



# Active Languages

Linking Sport and Languages in Schools



# Welcome

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Welcome to our *Routes into Languages* guide on *Linking Sport and Languages* in Schools, which has been produced by West Midlands Project Manager, Kat Stevenson, working in conjunction with schools across the region.

*Routes into Languages* was launched in 2006 following publication of the Languages Review by Lord Dearing, which highlighted problems of motivation for language learning, the need for an exciting curriculum, and also for greater promotion and support. *Routes into Languages* regional consortia, based in universities, have been funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department for Education to work with schools, colleges and stakeholders to increase the numbers of language learners. Through a programme of events and activities, our aim is to support and inspire, piloting novel approaches for greater engagement between schools and universities, and offering language learning experiences in a range of settings. Project funding is time-limited, so a key aim is to develop and embed sustainable activities and resources which can be used, adapted and replicated for years to come. This is how the *Active Languages* project came about.

The Olympics, Wimbledon, the World Cup and other major sporting events bring together celebrities with all sorts of linguistic and cultural backgrounds: Maria Sharapova, Thierry Henry, Ronaldhino... stars with exciting lives, who inspire an international following. Arsenal Double Club and Youth Sport Trust have led the way in showing how enthusiasm for sport can be harnessed for educational purposes, including language learning. The West Midlands *Routes into Languages* consortium has been keen to

follow this path from the day of our launch when Lorna McClelland, player liaison officer for Aston Villa FC, captivated youngsters at Birmingham International Airport as she talked of running up and down the touchline using her language skills to translate instructions for international footballers, and of offering support to their families. Building on the link between language and sport, and working with Youth Sport Trust, *Routes into Languages* West Midlands has supported the six schools featured in this booklet to develop their own *Active Languages* projects!

All have sought to raise the profile of languages by encouraging pupils to use languages in new contexts, giving them a new purpose and meaning. As you read the booklet, you will see they have worked hard to develop creative and interesting projects which have produced amazing results they are keen to share. None of the projects require vast sums of money for set-up or running costs. What they need is time and dedication. We hope that, if you are looking for new ways to motivate learners, you will find inspiration, resources and support here, and this will help you get started. Good luck!



Professor Pamela Moores, OBE

Director of *Routes into Languages*  
West Midlands

# Getting started

Active Languages is all about taking languages out of the classroom and getting pupils using them in new, exciting and even real life settings. Thinking about running your own project can seem daunting and raises a lot of questions – where do you start? How much will it cost? How much work will it involve? How will the pupils respond? The idea of this booklet and the accompanying resources online is to get you started with some ideas which you can adapt to suit your school. Each project is detailed with the rationale, the work and processes involved, the impact it has had on pupils and plans for future development. You will also find resources on our website which were created by the schools and can be used and adapted as necessary for your own plans.

Before you get going, here are some pointers from our participating schools which should help ensure things run smoothly:

- Start small.
- Identify key members of staff in each department and then make time to sit down together and create an action plan with time scales, costs, etc before you start.
- Share your good practice with other Departments.
- Involve students from other year groups to lead or support where possible – consider training up Language Leaders (see useful websites on the right for more details).
- Promote your project – use plasma screens, display boards and newsletters to remind students and staff and to showcase work. Create a press release for your local newspaper too.
- Include parents – send letters home to let them know what their sons/daughters have been doing. Consider inviting them to a showcase event.
- Ensure that your project is not a one off event – the idea is to embed new practices in the curriculum.
- Get feedback – students and staff should complete evaluation forms which will provide evidence of impact and help with future planning.
- Produce a vocabulary prompt sheet for PE staff with numbers and colours in the Target Language. This sort of vocabulary is used frequently in PE lessons and can be easily incorporated into the majority of lessons.
- Don't be afraid to have a go yourself! Students love the novelty of seeing Languages staff trying to do PE and hearing PE staff speaking foreign languages.
- Not all pupils are motivated by sport – include everyone by having cheerleaders, banners in target language, journalists, people serving refreshments in target language, photographers, etc.
- The first year of your project is a steep learning curve but persevere with a smile on your face!

## Useful websites:

Routes into Languages  
[www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk)

Links into Languages  
[www.linksintolanguages.ac.uk](http://www.linksintolanguages.ac.uk)

Youth Sport Trust  
[www.youthsporttrust.org](http://www.youthsporttrust.org)

Foreign Language Leader Awards  
[www.sportsleaders.org](http://www.sportsleaders.org)  
(search for Foreign Language Leader Award)

Soccerlingua  
[www.soccerlingua.net](http://www.soccerlingua.net)





# Case Studies

**Sundorne School & Sports College**  
Corndon Crescent  
Shrewsbury  
SY1 4LL

Phone: 01743 276700

# Sport and Languages For All



Sundorne School is a rapidly improving 11 – 16 comprehensive with a Sports specialism and Healthy Schools status. The Language department at Sundorne were keen to increase uptake at Key Stage 4 and to develop more creative approaches to teaching. A Language Leadership programme is already in operation at the school and it made sense to develop this programme and incorporate sport for a bigger impact on a wider range of pupils. Sundorne also wanted to introduce basic French vocabulary to Key Stage 2 pupils in a local Junior School in a fun and active way, thus aiding transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

## The project

Staff at Sundorne wanted to develop their Language Leaders programme by incorporating sporting activities and so members of the Language and PE departments organised a half day training for the Year 9 Leaders. The training incorporated the basics of being a good leader, what makes a good lesson and deciding on the level and type of foreign language to be used. When this was finalised, the group then decided which sporting activities they would use to best suit the vocabulary chosen and planned some mini lessons.

Leaders were then provided with time during language lessons at various stages during the term to plan and develop their lessons. They brought their ideas back into lessons and told the rest of the group what they had planned, which was an excellent confidence building exercise. Leaders were also given the opportunity to practise sessions with Year 7 classes in PE time. They evaluated the impact of sessions and areas for development, supported by PE and Language staff.

Teaching staff at the Junior School were given information about the vocabulary to be covered in forthcoming sessions and asked to familiarise pupils with instructions, colours etc. The Year 9 Leaders then delivered their lessons to 50 Key Stage 2 pupils which made for an enjoyable afternoon and was very well received.

The Leaders went on to deliver their lessons on a fortnightly basis to targeted Year 7 forms during PE time and as a result a Language and Sport Module in invasion games has now been included in the Year 7 Scheme of Work for PE.



*“We liked the French and PE together. It’s good to do something different and we definitely want to do it again!”*

Year 6 pupils



#### **What impact has the project had in school?**

In general the project has been good CPD for staff and has encouraged other departments in school to work together. It has raised the profile of languages and made the subject more attractive, especially to boys. This has persuaded some students who would not usually volunteer for language activities to get involved and has had a small, but measurable, impact on pupils opting for languages at Key Stage 4.

#### **How will the project be developed in future years?**

Sundorne plans to run the same programme rolling it out to a greater number of local Junior Schools and developing activities in Spanish as well as French.



## CTC Kinghurst Academy

Cooks Lane  
Birmingham  
B37 6NZ

Phone: 0121 329 8300

# Language Leaders

CTC Kinghurst Academy is an urban comprehensive school in Birmingham with over 1,500 students aged 11 – 18. Students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds with more students than average experiencing aspects of disadvantage. Staff at Kinghurst applied to take part in the project firstly to develop the leadership skills of targeted Key Stage 3 pupils and increase their motivation for learning a language and secondly to begin making links with feeder primary schools.

### The project

Each year the school runs a “Project Week” for Key Stage 3 students where students take part in various trips or themed projects in place of their normal timetable. The Language Leaders’ course had run in previous years with great success but had always been classroom based. Running the project during Project Week meant staff from different departments could work together and have access to sporting facilities and so on.

The project involved 14 Year 8 pupils who had been nominated by both MFL and PE staff as meeting the criteria as gifted and talented in

both subjects. They were coached as Language Leaders during the early part of Project Week with work involving effective lesson planning, team work skills and communication skills. Students also had hands on experience of teaching lessons and working on feedback before moving to work with the Primary School children later in the week. Six of the students offered French and eight offered Spanish. They worked together to order the appropriate equipment and Language Leader t-shirts. The t-shirts were considered a good investment as they brought the Leaders together as a team and set them apart from the Primary School children. The teaching practice ended in a mini tournament which was refereed by the Language Leaders.

The Primary Schools were found by MFL staff at Kinghurst by calling feeder schools and explaining the project to them – luckily two schools contacted early on were very keen. It was left to the Primary Schools to choose which children should be involved and to put them in groups as directed by Kinghurst. This meant that Kinghurst staff could dedicate their time to working with the Language Leaders.

### What impact has the project had in school?

The MFL department has achieved a certain amount of recognition in school and the Language Leaders have been used to teach some topics to Year 7 students. As a result some are considering careers in teaching, they have developed their leadership skills and confidence on the whole in Language lessons and other subjects. They have also proved a useful source of creativity for the Primary School teachers who are not language specialists. What’s more, when the Year 6 pupils joined the school as Year 7s, there were already friendly faces in Year 9 to help them settle in.

### How will the project be developed in future years?

The project will continue with the same Primary Schools next year using Year 8 and 9 pupils. The school hopes to develop resources in a new sport and over time the project will hopefully grow to include more Primary Schools and more Leaders.

\*To access resources to accompany this project please visit [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands) and go to Resources \*



*“Some pupils are considering careers in teaching following their experience as Language Leaders”*

MFL teacher

## Charlton School

Severn Drive  
Wellington  
Telford  
TF1 3LE

Phone: 01952 386800

# Themed Language Days



Charlton School is an 11 – 16 comprehensive with a Science specialism. Languages are popular at the school with the majority of pupils at Key Stage 4 studying at least one. The MFL department applied to take part in this project to give languages a visual presence in the school and to promote cross-curricular activities. They also wanted to encourage pupil use of target language in a range of activities.

### The project

Charlton decided to hold two themed language days for different year groups. The first was a Primary Languages Day held early in the year to build relationships with local Primary Schools and offer a range of support strategies for the primary teachers who were concerned about teaching languages at Key Stage 2. A second themed day, “Festival of Languages” was planned for Year 7 linking Languages and Performing Arts.



For the Primary Languages day students from 5 different schools were split into groups to take part in carousel activities including interactive grammar and numbers, traffic light football and running dictation. Charlton also created a tailor-made virtual France in the Drama Studio giving students authentic opportunities to use and practise their French. The day was brought to a close by The Flying Theatre Company who performed a French play, much to the delight of the students.

In December, a day was dedicated to the Year 7 “Festival of Languages” which linked MFL and Performing Arts. The day was billed as a celebration of the first term for many learning a new language and started with pupils learning the can-can, playing long-ball in Spanish and face painting. In the weeks leading up to the festival, time was dedicated in each language lesson to learning and rehearsing a rap or song in French or German. Linking up with the PE and Dance departments added extra spice to the performances. As a finale to the festival, each teaching group delivered their routine to a group of X-Factor style judges with prizes awarded to the top three routines.

### What impact has the project had in school?

The project has helped develop strong partnerships with local primary schools and gave the pupils a taster of life at Charlton School. It has also raised the profile of languages in school.



*“The event has acted as a fun taster  
of languages at Charlton”*

MFL teacher

**The Priory School**  
Longden Road  
Shrewsbury  
SY3 9EE

Phone: 01743 284000

# Orienteering in French



The Priory School is a mixed comprehensive with approximately 800 students aged 11 – 16. The school is located near the centre of Shrewsbury and received an “outstanding” grade in their most recent OFSTED report. The Priory School applied for Active Languages funding as they wanted to offer their pupils and staff the chance to use French, and other languages, outside the MFL classroom.

## The project

Orienteering was chosen as it had recently been introduced into the Key Stage 3 Scheme of Work to much success and, as most pupils had already learnt the basics, it would be relatively simple to incorporate French into the lessons. The main priority of the project was to give students the chance to use French and other languages outside the classroom by doing so whilst involved in active tasks. It was also felt it would be motivating for the pupils to hear members of staff from other departments using a foreign language.

The first orienteering course combined skills used in PE and French vocabulary in Year 8. Letters at the marker points on the map were replaced by phrases that students had to retrieve and translate into French. The key on the map was also translated into French, and a French map was produced for the more able pupils.



The pupils had been learning about food and focusing on different tenses during their French lessons and so it made sense to use vocabulary related to this topic during the orienteering activities. During the orienteering lesson pupils worked in groups of four to find a French sentence at a place marked on the course which they then translated into English and checked with a teacher, before going to find another. The winning team was the group who collected the most correct answers. All of the instructions were given in French and pupils were given a vocabulary sheet to help them ask questions in French.

The lesson proved to be very successful with pupils asking all of their questions in French and finding encouragement in seeing PE staff, who do not speak another language fluently, asking questions in French too! This orienteering module is now a part of the PE Scheme of Work and is a very popular addition with all pupils – the vocabulary used is variable depending on the age and language skills of the students.

*“We have all found the project incredibly motivating and now pupils don’t hesitate to use French phrases in PE lessons!”*

PE Teacher



**What impact has the project had in school?**

There has been positive feedback from all groups of students participating and teachers have found them much less inhibited when using a foreign language. They don’t hesitate to use French phrases as part of an active session.

Staff have also found the whole project incredibly motivating and are keen to find new ways of incorporating languages into PE lessons.

**How will the project be developed in future years?**

As well as the orienteering course, Priory also began developing activities in handball, volleyball and rounders. Their priority is to continue the work and to embed it into Schemes of Work to ensure continuation year after year. Active Languages has helped PE staff develop the confidence to use more languages in their general teaching and they are now using French numbers to score in table tennis and are keen to develop this further.

*\*To access resources to accompany this project please visit [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands) and go to Resources \**

## Bishop Vesey's Grammar School

Lichfield Road  
Sutton Coldfield  
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Phone: 0121 250 5400

# Languages in Sport Day

BVGS is a heavily oversubscribed voluntary aided, selective secondary school for boys aged 11-18 with Language College and Training School status. Girls are admitted into the Sixth Form. In 2009 the school achieved 98% A\*- C at GCSE and 79% A/B at A level. Staff wanted to increase the confidence of their pupils and to promote teamwork amongst them. They also wanted to raise the profile of languages in the school and promote interdepartmental collaborations which is essential for the new curriculum and CLIL.

### The project

As a Language College, BVGS benefits from staff who are able to speak a wide variety of languages and so it was decided to incorporate some new, non-European languages as well as working on existing ones to enhance the global dimension of the day. Pupils in the school are generally very positive about sport and it was felt that linking MFL with sport would really motivate the boys, including those who are not usually so enthusiastic about language learning. Taking students out of their "comfort zones" (playing a new sport in a new language) would promote team work and the pupils' confidence would be boosted as they see their skills develop in each activity. After much consultation between MFL and PE staff to ensure ease of organisation and range of languages, the events chosen

were Kabbadi (Urdu), Badminton (Chinese), Football (Spanish), Sumo (Japanese), Handball (German) and Capoeira (Portuguese). Pupils were placed in 6 teams with each team given the name of a continent to further enhance the international theme. Each group had a mixture of abilities in both sport and languages which meant that each team contained pupils who had never worked together before.

Every pupil received a booklet on the day of the event which contained key words for all activities in the language to be used. There were questions on every page which could only be answered if the pupil paid full attention to the short briefing at the start of every activity. This ensured pupils remained on task and also gave them something to take away with them at the end of the day.

House points were awarded based upon the students who had shown the most skill in each sport as well as those who had used the most language. This meant that all pupils gave their all throughout the day and were keen to show off what they could do!

The event was followed up in class afterwards with pupils writing newspaper reports about the day in the target language. A display was created in the foyer of the language college and photos/videos were used on the plasma screens in reception.



*"The success of the day has been a springboard for more exciting cross curricular language activities in school"*

MFL teacher

*"I really enjoyed working in teams with new people – it was fun!!"*

Year 8 Pupil



#### **What impact has the project had in school?**

During the plenary session at the end of the day pupils completed an evaluation form. The results of these evaluations told, amongst other things, that 54% of the pupils said that they had used new skills and 66% enjoyed working in a team. Back in the classroom, members of staff commented that, following the sports day, pupils demonstrated a more focused and positive attitude in lessons.

#### **How will the project be developed in future years?**

The success of the day has been a springboard for other language days. As well as repeating this event and other cross curricular language days for other year groups, the school also branched out to hosting pupils from local secondary schools at a Gifted and Talented day.



## The King's CE School

Regis Road  
Tettenhall  
Wolverhampton  
WV6 8XG

Phone: 01902 558333

# German Orienteering Festival

The King's CE School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive situated in Wolverhampton. The school has specialist status as a Visual Arts and Sports College with Science, enabling the development of close links with the local community and partner schools. The King's CE School is very ethnically diverse with students coming from a variety of backgrounds, creating a very multicultural environment. Languages remain a compulsory element of the KS4 curriculum, with all students following a course in either French, German or one of the community languages on offer. Staff hoped that by developing an Active Languages project they would be able to raise the profile of languages in school, raise attainment, show pupils that languages have a place outside the classroom and make them accessible to everyone.

### The project

Like Priory, the PE department at King's had recently set up an orienteering course in school and it was seen as the ideal opportunity to try it out in a different way. Year 8 pupils were targeted as their language skills would be sufficient to be able to decipher the clues and Year 10 Language Leaders supported the delivery of the programme.

Before the start of the project, all MFL and PE teachers involved in the delivery underwent basic orienteering training – familiarising themselves with the position of each marker, the map, etc – and a member of each department worked together to devise the Orienteering clue sheets and maps. Three clue sheets were produced to provide for the varying linguistic needs of the pupils to ensure the activity was accessible to everyone.

Prior to completing the orienteering course, pupils participated in a briefing session delivered by MFL teachers to familiarise themselves with core vocabulary required for the course such as colours and school

buildings. Pupils also learnt some motivational language which could be used to cheer on their peers.

The activity was structured so that the course would be completed by each teaching group individually during language lessons. The team to get the correct answers the quickest in each teaching group was put through to the 'Grand Finale', competing against the fastest groups from the other teaching sets. The finale took place during PSHE lesson in the last week of the summer term, giving a turn around of 3 weeks for all briefing sessions, initial rounds and the final to take place.

In the first round of the competition, pupils were reminded of the rules of the competition. A dictionary was placed in the middle of the field which pupils were allowed to use three times throughout the competition (carefully monitored by a teacher!), so that they had some support but were also using their linguistic skills to attempt the challenge.

It was important that all pupils should feel involved in the grand final, not just those who were competing and so lessons in the run up focused on creating target language banners and cheers to encourage the teams representing each teaching set. The roles of reporter and photographer were allocated to some pupils and others were responsible for serving refreshments. As an additional challenge, pupils were only allowed to have a drink if they had asked for it in German thus ensuring maximum use of target language.

Following the event, the winners were presented with certificates in an awards ceremony during Year Assembly. Prizes were awarded not only to the winning orienteering team, but also for the best cheers and banners, the best report of the event, the best tea lady etc, so that the event was fun and accessible for everyone.



*“The pupils enjoy challenging us to see how many German words we can still remember!”*

PE Teacher



#### **What impact has the project had in school?**

The event had a really positive impact on the year group whilst it was being carried out, with a real sense of competition being embedded. Not only did pupils want to win themselves, but they were very supportive of the teams representing their teaching group, which consequently improved the atmosphere and camaraderie in the teaching groups resulting in greater productivity in lessons generally. There has been a renewed enthusiasm for language learning amongst the pupils that participated in the project and some pupils have chosen to follow the Language Leaders Award as they were inspired by the Language Leaders who helped run the Orienteering Festival.

It has also had a positive impact back home, with many parents mentioning the project at parents' evenings.

On a wider school level, it has opened the door for more cross-curricular activities to take place, and has been particularly useful in demonstrating how to make it a success before cross-curricular teaching is introduced to Y7 across the board from September onwards.

#### **How will the project be developed in future years?**

With the orienteering course in place and the materials produced, it is simple to roll this out to other year groups. The staff plan to translate the materials into other languages to create a full suite of resources for the Orienteering Festival to become an annual event. The Language Leaders Award will be rolled out to other year groups as it proved to be very popular as the pupils relished the opportunity to work with younger students in the delivery and organisation of the event.

*\*To access resources to accompany this project please visit [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands) and go to Resources \**



With thanks to:  
Bishop Vesey's Grammar School  
Charlton School  
CTC Kingshurst Academy  
Sundorne School and Sports College  
The King's CE School  
The Priory School  
Bev Whiteside, Youth Sport Trust  
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