete benefit for pupils (who get a St Andrews qualification on their UCAS forms), schools (who get to try a language before running the full course) and universities (who get teaching experience for their postgraduate researchers), could be the model for language resurgences across the country, not just for Latin.

And I am hard-pressed to think of a more productive couple of pints I've had in my life!

**George Connor, Monifieth High School**



## The first day of primary school life in Edinburgh

I am Chen Yu, from Shanghai, China. In China, I am a Chinese language teacher teaching foreign students at Fudan University.

This February, I moved from Shanghai to Edinburgh. Now I am working in the Confucius Institute of Scotland in the University of Edinburgh. My 9-year-old son, George, came here with me. Today, I would like to share the story of his first day in primary school.

George has learned English before in his primary school in China, but it was very limited. The day before his first day of school here, the Headteacher and classroom teacher invited us to visit the school for about 15 minutes. They both talked to him very patiently, but George couldn't respond at all.

"I feel like an idiot!" he complained. "Of course, you are not! We just need to learn English harder! What about practicing speaking English at home?" I proposed. My son stared at me and walked away.

The first day of school was approaching, and I was anxious about George. I still remembered my older son, Andy. He attended primary school for one year in Washington, DC in the USA 10 years ago. At that time, he was even younger than George is now. That day, Andy came back from school and cried to me as soon as he saw me. He cried and begged me to take him back to China as he didn't understand what the teachers and classmates were saying. Would George cry too?

However, I was wrong. George came back happily and told me he understood everything. How could that be? I wondered.

"In our classroom, there is a big screen. My teachers used some tools, and then, what they said changed into Chinese subtitles on the screen! I totally understand! I hope what I say can change into English, but I don't think my teacher has that tool."

Looking at his smile, I feel relieved! Thanks to technology, George had a good day at school! His reading ability in Chinese characters helped him a lot. He doesn't need to feel like an idiot just because he can't speak another language, and we don't need to practice English at home, which makes us both awkward. But as a language teacher, I also feel a little bit worried. Will George rely too much on the subtitles? Will his English improve very slowly because of these subtitles? How do we guarantee the subtitles are translated correctly? Technology in language teaching is like two sides of a coin. I hope that connecting with other language teachers here in Scotland will help me to gain ideas and suggestions for how to best use technology to help younger language learners in school and at home.

**Chen Yu, parent**

## Travelling the world

As a multilingual primary school in the centre of Edinburgh, we share a wealth of languages in our school community. We have over 25 languages spoken by children in the school and wanted to create an event which would celebrate our cultural and linguistic diversity.

On Wednesday 28 February, our parent multilingual group came in to teach their home language in our classrooms. Each class, from P1 to P7, 'travelled' around the school to sample language, culture, music and stories, all planned and delivered by our parents. Each lesson lasted 30 minutes, before the children moved on to their next destination; learning sounds, phrases and alternative alphabets in Arabic, Bengali, Czech, Greek, Italian, Polish and Spanish.

Our nursery children were visited by two of our parents and enjoyed stories in Arabic and Greek.

The plan was ambitious and really relied upon the goodwill and involvement of our parent group. They rose to the occasion with enthusiasm and, for those children who already knew these languages, there was a definite sense of recognition and pride as they shared their mother tongue with their peers.

All the children took notes in their homemade passports which they took around the school with them and this became their souvenir of the day.

In feedback from staff and children, it was evident that the day had elevated language learning from their curricular French lessons to endless other possibilities. Enthusiasm, curiosity and engagement were evident.

I very much hope that we can build on this event for future years and have no doubt that our own school publicity around the event will encourage more of our parent community to step forward and volunteer next time. Fingers crossed!

**Pamela MacGregor, James Gillespie's Primary School**



# News from our partners

## Broadening horizons: UK-German opportunities for schools and teachers

We are delighted to offer opportunities for young people and schools alike, and we are committed to supporting UK-German school partnerships and their development for years to come.

### Spotlight on: Host a teacher from Germany

This professional development opportunity offers UK schools the exciting chance to bring intercultural exchange into the classroom by [hosting a teacher from Germany](#). In December 2023, Grove Academy in Dundee hosted a German teacher from Frankfurt am Main. Described as a “welcome addition to the department”, the German teacher’s visit to the school enhanced language teaching as she delivered workshops on German culture. Furthermore, she offered pupils individual support in small groups with their learning, seen as a

“positive impact on pupils [as they] were able to speak to a native German and find out directly [...] about school and culture in Germany”. Her visit has also sparked discussions between the two schools about future Scottish-German activities.

Schools interested in hosting a teacher from Germany in 2024-25 can register from the end of April. [Find out more](#).

### Professional Enrichment Programme

UK teachers can also apply to the [Professional Enrichment Programme](#) to visit a German school for 1-2 weeks and engage in international professional development and exchange.

### Funding for exchanges and visits

We offer a range of grants to schools that would like to establish a new partnership

or strengthen existing links. Perhaps your class is planning an upcoming visit, or you’re seeking to enhance your Scottish-German connections through digital activities. Our funding offers flexibility and is also open to schools that do not offer German as a taught subject.

You can discover more about [our funding opportunities](#) via our website.

We also offer and facilitate [Café Connect for schools](#), where partners can come together digitally and pupils can collaborate with one another between in-person visits.

**Eilidh Reid, UK-German Connection**



## Celebrating Languages Week Scotland

French and Spanish La Jolie Ronde teachers around Scotland celebrated Languages Week Scotland with an array of free language-related activities and events.

Sandrine Bache in Hamilton presented an ecstatic Arthur age 7 with his French certificate and medal for completing his latest programme.

Rachel Peebles who teaches Spanish in Busby and Uddingston had lots of fun and giggles with little ones and their parents and carers. In celebration of Languages Week Scotland, Rachel put on a jam-packed session full of fun Spanish games, songs, rhymes and role-play activities!

Sandra Kasparek in Livingston and her French pupils enjoyed a baking session making French biscuits! She even did an online session for her remote learning pupils.

Izzie Hogg held free French classes for parents and toddlers at several venues in her hometown of Aberdeen.

Scotland Loves Languages!

**Mala Henry, La Jolie Ronde**



## Let's delight in all the language

Language in all its glory – or even banality (“Where are my keys?” is, apparently, one of the most commonly used phrases in English!) – is used to reason, connect with others, devise stories, record and relive events – memorable or the everyday – recite poetry, profess our true feelings, or confess our misdoings (gulp!). So, the idea of “continual languaging, an activity of human beings in the world” (Becker 1991), you might agree, captures the wonder of the everydayness of language and the ever-flowing and evolving nature of it.

An increasingly global Scottish landscape means that multiple layers of language (or is it languaging?) exist in our classrooms. This includes 154 community languages (Scottish Government, March 2023), signed languages, taught languages under Scotland’s languages policy, English as an additional language, and subject-specific language through

and around the curriculum. We are language rich, surely?

Headline statements relating to children’s language and literacy skills might have us thinking otherwise, with words such as gap, impoverished and deficit now a familiar part of our language repertoire as educationalists. I challenge you to hear the word, ‘literacy’ without the words ‘attainment’ and ‘gap’ following swiftly to mind, for example. How does this alter our understanding of literacy and our view of the potential of language/s?

This is not a statement in any way intended to gloss over present issues or areas for development, but instead, to put forward the suggestion that the way we talk about language and literacy, framed differently, could serve to inspire, motivate and encourage change, rather than forcing it. Knowing that language and thinking are so interconnected, we must question the impact of a persistently

negative word choice on the morale and confidence of children and educators alike, not to mention pedagogical choices and freedoms. Intervention programmes, sometimes marketed as whole literacy programmes, might further alter our vision of literacy to phonics and little else. Freire will be turning in his grave!

Language can be freeing, enabling and empowering. It facilitates self-connection and a connection with our peers and our world; our history and our future. It is beautiful and powerful, and it is the strongest tool we have to work against the challenges we face. As educationalists we must lead from the front in ensuring the language we use best identifies the way forward. Let’s see the opportunities and reach out to them.

**Caroline Gordon, Moray House University of Edinburgh**

## Updates from LFEE Europe

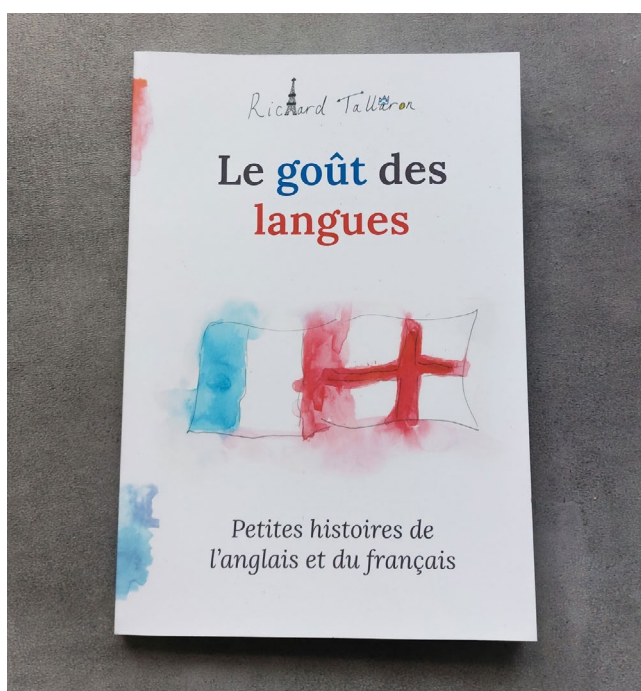
LFEE Europe organised a symposium in partnership with International School Partnerships Scotland on the importance of international education in our schools. The event was well attended and took place at the SCILT offices at The Ramshorn in Glasgow. If you are looking for new partners abroad, or if you simply want to host colleagues in your school for a few days, the LFEE team would be happy to help.

### A Taste of Languages

Richard Tallaron’s new book has been well received by teachers and pupils around the country. Highland Council have decided to buy a copy of the book for each of their schools. Richard now offers free webinars for pupils and/or teachers, in French or English, on the theme of the impact of French on English. The short stories will encourage the learners to find out more about their own language, and to become curious little linguists. The book is [available online](#).

For more information on teacher training, to find out about our digital resources or to explore our online language courses for teachers, please visit the [LFEE Europe website](#) or [email us](#).

**Richard Tallaron, LFEE Europe**





# Languages beyond school

## Language Ambassadors online



We recently held the final Language Ambassadors online session for 2023-24. Since September we have offered interactive Language Ambassador monthly sessions led by a different group of students each time. These sessions are designed to promote languages to young people and to encourage learners to choose languages as part of their learning experience by hearing directly from near-peer role models. Our Language Ambassadors are students of various languages on a range of degree programmes who are keen to share their experiences of learning languages and discovering new cultures.

Sessions have been led by students from the universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, St Andrews, Stirling and Strathclyde. Some have joined us from home, some from their university buildings and some from

their year abroad, so we have seen a real snapshot of life as a languages student at university!

In addition to our online programme, some universities are also able to offer in-person language ambassador visits to individual schools throughout the year. These are arranged directly between schools and universities; a list of contacts for this, as well as more information about the programme generally, is on the [Language Ambassador webpage](#).

We are already planning next year's Language Ambassador online sessions; registration information will be published after the summer on [SCILT's school-university liaison](#) page, which also contains information about SCILT's other senior phase programmes.

Our Language Ambassador programme shows language opportunities and experiences from the perspective of university students. To complement this, we also offer 'Languages and Your Career' sessions presented in conjunction with eSgoil's DYW Live programme, which have more of a DYW focus. In that programme we look more directly at the value of choosing languages, the benefits of a language, and the range of careers that this opens up. You can find more information about these workshops on eSgoil's [Languages and Your Career webpage](#).

Sheena Bell, SCILT

## Moving forward with languages

In collaboration with partners from the universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling and Strathclyde, the 2023-24 series of 'Moving forward with languages' online workshops took place on Wednesday afternoons throughout the autumn term. Workshops covered a broad range of topics, including: how to brush up on translation skills; bringing focus to the fundamentals of grammar; different approaches to cultural analysis and listening skills; learning how to make presentations in the target language; using images to generate critical analysis and discussion; and fine-tuning reading comprehension skills.

Participants had the chance to hear firsthand from language students, who shared their experiences of university life and answered questions about studying languages at university. School learners also had the opportunity to meet language lecturers, find out more about courses at different institutions and gather tips and hacks to apply to their current Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

Attendees had this to say about the workshops:

"I found analysing the pictures and taking notes on what we think is happening in them interesting. It made me see a different way of using language so how language can be used to tell a story not necessarily through words but scenery."

"I found the talk from the students really useful as it gave me a great insight into what it is like to be a university student at the university and also the different ways in which that can be done."

"I think it has helped me understand what is required for the directed writing and will really help me in the exam."

"I liked the fact that we were given tips on how to conquer our nerves when giving presentations in our target language or in general and how to engage the audience."

"I found the analysing of the French trailer interesting and I liked the tips given to improve our knowledge of the language (i.e. watch shows in the target language without subtitles and take notes down to help with the listening exam)."

"I'll definitely make sure to leave a lot of time for my translation and not copy everything word for word in the dictionary and make sure everything flows."



Plans are currently underway to develop next session's workshops. Registration information will be published after the summer break on [SCILT's school-university liaison](#) page, which also contains information about SCILT's other senior phase transition programmes.

Suzanne Ritchie, SCILT



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At the University of Strathclyde, SCILT has a number of partnerships with key organisations in Scotland, UK and further afield.

