Scotland's National Centre for Languages

Confucius Institute for Scotland's School

Summary Report for April 2025 – March 2026

Scotland is a multicultural society where many languages are spoken. This includes indigenous, Scottish languages and those originating from further afield.

Our vision:

SCILT is Scotland's National Centre for Languages, supporting a wealth of language learning and diversity across Scotland's communities. As a nation, we are developing the language skills that equip us for life in a globally interdependent world, thus contributing to a fairer, smarter, more successful Scotland. We achieve this by promoting and supporting high-quality language learning and fostering a climate that celebrates all languages.

The Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools is part of Scotland's National Centre for Languages and shares the same vision and values. CISS contributes to the Scotland's international engagement. We create opportunities and widen access for learners in our schools and the wider community to develop the knowledge, skills and cultural awareness required of citizens in the globally interdependent world of the 21st century.

Within this vision our priorities are:

1. **Supporting the learning experience for practitioners and learners**

   To support and promote high quality language learning experiences for all, in line with national priorities

2. **Promotion and partnerships**

   Working with partners to highlight the benefits of multilingualism and intercultural competencies so that languages are widely recognised as a key skill for life and work

3. **Scholarship, research and, knowledge exchange**

   To facilitate language-related research, share information and enable knowledge exchange in Scotland and beyond

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Scotland's National Centre for Languages

Priority 1: Supporting the learning experience for practitioners and learners

CLPL: learning and experiences 3-18 with a focus on Scotland's languages policy

SCILT/CISS professional learning offer

Primary Professional Learning

Comparison of April 2025-May 2026 primary engagements with the previous year shows that though group bookings for in-service primary teachers have gone down significantly, professional learning for early career teachers has increased considerably. There continues to be an appetite for professional learning about outdoor learning contexts.

Primary CLPL	2024 - 25	2025 - 26
Engagements	7 workshop bookings of which: 3 online workshops for 1 local authority 2 in person workshop for 1 school staff 2 online workshops for EIS Total Attendees = 52	2 online workshops for whole school, opened to local authority Total Attendees = 15
Open Access opportunities	April 2024 – March 2025 Five online primary open access workshops - supported by invited school-based practitioners. Themes = assessment, outdoor language learning x2, valuing linguistic diversity, IDL contexts for language learning 28/05/24 EY & Primary Show & Tell – showcase of short examples of practice from 7 practitioners, varied content 12/11/24 Give careers education with a languages twist: a workshop for primary teachers - partner with DYW Live eSgoil as part of Scottish Careers Week, online (supported by school-based practitioners)	April 2024 – March 2025 5 online workshops - supported by invited school-based practitioners. Themes = digital tools, outdoor language learning x2, multilingualism, first steps in teaching primary languages, careers education with a languages twist Three in person workshops – outdoor language learning x 3 (venues in PKC, at Queen Margaret University Outdoor Learning Hub, on University of Strathclyde campus) With partner: SALT/SCILT Primary Languages Six in Sixty Show & Tell, online Total Attendees = 89

	Total Attendees = 94	
Early Career Teachers (student teachers and years 1-4 post qualification)	April 2024- Mar 2025 Primary ECT Primary Languages Signpost Sessions. Open access and online. Themed on various issues, supported by invited guests from ITE and primary schools x 5 24/04/24 Clackmannanshire Council primary NQTs: First steps in primary languages (online) Sept/Oct 2024: 3 bespoke inputs with UG TESOL Yr 3 students, University of Strathclyde re: lesson planning, microteaching (in person) 09/01/25 Dumfries & Galloway primary NQTs and RQTs: Bespoke first steps in primary languages (in person) 31/01/25 University of Glasgow Dumfries Campus, Primary PDGE students 4 different themed inputs (in person) Total Attendees = 130	April 2025-Mar 2026 Primary ECT Primary Languages Signpost Session. Open access and online. Themed on various issues, supported by invited guests x 4 Clackmannanshire probationer input, online x 1 ITE, in person inputs: Moray House PGDE Primary cohort – outdoor language learning x 2, multilingualism x 1 University of Glasgow, Dumfries campus. PGDE Primary cohort x 3 – planning for progression, active assessment & target language phonics University of Stirling – BA Primary Education with ML, Yr 3 cohort x 2 - watching short films, outdoor language learning Total Attendees = 170
Popular workshops (across all formats)	First steps in primary languages x 3 Valuing linguistic diversity x 3 Languages in Colour x 2 Getting outdoors with primary languages x 2	Getting outdoors with primary languages x 9 Multilingual ethos & approaches x 5 First steps in teaching primary languages x 3

In a repeat of 2024-25, during February and March 2026, two of a series of in person open access workshops to be held at The Ramshorn were cancelled due to low registration. Counterintuitively, participants in the primary focus group in March 20206 indicated they would like SCILT to offer more in person workshops. With evidence across two academic sessions now, the reality is that there is in fact little appetite for in-person workshops that require primary teachers to come to us in central Glasgow.

With regards to the stated next steps from the Annual Report 2024-25:

This year, other commitments left primary PD team with insufficient capacity to explore the feasibility of themed short course modules with accompanying language upskilling from cultural organisation partners.

Next steps

All primary open access workshops will be online.

For primary workshop menu, promote model of whole school booking opened up to local authority registrations.

Continue to offer professional learning opportunities in partnership with other organisations to maximise potential audiences.

SCILT Cross-sector Professional Learning

Cross-sector CLPL	2024-25	2025-26
All sectors	For in-service teachers: Managing and developing a positive multilingual ethos for middle leaders (20/02/25, 1 local authority) Local authority 1+2 professional learning event, mix of secondary and primary inputs Total Attendees = 18	For partners x 3 – what SCILT does (for GCC EAL Service Team, Strathclyde Institute of Education, Skills Development Scotland staff) For in-service teachers: Local authority 1+2 professional learning event, mix of secondary, primary & cross-sector inputs Multilingualism through Art for GCC EAL teacher network x 1 Introduction to anti-racist languages education x 1 Translanguaging in partnership with GCC EAL Service colleagues x 1 Total Attendees = 219
Early Carer Teachers (student teachers and years 1-4 post qualification)	April 2024- Mar 2025 Primary ECT ITE, in person inputs: University of Stirling – education & languages student PLC, primary & secondary ed., joint honours - bespoke inputs around relationship building & 1+2 and DYW Total Attendees = 8	April 2025-Mar 2026 Primary ECT ITE, in person inputs: University of Stirling – education & languages student PLC, primary & secondary ed., joint honours - outdoor learning x 1 Total Attendees = 3

With regards to the stated next steps from the Annual Report 2024-25:

A gratitude protocol was established in order to recognise the primary and secondary practitioners

we invite to contribute to SCILT/CISS badged professional learning opportunities over and above their paid employment. The sequence recognises the level of support given e.g. number of workshops, amount of co-design or development work undertaken. 1. Thank you email post-workshop. 2. Share summary of workshop evaluation. 3. Vouchers to the value of £20. The system has worked smoothly for five primary and three secondary speakers this session.

You said, we did style feedback was shared with participants in the primary and the secondary professional learning focus groups, and on SCILT website, spring 2026.

Next steps

Include cross-sector workshops on menus for groups of in-service teachers and for groups of early career teachers as well as in the open access offer.

Secondary Professional Learning

Comparison of 2025-26 secondary engagements with those in 2024-25 shows that the level of engagement has once again remained broadly consistent over those two years. The Teaching Sprints initiative ran differently this year, in the form of two bookable sessions rather than individual sessions with departments, as the statistics show.

Secondary CLPL	2024-25	2025-26
Engagements	16 local authorities Total number of CLPL engagements with local authorities = 24 (includes 9 Teaching Sprints inputs) 1 CLPL delivery to Secondary Mandarin GTCS teachers 1 CLPL delivery to PGDE languages students 1 CLPL delivery for national teachers via DYW Live (Employability) 1 CLPL delivery for national teachers via Scotdec (Global Citizenship) 1 CLPL delivery for Higher Education colleagues 1 CLPL delivery for ITE Early Career Teacher drop-ins: 2 sessions The Big Question series: 1 session Total Engagements: 33	14 local authorities Total number of CLPL engagements with local authorities = 16 (no individual Teaching Sprints inputs this session) 2 CLPL deliveries on Teaching Sprints 1 CLPL delivery to Mandarin CETs 1 CLPL delivery to PGDE languages students 2 CLPL deliveries for national teachers via DYW Live (Employability) 2 CLPL deliveries for Higher Education colleagues 1 CLPL delivery for ITE 1 CLPL delivery for SALT conference The Big Question series: 3 sessions Total engagements: 29
Popular topics	Teaching Sprints Employability Outdoor learning Moderation	All of our booked workshops were bespoke this year, from our Build Your Own Workshop list.

	Social-Emotional Learning Once again, our bespoke offer was by far the most popular.	

SCILT continues to support secondary languages practitioners through a responsive programme of professional learning designed to meet national priorities while addressing the specific needs of schools, departments and local authorities. During session 2025–26, the secondary professional learning programme combined nationally available webinars with a highly successful bespoke offer, enabling departments to access support tailored to their own improvement priorities.

Throughout the year, delivery remained predominantly online, allowing teachers from across Scotland to participate regardless of location while maintaining interactive sessions through discussion, collaborative activities and the sharing of effective practice. This has also permitted the inclusion of guest practitioners, which has been greatly appreciated by presenters and attendees alike. The newly introduced gratitude policy allows us to offer these practitioners a small token in recognition of the work that they put into their inputs.

The bespoke workshop programme continued to be the most frequently requested element of the secondary offer. Schools and local authorities were able to select from a wide range of themes, including Developing the Young Workforce, Learning for Sustainability, interdisciplinary learning, AI, social and emotional learning, language production and comprehension, curriculum planning and classroom practice. This flexibility has enabled SCILT to respond quickly to local priorities while ensuring that professional learning remains relevant and practical for participants.

Following evaluation of previous years' delivery, the Big Question series was redesigned for 2025–26. Instead of offering all sessions during the summer term, workshops were distributed across the academic year, allowing SCILT to respond more effectively to emerging curricular developments and practitioner interests. Themes included interdisciplinary learning, developing language production, developing a linguistic mindset and celebrating languages, providing opportunities for teachers to explore current research alongside practical classroom approaches.

SCILT also continued to contribute to wider national professional learning through specialist sessions for secondary Mandarin teachers, PGDE students, early career teachers and higher education colleagues, as well as webinars delivered in partnership with organisations such as e-Sgoil and Scotdec.

Next steps

Continue to develop the bespoke secondary professional learning programme in response to school and local authority priorities.

Build on practitioner feedback and focus groups to further strengthen the quality and impact of professional learning.

Continue to work with national partners to maximise opportunities for secondary languages teachers to engage in high-quality professional learning.

Support for teachers networks

Teachers of Italian in Scotland (TOIIS) network

Due to issues around staffing and timetabling, teachers of Italian in Scotland often feel isolated,

and disconnected from fellow teachers of the language, with the result that provision of Italian has reduced across the country. Since its inception in 2023, this group has provided a forum for teachers to connect, network and share resources, with a view to facilitating the growth of Italian in schools throughout Scotland's local authority areas. Through regular meetings and newsletters, this project aims to:

- ensure teachers of Italian across Scotland feel more connected to fellow practitioners, potentially through the creation of local clusters
- provide opportunities for knowledge exchange and professional learning
- provide a forum for the sharing of ideas and resources
- assist in the growth of Italian in Scotland's schools
- provide teachers and their learners with opportunities to take part in national competitions

Engagement with initiatives continues to be very positive, with a network which now numbers over one hundred members. In October 2025 a second live online CPD event, which saw three teachers at different stages of establishing Italian in their schools present their strategies, was attended by over forty practitioners. Subsequently, on Saturday 28 February, a first in-person event for the network was staged by SCILT. This session was attended by teachers from three Local Authority areas and resulted in the drafting and dissemination of a series of action points (see below). These two events have led to an enhanced sense of connectivity and community among members of the network. Meanwhile, the interdisciplinary Calciamo project continues to be a well used resource.

Next steps

During the above-mentioned in-person event held on 28 February, the following action points were identified as being worthy of development:

- Quadrants/consortia within Local Authority areas
- Customised advice for teachers of different profiles / at different stages of their career in Italian
- Dedicated channels for the sharing of resources
- Input from SCILT to the creation of resources
- Moderation events
- Videos by graduates in Italian
- Information days by universities, for both BGE and Senior Phase

As well as these, and as has been the case in previous years, ongoing initiatives will be taken to publicise the group and to increase its membership. Meetings and newsletters will continue to promote national competitions and projects, while opportunities for Italian-specific professional learning will be again made available to members. Meanwhile, conversations and consultations will take place on tangible ways in which the group can help to bring about increased levels of provision of Italian in Scotland's schools, and the network will have opportunities to build on established connections made with teachitalian.co.uk, a network for teachers of Italian in England and Wales. Lastly, the launch in 2025 of the online versions of the University of Strathclyde's Certificate of Continuing Education in Italian provides an exciting opportunity for teachers of other languages across Scotland to gain the credits necessary to register as teachers of Italian, and to join the network thereafter.

Teachers of German in Scotland (TOGS) network

Building on its successful launch in 2024-25, the TOGS network has continued to grow in both membership and activity over the course of this session. Termly online meetings have continued as planned, providing a consistent forum for practitioners to share practice, resources and approaches to teaching German across the primary and secondary sectors. Attendance and engagement at these sessions have remained strong, and the TOGS network provides a strong and inclusive cross-sector platform to advocate for German learning in schools and to amplify the voices of German teachers in Scotland.

SCILT has maintained close liaison with German partners across the UK throughout the year, working to identify offers, programmes and funding opportunities relevant to Scottish learners and teachers. This has included ongoing dialogue with the Goethe-Institut Glasgow, the German Embassy in Edinburgh, the British German Association and the UK-German Connection, ensuring that Scottish teachers of German are aware of, and where possible can access, UK-wide initiatives designed to support the subject.

In line with last year's commitment to widen the network's reach, TOGS has this session welcomed representation from German departments in Scottish universities. This has strengthened the network's capacity to support progression pathways for pupils and has opened up new opportunities for school-university collaboration, including guest input from university-based German academics at TOGS meetings.

A further highlight of the year has been the development, in partnership with the TOGS network, of a German strand of the existing Francofoot/Calciamo project. This new strand links football with German language learning and has been designed specifically for Broad General Education (BGE) learners, with the aim of increasing motivation and participation in German at a stage when pupil numbers are most vulnerable to decline. The German “FußballLingo” resource pack will be launched in early 2026-27 in tandem with the Spanish “FútbolListos” pack.

Taken together, these developments demonstrate that all of the next steps identified in the 2024-25 report have been achieved, and that the TOGS network is maturing into an increasingly well-connected and well-resourced community of practice.

Next steps

Collaborate with German stakeholders in Scotland — including school strongholds, Education Scotland and Scottish HEIs — and across the home nations, including NCLE and the Collaborating for Change initiative, to develop a strategy to support German learning in Scotland and amplify this message across the UK.

Monitor developments such as NGAC (the National German A-Level Class, due to launch in September 2026 and run by the Goethe Institut and Languages for All).

Provide sustained, practical support for teachers of German in Scotland.

Continue to liaise closely with cultural partners.

Teachers of French in Scotland (ToFiS)

New for session 2025-26, as one of the key outputs of the 2025 Future of French en Écosse forum held in Edinburgh, the Teachers of French in Scotland (ToFiS) association is a national professional network for practitioners teaching French across primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. Established in partnership with the Institut français d’Écosse to support collaboration, professional learning and the sharing of effective practice, the network brings together teachers from across Scotland and beyond to explore

current developments in language education and strengthen the teaching of French.

During session 2025–26, ToFiS membership grew to 138 members, representing practitioners from schools, local authorities, universities and partner organisations. The network aims to provide a welcoming and supportive space for professional dialogue, enabling members to share ideas, resources and examples of classroom practice.

The network launched with an online meeting in January 2026, which led to the establishment of a steering group. This group met in May 2026 to plan an events calendar for session 2026-27 which was shared with members during the 2026 Future of French en Écosse event in Aberdeen in June.

Next steps

Continue to grow the ToFiS network by encouraging participation from practitioners across all education sectors and career stages.

Deliver a varied programme of professional learning, reflecting current priorities in French language education and responding to members' interests.

Strengthen collaboration with national and international partner organisations to broaden opportunities for practitioners and learners.

Continue to expand the range of online resources, recordings and exemplification available to support the teaching of French.

Make the case for the teaching and learning of French to key stakeholders and organisations who can effect change.

Scotland's Language Leadership Programme

Figures below show retention of SLLP participants in 2025-26 in comparison with 2024-25.

SLLP	2024-25	2025-26
Participant registration	45	19
Participant places accepted	36	16 + 1 deferral + 3 on flexible route = 20
Participant completion (GTCS Professional Recognition awarded)	31	13
Critical Friend recruitment	19 (18 returning, 1 new)	17 (15 returning, 2 new)
Critical Friend retention	18	17

Thirty-one participants on the 2024-25 cohort successfully completed the programme in May 2025. The 2025-26 cohort began in May 2025 as the smallest cohort since the programme pivot online in 2021/22. As per next steps identified for 2025-26, clear information about the processes related to criteria decisions and upgrades in order to keep high standards associated with the GTCS Professional Recognition award was included in the programme handbook, Pre-Core, Core and Touchpoints. Participants that withdrew most commonly cited school-based workload and illness as reasons.

In last year's annual report, one of the next steps identified a need for succession planning to account for practitioner and system need. As such, a number of issues informed the drafting of SLLP Futures proposal to SCILT Advisory Group and Scottish Government. These were:

1. The issues of recruitment and retention for 2025-26 cohort.
2. Changes to staffing and capacity changes to the Languages Team at Education Scotland, SLLP partner.
3. Ongoing limited activity of SLLP Alums Network.
4. The need for strategic leadership at all levels with soon-to-be incoming curricular changes and continuing entitlements and expectations associated with Scotland's languages policy.

The SLLP Futures proposal suggested we take a holistic view of the national languages leadership development support, recognising that the two distinct strands were equally as important as each other.

- The SLLP subject specific leadership development programme, with GTCS Professional Recognition
- The SLLP Alums network – ongoing support for alums in terms of voice and leadership opportunities, professional learning and networking, in community, consolidate and build on existing leadership capacity

The suggestion to alternate the focus of the programme team's efforts between the two strands was accepted by Advisory Board and Scottish Government. As such, 2026-27 will be the first SLLP Reunion Year, focusing on opportunities for SLLP alums, and 2027-28 will be next cohort of SLLP leadership development programme.

Meanwhile, during the period of this annual report, a summary of SLLP impact 2022-2026 was included in the Strathclyde Institute of Education's (SIoE) Languages Education case study for University of Strathclyde's next Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission that is currently in preparation and subject to review.

In spring 2026, proposals submitted in winter 2025 to present about the SLLP at two international conferences in summer were accepted. Our aim was to seek advice about our plans to investigate the leadership trajectories of SLLP alums from professional learning and development colleagues. Ultimately, one acceptance, for the Leadership for Professional Learning Symposium at the University of Maine in July was declined because of the associated costs and lack of online option. The other, for a roundtable presentation at the International Professional Development Association Conference in Dublin was accepted.

Next steps

Plan professional services and professional development workstrands for SLLP Reunion Year.

Aim to recruit 25 participants to 2027-28 SLLP leadership development programme in spring 2027.

Aim to recruit 13 critical friends from alums to support 2027-28 cohort in spring 2027.

Secure ethical approval from SIoE for collaborative enquiry with SLLP Alums and begin planning for first cycle of enquiry.

Employability

Promotion of Employability

Developing young people's understanding of the value of languages in learning, life and work remains a key priority for SCILT. Languages play an important role within Scotland's Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) agenda by equipping learners with transferable skills including communication, collaboration, problem solving, adaptability and intercultural competence. Through professional learning, learner engagement opportunities and practical resources, SCILT continues to support practitioners in making meaningful links between language learning and future careers.

Throughout session 2025–26, employability continued to feature within SCILT's professional learning offer. Workshops and bespoke support for primary and secondary practitioners explored practical approaches to embedding careers education within language learning, highlighted examples of successful interdisciplinary practice and encouraged participants to develop partnerships with employers, businesses and community organisations.

SCILT also continued its successful collaboration with e-Sgoil through the DYW Live programme. The interactive Languages and Your Career series provided learners across Scotland with opportunities to hear directly from professionals who use languages in a wide range of sectors. Live online sessions enabled pupils to explore diverse career pathways, gain insight into the skills valued by employers and engage with guest speakers through interactive discussion and questioning. In addition to learner sessions, support for practitioners included opportunities to explore how careers education can be integrated naturally into language learning.

These activities complement SCILT's wider programme of employability support, including classroom resources, case studies and examples of effective practice which demonstrate how languages can contribute to the Career Education Standard and support learners in recognising the relevance of language skills beyond the classroom.

Next steps

Continue to embed employability within SCILT's professional learning programme through workshops, webinars and bespoke support.

Further develop the partnership with e-Sgoil to expand the reach and diversity of DYW Live language sessions.

Extend the range of online resources and case studies that support practitioners in embedding careers education within language learning.

Continue to promote the value of languages as a key employability skill through partnerships with employers, organisations and education stakeholders.

Scottish Languages Employability Award

The Scottish Languages Employability Award (SLEA) continues to provide a national framework through which schools can recognise and celebrate innovative partnerships between language learning and the world of work. The award encourages learners to apply their language skills in authentic contexts while developing an understanding of careers, enterprise, sustainability and community engagement.

The award now comprises four complementary strands: the original Scottish Languages Employability Award, the Scottish Languages Employability Award – Local, highlighting partnerships within clusters or local authority areas, the Scottish Languages Employability Award – Green, which recognises projects linked to Learning for Sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Scottish Languages Employability Award – Multilingual, which celebrates projects that promote multilingualism and build

meaningful partnerships with cultural organisations, community groups and heritage language communities.

During session 2025–26, schools across Scotland continued to submit high-quality projects demonstrating imaginative approaches to linking languages with employability. Submissions showcased a broad range of partnerships with businesses, employers, charities, community organisations and environmental groups, reflecting the flexibility of the award and its ability to support local priorities. The growing collection of case studies provides valuable inspiration for schools wishing to develop similar initiatives and demonstrates the positive impact that authentic language experiences can have on learner motivation and skills development.

Alongside the awards themselves, SCILT continued to enhance the support available to practitioners through comprehensive guidance materials, handbooks, exemplification and case studies. These resources are designed to help schools develop sustainable partnerships, plan projects that meet the award criteria and celebrate learners' achievements.

The Scottish Languages Employability Award remains an important mechanism for encouraging schools to embed employability within language learning while strengthening links between education, employers and local communities.

Next steps

Continue to promote all four strands of the Scottish Languages Employability Award to schools and partner organisations.

Increase the range of published case studies and exemplification to showcase effective practice from across Scotland.

Further develop guidance and support materials to assist schools in planning, delivering and evidencing award submissions.

Encourage new partnerships with businesses, community organisations and cultural groups that provide authentic contexts for language learning.

Support for school – university liaison

The three core pillars to SCILT's school-university liaison programmes are:

Moving Forward with Languages project, the latter of which changes year on year to respond to emerging trends and school priorities

Language Ambassadors Online (LAO)

Language Explorers Scotland mentoring programme (LES)

All three projects involve collaboration from the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Heriot-Watt, St Andrews, Stirling, Strathclyde and The Open University.

Moving Forward with Languages – conference series 2025-26

In response to feedback from 2024-25 attendees, the 2025-26 Moving Forward with Languages conference series for Higher and Advanced Higher language learners introduced language-specific workshops for the first time. The series comprised an in-person conference at the University of Strathclyde on 10 September 2025 and an online event on 19 November 2025.

In-person conference (10 September 2025)

Sessions covered French, German, Spanish, Mandarin and a multilingual workshop, delivered by colleagues from the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Heriot-Watt, Stirling and Strathclyde. The event attracted 164 attendees, including 143 pupils (plus accompanying teachers) from 21 schools across 12 local authorities: Clackmannanshire, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Falkirk, Glasgow, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire and Stirling.

Online conference (19 November 2025)

Workshops were hosted by language colleagues from eight university faculties: Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Heriot-Watt, St Andrews, Stirling and Strathclyde. Of 173 registrations, 112 pupils attended, representing seven schools (Ardrossan Academy, Dunoon Grammar School, Forres Academy, Meldrum Academy, Portree High School, Westhill Academy and Sgoil Lionacleit) from six local authorities (Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Moray, Highland, North Ayrshire and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar), plus three independent schools.

Attendance at the online leg was lower than in the previous year, indicating a growing preference for in-person engagement. This trend has been factored into planning for the 2026-27 series.

Across both events, schools from a total of 21 local authorities took part. Evaluations showed that pupils took away clear key messages from the workshops they attended and were enthused both by the wider opportunities to study languages at university and by practical tips they could apply directly to their current Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

Summary	In-person	Online
Conference date	10 September 2025	19 November 2025
Attendees	164 (143 pupils)	112 (of 173 registered)
Schools	21	7
Local authorities	12	6 (+ 3 independent schools)
University faculties delivering	5	8

Next steps

On evaluating the 2025-26 Moving Forward with Languages programme, it was agreed that school-university liaison for 2026-27 should focus on supporting languages teachers across Scotland to make the case for languages with stakeholders and decision-makers who may not realise the wide-ranging benefits of language learning for young people. In view of this, we plan to produce an interactive map of "Moving Forward with Languages" in Scotland, to give a flavour of the universities where young people can continue their language learning in Scotland. This will complement and augment information contained in the already excellent "Beyond School" section of the SCILT website and encourage more young people to engage with language learning as part of their future studies.

Language Ambassadors Online

In 2025-26, Language Ambassadors Online continued to provide learners across Scotland with opportunities to hear directly from university students about the value of language learning and the

many pathways it can open. Through a series of live, interactive online events, the programme enables learners to engage with current undergraduate students studying languages and related subjects, helping to raise aspirations and encourage continued language learning beyond school.

During session 2025–26, SCILT delivered 6 online ambassador sessions between September and March, scheduling events at a variety of times and on different days to maximise accessibility for schools across the country.

Each session featured a panel of student ambassadors drawn from universities across Scotland. Ambassadors represented a diverse range of degree programmes, studying languages as single honours, joint honours or as part of wider degree pathways. By sharing their personal experiences of language learning, university life, study abroad and career aspirations, ambassadors provided authentic and relatable role models for learners considering their own next steps.

This year, 71 student ambassadors from 6 universities signed up to the programme, and many of those took part in live sessions or supported us to produce recorded sessions for schools to watch at times that suit them. As in previous years, the ambassadors demonstrated exceptional enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment. They engaged confidently with learners, responded thoughtfully to questions and offered honest reflections on the opportunities and challenges of studying languages at university. SCILT continued to support ambassadors through training, guidance and ongoing mentoring to ensure they felt confident in delivering engaging online presentations.

Sessions remained highly interactive, incorporating quizzes, polls and question-and-answer opportunities alongside ambassador presentations. Each ambassador contributed a short presentation using personal photographs and examples from their own language learning journey, including experiences of studying, working or volunteering abroad where relevant. This format continues to encourage meaningful dialogue between learners and ambassadors while highlighting the wide variety of pathways available through languages.

During 2025–26, primary and secondary schools from 18 of Scotland's 32 local authorities participated in the programme. The programme also continued to attract interest from schools beyond Scotland, with participation from Spain, Ireland and England providing opportunities to showcase Scottish higher education and encourage discussion of different qualification pathways. In total, approximately 2400 learners took part across the year's events.

Alongside the national online programme, universities continued to offer local in-person Language Ambassador visits where appropriate, enabling schools to develop longer-term relationships with their nearest higher education institutions. Details of participating universities and contacts remain available through the SCILT website.

Next steps

Continue to develop both the live and recorded elements of the programme to provide flexible engagement opportunities for schools.

Recruit ambassadors from an increasingly diverse range of universities, language combinations and backgrounds to reflect the breadth of language learning pathways available.

Explore opportunities to develop additional digital resources, enabling schools to access ambassador content asynchronously alongside the live sessions.

Continue to recognise ambassadors' contribution through training, professional development and digital certification.

Language Explorers Scotland

This programme aims to support and encourage language uptake in the senior phase. Language Explorers Scotland offers a short series of mentoring sessions led by university students with lived experience of language learning and multiculturalism, giving young people time to explore the bigger picture of language learning with a trained, supportive mentor. Similar schemes elsewhere in the UK have led to increased numbers of learners continuing with languages into higher levels of study.

Next steps identified for 2025-26 were partially met. These include preparation and sharing of a student recruitment flyer with university contacts, student associations and international offices at each partner university. This was also promoted via My Place; and a template for mentor accreditation was developed, based on the 2024-25 pilot, for adaptation and use by more universities.

Mentor and school recruitment, along with mentor training, were finalised in early November, with mentoring sessions running from November 2025 to March 2026. Regular drop-in sessions supported mentors throughout, while ongoing touchpoint emails to schools ensured smooth communication and early resolution of any issues.

Feedback was strongly positive. Schools noted the impact of mentoring on learner motivation and expectations around uptake; further evidence on the latter will be gathered from schools in June. Mentors also reported gains in confidence and leadership skills, with some citing the experience as a factor in considering a future career in teaching.

Twelve schools from 12 local authorities applied to the programme, and 9 completed it (4 of these returning schools), representing 9 local authorities: Aberdeenshire*, Argyll & Bute, Dundee*, East Dunbartonshire*, Fife, Highland, Inverclyde*, Moray and West Dunbartonshire. Of the 3 schools that withdrew, one was due to a lack of communication between mentor and school, and two were due to long-term staff absence limiting school capacity. Sessions were delivered by 11 mentors from 4 universities: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Heriot-Watt and St Andrews.

Next steps

Prioritise student recruitment by running bespoke information sessions with individual universities to grow the mentor pool. Initial dates have been identified pending confirmation in late August 2026 once university timetables are finalised.

Support university partners in developing accreditation pathways for volunteer mentors, recognising their contribution to widening participation and building sustainable recruitment routes.

Use increased mentor capacity to engage more schools and reach more BGE learners.

Engage in knowledge exchange and professional dialogue with UK colleagues via The Languages Gateway editorial group and Multilingual Mentoring in Wales.

Short-Life Collaboration: Accelerate Programme – Languages and International Communications Challenge

SCILT is collaborating with colleagues from the University of Strathclyde to develop a Challenge for the Accelerate widening access programme that will offer S5/S6 language learners the opportunity to experience a week of university study combining languages with other subject areas. The programme will run from 8-12 June 2026 at the University of Strathclyde. Languages featured on this programme until ca. 2016 and we look forward to re-introducing a language focus and highlighting the vital skills that language learning confers in and of itself, but also in combination with joint honours degree programmes.

Support for multilingual learners and heritage languages

SCILT has continued to strengthen its engagement with the higher education sector through collaborative work focused on multilingualism, language education and teacher development. In September 2025, SCILT co-delivered a session at the BAAL Conference alongside colleagues from the University of Strathclyde, Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne and Queen Margaret University as part of the colloquium "I learned with the children": rethinking initial teacher education and professional learning for primary class teachers in the light of Scotland's L3 policy. Building on this successful collaboration, further discussions took place in October, identifying opportunities for ongoing partnership and research. Conversations among university colleagues continue to explore multilingualism and the potential of the L3 space as a catalyst for transformative and inclusive practice in primary education. SCILT looks forward to supporting this work through its extensive network of schools and practitioners.

Alongside this, SCILT has strengthened links with colleagues across the sector through its involvement in the newly funded Aberlangs project at the University of Aberdeen. As part of the project, SCILT will contribute to professional learning workshops for primary and secondary teachers scheduled for autumn 2026. SCILT is also exploring opportunities to contribute to an updated international volume examining how teachers, teacher educators and communities are adapting their practice towards increasingly multilingual primary classrooms. A proposed contribution would showcase innovative practice from SCILT's Mandarin and Arabic online programmes, highlighting how these models support multilingualism, inclusion and professional learning while delivering benefits for both teachers and learners in primary school settings.

Next steps

Continue to collaborate with colleagues in SIoE on proposed publication.

Through various initiatives, strengthen the positioning of multilingualism within equity, inclusion and anti-racist education.

Tailor professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders to develop confidence in multilingual and culturally responsive pedagogies. Professional learning should support practitioners to create inclusive learning environments that value linguistic diversity and meet the needs of multilingual learners.

Showcase effective practice from schools, local authorities and EAL services.

Develop and strengthen partnerships across the education system to share expertise and effective practice. This should include closer collaboration with local authorities, e.g., Glasgow City Council, EAL teams, higher education institutions, community language organisations and other key stakeholders to support a coordinated approach.

Encourage schools to work collaboratively with families and communities, recognising the important role they play in supporting language development, cultural understanding and learner success. Increased use of multilingual communication and community partnerships can help strengthen engagement and inclusion.

Promote greater awareness and uptake of the Scottish Languages Education Award (SLEA) as a means of recognising learners' linguistic skills, intercultural understanding and wider achievements. Celebrating multilingual attainment can help raise the status of languages and reinforce the value of linguistic diversity.

Learning Partnerships

Sustainable Designs for Living and Learning: Embedding Multilingualism into Learning for Sustainability (SDLL)

Year 1 of the SDLL project has seen significant engagement across all project strands. Members of the research team have spent a considerable amount of time in the 3 partner schools gathering data, trying out project-related activities with learners across all stages and engaging in dissemination activities. In addition, the artists have also contributed to these site visits and engagement with schools. The feedback from teachers and learners has been broadly positive in terms of incorporating multilingualism into nature-based learning and work in this area will continue as we progress into Year 2. Learners have displayed an increased curiosity about the natural world and how languages and cultures connect with this. Our 3 partner schools have created their design for the school's multilingual living spaces and are now in the process of creating this.

Having carried out research to find out perceptions from educators and families about multilingualism and learning for sustainability, Bilingualism Matters published its draft report: Language Ecologies: An overview of multilingual practices and approaches in Scottish primary schools, as commissioned by the project. 50 people completed the national survey across 21 local authorities. 8 teachers took part in 3 focus groups (for teachers) from 6 local authorities.14 parents from Edinburgh Council took part in focus groups for parents and carers.

Following the call for Year 2 schools to join the project, SCILT received 28 applications in total from schools across 16 local authorities. 10 schools were selected, each from different authorities, with a mix of rural and urban settings.

Updates about the project's journey and progress are shared regularly via the SDLL blog, SCILT e-bulletin/newsletter and social media channels. Engagement with the SDLL blog has been high with 65% of users having visited the site directly through the URL. The top two pages on the blog so far are Sustainable Designs for Living and Learning page and the Year 2 call out for schools. The best performing post on Instagram had 312 views and the best performing post on Facebook had 89 views with 62 accounts reached.

The SDLL logo competition proved to be popular with learners across all 3 partner schools. Over 100 inspired designs were received and from that, the winning design was selected and digitised by a senior graphic designer at the University of Strathclyde. An exhibition to celebrate the children's work was held in 3 different venues across Glasgow, including the City Chambers, and a smaller exhibition was also held in Paisley. The official logo is now visible across the project's official website and communication channels.

Next steps

Building on the learning and progress made during Year 1, practitioners from Year 2 schools will begin to implement and trial selected activities with their learners. Feedback from these experiences will be collected and used to inform the ongoing development of the project. This will take place through regular reflective touchpoints scheduled throughout the session, creating opportunities to share successes, identify challenges, and adapt approaches where needed.

The SDLL team will continue to identify and explore opportunities for dissemination in order to share learning, outcomes, and effective practice more widely.

The team will maintain its focus on supporting practitioners by enhancing their knowledge, skills, and access to resources that promote multilingual sustainable and arts-based practices. This will be achieved through targeted professional learning opportunities, collaborative discussion, and practical guidance designed to strengthen confidence and capacity in this area.

Collaboration with all project partners will remain central to the work moving forward. The team will continue to engage with partners to strengthen relationships, share expertise, and ensure that the project benefits from a wide range of perspectives and contributions, supporting both sustainability and

long-term impact.

Francofoot/Calciamo

Francofoot/Calciamo is a national interdisciplinary initiative developed by Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) in partnership with the University of Stirling. It combines language learning with Physical Education and Health and Wellbeing, using football as an engaging context for learners in S2 and S3. The project builds on the earlier SCILT initiative Le Foot et la Francophonie and originated through a British Academy-funded research project investigating whether an interdisciplinary approach could help address the gender gap in language uptake at secondary school level.

Following the successful pilot and national launch in 2024–25, the focus during session 2025–26 was on embedding, extending and promoting the project. The longer timescale enabled greater emphasis on teacher support, wider dissemination of the resources and the development of additional language versions.

Development and dissemination of resources

The original Francofoot and Calciamo resources were developed collaboratively with teachers from six secondary schools across Scotland and are designed to support learning in both Languages and PE. The materials provide scaffolded language learning around three broad themes: learners' sporting profiles, health and wellbeing, and football training. They include lesson plans, presentations, worksheets, vocabulary activities, PE lessons and supporting audio/video materials.

During 2025–26, work continued to develop and broaden the resource offer. In particular, new Spanish and German versions were developed, extending the potential reach of the project beyond the original French and Italian languages. The Spanish materials were produced through work by colleagues at the University of Strathclyde, while the German materials were developed collaboratively by teachers from Bishopbriggs Academy, Meldrum Academy and Firrhill High. These developments represent an important step towards establishing the approach as a wider model for interdisciplinary language learning rather than a project restricted to French and Italian.

The existing French and Italian materials continued to be promoted through the SCILT website as free, ready-to-use resources for schools. The materials are designed to be flexible and can be used as part of regular classroom learning, interdisciplinary learning, wider achievement or enrichment activities.

Professional learning and teacher support

A key priority for 2025–26 was to support teachers to make fuller use of the resources and to explore how football could provide an authentic context for interdisciplinary learning.

Francofoot/Calciamo was incorporated into SCILT professional learning activity, including the first Big Question session of 2025–26, Interdisciplinary Learning – What, Why and How? This session used the project as a practical example of how languages can be meaningfully connected with other curricular areas and provided opportunities for practitioners to consider how interdisciplinary approaches can enrich learning and make language learning more relevant to learners.

The project was also promoted through SCILT networks and communications, including the Teachers of Italian in Scotland network. This helped to strengthen awareness of Calciamo amongst Italian teachers and provided opportunities to share the resources and discuss their use in schools.

National competition 2025–26

The national Francofoot and Calciamo competition was run again during 2025–26, providing a high-

profile opportunity for learners to apply their language skills in an authentic sporting context. The competition was open to S2 and S3 learners and retained the two-part entry introduced in 2024–25. The competition was promoted nationally, with an entry deadline of 8 May 2026. Prizes were awarded to participating schools.

Due to uptake and capacity issues, the decision has been made to move to a 4-yearly schedule of running the competition, tying in with the FIFA World Cup and allowing greater focus on promotion and participation.

Impact and contribution to wider priorities

Francofoot/Calciamo continues to support a number of national priorities for language education. By bringing Languages and PE together, the project provides an authentic context in which learners can use language for a real purpose and develop confidence through active participation.

The football context is particularly valuable in helping to challenge perceptions about who languages are "for" and in providing an alternative entry point for learners who may not initially identify strongly with language learning. The original research project was explicitly concerned with the gender gap in language uptake, and the subsequent development of the resources and competition has maintained this focus on engagement and motivation.

The development of Spanish and German materials during 2025–26 represents a significant expansion of the project and provides the potential for the approach to reach a substantially wider range of learners and practitioners across Scotland.

Overall evaluation

The development of Francofoot/Calciamo during 2025–26 has successfully moved the initiative beyond its initial pilot phase towards a sustainable national resource and competition.

The project has:

- established and promoted a bank of high-quality, interdisciplinary French and Italian resources
- continued to provide a national competition for S2 and S3 learners
- strengthened links between language learning, PE and Health and Wellbeing
- provided professional learning opportunities for teachers exploring interdisciplinary learning
- extended the project through the development of Spanish and German materials
- maintained a clear focus on learner engagement, motivation and the gender gap in language uptake
- provided a high-profile context in which learners can experience the practical and wider value of language skills

The project has therefore developed from a time-limited research and pilot initiative into a broader model for engaging learners with languages through authentic, interdisciplinary contexts.

Next steps

The next phase of development will focus on:

completing and disseminating the Spanish and German resource packages

promoting the expanded resources to schools and local authorities across Scotland

supporting schools in their use of the materials and organisation of local competitions and events

continuing to provide professional learning to support effective interdisciplinary use of the materials

promoting the national competition and exploring opportunities to broaden participation in its new 4-yearly schedule

further developing links between football, languages, employability and career pathways

exploring the potential for the Francofoot/Calciamo model to provide a sustainable framework for interdisciplinary language learning across a wider range of languages and contexts

Priority 2: Promotion and partnerships

Professional partnerships

Languages Network Scotland (LANGS) partnership

Languages Network Group Scotland (LANGS) meets three times a year to facilitate communication between language stakeholders in Scotland. Meetings include key updates from Scottish Government, Education Scotland and SCILT/CISS, as well as information from cultural organisations and opportunities for members to network and share ideas.

SCILT facilitates and is a key player in the organisation of the group and is responsible for maintaining and updating the LANGS database, dissemination of information to LANGS members, and coordinating the online and in-person meetings.

During the past review year there was an in-person meeting in June 2025 and two online meetings in November 2025 and March 2026.

Two local authority networking sessions, which take place as an online twilight session separate from the main meeting, took place over 2025-26. These allow teachers who are class committed to contribute to LANGS discussions and network with colleagues if they are unable to attend the main meetings.

As outlined in the last annual report under next steps, the LANGS focus group was reinstated this session. This group is to remain small with only one representative each from Scottish Government, Education Scotland, SCILT, SALT and FE/HE. Three meetings took place over the past review period.

The LANGS webpage continues to be updated with materials after each meeting, and the LANGS Team allows for opportunities to be shared in between meetings.

Sources of evidence

- LANGS group membership: remained steady with 113 representing 29 authorities in March 2025, and 110 representing 29 authorities in March 2026. In March 2026 the three authorities missing were Clackmannanshire, Orkney and Scottish Borders.
- LANGS LA networks meetings: attendance has remained consistent with comparatively good LA representation:
    - November 2025: 14 attendees representing 11 authorities
    - March 2026: 16 attendees representing 14 authorities
- LANGS main meetings: attendance has dropped a little over the review period, however the number of authorities represented has increased slightly:
    - June 2025: 37 attendees representing 8 authorities
    - November 2025: 29 attendees representing 11 authorities
    - March 2025: 32 attendees representing 12 authorities

Next steps

Chairs are continuing to investigate setting up a dedicated LANGS mailbox as well as a LANGS website distinct from the SCILT website.

Chairs are consistently looking at ways to increase representation to cover all local authorities.

Dates for 2026-27 meetings to be decided.

Election of new Chairs to be discussed over coming session.

International partnerships

Partnership with Qatar Foundational International

SCILT's partnership with QFI entered its fifth year in 2024-25 and the Discovering the World of Arabic courses have reached 1145 pupils in Scottish primary and secondary schools this session.

2025-26 marks the sixth year of SCILT's partnership with QFI on the Discovering the World of Arabic programme. This session, 1184 primary and secondary learners learned Arabic with us in schools from Argyll & Bute to Shetland. To date, over 4000 young people have participated in this programme since it was launched. Many schools return to this programme year on year because they value the high-quality and inclusive learning provision that it offers.

Regular departmental meetings, quality assurance processes and opportunities for professional learning and observations underpin collaborative working and curriculum-making with our team of qualified, committed Arabic teachers.

In May 2025, children and young people joined their Arabic teachers at SCILT's Ramshorn base for an event entitled Celebrating the World of Arabic. This was a successful event that showcased Arabic learning by participants in different schools and that built a community of learning around Arabic.

Opportunities for teachers continue to be offered through our Taste of Arabic mini-series. This runs in May/June and gives colleagues an insight into Arabic language and cultures ahead of starting the programme with learners. It also allows class teachers to become more familiar with the delivery platform for live and asynchronous lessons, effectively solving issues before they arise.

Throughout this academic session, 8 primary schools from 6 local authorities and 11 secondary schools from 7 local authorities participated in weekly live Arabic sessions. There is growing demand for an Arabic qualification pathway to be established and SCILT is advocating for this with Qualifications Scotland. This would benefit all learners and raise the profile of Arabic learning, thereby supporting inclusion for one of Scotland's most widely spoken community languages. Furthermore, it would put Scottish learners on a more equal footing with English learners who can access Arabic at GCSE and A-Level.

Promotion for 2026-27 has begun and registrations for primary and secondary Arabic courses are due to close at the end of April 2026.

Next steps

We are exploring ways of offering an Arabic language immersion experience to young people who are following the Discovering the World of Arabic courses. Preliminary ideas for approaches to this were gathered during the QFI Arabic immersion event in Newcastle in July 2024.

Continue to develop and improve our innovative online Arabic learning programme.

Work to include Arabic as part of the Modern Languages for Life and Work Award as a first step on the qualification's pathway in Scotland.

Explore opportunities to offer a mobility experience to senior phase Arabic learners.

Develop and launch an Arabic immersion-camp experience for BGE Arabic learners.

Identify a date to run an Arabic language event with primary Arabic learners.

Explore the possibility for our Arabic teachers to apply for GTCS registration.

Scope class teacher interest in a longer Arabic beginners' course as part of our CLPL offer for teachers.

Partnership with other language centres (INNLAC)

Two of SCILT 's Professional Development Officers, one primary and one secondary, took part in INNLAC 2026 in Leiden, Netherlands.

The topics examined at this form were: teacher competencies, motivation, curriculum redesign and multilingualism. These were examined through consideration of papers submitted by each of the participating national language centres, presentations by key stakeholders in each area in the Netherlands, and group discussion. Important, shared priorities were identified, and discussions were started on collaborative ways forward to address these.

Plans are already in place to continue this work in Norway in May 2027 at the next INNLAC meeting in-person, with consideration also being given to the possibility of online collaborations in the interim.

British Sign Language (BSL)

Support for BSL

The BSL learning programme this session has continued to be a popular option with schools opting for BSL as its L3. Following numerous applications from primary schools across 16 local authorities, five schools from five local authorities were selected, involving a total of 84 learners overall. The block of online learning was led by West Scotland BSL and livestreamed from the Ramshorn in Glasgow. The learners responded positively to the lessons and engaged with follow-up materials supplied by the tutors to consolidate learning. Feedback from teachers was very positive, which highlights clearly the positive impact this programme of language learning has had on their learners. Due to funding, SCILT will no longer be able to offer BSL as an L3 option for the time being.

Promotional events/campaigns

Support for national competitions

Our World

Our World is a national, inter-disciplinary competition for S1-6 learners, previously run by the Scottish European Educational Trust (SEET) and now organised by SCILT, Scotland's National Centre for Languages. It combines language learning with the art of filmmaking, bringing in aspects such as design, drama, sound and technology within the context of Learning for Sustainability and environmental education. The competition builds valuable employability skills such as team-working, creativity, organisation, communication, problem solving and much more.

Learners work in teams to create a storyboard for a short film, based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Learners whose films are shortlisted take part in an online workshop which includes input from a professional filmmaker. Learners then work in their groups to turn their ideas into a real film, which is shown at an online film screening showcase and awards ceremony. It is a

great opportunity for budding filmmakers to use their language skills, or for budding linguists to use their filmmaking skills!

As outlined in the last annual report, an external evaluation of the project was undertaken by education consultant and former SEET trustee Ann Robertson. The review included online surveys, interviews with teachers and learners who have participated in Our World, and input from SCILT staff. Following this review a number of changes were implement across the project. Two key changes were moving the filmmaking workshop and ceremony online to ensure equity and amending the project timeline to avoid clashing with busy periods in schools.

The deadline for storyboard submissions is now 19 June, and internal shortlisting will take place during the school holidays. Shortlisted entries will be informed in August and invited to the online filmmaking workshop in September. The final award ceremony and screening will take place in December.

Sources of evidence

We will review submission numbers once they come in.

Next steps

Deliver competition outcomes within new timeline.

Conduct internal evaluation upon completion of the competition and consider areas of challenge/improvement.

Euroquiz

Euroquiz is an annual project open to all P6 pupils across Scotland. Previously organised by the Scottish European Educational Trust (SEET), SCILT took over the running of Euroquiz in April 2024. The competition sees teams of four working together to broaden their knowledge of Europe and the wider world. Subjects covered include languages, history, geography, culture and European affairs. Heats take place in local authorities from January to March, with the winning teams from all areas progressing to the National Euroquiz Final in June.

SCILT ran the competition in its entirety for the first time in the 2024-25 session. Following review of external feedback and the completion of an internal evaluation, several changes were made to the competition for the 2025-26 session. In the local heats phase this included the addition of short videos for the languages round, and the provision of a recorded version of the entire heat for use by local authority coordinators. For the final event, changes included making amendments to the language round and revising the rules around tiebreaks and the top three teams.

Local authority heats took place online and in-person from January to March 2026. The national final takes place on 12 June in Edinburgh, hosted by new Quizmaster Ann Robertson.

Sources of evidence

29 authorities took part in June 2025 final.

29 local authorities ran heats in 2026.

509 schools participated in heats for the 2026 competition, a drop from 560 in the past two years.

Evaluations conducted with LA coordinators, teachers and pupils, which will be reviewed when future planning.

Next steps

Evaluations conducted by pupils / teachers / local authority organisers to be reviewed.

Internal evaluation to take place.

Mother Tongue Other Tongue

Mother Tongue Other Tongue (MTOT) is a multilingual poetry competition which celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity through creative writing. It offers a unique opportunity to showcase the many languages spoken and learned by young people in school and at home.

For the 2025-26 session MTOT focused on the written word. The project aims to celebrate all language learning as well as the rich diversity of heritage and community languages in use throughout the wider languages landscape. A key aim of the project is to encourage the creative use of languages being learned and used in Scotland's schools and communities.

Entries are accepted in two categories; Mother Tongue, for those pupils whose native language is not English and who speak another language at home with their families and Other Tongue, for those who are learning a language at school or independently. To this end the competition is open to all school-age pupils across Scotland who speak and learn other languages and is judged in the age ranges P1-P4, P5-P7, S1-S3 and S4-S6.

In the 2025-26 session the competition launched on National Poetry Day in October with a supporting video from the Scots Makar, Peter Mackay. The entry deadline was moved to International Mother Language Day in February and the online Award ceremony held in March to celebrate World Poetry Day.

Support for language promotion

The European Day of Languages (EDL) is celebrated across Europe on 26 September every year. It aims to promote the rich linguistic diversity of Europe and raise awareness of the importance of lifelong language learning for everyone.

SCILT supports schools to celebrate EDL by:

- sharing news, themes, update, opportunities and online resources from ECML
- updating our website with ideas on how to celebrate with links to external sites
- celebrating the events that schools organise by promoting them in our EDL blog and our newsletter

We ran a social media campaign on all our platforms in the run up to the day, sharing ideas for how schools could celebrate EDL 2025 and directed people to the range of online resources on our EDL webpage. These posts received a high level of engagement and the EDL pages on our website are the 14th most viewed pages for 2025-26, with 1.8K views across the course of the year. This is a 40% drop in the number of page views compared to the previous year.

The social media campaign did not have the same impact as previous years due to schools moving from X to diverse social media platforms.

Three schools submitted an article for the EDL blog. We included these articles in the SCILT winter newsletter, a further opportunity to spread the word about the day.

Next steps

We will use the full range of SCILT's social media together with the bulletin to promote European Day of Languages and the resources available on our website to support the day.

Languages Week Scotland (Communications strand)

In 2026, the week ran from 2–6 February, with the theme "Diverse voices, common ground".

The initiative highlighted Scotland as a linguistic powerhouse, with significant multilingual communities and an education policy supporting language teaching in schools, and encouraged participation from schools, families, community groups, cultural organisations, and businesses.

A wide range of activities and celebrations took place, including:

- Daily challenges for schools and families
- Suggested activities for early years, primary, and secondary learners
- Community-led events and showcases
- School-based opportunities for pupils and families to explore and share their heritage languages and cultures

Schools and organisations were encouraged to run events, share resources, and highlight multilingual voices.

The campaign objectives of Languages Week Scotland include:

- Raise awareness of Languages Week Scotland and the theme of multilingualism and intercultural dialogue.
- Showcase practice in schools and communities (events, lessons, creative work, partnerships).
- Reinforce the value of language learning for careers, connection and Scotland's global role.
- Amplify national reports and policy conversations (e.g. Language Trends Scotland).

Languages Week Scotland 2026 generated vibrant, positive conversation across multiple platforms (X, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Bluesky, LinkedIn and web coverage). Posts consistently highlighted celebration, inclusion and the value of language learning, with all captured messages conveying positive sentiment.

Activity ranged from classroom projects and food competitions to national policy and research discussions, showing strong alignment between grassroots school activity and national narratives about multilingualism and languages education. See bookmarked content and share examples here: https://uk.pinterest.com/scilt/languages-week-scotland-2026/

The campaign generated highly positive sentiment, clearly split between policy-focused engagement

and community-led celebration.

- Total Volume: 198 mentions tracked.
- Potential Impressions: 303,765 (Strong reach driven by partner amplification).
- Total Engagements: 1,987 interactions (likes, shares, comments).
- Sentiment: 100% Positive. Even discussions around "barriers" in education were framed constructively.

Of the total of 1,481 visits to the LWS website:

- 52% were to the homepage. The homepage hosts information for schools and partner organisations on how to get involved in the week. The homepage also hosts the blog.
- 37% were to the Daily Challenges.

Next steps

We would like to see more visits to the Events pages and more engagement with the blog, particularly as partners actively shared events with us for promotion. We will build this into future planning, considering how we can leverage social media and the SCILT e-bulletin to facilitate this.

The steering group has suggested there should be information on the site to encourage business partners to engage with the Week.

It continues to be difficult to monitor cross-channel engagement with the Week, particularly channels that are not used by LWS directly (eg X, YouTube). Monitoring the hashtag can help to overcome some of these obstacles. Consider using an advanced social media monitoring/listening tool, although this comes at a financial cost.

Linked to this, it continues to be difficult to garner full information on how schools celebrate Languages Week Scotland. The steering group suggests a question on this to be incorporated into the Language Trends survey.

Priority 3: Research and knowledge exchange

Collaboration on bids for research and diversification of funding streams

Transforming Cultures of Language Learning (TransCoLL)

Planning has started with colleagues from Stirling and Cardiff universities. Nine mentors from Scotland have already been identified from among the SLLP alums group. A mentee training weekend in Glasgow led by SCILT has been reserved for 20-21 March 2027, and five online professional learning workshops led by SCILT have been agreed across the academic year 2027-28. The director of SCILT has agreed to be part of the TransColl advisory group.

National and international knowledge exchange events

Research, scholarship, citizenship and knowledge exchange activities

SCILT colleagues have attended conferences and other knowledge exchange events since April 2025, a selection of these include:

- The Languages Gateway – editorial group involvement (SCILT Director and two PDOs); collaboration on working groups to develop toolkits and supportive professional learning around ambassador and mentoring programmes for languages
- Curriculum Improvement Cycle – SCILT Director and PDOs strategically involved in all layers of development (Steering Group, Core Group, Collaboration Group, Critical Friends)
- WISE, Qatar (Nov 2025) – "Humanity.io: Human values at the heart of education"

Participation in, and attendance at, national and international conferences

SCILT colleagues have presented at or facilitated sessions at numerous conferences and knowledge exchange events since April 2025, including:

- INNLAC Conference, Austria (June 2025) - "Multilingualism in the age of cocooning: why should we learn foreign languages?"
- BAAL, Glasgow (Sep 2025) – "I learned with the children: rethinking initial teacher education and professional learning for primary class teachers in the light of Scotland's L3 policy"

Engagement with research publications and collaboration with research projects

Scottish Languages Review

The Scottish Languages Review (SLR) is an open-access online journal, with up to two editions per year. The SLR aims to:

- provide language teachers, students, and researchers in Scotland with a strong voice in relation to all aspects of language teaching and learning
- promote discussion amongst language practitioners across all education sectors about mutual areas of interest or concern

- encourage greater debate between language learning theory and practice

The digest section contains information on recent language-related publications and provides links to articles from other academic journals that are free to download without subscription. There is also a summary of important upcoming language-related events and conferences.

The editorial team, formed in 2023, continues to look for ways to attract potential contributors. The wider range of categories available to potential authors was appealing to contributors prior to issue 38 (spring 2025) and reflected in the varied nature of their submissions. In addition, the SLR continues to be advertised by SCILT staff during presentations, and by media and comms colleagues in their bulletin and social media output.

Sources of evidence

The SLR webpage attracted 4151 hits during 2025-26 – an increase of more than double on the previous year. A notable 52.5% of readers accessed the site from outside the UK, demonstrating the publication's international reach.

Next steps

Following the publication of issue 38 in spring 2025, an initial expression of interest by a cluster of researchers for publishing Issue 39 was unfortunately withdrawn due to pressures within their institution. SCILT staff will continue to advertise the SLR at events and conferences, while the editorial team, as well as continuing to look for partners willing to help publicise the SLR as an accessible forum on which practitioners in Scotland and beyond may wish to disseminate their work, will explore new ways to promote and develop the journal. In order to enhance the international profile, partner associations from the INNLAC network will once again receive targeted approaches.

Collaborative Doctoral Award studentship (PhD)

SCILT continues to be the partner organisation in the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Collaborative Doctoral Award, led by the University of Stirling in partnership with the University of Glasgow. The 3.5-year doctoral project, "An evaluation of the Scottish Government's 1+2 language policy and its relation to uptake of French, Spanish and German in national school exams", is examining the long-term impact of the 1+2 policy on language learning and qualification uptake across Scotland.

During session 2025-26, doctoral researcher David Vescio continued to work closely with SCILT, combining his academic research with practical engagement in schools and professional learning. Building on the success of the Francofoot and Calciamo pilot, work this year focused on broadening the project's reach through the development of new interdisciplinary teaching resources in Spanish and German, enabling a wider range of schools and practitioners to engage with the approach.

Alongside these curriculum materials, a self-directed professional learning resource has been created to support practitioners in implementing the interdisciplinary model within their own contexts. Designed to provide flexible, accessible professional learning, the resource will encourage teachers to explore the pedagogical principles underpinning the project, considering the research evidence, and adapt the approach for their learners, and will be published on the SCILT website in the coming months.

David's continuing involvement with SCILT has enabled the research to remain firmly connected to

classroom practice while generating valuable insights into how interdisciplinary approaches can influence learner engagement and support greater participation in language learning. This practical strand complements the wider doctoral research, which continues to draw together national and local authority data alongside evidence gathered through school-based research.

The collaboration between the University of Stirling, the University of Glasgow and SCILT continues to strengthen the evidence base informing language policy and practice in Scotland. As curriculum reform progresses, the findings from the project have the potential to make an important contribution to discussions around the future of language learning and increasing uptake of languages in Scottish schools.

Next steps

Disseminate the expanded Spanish and German interdisciplinary resources and self-directed professional learning package to schools across Scotland.

Continue analysis of the impact of the 1+2 language policy using national and local authority data alongside school-based research.

Extend engagement with participating schools and local authorities to further explore the relationship between interdisciplinary learning, learner motivation and uptake of languages.

Outward facing communication

Website review

Maintaining an easy to navigate, relevant and attractive website is crucial to SCILT engaging with its stakeholders. During the period April 2025 to March 2026, the SCILT website saw 89K visitors and 223K pages viewed.

SCILT's website supports SCILT's priorities, as stated in the Strategic Plan.

Priority 1: To support high quality language learning and teaching in line with national priorities

The Professional Learning pages see a consistent number of visitors throughout the year, averaging around 100 each month. These pages host information on the range of PL opportunities SCILT provides, including PL workshops for local authorities, Professional Learning Partnerships, self-directed PL opportunities and Scotland's Languages Leadership Programme.

Priority 2: To highlight and demonstrate the benefits of multilingualism and intercultural competencies so that languages are widely recognised as a key skill for life and work

The pages hosting information and resources to support schools in celebrating Euroquiz have been particularly popular this year – a total of 46K visits over the course of the year make these the most popular pages. Pages hosting information on European Day of Languages and the SLEA have been consistently popular from last year to this year, and we are delighted to see such strong engagement with these campaigns.

Priority 3: To share information and language-related research, and facilitate knowledge exchange in Scotland and beyond

The News pages continued to see a high number of visits (16K), eclipsed only by the number of visits to the pages holding information on Euroquiz.

Visits to the Newsletter increased last year and continue at the same level. Visits to the SLR are 4K, an increase of 100% from last year.

Next steps

SCILT continues to monitor engagement and continues an annual review cycle to ensure content remains relevant. SCILT continues to promote specific website content through its social media channels and weekly news bulletin to ensure that its audience can access the most relevant pages of the website easily.

Communication strategy

E-bulletin

The bulletin aims to provide subscribers with a weekly selection of items happening in the languages community in Scotland, the UK and beyond. It is our primary means of promoting SCILT news and events and is an important and effective means of communication with practitioners.

"I'd like to say how useful I find the weekly SCILT bulletin! Every week I do browse it for resources and opportunities. It's because of the bulletin that I'll be taking some N5/Higher Spanish students to see a flamenco show at the Fringe this Friday! The bulletin alerted me to the show, and I made the plans back in June to take students and book tickets! So please pass on my praise and thanks to whoever works on the newsletter. It's such a great resource for MFL teachers!" (Jessica Laudi, Knox Academy)

"I know you already share information about the prize with teachers in Scotland – we are very grateful for this and for any additional help with promotion!" (Catriona, Queen's College Oxford regarding the Anthea Bell Prize)

"Thank you so much for giving us a hand in disseminating our activities and resources" (Antonio Goñi Mues, Consejería de Educación)

Over the period August 2025 to June 2026 there is a 3.23% increase in subscribers. Subscriber numbers in June 2025 stands at 1600.

The four most popular links during this period all relate to SCILT initiatives and resources, some with partners, to promote languages in schools and support language teaching.

Over half of the most popular links relate to SCILT initiatives ranging from professional learning opportunities for language teachers, promoting uptake and supporting exam preparation to awards and competitions. Our Christmas pages continue to feature high in the list along with events run in conjunction with eSgoil and DYW promoting the benefits of language skills for life and work. There has been high engagement with initiatives from Goethe-Institut offering German following the launch of SCILT's Teachers of German in Scotland (TOGS) network, leading to our popular Languages Week Scotland (LWS) page this year very narrowly missing a top 20 listing but coming 21st (354).

Next steps

Continue to ensure that the layout means the wide number of SCILT opportunities are easy to find.

Communicating with wider society

As part of the communications strategy, we have continued to build on the success of our targeted social media approach. We have seen a significant increase in followers on Instagram (up 34% to 694), Facebook (up 9% to 1971) and LinkedIn (up 49% to 541). Analytics are not available for Bluesky, but our followers have increase by 17% to 581.

Facebook is the platform with the most followers, however the platform with the highest engagement rate for posts is 4.48%. A large portion of our success on Instagram can be credited to the work our intern, Molly, has done creating a series of engaging Reels.

SCILT's combined presence across these platforms accounts for a significant number of external site referrals to our website. Facebook was the highest source driving traffic to our website.

On Facebook and Bluesky, we post daily to promote SCILT news, opportunities and resources. In addition, on Facebook, we share a mixture of SCILT opportunities, motivational quotes and fun language facts.

On the Instagram feed we share inspiring quotes, fun language trivia and facts and relevant SCILT opportunities. On LinkedIn we post twice a week – once to highlight SCILT opportunities and the other time to advocate for language skills.

Next steps

We will consolidate our presence on Facebook and Instagram and continue to use LinkedIn and Bluesky.

Newsletter

The SCILT newsletter is published twice yearly. For the first time this year we moved the newsletter from PDF to an online format using Canva to allow tracking of engagement with the newsletter.

The newsletter features articles about the work of SCILT and includes articles submitted by cultural organisations, local authorities and schools that showcase interesting approaches to language learning and teaching.

The SCILT newsletter was published in December 2025 and May 2026. We can see that the Spring newsletter had 231 views and the Winter newsletter had 329 views.

Next steps

We will continue to monitor engagement with the newsletter and continue with promotional campaigns to ensure that it is widely read and that we receive contributions from a wide range of schools and other partners.

Digital interns

SCILT/CISS recruited seven S6 students to participate in the 2025-26 digital internship programme. The aim of the programme is for S6 students to promote languages and language learning to their peers (15 to 18-year-olds) through social media.

The interns receive initial training from the SCILT team as well as ongoing support/mentoring throughout the project. This is supplemented with an additional training session in December where the digital interns hear from a range of external speakers.

This year, the team of digital interns chose to use Instagram and TikTok and posted regularly from August onwards. Posts included cultural and language content and aimed to engage learners across a range of languages and stages. The SCILT team is pleased with the impact of their content on TikTok, with many posts receiving >2K views; the highest performing post had 26.8K views.

Next steps

The programme has ended and the team are considering further means of engaging in this demographic.

Ramshorn communication strategy

The year has seen an increase in the use of the Ramshorn as an events space. We welcomed events from partners at the University of Strathclyde, and we are pleased to have increased the number of external bookings from outside the university community. This is elevating the profile of the Ramshorn, alongside the Ramshorn website, making the building an asset that is now helping to generate revenue for SCILT activities.

Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools

Priority 1: Supporting the learning experience for practitioners and learners

CLPL: learning and experiences 3-18

Support for GTCS registered teachers of Mandarin

We continue to maintain and support a network of local Mandarin teachers. This support is given directly or indirectly depending upon their needs. We offer professional learning events for all GTCS Mandarin teachers and student teachers in Scotland. In the financial year 2025-26, we delivered two professional learning and support sessions as we had set out in the strategic plan.

The first input of the year on 29th May 2025, was led by the GTCS teachers' themselves and was a 'show and tell' format, sharing ideas around cultural activities, outdoor learning, recognising characters and deploying a CET effectively. Nine GTCS registered Mandarin teachers attended the online session. Numbers were significantly down on usual due to SQA markers meetings for teachers of Chinese languages and other competing events.

The second input was in February, when CISS held a full-day in-person professional learning conference at the Ramshorn, Glasgow. This event was held jointly with CISS Chinese Exchange Teachers as an opportunity to network and share ideas as well as learn explore the theme of Inclusion. Fifteen GTCS Mandarin teachers attended, along with 51 Chinese Exchange Teachers. This included a keynote speech from Education Scotland representatives, a plenary discussion, a core workshop specific to GTCS teachers creating Senior Phase Assessments and two workshops from a choice of three options. A variety of speakers presented included those from University of Strathclyde, SCILT and CISS professional development officers and associates. The theme was "Teaching and Learning of Mandarin in times of change" and focused on a back-to-basics approach on issues affecting day to day practice. Topics covered included: using film in Mandarin lessons; employability; active learning the BGE; sharing practice in the Senior Phase; bilingual learners in the Chinese language classroom.

Next steps

We plan to hold two professional learning workshops throughout the year 2026-27 in May and February. The May session will include input from SCILT/CISS or an outside speaker, and one will be an in-person conference around the theme of the new curriculum. We hope to re-build the GTCS teachers' steering group, giving more leadership opportunities to teachers, and building on their previous work to allow for greater sustainability within the Mandarin teaching sphere.

Support for Chinese Exchange Teachers (CETs): Professional learning programme

We continue to offer professional learning opportunities which are designed to meet the needs of teachers in different contexts as part of the teaching of Chinese language and culture across Scotland. We provide support to the Chinese Exchange Teachers sent by CLEC by way of pastoral care and a comprehensive professional learning programme to help them along their individual journeys. Continuing from the success of the professional learning and support programme for Chinese Exchange Teachers (CETs) introduced in 2020, we delivered this programme to the 46 new

volunteer exchange teachers who arrived in two groups in September 2025. Five eligible volunteer teachers also remained in Scotland for a second year. Of the 51 CETs, 7 were post graduate education students from Southwest Jiaotong University in Chengdu, 3 were employed by TMEC, on exchange from schools in Tianjin, and 41 were students from Tianjin Normal University and Tianjin Foreign Studies University.

The comprehensive professional learning programme included four days of induction workshops and support for new exchange teachers to integrate them into life and work in Scotland on their arrival in September 2025. Each day of workshops covered a particular theme relating to life and work in Scotland and Scottish schools. Themes of the day included: welcome to Scotland; education system in Scotland; lesson planning and practical advice for working in Scotland. In addition to workshops and professional learning based on the education system, exchange teachers were given support and advice in finding accommodation, setting up bank accounts and were trained in using Microsoft software packages. One CET arrived later than the rest due to visa issues and was given an individual induction over 2 ½ days.

The induction programme was followed by eight monthly professional learning input sessions (alternating between 4 two-hour synchronous interactive workshops, a full day, in-person professional learning conference and 3 asynchronous recordings). There were also seven hour-long monthly online tutorial sessions. The CETs were split into seven groups of seven or eight CETs for the discussion tutorials, each facilitated by a CISS/SCILT professional development officer or associate and where possible, supported by one other volunteer tutor from the CISS network to allow for more individualised support. This upscaling of the previous structure has proven very successful, with CETs reporting that they feel supported and are progressing in their teaching.

All the themes covered by the professional learning are linked to the Standards for CETs, which were created from the GTCS Standards for Provisional Registration. The Year 1 CETs followed one programme, and the Year 2 CETs follow a different programme, using the same format. They joined together for the monthly discussion sessions, and the groups are allocated broadly on a geographical basis, allowing for mutual support and proximity. Full evaluation of the programme was conducted by means of a survey of all exchange teachers in May 2025. This fed into our plans for 2025-26. Teachers responded positively to the hybrid nature of professional learning, with a mix of personal interactions, asynchronous videos for self-access at a convenient time and synchronous online workshops which was easier, cheaper and more convenient to access than travelling long distances.

Next steps

Review professional learning programme for exchange teachers in light of increased numbers over 2025-26, in particular the tutor group set up, and to evaluate the new workshops developed for the Year 2 programme to inform future practice among CETs who choose to stay for another year.

Support for Chinese Exchange Teachers (CETs): Framework of progression

The Mandarin Learning Framework was developed specifically for use by CETs in Scottish schools as a Progression Pathway for beginners through the Mandarin language and was introduced in 2021. A follow-on Second Stage was launched in 2024.

We undertook a review of the first stage of the Framework in summer 2025. This process consisted of seeking feedback from all 66 Chinese Exchange Teachers through a survey on their use of the Framework and also on the views of a Focus Group of CETs who gave opinions, detailed suggestions

and comments on the document. As a result of this process, the Stage 1 document was revised and updated before being introduced to our new cohort of CETs in September 2025. The use of the Framework has been an important part of their Induction training and ongoing Professional Learning and has been discussed and promoted at events such as Regional Hub Meetings.

Learning partnerships

Development of Partnership Projects and Specialist hubs

We supported staff within the Specialist Hub at Scottish Opera to work with three Primary Confucius Classrooms, in Callander, Aberdeenshire and Stornoway to provide Professional Learning on their 'Dragon of the Western Seas' project, leading to successful performances by pupils.

Virtual Exchange Teacher (VET) Programme: Learning and Teaching

The Virtual Exchange Teacher Programme continues to go from strength to strength and is now in its sixth year, having completed eleven iterations of the programme. What was originally a response to decreased numbers of Chinese Exchange Teachers to deliver Mandarin lessons to Scottish primary school learners during the Covid-19 pandemic, has become a means of widening participation in Mandarin learning and teaching across local authorities. The programme is now open to all BGE learners in any state primary or secondary school in Scotland. The programme is particularly popular with rural schools in remote areas where access to in-person specialists is more challenging.

CISS continues to develop our partnership with Southwest Jiaotong University in Chengdu, China and has used this partnership to increase our provision of online Mandarin lessons to primary and secondary learners across Scotland.

Lessons are taught using an 8-week progressive Mandarin courses at three levels, developed by CISS and which have been extensively evaluated and adapted to meet the needs of BGE learners studying Mandarin as an L3.

The course materials continue to be improved following feedback from Scottish teachers and VETs themselves. With the continued large number of CETs arriving in Scotland in September 2025, we expected uptake of the virtual programme to decrease. However, this was not the case and registrations for the VET programme from October-December 2025 increased once more from the previous year. Registrations in February 2026 for the April-June teaching block were also projected to be increased from the same time in 2025.

Dates	Classes	Schools	Local authorities	VETs	Learners
April-June 2025	41	17	8	20 + 6 CETs	863
Oct-Dec 2025	46	26	10	44	1035

Next steps

Continue to offer online VET courses to schools across Scotland to provide equity of access to Mandarin learning to all primary and BGE learners.

Work with partners at Southwest Jiaotong University to continue the pipeline of Mandarin teachers available to teach online lessons. Develop this partnership further to promote the programme wider across China and support research conducted by colleagues.

Develop and build upon a newly agreed partnership with Tianjin Normal University to sustain and expand provision of Virtual Exchange Teachers from the university, and to provide an opportunity for teaching practice for students coming to Scotland as Chinese Exchange Teachers in the future.

Virtual Exchange Teacher (VET) Programme: Professional Learning

From April-June 2025, 20 existing VETs from SWJTU continued with their professional learning by means of four fortnightly professional learning seminars over the teaching block period, delivered by professional development officers.

Themes covered in the first level programme included:

- Introduction to formative assessment review of learning intentions and success criteria
- Engaging learners online
- Good practice in the virtual classroom
- Teaching talking skills

These sessions were followed by a fifth seminar where the teaching programme was evaluated.

In weeks 6 and 7 of the teaching block (June), VETs were observed in lessons and given personalised feedback on their teaching. In all, 17 lessons were observed by CISS development officers and their SCILT colleagues.

Prior to their participation in the programme in October 2025, 35 VETs from Southwest Jiaotong were given induction training over 4 days. Nine VETs also returned from the previous year making a total of 44 VETs working on the programme in the autumn term. Topics covered during the induction were: an overview of the Scottish Education System; safeguarding; planning a lesson; delivering online lessons; Scottish primary schools; working with colleagues; IT systems and the VET course.

Throughout the teaching period, 4 professional learning workshops were held on alternate weeks, at 2 levels: beginner for those who had not participated in the programme before, and intermediate for those who had prior experience of the programme. Topics covered at beginner level included: introduction to formative assessment, teaching talking skills, engaging learners online and good practice in VET lessons. Topics covered at intermediate level included: next steps in formative assessment, managing the online classroom, using digital technology in lessons and online teaching challenges.

Both levels completed the programme with an evaluation session where feedback was shared on the programme and their teaching progress through lesson observations.

In weeks 6 and 7 of the teaching block (December), the 44 VETs were observed in lessons and given personalised feedback on their teaching. In all, 27 lessons were observed by CISS staff.

Next steps

Evaluate and expand a two-level professional learning programme for VETs to accommodate those who are new to the programme and those who have participated before, covering two teaching blocks.

Engage with new partners at Tianjin Normal University to increase VET numbers and develop a suitable professional learning programme for the students there.

Hub links

Eco Learning Partners

CISS ran another very successful Eco Learning Partners project, for the fourth time in April-June 2025. Eco Learning Partners is an interdisciplinary project combining Learning for Sustainability with Mandarin language. It builds Scottish learners' intercultural competencies through working in partnership with their counterparts in Tianjin, China and sharing in their learning together via video calls.

Teachers from participating schools are trained to use a progressive, adaptable framework of lessons to cover a minimum of eight weeks and which tackles themes such as climate and climate change, the carbon cycle, biodiversity, the Global Goals and climate action. Over eight weeks from April to June 2025, the schools simultaneously delivered a series of lessons on climate emergency, based on materials adapted from Keep Scotland Beautiful, RZSS' Beyond the Panda programme and resources developed by CISS staff. Mandarin language resources which link to each of the themes have also been developed by CISS staff so that language can be integrated into the theme fully.

From the Scottish teachers' perspective, the programme was a huge success, and they and their learners enjoyed taking part and benefitted from the experience. The CISS training session was well received and deemed useful and informative.

April – June 2025

Classes	20
Schools	16
Local Authorities	10
Participants	451

In autumn 2025, CISS launched the promotion of the 25/26 programme. As of March 2026, the following participants were registered to take part in Quarter 1 of 26-27.

Classes	24
Schools	18
Local Authorities	11
Participants	Circa 500

Eighteen Scottish primary schools registered along with their partner schools in Tianjin, China. In all, 30 Scottish teachers and CETs attended a full day in-person training and information day to prepare for the launch of the 2026 iteration in February 2026, and feedback was extremely positive from the teachers. Training was given on the format and structure of the project, how to use the software

necessary to run the project smoothly, successful collaboration with Chinese partners, and how to plan lessons around the framework. An online information session was held with Chinese schools in March 2026, along with a follow up planning meeting for Scottish teachers. At the end of Q4, the 2026 programme was ready to launch.

Next steps

Continue to offer this opportunity to schools in the summer term of school session 2025-26 and work with them to develop a sustainable and long-lasting project which can be fully integrated into the schools' curriculum.

Aim to maintain or increase participation in session 2026-27 by sustained promotion of the project in a variety of ways.

Continue to evaluate the project, including pupil voice, as well as feedback from class teachers and CETs. Report on findings to stakeholders and act on suggestions for improvement.

Supporting uptake in National Qualifications and other accreditation

Discovering China National Qualifications

The Discovering China National Qualifications programme continues to provide learners across Scotland with access to high-quality online Mandarin (Simplified) teaching at National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. Alongside these national qualifications, SCILT/CISS also offers the Chinese Bridge Award, a Qualifications Scotland-recognised qualification designed to provide an accessible progression route for learners beginning their Mandarin learning journey or those who may not yet be ready to undertake a National Qualification.

Following the redevelopment of the Chinese Bridge Award during the previous session, the revised qualification was introduced in 2025–26. The updated award now spans SCQF Levels 3–6, providing greater flexibility for learners and schools and offering a clearer pathway into National Qualifications. The revised resources and assessments, developed in collaboration with Qualifications Scotland, have been well received and continue to strengthen the overall progression framework within the Discovering China programme.

During session 2025–26, the programme supported 68 learners from 20 schools across 13 local authorities. The continued growth of the programme reflects both sustained demand for online Mandarin provision and the commitment of participating schools to expanding language learning opportunities for their learners.

Teaching continued to be delivered through Microsoft Teams within Glow, providing learners with a consistent online learning environment while enabling effective communication between teachers, learners and schools. SCILT/CISS teachers, all of whom are GTCS-registered and fully qualified, were responsible for planning, teaching and assessing learners, working in close partnership with colleagues in participating schools whose ongoing support remains central to the programme's success. The teaching team continued to work collaboratively to deliver high-quality learning experiences across all qualification levels, sharing resources, expertise and effective practice.

The timetabling model introduced in recent years has continued to evolve, enabling the programme to respond flexibly to the differing timetable structures of schools across Scotland while maximising opportunities for learners to access Mandarin. The team also continued to strengthen relationships

with participating schools through regular communication and, new for this year, an online parents' evening and a programme of in-person visits, supporting a positive transition into online learning and fostering strong partnerships throughout the year.

Comprehensive information about the Discovering China programme, including guidance for schools, learner information and promotional materials, is available through the SCILT website.

Next steps

Continue to refine the timetable model to maximise access to online Mandarin provision for schools across Scotland.

Further develop progression pathways through the Chinese Bridge Award and National Qualifications.

Strengthen partnerships with participating schools through regular engagement and opportunities for in-person collaboration.

Continue to review and enhance teaching resources and digital approaches to ensure an engaging, high-quality learning experience for all learners.

CET arrival and pastoral support

In September 2025, 46 new volunteer CETs arrived from China to be deployed in Confucius hubs across Scotland. The teachers arrived in two groups, the first coming from Southwest Jiaotong University in Chengdu and Tianjin Normal University, and the second also travelling from Tianjin. During their induction, their health and wellbeing needs were met by the Chinese Director, while a full induction programme of professional learning took place, led by CISS Professional Development Officers.

CETs spent four days in Glasgow on arrival, acclimatising themselves to their new environment after which they transferred to their hub schools. Workshops covered a balance of information on living in Scotland and teaching preparation, including lesson planning, safeguarding, Scottish primary schools, Scottish secondary schools, the Scottish education system and looking at resources. CETs continued to be supported throughout the academic year by the Chinese Director and CISS staff.

The 46 new volunteer CETs joined five remaining Chinese exchange teachers, all from Tianjin Normal University to make a total of 51 CETs working in schools across Scotland in 20 local authorities.

Thanks to these continued partnerships with Chinese Universities, we will welcome a similar number of new Chinese Exchange Teachers to Scotland in autumn 2026 to teach in Scotland's schools for a year.

In addition to having their own mentor locally, who supports them both professionally and pastorally, each CET has been a member of a Tutor Group. The seven groups consist of 6-8 CETs and normally two tutors from amongst SCILT staff and our associates. The groups meet monthly online to follow up on Professional Learning sessions and to offer CETs the chance to get to know each other. Tutors support them professionally but also pass on any pastoral issues and give support where needed.

Next steps

Continue to evaluate the new mechanisms and procedures in place to support an increased number of CETs over session 2026-27.

Look for new ways for schools across Scotland to engage with Chinese Exchange Teachers in their schools and continue to encourage schools to have a Chinese Exchange Teacher.

Quality improvement

Hub support and challenge: planning for improvement

Operational plans

Part of the quality assurance procedure for our 39 Confucius hubs is monitoring the annual operational plan submission procedure. Hubs are required to submit annual returns including a finance report from the previous school year; an operational plan detailing what the project plans are for the coming school year with estimated budget for each project; and statistics on numbers of pupils who took Mandarin, length and frequency of classes and who delivered the classes.

The submitted paperwork is checked for relevance, financial accuracy, and content by the General Manager and CISS PDOs, and feedback is given on the projects.

The two Professional Development Officers, one to support primary schools and one for secondary schools, offered hubs additional support and gave detailed feedback on proposed plans, which has been welcomed. Despite ongoing staffing issues in some hubs, all plans had been completed and returned by quarter four, with suggestions given on how to develop projects moving forward.

Online hub support sessions

In quarter two, CISS held two information and support sessions for hub staff to ask for advice, network and receive training on aspects of running a hub. The first was related to project planning and completing operational plans and had 9 attendees (a decrease of 10 compared to last year) and the second provided information for CET mentors and had 13 attendees (a decrease of 23 compared to last year but similar numbers to 24-25). Those attending have reported these sessions as extremely useful and a great opportunity to ask questions in a more informal way and to share ideas with other hub staff.

Regional hub support meetings

In quarter 3, three regional engagement sessions took place to provide support for all hubs. These took place in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. There were three attendees at the Aberdeen meeting, four at the Edinburgh meeting and 13 attendees at the Glasgow meeting. School staff report it is increasingly difficult to get time out of school to attend in-person meetings. During these sessions, CISS staff gave an overview of current developments and projects, then invited hubs to share their work over the past session followed by open discussion and sharing of ideas for projects and addressing any questions or concerns about running a hub.

In addition, 6 individual hubs were supported through in-person visits by a Professional Development Officer.

Next steps

Continue with the same level of hub support.

Reduce in-person meetings to two, in Aberdeen and Glasgow.

Arrange individual visits to hubs to observe CET teaching, provide feedback, address any concerns and for general quality assurance purposes across the hubs.

Priority 2: Promotion and partnerships

Professional partnerships

CISS Board and Advisory Group

Four Advisory Group meetings in hybrid format were held in 2025/26 year.

The Advisory Group and Board are chaired by Douglas Brodie, Associate Principal (Inclusion), HaSS Faculty. The Advisory Group has representatives from the University of Strathclyde, schools, Confucius hubs, Heads of Education, businesses and independent consultants and teachers.

A Board meeting took place in Tianjin in October 2025. The Scottish chair of the CISS board, Professor Douglas Brodie co-hosted the board meeting in Tianjin with the deputy director of TMEC, Mme Lui. The Deputy Director of SCILT/CISS gave the annual report, and Yanyan Zhao, Chinese Director of CISS also attended in person with the delegation of head teachers from Scottish schools.

International partnerships

Liaison with CLEC (Centre for Language Education and Co-operation) and TMEC (Tianjin Municipal Education Commission)

Links with TMEC

Work with TMEC in 2025/26 was focused on the mobility programme for pupils, Tianjin strategic educational leaders' visit to Scotland and the Tianjin scholarship learners. Five local authorities (East Dunbartonshire, Fife, Highland, Perth & Kinross and Stirling) with a total of 55 pupils and staff went to Tianjin and Beijing in July 2025 for two weeks' language and cultural immersive experience. Twenty-one learners that received the Tianjin scholarship completed their one-year course in Tianjin Normal University (TNU) in July 2026. We are liaising with TMEC and TNU for the application of the new cohort of 22 scholars which will start their journey in September 2026.

The number of Chinese Exchange Teachers (CETs) dispatched by TMEC to Scotland dropped slightly from 66 to 51, but we were able to meet the demand from the schools. The majority of the CETs were student teachers (volunteer CETs) from Tianjin Normal University.

A strategic education leaders' delegation organised by TMEC visited their partner schools in Scotland in May 2025. An education symposium was hosted by SCILT/CISS during their visit.

Next steps

Work with Tianjin Normal University to improve the recruitment process of volunteer CETs to ensure CET number is maintained from Tianjin.

Negotiate with TMEC about increasing the number of funded pupils participating in Summer Immersion Course to 100.

Links with CLEC

Fhiona Mackay, Director of SCILT/CISS attended the International Chinese Language Conference in Beijing in November 2025 organised by CLEC and received an award for the Virtual Exchange

Teachers online teaching programme. The 'Teachers of Mandarin' funding from CLEC supported 25 posts of GTCS teacher of Mandarin in 2024-25.

Next steps

Continue to discuss collaboration opportunities in terms of developing Mandarin teaching workforce, continue to promote the 'Teacher of Mandarin' funding to schools and facilitate discussions with CLEC, SCILT and the University.

Initiate the negotiation with CLEC for the renewal of funding agreements which will end at the end of 2026.

Support for engagement between hubs and Chinese partners

SCILT / CISS continued to support hubs to develop links with their partner schools in 2025/26.

Twenty classes from 16 schools in Scotland took part and worked with their partner schools in Tianjin for the Eco Learning Partners (ELP) programme between April and June 2025. Details of ELP can be found in the Eco Learning Partners section in this report.

Ffity-five pupils and staff from 5 local authorities participated in the summer immersion programme had the opportunity to visit their Tianjin partner schools and some Tianjin pupils' homes to develop the friendship and partnership between the two sides.

Nine strategic education leaders from Tianjin schools visited Scotland and their partner schools in May 2025.

Next steps

In session 2026-27 SCILT / CISS will continue to promote ELP more widely with an aim to increase uptake.

Follow up on school-to-school engagement discussions generated from the strategic education leaders' visit and start the preparations for 2026 Scottish Strategic Educational Leaders' visit to China.

Scholarship programmes

Offered jointly by CISS and the Tianjin Municipal Education Commission, the Tianjin scholarship facilitates a mobility programme which allows S6 school leavers to study Mandarin for ten months at Tianjin Normal University, and includes full tuition, accommodation, and living allowance.

Our 2025-26 scholars have all successfully completed their year at TNU. These 21 young people, representing 13 local authorities across Scotland, have benefitted from this unique opportunity, and have represented their families, schools and Scotland in an exemplary manner. The scholars chronicled their experiences all year in a series of vlogs, and they continue to share their enthusiasm and passion for Chinese language and culture through meetings and events.

Our next group of 2026-27 scholars will depart on 3 September 2026. They have participated in two briefing meetings and one 'getting to know you' day; they have compiled documents, completed applications to TNU and will shortly be applying for visas. Several of this year's scholars were participants in the 2025 immersion visit, and this has clearly inspired interest and enthusiasm, and

given them confidence to live in China for the year.

We are facilitating a reunion event on 12 August to bring together the returning scholars and those who will depart in September. This is an opportunity for the 2026-27 cohort to hear directly from those with recent, firsthand experience of undertaking the scholarship, and to ask any questions they may have.

The 2026-27 scholars will be making monthly blogs/vlogs on their experiences in China and CISS staff will be providing pastoral support throughout their time abroad.

This year we have also reconnected with former scholars who took part in the programme in the years pre-2020. Some of them have submitted videos to us, speaking about their experiences of the scholarship and how it has influenced where they are now. We will be sharing these videos on our website and putting clips on social media.

Sources of evidence

- 2025-26 scholarship completed – 21 young people from 13 local authorities.
- 2026-27 scholarship on track – 22 young people from 12 local authorities.
- Monthly blog and vlog updates received from scholars throughout the year.

Next steps

Final preparations for scholarship 2026-27.

Applications for the 2027-28 session will open in September 2026, with interviews taking place in December.

Continue to engage with alumni group of former scholars.

Promotional events/campaigns

Cultural exchange events

Once again, we ran a very successful Chinese New Year Poster Competition for primary schools. Over a thousand pupils from across Scotland submitted their entries celebrating the Year of The Horse and ten winners were chosen from across three age groups.

Priority 3: Research and knowledge exchange

National and international knowledge exchange events

Participation in, and attendance at, national and international conferences

CISS colleagues have presented at or facilitated sessions at conferences and knowledge exchange events since April 2025, including:

- World Chinese Language Conference, Beijing (Nov 2025) "Technology in Chinese Language Learning – A Scottish Prospective"

Outward facing communication

Maintenance of Confucius Hub management portal

Annual review of the hub funding management portal took place in May 2025 and updates were carried out. Funding applications opened for hubs in Mid-June after the AGM. Training delivered to key hub contacts to ensure all the hubs use the Portal to submit reports, operational plans and other data.

Next steps

Monitor the usage of the Portal and deliver ad hoc training to new hub contacts at request.

Communication strategy

Newsletter

A summer edition of Newsletter was published in May 2025, and the content was highlighted in the CISS AGM in June. This newsletter was compiled and designed internally by the Projects and Events Coordinator using online design tools, based on the same original template. This system is a good way to provide updates to hubs on CISS projects, hub activities, and partner news and events.

As the Projects and Events Coordinator, who was responsible for the delivery of newsletter, left the post we had to pause the work for future newsletters until suitable staff are identified to deliver this work.

Next steps

The CISS team will aim to continue to publish one annual newsletter, based on a template that will remain similar each time to enable ease of publication once suitable staff is in place. We will continue to encourage submissions and engagement from colleagues and partners and showcase the creative and innovative work of hubs and beyond.

General operations

Quality improvement

During the reporting period, the team continued to strengthen its planning and quality improvement processes to ensure resilient, efficient and effective operations.

In line with the University's Agile Working policy, the SCILT team operates under a hybrid working model, with all Professional Services staff now working a minimum of three days per week on campus.

To maintain consistent service levels and ensure the smooth day-to-day operation of the Centre, a monthly on-campus rota is coordinated to ensure appropriate staffing coverage across the office. This structured approach enables the team to balance flexibility with operational reliability, ensuring that core functions remain fully supported while accommodating modern working practices.

Funding

SCILT

SCILT is financed by and administered through Scottish Government's Curriculum Unit. For the 2025-26 financial year, SCILT received a funding grant of £950,000 to support a proportion of staff costs, the university levy and operational expenditure. This was an increase of £12,000 from the previous year.

Total expenditure for the 2025-26 financial year amounted to £1,273,358. This increase was driven by the rise in in-person meetings and events, the university's annual cost-of-living salary adjustment, and applicable staff increments. The resulting shortfall of £323,358 was met through alternative funding streams, with the Scottish Government grant accounting for approximately 75% of total annual costs, in comparison to 82% the previous financial year.

Next steps

Although we continue to operate a hybrid working model, ongoing travel and other operational costs, together with annual salary increases, will continue to place pressure on the Centre's financial position. Unless annual increases in grant funding match increases in salary costs, the gap between available funding and overall expenditure will continue to grow, increasing the financial deficit over time.

To address this, we will continue to work closely with the University's finance business partners to maintain and refine our three-year financial model. This ongoing review provides up-to-date financial insight to support effective planning, identify emerging pressures at an early stage and inform discussions around future funding requirements.

Other funding

China

The Chinese language programme run by SCILT receives funding from Tianjin Normal University and Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC). A total of approximately £960,929 was allocated from China to cover the cost of hubs, Chinese Exchange Teachers, GTCS teacher salaries

and projects.

Qatar Foundation funding for Discovering the World of Arabic

In January 2025 we were awarded £181,123 from the Qatar Foundation International (QFI) to continue and support the delivery of an Arabic language programme in Scotland. The funding supports work with state schools across both primary and secondary schools and includes a contribution towards SCILT staffing costs.

The project operates on a year-to-year basis, with the initial funding period running from January to December 2025. Following submission of the final year-end report, we received a letter of comfort from QFI confirming that further funding support for 2026 was anticipated.

Staffing

SCILT and CISS

	Senior Leadership Staff	Teaching Staff	Professional Support Staff
2025-26	Director Depute Director Chinese Director (part of teaching exchange programme from TMEC)	7 Professional Development Officers (5 x 1 FTE, 1 x FTE 0.4, 1 x FTE 0.2) 3 Professional Development Assistants	Business and Finance Manager General Manager Information and Communications Officer (FTE 0.8) Information, communications and project support (FTE 0.6) Senior Project and Events Coordinator 2 x Projects and Events Coordinators 3 x Administrative Assistants

Procedures and handbook

Across SCILT, procedures are in place for all aspects of the Centre's management. These are evaluated on a regular basis to ensure they are robust, up-to-date, and appropriate. This ensures that all staff comply with University regulations and policies but also with any internal procedures that are developed on a continuous basis.

The SCILT handbook is updated annually with contributions from all staff. It serves as an integral part of the induction process for new team members while also providing a valuable reference for existing staff, reinforcing University and internal procedures.

Staff development

Staff development continues to form an integral part of the SCILT work culture and where possible, staff are encouraged to identify and attend training courses. This will then feed into the annual University staff Accountability and Development Review (ADR) process through the Learning and Development section of the ADR form.

Strategic planning

As part of the annual strategic planning cycle, staff from both SCILT and CISS participated in two half-day planning sessions. These sessions provided structured opportunities for colleagues to reflect on their individual and team contributions to the SCILT/CISS strategic priorities for the year ahead. They also supported open discussion, enabling staff to share updates on ongoing and planned activities, identify synergies across work areas, and strengthen communication between the teams.

Following the development of the draft strategic plan, the Business and Finance Manager was able to produce a budget forecast aligned to the proposed project activity. This ensured that financial planning was fully integrated with strategic objectives.

Quarterly reporting

This year all Scottish Government meetings have continued to be conducted online. The current system for quarterly reporting works well. We now include an overview document with quarterly updates and projected targets, whereby data is collected for each priority area of the strategic plan. The quarterly report for Scottish Government is also shared at Advisory Group meetings.

Action plans

Action plans are collaboratively developed and implemented by the teams involved in each project. These plans are continuously updated, feeding into quarterly reporting. Both SCILT and CISS operate with project-based budgets, and the action plans play a crucial role in ensuring effective time management and budget control.

Safety, health and wellbeing

Staff safety, health, and well-being are fundamental to all activities within SCILT, reflecting the University's strong commitment to these priorities. The University's Strategy Vision aims to create a culture of care where everyone feels safe, secure, and supported. SCILT is committed to upholding this vision by prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all staff.

Staff are encouraged to incorporate health and well-being practices into their working day, such as walking and taking regular lunch and tea breaks. The University has a comprehensive staff sickness policy that provides full support for staff facing personal or health-related issues. Appointed staff members collaborate with the University's Occupational Health and Safety advisers to ensure appropriate support is available.

In addition, SCILT's Finance and Business Manager actively participates in faculty and school Health and Wellbeing meetings, ensuring the Centre is up to date with current policies and procedures. Staff can also access a dedicated Health and Wellbeing page on the faculty's SharePoint site, alongside extensive resources on the University website, aimed at promoting overall staff wellbeing.