

Early Foreign Language Learning and Culture

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Introduction

As part of the authority's implementation plan for *Citizens of a Multilingual World*, East Ayrshire Council has encouraged in Nursery schools and classes an approach to including the international dimension in education in the curriculum entitled "Nursery Language and Culture." While reference is made below to French, Spanish and German, the authority also wishes to encourage an input on as many languages and cultures as is feasible, and excellent work has already been done in Gaelic, Italian and Norwegian in small numbers of establishments.

This approach has developed over a period of some years and owes much to innovative work in this area of the curriculum by a group of enthusiastic and imaginative head teachers, teachers and nursery nurses at - among others - Onthank and Auchinleck Nurseries.

The authority further wishes to recognise the contribution to the present policy made by:

Linda Gallacher, Kilmaurs Nursery
Jennifer McBurnie, Onthank Nursery
Fiona Kellet, Barshare Primary School Nursery Class
Anita Knapp, Flowerbank Nursery
Sonia Pérez Coughlan, Onthank Nursery (now Crosshouse Nursery)
Lynn Poggi, Kilmaurs Nursery
Anne Thomas, Kilmaurs Nursery

The policy consists of advice for Nursery teachers and nurses on the materials they may want to use when introducing other languages and cultures to pre-school children, the methodology that has proven to be successful in this area and suggestions on how to involve parents and visitors in order to enrich children's experience of this area of the curriculum.

Advice for Primary 1 teachers on how to take the initiative forward has also been included, along with suggestions for the future language support of Nursery and Primary staff.

It is the authority's intention to take forward the Nursery Language and Culture development into Primary 1-4. Teachers and nursery nurses will be able to take part in refresher language opportunities as part of the authority's inset plans and as part of continuing professional development. The Quality Improvement Team is also investigating the possibility of developing a

postgraduate certificate in language and culture studies for Nursery and Primary 1-4 teachers and a Higher National certificate for nursery nurses in cooperation with Kilmarnock College.

Getting started

Before choosing the language and culture the Nursery wishes to start with, staff should familiarise themselves with East Ayrshire's implementation strategy for *Citizens of a Multilingual World*. This is attached as the Appendix. They should also familiarise themselves with the contents East Ayrshire's Nursery Language and Culture Pack. Since there is a lot of information and material within the pack, staff should agree as a team what they want the children to learn, extract from the pack the materials they plan to use and agree when and how to use them. The materials selected should be manageable and should be embedded in Nursery planning.

It is advisable to start with a language which staff are familiar with, even it is remembered from schooldays! Staff are always surprised at how much of a language they remember - and how much this helps to boost their self-confidence.

Approaches to teaching that have been successful

A good way to get started is to have a French/Spanish/German/Italian Language and Culture Week or Topic. Staff can begin by looking at where the children live and studying where they live on a map:

- We live in Scotland
- Scotland is part of the United Kingdom
- We live on an island

The children can then discuss Scottish culture and language, national dress, the flag, food, places of interest, etc.

They can then be introduced to a character from, for example, France: Jacques the mouse, a hand puppet. They can be told that Jacques is from a different country called France. The children should find France on the map and discuss how they would get there.

Staff can build up a wall display of the two countries including a map of each country, transport to get there, flags, national dress, money, food, etc.

French should now be introduced as a language, with simple greetings such as Bonjour and Au revoir. Children and staff should use these greetings as the children arrive and leave the Nursery, and visitors to the playroom, including parents, should be encouraged to use the greetings.

Vocabulary can be built up slowly as part of everyday Nursery routine. This can be part of a topic or classroom instruction.

Staff may wish to give parents information about the language work being done through a newsletter.

Introducing other cultures

Spanish Culture

Festivals and Folklore

Carnival (Feb/March) is the focus for arts and crafts: e.g. making masks

Holy Week/Easter (March/April) can feature videos and photographs of events

Fallas de Valencia (Valencia Torches) (March) allow children to discuss photographs

Fairs - these take place in every town, during different months - e.g. Seville in April - and allow work on arts and crafts, such as making colourful fans.

May Crosses (May) - children can make paper flowers

Sanfermines (Saint Fermin's Festival, in July) - photographs are useful here

Hallowe'en (October).

Holy Innocents' Day (December). Art and Craft: Cut-out paper figures.

Christmas and New Year (December).

The Three Wise Men (January). Art and Craft:

Eating Habits:

Discuss different meal times and different foods.

Introduce the idea of tapas.

Use recipes: Spanish omelette, paella, gazpacho, sangria.

Spanish Surnames: it's quite common for people to use both their mother's and their father's second names: the famous South American writer Gabriel García Márquez has a first name - Gabriel - followed by his father's surname - García - and his mother's surname - Márquez.

Celebration of birthdays and onomastics (the day of the Christian name):
making a piñata.

Geography: where Spain is and places people in the children's families have visited. Map.

Spanish Houses: discuss in what ways houses are different from Scottish houses. Photos are useful here.

French Culture

Festivals and Folklore

Epiphany (6Jan) la fête des rois a special cake (la galette) is bought containing a bean. Recipient of bean is king and wears a crown and chooses a queen or king who also wears a crown.

Mardi Gras (Feb/March) is the focus for food tasting (pancakes)

April Fool's Day le poisson d'avril make a paper fish and stick it on someone's backs for a joke

Bastille Day/Fête Nationale - a celebration open air concert and dance are held in many cities and towns - children can make flags and hear the French national anthem

Hallowe'en (October) is celebrated in French-speaking Canada, though not in France, and in the same way as in the USA with pumpkin lanterns, dressing up, etc.

Christmas and New Year

Eating Habits:

Discuss different meal times and different foods and the fact that the French very much keep to the tradition of the family meal in the evening. Children can have a French breakfast with juice, croissants, bread, jam.

Celebration of birthdays and saints' days - although most French people are not now practising Catholics, a lot of traditions remain such as giving children a saint's name and celebrating that saint's day as well as the birthday.

Geography: where France and other French-speaking countries are and places people in the children's families have visited. Map.

French streets: discuss in what ways streets are different from Scottish streets - driving on the right, street signs. Photos are useful here.

Foreign Language Resources for use in the Nursery

Most of the resources useful in presenting foreign language in the Nursery are already in everyday use:

- dressing up clothes - a French beret or a Spanish sombrero
- puppets
- doll's house figures and the doll's house itself for the rooms in a house
- role play café or market or shop
- French/Spanish food and artefacts

Art Displays

Staff can display famous paintings - Monet, Picasso, van Gogh, Renoir, Degas, etc - and pottery, plates, etc which children can use to make their own versions.

Music/Dancing

Children can be introduced to traditional French/Spanish music:

- guitar concertos
- Ravel's Boléro
- Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals
- Offenbach's Can Can
- samba, flamenco and gypsy music

Video/TV

- Singing Kettle World Tour
- Barney's Best Manners - Spanish
- Tots TV - French
- Sky Nikolodeon - Dora the Explorer
- So Smart Spanish video - songs

Books

- Penguin Pete - Pingu
- Dear Zoo
- Play It In Spanish
- Compañeros Spanish Activity Book
- I Can Sing In Español

WEB LINKS to the sites mentioned below and others are to be found on our own nursery page which is maintained by Kay McMeekin

<http://www.quia.com/pages/nursery.html>

Other sites can be found on

<http://www.quia.com/pages/primaryfrench.html>

INFORMATION

Scottish CILT - Centre for Information on Language Teaching

<http://www.scilt.stir.ac.uk>

MFLE Modern Foreign Language Environment hosted by LTScotland

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/mfle/>

You need to register to get a password. Lots of resources, information and discussion forum.

ONLINE SHOPPING

B Small Publishing - great bilingual books

<http://www.bsmall.co.uk>

Lingua Tots and Little Linguist stock lots of resources

<http://linguatots.com>

<http://www.littlelinguist.co.uk>

Le Français en Ecosse

Richard Tallaron is based in Edinburgh

Entre dans ma grande maison pack - songs stories, activities

<http://www.lfee.net/resources.php>

Salut Serge is broadcast from time to time on BBC, available now only on dvd:

DVD £24.99 with good songs

To order any BBC resource directly, call

0870 241 5490 between 9am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

or visit <http://www.bbcshop.com>

Usborne

First French Word Book

French Song Book

<http://www.usborne.co.uk/languages/languages.asp>

Early Start video pack @£64 or on DVD @ £75 - excellent for nursery and early primary

French, German and Spanish for young learners

<http://www.earlystart.co.uk>

European bookshop

<http://www.younglinguists.com>

Mantra lingua bilingual books

<http://www.mantralingua.com/>

Bilingual Supplies, books, posters, reward stickers, pencils

<http://www.bilingual-supplies.co.uk/>

Orchard Toys, Debdale Lane, Keyworth , Nottingham NG12 5HN

Ready for French series

cherchons le mot - matching game

les courses à faire - shopping game

trouvons l'image - bingo game

<http://www.orchardtoys.co.uk/french.html>

CD Roms

Eurotalk

3 levels of CD ROM - the first level is:

Vocabulary Builder for young children £19.99

Interactive Picture Dictionary - French, German, Spanish and Italian in one CD-ROM £24.99

<http://www.eurotalk.co.uk>

TV

Details of BBC language broadcasts appear on the languages schedules page:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/lzone/results.shtml?languages_and_travel_all

Language programmes are on Monday and Tuesday early on learning zone BBC2.

Involving parents

- **Newsletter:** an initial newsletter should be sent to all parents informing them of the proposed plans to introduce different languages and cultures. It could also outline how the Nursery intends to take languages forward.
- **Information Board:** this area should be regularly updated to inform parents of the new words, their meaning and pronunciation. This may encourage them to use the words with their children at home.
- **Nursery Visit:** a short informal visit to the Nursery, maybe at the end of the session, can be arranged to let parents see and hear their children participating in the language programme.
- **Language Sacks:** containing a selection of words, their meanings and pronunciations, a bilingual book or tape and a game can be sent home for parents and children to use.
- **Parental Expertise:** any parents with a knowledge of another language or other skills which may help the Nursery take the language programme forward should be encouraged to volunteer.
- **Language Course:** a short introductory course could be offered to assist any parents who feel that they would like to have a better understanding of the work which their children are doing at the Nursery.

How to use a visitor

Visitors are always welcome in Nursery schools and classes, and visitors who speak another language and have knowledge of another culture are particularly interesting to the children. A visitor may be in the playroom for an hour or for a series of visits for instance, the head teacher may have arranged for the Foreign Assistant(s) in their Learning Partnership to make a series of visits to the Nursery.

If a visitor is making a one-off visit:

- A member of staff should act as link person and quickly try to familiarise the visitor with the work of the Nursery, show them round and introduce them to other staff and to the children.
- The link person should be ready to suggest an activity the visitor could do involving the children: e.g. teaching the children a simple song or a few

words in their language (for example, thank you, good morning, numbers 1-5, the names of snacks.)

- If the visitor seems comfortable with the children, they could also take part in a craft or painting activity or a story or a table game.
- If the visitor has a particular interest or skill - maybe they have brought music from their country for the children to listen to or can play an instrument - they should be encouraged to use this ability with the children.
- The children can also introduce the visitor to aspects of Scottish culture through singing a song, etc.

If a visitor will be in the Nursery for some time or for a series of visits: Before the visit

- Staff should find out a little about the visitor's language and culture, for example: festivals and food.
- The Head Teacher should inform parents in a newsletter about the visit.
- The Nursery should invite in to meet the visitor any member of staff's children or parents who know the language of the visitor

During the Visit

- Allocate one member of staff to be the visitor's link.
- The link should show the visitor round the Nursery, introduce them to the staff and help familiarise them with the children.
- A copy of the Nursery handbook should be provided, along with the Nursery Language and Culture Pack and the student/routine folder.
- Fire procedures should be explained.
- The visitor should be encouraged to plan activities they could do involving the children: e.g. teaching the children a simple song or a few words in their language (for example, thank you, good morning, numbers 1-5, the names of snacks.)
- The visitor could also take part in a craft or painting activity or a story or a table game.
- If the visitor has a particular interest or skill - maybe they have brought music from their country for the children to listen to or can play an instrument - they should be encouraged to use this ability with the children.
- The children can also introduce the visitor to aspects of Scottish culture through songs, food, etc.

Continuity into Primary 1

Children coming into Primary 1 from Nursery will have had a range of language experiences: some will have taken part in a French or Spanish week, during which they have drawn pictures, sung songs and learned some basic language. Other children will have had regular exposure to French or Gaelic or German from a native speaker. A few will have had no experience of foreign languages and cultures.

Whatever the children's experience, Primary 1 teachers should note the following:

- Information on how much experience of other languages and cultures and details of the nature of the experience will be passed on to Primary 1 teachers.
- There should be liaison on language learning between Nursery and Primary 1 staff before children transfer to primary school.
- Children's prior learning should be taken into account, with children who have had experience of other languages and cultures being invited to make a contribution to class discussions.
- In all cases, teachers should pay the same attention to Scots language and culture as to other language experiences.

Primary 1 teachers may wish to build on children's experiences in the following ways:

- visit the Nursery/Nurseries associated with the Primary school in order to obtain information on the kind of language and culture input children have experienced
- watch the video material provided by the authority's Media Support Officer showing children participating in language and culture activities
- begin by revising the language areas covered in Nursery
- add to the children's language resource by building on the language areas they are familiar with:
 - wild animals
 - family
 - numbers 11 to 20
 - parts of the body
 - more colours
 - more food items
- celebrate foreign festivals: Mardi Gras, Fasching, Id, Navidad, national days, etc
- use bilingual story books and "Big Books" at story time

- when telling stories or reciting rhymes or singing songs, put key words in in other languages
- make time in Primary 1 to cover songs in the Nursery Language and Culture pack not covered in Nursery
- use traditional stories such as Goldilocks, which children are familiar with, as the basis for introducing other languages
- include songs in other languages at all P1 assemblies
- hold a French or German or Spanish day each Friday, with special food in the dining room, songs at assembly, etc

Conclusion

It is hoped that staff in nurseries and infant classes will find introducing languages to their pupils stimulating and rewarding. Their pupils will certainly gain in self-confidence. Parents too will want to participate and the whole school will benefit.

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Appendix

East Ayrshire Citizens of a Multilingual World Implementation Plan

The learner will have

	<u>Pre-School</u>	<u>P1-4</u>
Entitlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to 10 minutes per day of teaching about two languages other than English • access to information about these languages and their cultures through ICT, TV and video • interaction with a native speaker on a regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to 10-15 minutes per day of teaching about and through two other languages • access to interactive learning through CD-Roms, e-mail and TV and video • interaction with native speakers on a weekly basis
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of other languages and of language • ability in two languages to say their name, count up to 5 and identify colours • ability to recognise familiar greetings and respond to them • ability to sing short songs, recite short rhymes, fill in the gaps in a story or song in two languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of an understanding of the nature of language and how language works • ability to say colours and numbers up to 30, identify classroom objects, ask and answer everyday questions relating to personal interests • ability to exchange greetings and personal information with a speaker of these languages • a repertoire of songs and rhymes in two languages
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of other countries • awareness of other ways of living and ability to describe these through art, music, drama and play • knowledge of the main points of the year and celebrations in two other countries • knowledge of countries people go to on holiday 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of Europe as a community • awareness of positive differences and similarities between people • opportunity to explore these differences and similarities through the expressive arts and as they arise from classwork • recognition from a map of where certain countries are and their geographical features