

WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM THE INSTITUT FRANCAIS D'ECOSSE

The Institut français d'Ecosse (French Institute in Scotland) welcomes warmly the Scottish Government's 1 + 2 strategy, which proposes to enable all young people in Scotland to learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue, and therefore recommends an earlier start of L2 from P1 and of L3 from P5 at the latest.

We believe that it is a great opportunity for all children in Scotland to learn Modern languages and broaden their cultural horizon. At the same time, there is no doubt that it will give a fresh start to modern languages if some conditions are met to ensure the success of this huge challenge.

The Institut français wants to support the 1 + 2 agenda in order to arouse the interest of Scottish pupils for modern languages. We are investing time, money and our expertise, especially in training primary teachers who teach French.

1. About the Institut français d'Ecosse

Established since 1946 in Edinburgh, the Institut français d'Ecosse (French Institute in Scotland) is one of the 150 French institutes worldwide. It is the only official body funded by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it works very closely with the French Ministry of Education and the Educational Local Authorities in France.

Our mission is to promote the French language and culture in Scotland. The Education Services from the Institut français d'Ecosse are committed to promoting the learning and teaching of French in primary and secondary schools in association with Local authorities in Scotland. <http://www.ifecosse.org.uk/Education-.html>

Building bridges between schools, teachers and pupils in France and Scotland

School partnerships are a powerful and exciting way of bringing an international dimension into the classroom while enhancing the language and the intercultural skills.

We are working with several Scottish local authorities to link them with French educational local area in order to make the most of European funding (Comenius In Service training, One week jobshadowing...).

Supporting primary and secondary teachers across Local authorities in Scotland

We run (at low cost, but highest quality) twilight CPDs and "French Days" for primary teachers across Scotland in cooperation with the Local authorities (Glasgow, Westlothian, Aberdeen , South Lanarkshire...) to support the teaching of French within schools in Scotland.

Free online resources for teachers

The Institut français d'Ecosse creates free online resources for primary and secondary teachers.

Encouraging the learning of French

We organize every year the Rencontres théâtrales – a drama competition in French for primary and secondary schools in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow, as well as an online competition about French speaking countries and their cultural background.

Immersion days for Higher and Advanced higher students

In association with several Local authorities that have no Foreign language assistants (Glasgow, North Lanarkshire,...) the Institute français d'Ecosse runs Immersion days for S5 and S6 pupils to enhance their skills in French.

2. How can the Institut français d'Ecosse support the 1 + 2 strategy?

We believe that Scotland is missing EU funding opportunities to enhance the learning and teaching of languages. That's why we started in 2012, in cooperation with the Scottish government, a new strategy to help link Scottish Local authorities with French educational Local authorities. Firstly, it would facilitate the learning of French in a meaningful context, through a real link with a French classroom in France (eg. via GLOW).

Secondly, local authorities could benefit more from the European funding which is available. Although there are a few obstacles to be addressed, **it is absolutely feasible to improve the situation.** It can be improved, if teachers get the support from their Local authority, but also provided that this policy, embedded in a wider/national strategy to enhance the skills of Scottish teachers for the learning and teaching of a Modern language in primary and secondary schools, is endorsed by the Directors of Education.

From our point of view, two of the Service training programmes could be more efficiently promoted across Scotland, and could thus benefit more primary school teachers and support their learning and teaching of, for example, French in Scottish schools.

1. Professional development activities (French course in France through organisations accredited by the French ministry). Obviously, there is a big lack of information about this opportunity. All the information is online, but teachers have to know where to find it.

It would also be possible to ask some selected organizations that cooperate with the French Ministry of Education to tailor a specific programme for primary teachers, we would only have to get a group of teachers together. It could be a

great help for these teachers who lack confidence. The results can be very impressive!

2. The job shadowing programme for linking teachers and schools

Teachers spend one week with a French colleague in his or her school and discuss ideas about projects they can do together with their Scottish and French classes. For the Scottish teacher, it is a full immersion in an authentic Scottish/French environment. To make that happen, teachers will need basic skills in the target language : even if they can both use their own language if neither of them feels comfortable, it is still a good opportunity to pick up some French during the week and to observe the cultural differences (different methodology / teaching/ social behavior ..).

According to the British council's website, "For that programme, teachers will need to find a European institution and the colleague you would like to shadow".

Obstacle 1: The question for the teachers interested in such a programme is: How can I find a school in France to link up?

Proposal: The French Ministry of Education started in September 2012 (in cooperation with the Scottish Government) an initiative to connect teachers, classrooms and schools from the same Local authority to a French Educational Local authority.

The idea is simple: Teachers from a Council linked with a French ELA have in France and in the Council a unique entry point. That means one identified person to help and support this project.

- Fife Council / Académie de Créteil (Educational Local authority of Créteil nearby Paris): first pilot project in Scotland for one week shadow training programme funded by the EU under Comenius In Service training programme.

- Westlothian / Grenoble (pilot with the cluster around Armadale Academy + 4 primary schools since January 2013).

- Stirling / Académie de Lille (cluster in Dunblane as a pilot + twin city link between Stirling and Villeneuve d' Ascq by Lille since December 2012).

- Renfrewshire/ Lyon (around 10 teachers from Renfrewshire applied for a One week Job shadowing programme in their partner school in Lyon. Most of the schools involved are primary schools; Start of the project: December 2012).

- Dundee/ Orléans (based on the strong link between the 2 cities)

- Dumfries and Galloway / Académie de Nancy-Metz.

- South Lanarkshire / Reims.

Other French Educational Local authorities (Versailles, Strasbourg and Nice) are interested in building links with a Scottish council to link up schools.

Obstacle 2: The IQO with a sound understanding for modern languages are disappearing. If there is nobody to coordinate such projects, it becomes difficult to spread the concrete information about the EU funding possibilities among teachers.

The link between the Fife Council / Council of Créteil (called Académie de Créteil) nearby Paris was the pilot project and started thanks to the huge involvement and commitment of Iain Hirschfeld, IQO at Fife council. Sadly, Iain Hirschfeld left the Council in December 2012. Fortunately, Creteil sent this year a teacher for the school year (paid by Creteil at its own cost!) to support the link project. Teachers need to know how to fill in the application from the British Council and how to proceed concretely to get the funding. Most of the LAs do not have the required expertise in this particular area. Teachers need personal advice and some primary teachers who lack confidence are anxious and will need extra support. That is why it is wiser to organize the project so that a group of primary teachers go together during the same week, and to negotiate with the French partner the dates and the programme.

Proposal: One person should be identified in each council to coordinate the One week job shadowing programme. This person will need a wee bit expertise in European programmes.

They should be well informed about the existing European funding programmes (a two-hour meeting is enough for that!) and on how to fill in the forms online (which can sometimes be a bit tricky).

Do existing teachers have both the skills and enough teaching resources available for language tuition?

The situation is very patchy and gives a different picture depending on the local authority primary teachers work in; it seems that some Local authorities are clearly better resourced than others.

Due to financial cuts, some of the Local authorities no longer deliver any MLPS training. In other Local authorities, the numbers of hours of MLPS training has been reduced drastically. It can sometimes be a struggle for some Local authorities to find a tutor delivering MLPS training at a low cost.

From my experience in delivering CPDs for primary teachers, it seems that few class teachers actually deliver a language within their class. This means that another teacher comes 45 min a week to teach a foreign language.

If we want to deliver a language from P1 on a day-to-day basis, we need to train every class teacher to teach one foreign language. It would be probably counterproductive to force that. This will be doable only if language learning and teaching is included in the ITE. It is a very long-term strategy. All other European countries (in continental Europe) chose this way as it is the most sustainable. It is simply harder to train later on teachers who have a demanding full-time job and a

family to take care of. If these teachers do not have the basic linguistic skills, it takes much more time to train them to get these basic skills so that they can feel confident in their classroom.

I have seen among local authorities a lot of material for French which can be very different from a local authority to the other, but teachers are still asking for more resources and ideas for their teaching. Therefore, the Institut français d'Écosse started last year to create free online resources that teachers can download. But if teachers do not have the basic linguistic skills, putting resources online is not enough: teachers need to be more supported with face-to-face teaching to boost their confidence and accompany them in their learning of a language. That is the reason why we started a Beginner course for primary teachers in Edinburgh (at the Institut français) and in Glasgow (at the Alliance française).

In my experience, some teachers definitively need to develop their language skills before teaching a foreign language in their class, some others “only” need a refresher as they have already good basic knowledge of the target language, but they will have to work on how to adapt their vocabulary and language structures to the needs of primary schools. Personally, I have had a very good experience in Scotland and I have met primary teachers who already had a high level in French, but needed to train their oral skills and get some fresh ideas for classroom activities.

The reality is that in a MLPS course in French you can have total beginners, teachers who have learned French at school but need to refresh their language skills and adapt them to the context of the classroom, as well as other teachers who are fluent in French and need to learn how to teach the language. So it is a great challenge for the MLPS tutor to satisfy so many different needs in just one class. It would be more suited to tailor the MLPS offer according to the teachers' needs. The beginners will need more support (and more time) to develop basic language skills adapted to the reality of the classroom. We also believe that in the second case, foreign language assistants could also play a more important role in helping primary teachers to enhance their skills in French.

It would be better to assess (kindly) their level before they join an MLPS course (whose contents can be very different from one local authority to the other) and to offer an MLPS training that meets their needs and is sustainable. It could be worth thinking about how to certify the attained level, for example with a certificate delivered by the French Ministry of Education and based on the common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR).

From our point of view, there is **an urgent need for a national framework with a clear progression** (not only of the topics/vocabulary or best case practices) and clear expectations of the skills which should be trained and learned at each stage (not necessarily by the end of each year). It would be a great help for teachers and MLPS tutors across Local authorities.

Should there be more training and support for new and existing teachers for language teaching?

Yes, definitely, primary teachers need a sustainable offer for MLPS tailored to their needs.

Can language learning be embedded in existing teaching?

Yes, if you have confident teachers who have good language skills at a B1 level (intermediate level), they will find ways to embed the language in other topics (mental mathematics, PE, arts, drama...). I trust the high capacity of primary teachers to be creative as I have seen very good practice in Scotland.

But primary teachers will need stronger language skills and more self-confidence so as to use the target language in interdisciplinary learning. This would require a huge effort in terms of teacher training. We should be more realistic and encourage the use of the language (French for example) as much as possible in as many situations as possible (PE, arts ...).

The main goal should be to train as many class teachers as possible to enable them to embed the use of the target language in “small bites” every day in a daily routine. Even for that purpose, they will need to get extra support to build up their language skills and adapt the classroom activities to a simple level achievable for the children and enthuse them for languages. **We need quality, before quantity. We also need a proper transition between primary and secondary schools.**

In any case, an overview across the local authorities concerning the content of the CPDs, the target skills and audience as well as an analysis of the costs could be helpful to make decisions that are crucial as the money is tight.

It could be worth listing the CPD offers “on the market” and investigating about the monetary element/the total cost. **A closer partnership with the Education services from cultural organisations could be a way to reach quality at a lower cost and not to let the opportunities be underexploited.**

The choice of languages for teaching – which languages should children be learning and why?

Ideally, every language is worth to be learned as it opens doors to other languages (transferrable skills) and to the world. I cannot highlight enough the benefit of learning a language (and more than one) and feeling confident with it. Most companies know that someone who has had some experience abroad is more flexible and more likely to understand intercultural differences.

Realistically, it is easier for Local authorities, especially in rural areas, to make the choice of the L2 for which they have the greatest number of teachers trained – for cost reasons - and to let the choice open for the L3 depending on the language offer in the associated secondary school. This scheme promotes the

learning of two languages including the cultural component (there is no language learning without cultural elements!).

It is important that the languages learned within the cluster of primary schools can be carried on in secondary schools (in some cluster, there is a discontinuity that is not beneficial for pupils). It is also very demotivating for pupils to have learned German in a primary school and to be forced to “choose” Spanish because the secondary school doesn’t offer any German classes.

Some practical work should also be done to ensure a proper transition. In previous year, there was more money, thus allowing secondary teachers to meet their colleagues from the primary schools of the same cluster. A portfolio could also facilitate the transition.

The role of languages in economic development – what languages should children be learning to benefit their future careers, and to help Scotland flourish economically?

Languages are important for economic development and more largely to represent a Scottish position in the -not only English-speaking- world. Currently, China is about to become the first economy in the world, but we should be aware that things can change very rapidly. Other countries like Vietnam and Myanmar are becoming more and more important for the cheap production of products. Focusing on one fashionable language may not be the best strategy for our youngsters in Scotland.

1. Promoting and succeeding in the learning of languages can open the door to other cultures and even more languages. This is only possible with well-trained teachers.
2. Giving our children in Scotland the opportunity to make a real exchange with their French classmate involving parents and the community would be a big step forward to support the learning experience of our children in modern languages.
3. Giving our children the choice to combine science and languages would also be a key element to increase the chance of our children on the economic market.

These are three real challenges to get the 1 + 2 agenda right.