



# WELCOME

## Steven Fawkes, Co-President of ALL 2025-26

We celebrate in these pages the work of teachers over time and learners who enrich the linguistic capabilities of our nation through devoted, often voluntary, work outside the mainstream education system. We know that a Language (or more than one) is part of our identity through family history, way of life, religious and social customs etc. and that everyone flourishes when they have a robust sense of their individual identity within our diverse community.

The stories that follow will be an enjoyable read for all teachers of all Languages, no matter their sector, because they reflect issues we all recognise – how we support and motivate our highly individual learners, how we convey important cultural and social messages about the importance of open-mindedness and communication, how we inspire curiosity, a learning ethos, and a love for our Languages.

We have chosen a bilingual presentation format to place value on some of the world languages our learners have access to. The title of each article not in English is 'We are here', an affirmation of shared community. (Please note that proof-reading of the texts not in English has been arranged by the authors themselves.) The image of the Quilt on the cover of this *Languages Today* Special mirrors this wealth of Languages.

It has been a pleasure to edit the contributions of our writers, many of them writing this sort of text for the first time, as part of my activity in the Co-Presidential year I share with my friend Anna Lise (below).

The theme of our Presidency of ALL, is



Love your Languages



Friday 13 – Saturday 14 March 2026  
Leonardo Hotel Hinckley Island  
Leicestershire

### Collaboration at the heart of languages education

and this special edition of *Languages Today* is evidence of the importance we place on collaboration. It was born from a conversation at Language World 2025 between Jessika (below) and ALL's Chair of Trustees, and carried forward by the willingness of individuals who share the love of Languages and the sense of common purpose between Language teachers, whatever their context or indeed Language.

If you enjoy our sampler, as we hope you do, please tell others you know that they will be able to access the full e-magazine online, and visit the associated pages of the ALL website which are open to all (See page 16).

NB This is a sampler for the magazine to be published shortly on the ALL website <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/language-zones/home-heritage-community-languages/>. We chose an electronic format to give us the potential to add other stories which arrive in my inbox: [steven.fawkes@ALL-Languages.org.uk](mailto:steven.fawkes@ALL-Languages.org.uk) We have articles planned for Afghan, Amharic, Arabic, Czech, Greek, Gujarati, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish.

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## Anna Lise Gordon Co-President of ALL 2025-26

Did you hear these wise words from King Charles III in a recent speech? Talking about the UK, the King commented that 'our diversity is our greatest strength'.

This reminded me of a journey on the London underground some years ago, as I travelled from a school in Streatham, South London, to another school in Wood Green, North London. The journey took about an hour, and I was surrounded by linguistic diversity, throughout the journey, hearing no English at all. It was a joyous experience, listening to some familiar languages and being intrigued by (to me!) unfamiliar languages. I enjoyed wondering about what life experiences had brought us together, sharing the same



rattling tube carriage on a wet Friday in London.

In a recent ALLNet communication, ALL Council member, Lisa Chung, celebrated Chinese New Year, commenting: 'As language educators, we are uniquely placed to help learners make connections between language, culture and global citizenship'.

Indeed, as we recognise the importance of communication and intercultural understanding in a constantly changing world, ALL has a pivotal role to play in a society which does not always appear to value languages, including the many and varied home, heritage and community languages which are an important part of life for many children, young people and teachers.

Our professional association is run by teachers, for teachers, across all sectors, phases and languages in the UK and further afield. We celebrate the contribution of the HHCL community – make your voices heard by joining ALL and participating in our many activities!

## Guest editorial Jessika Rabello

This special issue of Languages Today, *We Are Still Here*, is both a celebration and a testament to our collective perseverance.

I am especially grateful to Steven Fawkes, whose kindness, insight, and steady support accompanied every stage of its development. His thoughtful engagement and willingness to contribute so constructively were instrumental in bringing this issue to fruition.

Across the country, quietly, persistently, and passionately, supplementary and heritage language schools do work that sustains languages, cultures and identities. Some have been doing this work across generations. Long before multilingualism became a buzzword in educational policy and diversity agendas, our communities were already building spaces of belonging. We were already teaching, organising, translating, mediating, supporting families and nurturing young people navigating multiple worlds. Despite limited or, in many cases, non-existent institutional support, these schools continue to thrive. This special issue documents that resilience and makes visible a history that is too often intangible - a history written through cultural transmission, linguistic preservation, and community care.

As founder of a Brazilian Portuguese Library, I have witnessed how access to heritage language resources can transform the way families relate to identity, literacy and belonging. Books, storytelling and language education are not simply educational tools: they are anchors that connect children to their heritage and empower communities to see themselves represented, valued and heard. Supplementary education is not an extracurricular



luxury. It is a vital educational, social and cultural infrastructure that strengthens our multilingual world.

The contributions gathered in this issue offer powerful success stories from teachers and organisers who are leading this work across the country. They highlight effective pedagogies, community engagement strategies, support for students' self-efficacy and creative approaches to sustaining heritage language education under challenging circumstances. These stories remind us that supplementary schools are laboratories of innovation, adaptability and cultural affirmation.

However, celebration must be accompanied by advocacy. If we are still here, it is because communities have carried this work through determination and collective effort. But survival should not be the ultimate goal. Supplementary and heritage language schools deserve sustainable accommodation, stable funding, increased visibility and formal recognition. We must be taken seriously by examination bodies, government agencies, mainstream education systems, and, at times, even by families who may underestimate the long-term value of heritage language learning.

This multilingual publication is itself a statement. By bringing together diverse voices and linguistic experiences, it honours the richness of our communities and reinforces the importance of linguistic diversity as a national asset. Each contribution in this issue represents countless hours of dedication and generosity. I extend my deepest gratitude to all collaborators who have shared their vision, research and lived experiences. Your work strengthens our collective voice and ensures that our stories are documented, celebrated, and remembered.

*We Are Still Here* invites readers to reflect, connect and take action. May this issue inspire new partnerships, spark dialogue and encourage continued advocacy for supplementary education. Our communities are not only preserving languages; we are building identities, nurturing resilient communities and shaping more inclusive futures.

It's been great to work with the ALL editorial and design team, and to have stimulating, inspiring calls along the way!

Enjoy, connect and thrive!



The full Languages Today Special, *We Are Still Here*, will be published electronically on:

<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/language-zones/home-heritage-community-languages/>

# Did you know...?

## Community-led Heritage Language Settings

### Nurturing a precious asset

- Community-led heritage language settings (also referred to as ‘supplementary’, ‘complementary’ or ‘out-of-school’) are settings often set up by parents / volunteers, to enable children to learn their **‘home’ language and culture**, as well as other curriculum areas.
- The UK is a **multilingual country** with an estimated 300 languages spoken. Over 20% of children come from homes where another language is spoken. It is estimated that some 60 languages are being taught in over 3000 community-led settings attended by many thousands of children.
- Community-led heritage language settings cater for a very wide range of students across **primary and secondary age ranges** including some who have no background in the relevant language.

### Feeling included, feeling valued

- Aiming to promote children’s **bi-/multilingual abilities**, these schools make an important contribution to **personal development and citizenship education**.
- In the face of discrimination commonly experienced by bi-/multilingual learners in their everyday lives community-led heritage language settings provide a **safe space** for children to feel proud of a multilingual-multicultural identity and to feel **part of British society**.

### Productive partnerships

- These settings operate at weekends often on the premises of mainstream schools, or in libraries, embassies or religious centres. Where there is collaboration between mainstream schools and community-led heritage language settings this has been found to have **multiple benefits for both partners**.
- Communication and involvement of parents / carers is strong; this includes requests to support them with **advice on issues that can arise in the mainstream school**.

### Facing challenges

- Funded largely by fees paid by parents / carers / volunteers, they **often struggle financially**. This is partly due to the high cost of hiring premises and the **decline in support from local authorities**.
- There is **little recognition** of the important work taking place in community-led heritage settings and many people, including mainstream educators, are unaware of their existence.

### Ensuring quality

- Great importance is attached to children’s welfare in community-led settings and local authority **safeguarding training** supports this.
- Although some teachers working in these settings may lack British qualifications, many are **highly qualified** and keen to take advantage of **professional development opportunities**.

### Find out more

- **YPF Trust - centre for supplementary education** supports community-led settings with their Quality Mark Award and capacity building programmes, such as the Creative Teaching and Learning Project and Children’s Rights programme, helping them raise their profile and enhance their impact.  
<https://ypftrust.org.uk/>
- The **HHCL Advisory Group** supports heritage language education in the UK by providing information and free professional development sessions for teachers:  
<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/language-zones/home-heritage-community-languages/>





## The Storyhouse Language Project

**Andre Olchowski** is Education Consultant, Liverpool Supplementary Schools Network

The Liverpool Supplementary Schools Network launched, as a partnership enterprise. It is an [SC1.1]innovative language programme to deepen awareness and demonstrate the importance [SC2.1]of languages in the community – in a relaxed, friendly, informative manner, and the brilliant setting of a busy vibrant theatre, library, cafe and socially spaced arena.

As part of a global and increasingly multilingual and multicultural society we realised the potential of our Supplementary schools to remedy the deficit in foreign language skills, at a time when global demand for languages is expanding. We believe that the key to future economic growth lies in languages, and also that the mental health and wellbeing of community members would be enhanced by linguistic stimulation, opportunities to meet new friends, form new relationships and improve social skills.



In order to raise awareness of what we could offer, and to support communities in fulfilling their potential through language skills, we set up a series of cultural events, festivals and workshops using the 'market place' space at the vibrant *Storyhouse* in Chester, located right in the bustling city centre.



The staff of supplementary schools acted as catalysts; these skilled linguistic individuals, powerful representatives of their cultures in the locality, embarked upon a programme to 'share languages' with the wider community through a series of relaxed teaching initiatives, and the *Storyhouse Language Festival* [SC3.1] spearheaded events in multiple languages including Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Arabic, German, Spanish, French, Hungarian and Chinese.

Shoppers, library users, visitors, family groups and community members shared the enjoyment of diverse culture, watching the various folk dances, tasting food, experiencing taster language workshops, singing and participating in fantastic toe-tapping music. This was all exhibited in the expansive theatre foyer with informal workshops and table displays dispersed around an exciting, bustling public interactive 'coffee' arena, during a busy weekend.

Interest in languages was extended to chat sessions, to which members of the visiting public signed up, and the spinoffs from the festival snowballed into

- weekly language storytelling workshops,
- mini-conferences such as 'Speak like a Native' and 'Raising a Bilingual Child'
- a 'Language Café' with weekly language start-up sessions and 'chats'

Footfall was high over the next few weeks and months, partly because everything happened in a place where you could meet new people and practise your language skills in a friendly atmosphere, supportive to beginner or advanced learners, with sessions such as '*Spanish on the sofa*', '*Deutsch in the Den*', '*Portuguese Rhythm*', '*Chatter and Natter Polish*', and '*Meet 'n' Mix French*'.

This was a really successful venture and a great way of engaging with the public to raise the profile of languages. The Storyhouse Project helped people connect with the expertise of those working in languages; we met people from businesses, students, the unemployed and the retired, all of them discovering how learning a language would benefit their future lives personally and professionally.



Post-project analysis showed that from the 105 initial interests, 85 signed up to the 'chat' language weekly workshops and after 3 months 65 still continued attending the weekly sessions. These were supported by commercial language apps but benefitted mostly from the interaction with native speaker language teachers, and the social aspects of the warm, friendly 'chat' sessions. This was a win for the theatre and the Supplementary schools who both benefitted from the interest and business.

This project was a success in raising awareness of culture and languages in the locality and raising standards of teaching and learning in the process, giving participants a valuable, lasting experience and a springboard to develop [SC5.1]further their skills in foreign languages. After a three[SC6.1]-month trial we found 'chat' groups still continuing into the new year, highlighting the success of the Project further! Links with higher education and local business enterprises were secured, along with some funding and strengthened sponsorships for our Supplementary schools. A Project that definitely gave added value!



Ελευθερία Καπαραλιώτη, Διευθύντρια Ελληνικού Παροικιακού Σχολείου Κόβεντρυ  
**Eleftheria Kaparalioti**, headteacher of the Greek community school of Coventry

## Τι προσφέρει ένα ελληνικό παροικιακό σχολείο: Η εμπειρία του Κόβεντρυ

Ελευθερία Καπαραλιώτη, Διευθύντρια Ελληνικού Παροικιακού Σχολείου Κόβεντρυ

Ως διευθύντρια αυτού του σχολείου, νιώθω βαθιά την ευθύνη αλλά και την τιμή να καθοδηγώ αυτή την πολύτιμη προσπάθεια. Τα παιδιά μας μεγαλώνουν σε ένα περιβάλλον όπου συναντώνται πολλές γλώσσες και πολιτισμοί. Αυτό αποτελεί πρόκληση, αλλά και ευκαιρία. Για εμάς, τους εκπαιδευτικούς, είναι σημαντικό να διατηρούμε ζωντανό τον πλούτο της ελληνικής κληρονομιάς, ενώ παράλληλα στηρίζουμε τους μαθητές μας να αναπτύξουν μια υγιή, ισορροπημένη ταυτότητα. Θέλουμε να νιώθουν περήφανοι για την καταγωγή τους, χωρίς να αισθάνονται ότι πρέπει να επιλέξουν ανάμεσα σε δύο κόσμους.

Το σχολείο μας βρίσκεται κάτω από την σκέπη της Αρχιεπισκοπής Θυατειρών και Μεγάλης Βρετανίας και αποτελεί έναν ζωντανό πυρήνα μάθησης, πολιτισμού και παράδοσης για τα παιδιά της ελληνικής παροικίας. Σε μια χώρα πολυπολιτισμική, το σχολείο μας λειτουργεί ως γέφυρα ανάμεσα στο παρόν και το παρελθόν, ανάμεσα στην καθημερινότητα των παιδιών στη Βρετανία και στις ρίζες της ελληνικής τους ταυτότητας. Εδώ, οι μαθητές μας δεν μαθαίνουν απλώς μια γλώσσα· μαθαίνουν την ιστορία, τον πολιτισμό και τις αξίες που συνοδεύουν την ελληνική κληρονομιά.

## Οι αξίες που επιδιώκουμε να καλλιεργήσουμε στους μαθητές μας βρίσκονται στον πυρήνα όλων όσων κάνουμε:

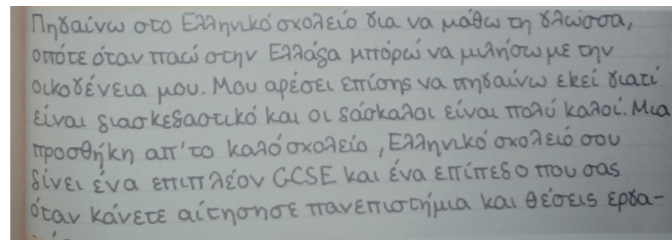
- να αγκαλιάζουν τη μοναδικότητά τους
- να αισθάνονται περήφανοι για την κληρονομιά, τη γλώσσα και τον πολιτισμό τους
- να εκτιμούν τις πλούσιες παραδόσεις της Ελλάδας
- να δείχνουν φιλοξενία, καλοσύνη και γενναιότητα
- να σέβονται τους άλλους



Σε κάθε μάθημα, τα παιδιά ανακαλύπτουν τον πλούτο της ελληνικής γλώσσας. Μαθαίνουν να διαβάζουν και να γράφουν στα ελληνικά, να εκφράζονται με σαφήνεια και αυτοπεποίθηση

και να κατανοούν τη γλώσσα ως έναν ζωντανό φορέα πολιτισμού. Οι μαθητές μας είναι ηλικίας από 5 έως 17 ετών και χρησιμοποιούν τα ελληνικά για να γράφουν τις δικές τους ιστορίες, μαθαίνουν τραγούδια και ποιήματα και συμμετέχουν σε σχολικές εορτές. Η ελληνική γλώσσα δεν είναι απλώς ένα μάθημα για

εμάς - είναι η ιστορία μας, η ταυτότητά μας και το νήμα που μας συνδέει με τις ρίζες μας. Μέσα από αυτήν, οι μαθητές αποκτούν γνώσεις και αξίες που θα τους συνοδεύουν σε όλη τους τη ζωή, είτε συνεχίσουν τις σπουδές τους στην Ελλάδα είτε παραμείνουν στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο.



Η κοινότητά μας στο Κόβεντρυ λειτουργεί σαν μια οικογένεια. Εκπαιδευτικοί, μαθητές και γονείς συνεργάζονται στενά με έναν κοινό στόχο: να προσφέρουν στα παιδιά ένα ασφαλές και υποστηρικτικό περιβάλλον. Μαζί οργανώνουμε εκδηλώσεις, γιορτές και δραστηριότητες που ενώνουν την κοινότητα. Οι οικογένειες παίζουν καθοριστικό ρόλο στη σχολική μας ζωή, με τους γονείς να συμμετέχουν στις γιορτές και να στηρίζουν τις φιλανθρωπικές μας δράσεις (όπως το καλοκαιρινό BBQ, τα bazaar με γλυκά και τη συλλογή χριστουγεννιάτικων κουτιών). Πολλές οικογένειες ταξιδεύουν από μακριά για να βρίσκονται μαζί μας κάθε εβδομάδα.

Οι γιορτές μας - από τις εθνικές επετείους έως τις χριστουγεννιάτικες και πασχαλινές εκδηλώσεις - είναι στιγμές χαράς και περηφάνιας. Τα παιδιά μαθαίνουν τραγούδια, χορούς, ποιήματα και ιστορίες που ενώνουν το παρόν με το παρελθόν. Μέσα από αυτές τις εμπειρίες, αναγνωρίζουν την αξία της κληρονομιάς τους και κατανοούν ότι ο ελληνικός πολιτισμός δεν είναι κάτι μακρινό, αλλά κάτι ζωντανό και εξελισσόμενο.

Στο σχολείο μας, οι μαθητές καλλιεργούν πολύ περισσότερα από γλωσσικές δεξιότητες. Μαθαίνουν να συνεργάζονται, να σέβονται ο ένας τον άλλον, να εκφράζονται και να χτίζουν την αυτοπεποίθησή τους. Δημιουργούν φιλίες που συχνά διαρκούν πολλά χρόνια και αναπτύσσουν ισχυρούς, ζεστούς δεσμούς με τους δασκάλους τους. Είναι βαθιά συγκινητικό ότι πολλοί από τους παλιούς μας μαθητές συνεχίζουν να μας επισκέπτονται ακόμη και ως ενήλικες, δείχνοντας ότι το σχολείο είναι κάτι περισσότερο από έναν χώρο μάθησης - είναι ένα δεύτερο σπίτι.



Γιορτή 25ης Μαρτίου

# What's your thinking

## on a place where language, tradition, and community come together

As headteacher of this school, I feel both the responsibility and the honour of guiding important work.



Our pupils grow up in an environment where many languages and cultures coexist. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity. As educators, it is essential to us to keep the richness of Greek heritage alive, while supporting our students in developing a balanced and confident sense of identity. We want them to feel proud of where they come from, without ever feeling they must choose between two worlds.

The Greek community school of Coventry is a vibrant centre of learning, culture, and tradition for the children of our diaspora. In a diverse and multicultural country, our school serves as a bridge between the present and the past, connecting our pupils' everyday lives in Britain with the roots of their Greek identity. Here, our students do far more than learn a language; they discover the history, culture, and values that shape our heritage.

The values we aim to instil in our students are at the heart of everything we do:

- embracing their individuality
- feeling proud of their heritage, language, and culture
- appreciating the rich traditions of Greece
- showing hospitality, kindness, and bravery
- respecting others and celebrating diversity

In every lesson, children explore the richness of the Greek language. They learn to read and write in Greek, to express themselves with clarity and confidence, and to understand the language as a living bearer of culture. Our pupils use Greek to write their own stories, for performing plays at school celebrations, singing songs, and when reciting poems. They range from ages 5 to 17, and each one brings something unique to our multicultural environment. Greek is not simply a subject for us - it is our history, our identity, and the thread that ties us to our origins. **Through their learning, pupils gain knowledge and values that will accompany them throughout their lives, whether they continue their studies in Greece or remain in the UK.**

Our community in Coventry functions very much like a family. Teachers, pupils, and parents work closely together with a shared goal: to offer children a safe, supportive, and inspiring environment. Under the care of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, our relationships grow stronger year by year. The church acts as a central point of cooperation, solidarity, and spiritual guidance. Together, we organise events, celebrations, and activities that bring the community



together and allow children to experience Greek tradition in meaningful ways. Families play a huge role in our school life, with parents joining us at celebrations and

supporting our fundraising efforts (like the end of year BBQ, cake sales, and Christmas shoebox collections). Many travel a considerable distance to join us every week.

Our celebrations - from national holidays to Christmas and Easter events - are moments of joy and pride.



Visiting the Greek mythology exhibition at the Ashmolean

Children learn songs, dances, poems, and stories that connect the present with the past. Through these experiences, they recognise the value of their heritage and understand

that Greek culture is not distant, but alive and evolving.

**At our school, pupils learn to collaborate, to respect one another, to express themselves, and to build confidence. They form friendships that often last for many years and develop strong, affectionate relationships with their teachers. It is deeply moving that many of our former students continue to visit us, even as adults, showing that the school is more than a place of learning - it is a second home.**

The Greek community school of Coventry is not simply an educational institution. It is a place where language, tradition, and community come together. A place where children learn who they are, where they come from, and how they can move forward with pride and confidence. The solidarity and cooperation that characterise our community support every step we take and give us the strength to continue. With dedication, love, and commitment, we carry on our mission, knowing that every lesson, every word, and every smile contributes to preserving and passing on Greek identity to the next generation.





**Ania Norman** (on the left of the photo) with Jane Driver from North Cambridge Academy

Polska Szkoła Sobotnia im Dąbrówka działa w Cambridge od 1952 roku; jest ona jedną z wielu szkół polonijnych istniejących w Wielkiej Brytanii i zrzeszonych w Polskiej Macierzy Szkolnej-organizacji wspierającej edukację polonijną.



Założona przez grupę powojennych emigrantów, którzy nie mogli powrócić do Polski z uwagi na zmiany ustrojowe po II Wojnie Światowej, szkoła miała za zadanie utrzymanie polskości - a więc naukę języka i tradycji - pośród ich dzieci urodzonych w Wielkiej Brytanii. Przez następne lata w sobotnich zajęciach uczestniczyły dzieci z rodzin o polskich korzeniach z kolejnych pokoleń i kolejnych fal emigracji, dzieci urodzone i wychowane w Wielkiej Brytanii, często w rodzinach polsko-angielskich. Na początku XXI wieku dołączyły do nich dzieci Polaków przybywających w ramach dotychczasowej zasady wolnego przemieszczania; urodzeni w Polsce, uczniowie ci często rozpoczęli już proces edukacyjny w kraju swojego

urodzenia. Wśród uczniów zapisywanych do szkoły w ostatnich latach przeważają już dzieci urodzone w Wielkiej Brytanii w polskich rodzinach osiadłych tu od kilkunastu lat, lub w rodzinach gdzie jedno z rodziców jest innej narodowości. Są to więc dzieci dwu i trój-języczne. Każda grupa reprezentuje specyficzne uwarunkowania, umiejętności i potrzeby którym staramy się sprostać.

Nie mamy własnego budynku szkolnego, a liczbowo przestamy rozmiary Polskiego Klubu, dlatego od lat korzystamy z gościnności North Cambridge Academy, pomocy i poparcia dyrekcji i pracowników tej szkoły doceniających wagę nauczania języka dziedzicznego.

Nasza Szkoła oferuje zajęcia dla uczniów wieku 6 - 15 lat, w 9 grupach. Każda klasa wykorzystuje podręczniki dostosowane do przyswojenia materiału zawartego w ramowym programie nauczania, opracowanym specjalnie dla szkół polonijnych. Zajęcia prowadzone są przez kadrę nauczycielską rekrutującą się spośród przybyłych z Polski nauczycieli, którzy nie tylko bazują na swoich poprzednich doświadczeniach i wykształceniu ale podnoszą swoje kwalifikacje poprzez specjalistyczne kursy, webinaria i konferencje pozwalające na wymianę doświadczeń ze specjalistami i nauczycielami z podobnych placówek.

Uczniowie klas najmłodszych uczą się pisać i czytać w języku polskim, mają również możliwość rozwijania i ćwiczenia umiejętności konwersacji w tym języku. Lekcje są urozmaicone i wzbogacone przez naukę piosenek i wierszyków z klasycznego i najnowszego repertuaru utworów dla dzieci.

W klasach starszych wprowadzane są zagadnienia gramatyczne i ortograficzne pomagające w prawidłowym użyciu języka, oraz teksty pozwalające na rozbudowanie słownictwa. Uczniowie zapoznają się również z wybranymi pozycjami z literatury polskiej.

Klasa 9 jest grupą pracującą pod kątem egzaminu GCSE, w oparciu o podręczniki dostosowane do wymogów i zakresów tematycznych AQA.

Klasy 5-9 mają dodatkowo lekcje historii i geografii Polski; dla zainteresowanych prowadzone są również lekcje religii.

Na zakończenie każdego roku szkolnego uczniowie otrzymują świadectwa i dyplomy nagradzające ich całoroczną pracę; co roku Grono Pedagogiczne wybiera także jednego ucznia, któremu wręczamy puchar szkolny.

Oprócz pracy nad podtrzymaniem i rozwojem znajomości języka polskiego, przygotowaniem do egzaminów państwowych na poziomie GCSE i A-level, szkoła organizuje również imprezy i występy szkolne nawiązujące do polskich tradycji oraz świąt państwowych. Pozwala to uczniom na rozwinięcie talentów artystycznych i zaprezentowanie swoich umiejętności na forum szkolnym. Występy gromadzą zawsze rodziców i przyjaciół, entuzjastycznie oklaskujących młodych artystów.

Program edukacyjny jest wzbogacony o wyjazdy do teatru w Polskim Ośrodku Kulturalnym w Londynie i wizyty grup teatralnych z przedstawieniami dla dzieci, wyjazdy do muzeum Sikorskiego w Londynie lub prezentacje online. Pozwala to na żywy kontakt z językiem w środowisku szerszym niż szkoła, czy grono rodzinne.

Uczniowie mają również możliwość udziału w międzyszkolnych konkursach (recytatorskich, plastycznych itp) organizowanych przez Polską Macierz Szkolną lub organizacje w Polsce, czy wyjazdach na doroczny Dzień Sportu; mogą także wstąpić w szeregi współpracujących ze szkołą zuchów i harcerzy. Umożliwia to zdobycie dodatkowej wiedzy, daje czas na rekreację i wspólną zabawę, jak również poczucie przynależności do większej społeczności nadając nauce języka dziedzicznego dodatkowy kontekst.

Nasza szkoła zawsze stanowiła ważny element życia polskiej społeczności, wspomagając rodziców w przekazywaniu języka i

podtrzymywaniu tradycji - co w warunkach domowych jest często wyzwaniem bardzo trudnym. Wierzymy, że swoją działalnością zapewniamy dzieciom wielorakie korzyści płynące z dwujęzyczności: ułatwienie utrzymania kontaktu z rodziną i przyjaciółmi w kraju, nawiązywanie nowych przyjaźni wśród kolegów i koleżanek, budowanie pewności siebie, bogatsze postrzeganie świata, akceptację i lepsze zrozumienie różnych kultur, rozwijanie kreatywności i łatwość nauki kolejnych języków, a w przyszłości - dostęp do szerszego rynku pracy.

Nauczanie języka dziedzicznego wymaga wytrwałej pracy, cierpliwości i nieprzerwanej współpracy między domem a szkołą, ale daje uczniom niewymierne korzyści - a ich zapewnienie jest dla nas nadrzędnym celem.



## meet the changing needs of learners

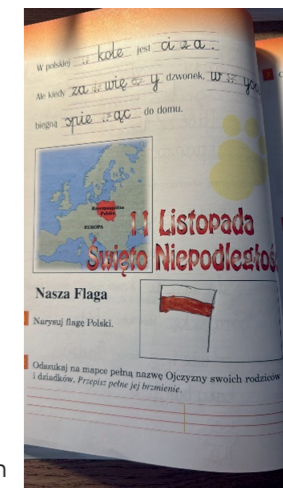
### Polish Saturday School in Cambridge

Since 1952 The Dąbrówka Polish Saturday School in Cambridge has striven to meet the needs of different groups of learners, with specific circumstances, skills, and needs. Over the years children from families with Polish roots, spanning several waves of migration, have attended. Some were born and raised in the UK, often in Polish-English families, but, at the start of the 21st century, under the EU's free movement principle, children arrived who were born in Poland and had often already begun their education there. In more recent years, most enrolments are children born in the UK to Polish families settled here for over a decade, or in families where one parent is of another nationality, meaning the children are bi- or trilingual.

We do not have our own school building and are too large for the Polish Club, but for years we have benefited from the hospitality of North Cambridge Academy, with the support and approval of its

management and staff, who appreciate the importance of heritage language teaching.

Our school offers classes for students aged 6-15, in nine groups. Each class uses textbooks tailored to the curriculum designed specifically for Polish community schools. Lessons are conducted by teachers from Poland, who draw on their previous experience and training, and enhance their qualifications through specialist courses, webinars, and conferences, allowing them to exchange experiences with experts and teachers from similar institutions.



Younger students learn to read and write in Polish and to develop and practise conversational skills in the language. Lessons are varied, and enriched with songs and poems from both classic and contemporary children's repertoires.

Older classes explore grammar and spelling to help with correct language use, as well as texts to expand vocabulary. Students also become familiar with selected works of Polish literature.

Class 9 is a group working towards the GCSE exam, using textbooks adapted to the requirements and thematic scope of the AQA Board.

Classes 5-9 also have additional lessons in Polish history and geography; for those interested, religious education is also offered.

At the end of each school year, students receive certificates and diplomas recognising their work; and every year, the teaching staff select a student to receive the school cup.



In addition to maintaining and developing Polish language skills and preparing for national exams at GCSE and A-level, the school organises events and performances related to Polish traditions and national holidays. These allow students to develop their artistic talents and present their skills to the school community. Performances always attract parents and friends, who enthusiastically applaud the young artists.

Their educational programme is enriched by visits to the theatre at the Polish Cultural Centre and to the Sikorski Museum in London, by online presentations and by theatre groups offering performances for children. This enables contact with the language in a broader environment than just the school or family circle. Our pupils participate in inter-school competitions (recitation, art, etc.) organised by the Polish Educational Society or organisations in Poland, as well as trips. They can also join the scouts and cubs who cooperate with

the school and provide additional learning, recreation and fun, as well as a sense of belonging to a larger community. Our school has always been an important part of Polish community

life, supporting parents in passing on the language and maintaining traditions, which can be a challenge at home. Teaching a heritage language requires hard work, patience, and continuous cooperation between home and school, but it gives students immeasurable benefits - ensuring these is our primary goal. We believe that our school provides children with easier contact with family and friends in Poland, new friends, self-confidence, a richer perception of the world, acceptance and better understanding of different cultures, creativity and ease in learning other languages, and, for the future, access to a wider job market.



As with many Polish community schools in the United Kingdom we are affiliated with the Polish Educational Society, a body supporting Polish diaspora education. The school was founded by a group of post-war emigrants who could not return to Poland due to political changes after World War II. Its purpose was to maintain Polish identity, language and traditions.



## Caminos de Lengua y Cultura

Marina Saez Lecue, Asesora de idiomas internacionales en el Consorcio Centro Sur, Gales

El proyecto **Caminos de Lengua y Cultura** consiste en una serie de talleres de teatro para hablantes de español como lengua de herencia, realizados entre abril y junio de 2025 en Cardiff en colaboración con el Departamento de Lenguas Modernas de la Universidad de Swansea.



Esta iniciativa forma parte del proyecto más amplio *Language Learning and Cultural Affirmation: A Model for Heritage Spanish Education*, cuyo objetivo es explorar cómo la lengua, la cultura y la identidad influyen en el aprendizaje del español como lengua de herencia, así como establecer directrices para construir un modelo pedagógico sólido para estas aulas. El proyecto cuenta con financiación del Arts & Humanities Research Council Impact Acceleration Account de la **Universidad de Swansea**.



El punto de partida de los talleres fue la experiencia pedagógica acumulada durante tres años en **Nuestra Escuela Cardiff**, una escuela suplementaria de español como lengua de herencia con cerca de 80 estudiantes y ocho grupos. Durante este periodo observamos dos inquietudes comunes entre las familias: por un lado, el desarrollo de la competencia oral (aunque los padres emplean el español, los hijos suelen responder en inglés o galés, lo que genera dudas sobre su competencia en la lengua de herencia). Por otro, el hecho de que el plurilingüismo de los niños no siempre se reconoce en sus contextos educativos.

Nuestra prioridad, por ello, era crear un espacio donde los alumnos usaran el español con fines reales y cotidianos, y donde todos sus repertorios lingüísticos fuesen visibles y valorados. Si bien no existe un único camino hacia el plurilingüismo, intuimos que la modalidad de aprendizaje era un factor clave. Además de ser escuela y comunidad, quisimos convertirnos en un punto de referencia para familias plurilingües y educadores interesados en el mantenimiento y desarrollo de lenguas y culturas de herencia.

El teatro se presentó como un medio idóneo, pues exige acción, movimiento y creación, permite centrarse en la tarea y motiva a participar. A su vez, genera un entorno donde cada alumno puede usar su voz -plurilingüe y única- para relacionarse con los demás.



Para diseñar e implementar los talleres contamos con Theatre Na Nóg, organización dedicada a producir obras originales bilingües. Los talleres se organizaron en cinco sesiones de 90 minutos para dos franjas de edad (5-9 y 9-12 años), además de una representación final. Estuvieron dirigidos

por dos tutoras de **Theatre Na Nóg** -una estudiante de español y otra hablante de herencia- junto con dos profesoras de la Escuela. Las diversas variedades del español que utilizaban permitieron a los niños escuchar y validar diferentes formas de hablar la lengua. También comprendieron que cometer errores es parte natural del aprendizaje y que mezclar lenguas es propio del plurilingüismo.



Al usar el español para hacer amigos, jugar e imaginar, los alumnos vivieron un viaje lingüístico y personal. Reflexionaron sobre quiénes son y cómo su

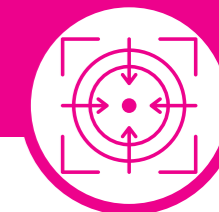
historia familiar forma parte de su identidad, asociando el idioma con experiencias colectivas y divertidas.

**Los cambios observados han sido notables: mayor espontaneidad al hablar, más confianza y un uso más natural del vocabulario. Aunque persisten errores y diferencias entre comprensión y producción, hemos visto un claro fortalecimiento de la identidad cultural. Los niños muestran ahora más entusiasmo por compartir elementos de sus culturas y tradiciones, así como por narrar sus experiencias.**

Para las familias, la experiencia ha sido enriquecedora y emotiva, especialmente al ver a sus hijos usar la lengua del hogar. Han comprobado que aprender una lengua de herencia va más allá de la alfabetización: implica construir identidad, comprender la propia historia y encontrar una voz propia.

Para el profesorado, los talleres han demostrado ser espacios seguros y motivadores que fomentan la interacción, la creatividad y la confianza. El siguiente paso será integrar actividades de arte dramático en nuestras clases habituales, dada su utilidad como complemento a la enseñanza formal.

Como escuela, estamos comprometidos a crear una red de apoyo con el resto de escuelas suplementarias de la región y a establecer un espacio donde compartir buenas prácticas, debatir retos y organizar proyectos colaborativos que aumenten nuestra visibilidad en la comunidad.



## Pathways of Language and Culture

Marina Saez Lecue is Adviser for International Languages at Central South Consortium, Wales

The **Pathways of Language and Culture** project consists of a series of theatre workshops for heritage Spanish speakers, held between April and June 2025 in Cardiff and developed in collaboration with the Department of Modern Languages at Swansea University.



This initiative is part of the broader project *Language Learning and Cultural Affirmation: A Model for Heritage Spanish Education*, which aims to explore how language, culture, and identity

influence the learning of heritage Spanish, and to establish guidelines for building a robust pedagogical model for heritage language classrooms. This project is funded by the *Arts & Humanities Research Council Impact Acceleration Account* at **Swansea University**.

The workshops draw on the pedagogical experience accumulated over three years at **Nuestra Escuela Cardiff (NEC)** - a supplementary heritage Spanish school, part of the **Nuestra Escuela Reino Unido (NERU)** Network-, with approximately 80 students and eight classes.

During this period, we observed two recurring concerns among families: the first was related to the development of oral competence (although parents address their children in Spanish, the children often respond in English or, sometimes, in Welsh, which raises doubts about their linguistic development in their heritage language). The second was that children's multilingualism is not always appreciated or recognised in their educational contexts.

Our priority, therefore, was to create a space where students could use Spanish for real, everyday purposes, and where all their linguistic repertoires were visible and accepted. Although we understand that there is no single path to multilingualism, we sensed that the learning modality was a key factor. For this reason, in addition to being a school and a community, we also wanted to position ourselves as a pedagogical point of reference for multilingual families and educators interested in the maintenance and development of heritage languages and cultures.

Theatre proved to be an ideal medium for this purpose, as it demands action, movement, and creativity, allowing students to focus on the task and feel motivated to participate. Furthermore, it creates a space where each individual can use their voice - multilingual and unique - to connect with others.



For the design and implementation of the workshops, we partnered with **Theatre Na Nóg**, an organisation dedicated to producing original bilingual plays

for audiences of all ages. The workshops were organised into five 90-minute sessions for two age groups (5-9 and 9-12), culminating in a final performance. They were led by two Theatre Na Nóg tutors - one a Spanish student and the other a heritage speaker - and two teachers from the school. They used diverse varieties of Spanish, enabling the children to hear and validate different ways of speaking the language. Children also learned that making mistakes is a natural part of

the learning process and that mixing languages is a characteristic of multilingualism.



By using Spanish to make friends, play, create, and imagine, the students experienced not only a linguistic journey but also a personal one. They reflected on who they are and how their family history shapes their identity. At the same time, they associated using Spanish with fun, shared experiences.

**The changes observed have been remarkable: greater spontaneity and confidence in speaking, and a more natural use of vocabulary. Although errors and discrepancies between comprehension and production persist, we have seen a clear strengthening of cultural identity. The children now show more enthusiasm for sharing elements of their cultures and family traditions and narrating their personal experiences.**

For the families, the experience has been enriching and deeply moving, especially seeing their children use their home language. They have realised that learning a heritage language goes beyond literacy: it is about building identity, understanding one's own history, and finding one's own voice.

For our part, we have found that the workshops are safe, motivating spaces that foster interaction, creativity, and confidence. Our next step will be to integrate drama activities into regular classes, given their value as a complement to formal education.

We are committed to creating a support network with other supplementary schools in the region and establishing a space to share best practices, discuss challenges, and organise collaborative projects that will increase our visibility in the community.

We are committed to creating a support network with other supplementary schools in the region and establishing a space to share best practices, discuss challenges, and organise collaborative projects that will increase our visibility in the community.





# Llwybrau Iaith a Diwylliant

**Marina Saez Lecue**, Ymgynghorydd Ieithoedd Rhyngwladol yng Nghonsortium Canolbarth y De, Cymru

Mae prosiect **Llwybrau Iaith a Diwylliant** yn cynnwys cyfres o weithdai theatr ar gyfer siaradwyr Sbaeneg treftadaeth, a gynhaliwyd rhwng Ebrill a Mehefin 2025 yng Nghaerdydd ac a ddatblygwyd mewn cydweithrediad â'r Adran Ieithoedd Modern ym Mhrifysgol Abertawe.

Mae'r fenter hon yn rhan o'r prosiect ehangach *Dysgu Iaith a Chadarnhad Diwylliannol: Model ar gyfer Addysg Sbaeneg*

*Treftadaeth*, sy'n anelu at archwilio sut mae iaith, diwylliant a hunaniaeth yn dylanwadu ar ddysgu Sbaeneg treftadaeth, ac i sefydlu canllawiau



ar gyfer adeiladu model addysgeg cadarn ar gyfer ystafelloedd dosbarth ieithoedd treftadaeth.

Tynnodd y gweithdai ar y profiad addysgeg a gronwyd dros dair blynedd yn **Nuestra Escuela Caerdydd** - ysgol Sbaeneg treftadaeth atodol gyda thua 80 o fyfyrwr a saith dosbarth. Yn ystod y cyfnod hwn, gwelsom ddau bryder a oedd yn codi dro ar ôl tro ymhlith teuluoedd: roedd y cyntaf yn gysylltiedig â datblygu cymhwysedd llafar (er bod rhieni'n annerch eu plant yn Sbaeneg, mae'r plant yn aml yn ymateb yn Saesneg neu, weithiau, yn y Gymraeg, sy'n codi amheuo ynghylch eu datblygiad ieithyddol yn eu hiaith dreftadaeth). Yr ail oedd nad yw amlieithrwydd plant bob amser yn cael ei werthfawrogi na'i gydnabod yn eu cyd-destunau addysgol.

Ein blaenoriaeth, felly, oedd creu lle lle gallai myfyrwyr ddefnyddio Sbaeneg at ddibenion go iawn, bob dydd, a lle roedd eu holl repertoires ieithyddol yn weladwy ac yn cael eu derbyn. Er ein bod yn deall nad oes un llwybr i amlieithrwydd, roeddem yn teimlo bod y dull dysgu yn ffactor allweddol. Am y rheswm hwn, yn ogystal â bod yn ysgol ac yn gymuned, roeddem hefyd eisiau ein lleoli ein hunain fel pwynt cyfeirio addysgeg ar gyfer teuluoedd ac addysgwyr amlieithog sydd â diddordeb mewn cynnal a datblygu ieithoedd a diwylliannau treftadaeth.

At y diben hwn, profodd theatr i fod yn gyfrwng delfrydol, gan ei fod yn mynnu gweithredu, symudiad a chreadigrwydd, gan ganiatáu i fyfyrwyr ganolbwyntio ar y dasg a theimlo'n frwdfrydig i gymryd rhan. Ar ben hynny, mae'n creu lle lle gall pob unigolyn ddefnyddio ei lais - amlieithog ac unigryw - i gysylltu ag eraill.

Ar gyfer dylunio a gweithredu'r gweithdai, fe wnaethom bartneru â **Theatr Na Nóg**, sefydliad sy'n ymroddedig i gynhyrchu dramâu dwyieithog gwreiddiol



ar gyfer cynulleidfaoedd o bob oed. Trefnwyd y gweithdai yn bum sesiwn 90 munud ar gyfer dau grŵp oedran (5-9 oed a 9-12 oed), gan arwain at berfformiad terfynol. Fe'u harweiniwyd gan ddau diwtor o Theatr Na Nóg—un yn fyfyrwr Sbaeneg a'r llall yn siaradwr treftadaeth—ynghyd â dau athro o'r ysgol. Defnyddion nhw wahanol amrywiaethau o Sbaeneg, gan alluogi'r plant i glywed a dilysu gwahanol ffyrdd o siarad yr iaith. Yn ogystal, dysgodd y plant fod gwneud camgymeriadau yn rhan naturiol o'r broses ddysgu a bod cymysgu ieithoedd yn nodwedd o amlieithrwydd. Trwy ddefnyddio Sbaeneg i wneud ffrindiau, chwarae, creu a dychmygu, profodd y myfyrwyr



nid yn unig daith ieithyddol ond un bersonol hefyd. Gwnaethant fyfrio ar bwy ydynt a sut mae hanes eu teulu yn llunio eu hunaniaeth. Ar yr un pryd, aethon nhw ati i gysylltu defnyddio Sbaeneg â phrofiadau hwyliog sy'n gyffredin.

**Mae'r newidiadau a welwyd wedi bod yn rhyfeddol: mwy o ddigymhellrwydd a hyder wrth siarad, a defnydd mwy naturiol o eirfa. Er bod gwallau ac anghysondebau rhwng dealltwriaeth a chynhyrchu yn parhau, rydym wedi gweld hunaniaeth ddiwylliannol yn cryfhau. Mae'r plant bellach yn dangos mwy o frwdfrydedd dros rannu elfennau o'u diwylliannau a'u traddodiadau teuluol ac adrodd eu profiadau personol.**

I'r teuluoedd, mae'r profiad wedi bod yn un cyfoethog ac yn gyffrous iawn, yn enwedig gweld eu plant yn defnyddio eu hiaith gartref. Maent wedi sylweddoli bod dysgu iaith dreftadaeth yn mynd y tu hwnt i lythrennedd: mae'n ymwneud ag adeiladu hunaniaeth, deall hanes eich hun, a dod o hyd i lais eich hun.

O'n rhan ni, mae'r athrawon wedi canfod bod y gweithdai yn fannau diogel ac ysgogol sy'n meithrin rhyngweithio, creadigrwydd a hyder. Y cam nesaf fydd integreiddio gweithgareddau drama i'n dosbarthiadau rheolaidd, o ystyried eu gwerth fel ategiad i addysg ffurfiol.

Rydym wedi ymrwmo i greu rhwydwaith cymorth gydag ysgolion atodol eraill yn y rhanbarth a sefydlu lle i rannu arferion gorau, trafod ein heriau, a threfnu prosiectau cydweithredol a fydd yn cynyddu ein hamlygrwydd yn y gymuned.



## The pressing need for Inclusion

**Fatima Khaled** is Headteacher of the Peace School in Brent, and member of ALL Council.

As a proud member of the Association for Language Learning Council, I've been reflecting on the *Language Trends 2025* report, particularly through the lens of community and heritage language education.

The report, as always, provides valuable data on language learning in primary, secondary, and independent schools across England. It remains one of the most influential documents shaping perceptions and informing decision-makers - headteachers, local authorities, and policymakers - about the state of language education in this country. However, when it comes to heritage languages, there is a clear gap.

Apart from brief mentions of languages other than French, German, and Spanish, the report offers little recognition of the significant work happening in community schools, or of the full multilingual reality of the UK. This is despite the fact that many community language schools are teaching over 60 languages to thousands of children nationwide.

To be clear, I'm not criticising the *Language Trends* report itself; it plays a vital role. But it is important to acknowledge what is missing: data and visibility for the vibrant, committed work of community schools and heritage language educators. Without this, we risk sending a message that these efforts are marginal, optional, or merely cultural add-ons, rather than central to an inclusive vision of education.

This special ALL publication of *Languages Today* is very welcome, as it illustrates just some examples of the important work going on in the sector, which is not yet recognised in the public discourse.

The issue is powerfully highlighted in the recent book *Community and Heritage Language Schools: Transforming Education* by Cruickshank, Lo Bianco, and Wahlin (2024). They point out that - worldwide - community language schools are often invisible in mainstream education research and policy. Data is rarely collected, and where there is recognition, it usually comes from multicultural departments, not education authorities. This separation between 'education' and 'community/culture' perpetuates systemic marginalisation.

In the UK, we see this pattern in the lack of national data on community language schools. Yes, there are local initiatives—such as the Cities of Languages projects - but we need to consolidate this data at a national level. Even a simple statement such as: 'At last count, X number of community language schools teach over 60 languages to Y thousand children and young people' would be a powerful first step.

This conversation also links directly to the discourse on decolonising the curriculum. Can we truly talk about decolonising language learning without addressing the status of heritage languages? If we continue to separate mainstream language education from the lived multilingual realities of our communities, we risk reinforcing the very hierarchies we claim to challenge.

In short, heritage language education must not remain at the margins. It belongs at the heart of any serious effort to promote inclusive, forward-looking, and decolonised education in the UK.

I shall be continuing to raise these issues in the ALL community, and through the HHCL advisory group as well as through NCLE and other opportunities when they arise. (Links below.)



I encourage readers in other communities, to do the same, and to combine our voice with this simple message:

**Community schools are, first and foremost, Schools. They support learning and they support the national community. Their contribution should be recorded in national data.**

*I acknowledge that these reflections have emerged from ongoing discussions within the ALL community, especially in dialogue with my colleague Jim Anderson. His insights and feedback have been invaluable in shaping these final thoughts.*

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K. Cruickshank, J. Lo Bianco and M. Wahlin (eds.) (2024) *Community and Heritage Languages Schools Transforming Education: Research, Challenges, and Teaching Practices*, 243-261. Oxford: Routledge

Cities of Languages: <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/cities-of-languages/>

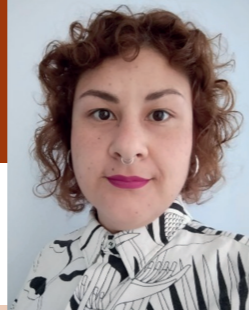
NCLE (National Consortium for Languages Education): <https://ncle.ucl.ac.uk/focus-on-home-heritage-and-community-languages/>

HHCL (Home, Heritage and Community Languages): <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/language-zones/home-heritage-community-languages/>

<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/about/community/special-interest-groups/de-colonising-the-curriculum/>

# Nós ainda estamos aqui

## Português como Língua de Herança em Londres: práticas que criam pertencimento



Fernanda Martinez

A Sabia Duvida é uma escola de Português como Língua de Herança com quatro unidades no sul e no centro de Londres e turmas on-line para crianças a partir de quatro anos em toda a Europa. Nosso trabalho nasce do vínculo vivo com a cultura brasileira e reconhece raízes regionais diversas. Priorizamos o vocabulário em contexto: lemos, conversamos e escrevemos com propósito. Entendemos a escrita como expressão, interação e construção de identidade. Ao ensinar o Português como Língua de Herança, promovemos encontros entre cultura, afetos e identidade. Para crianças nascidas fora dos países lusófonos, apresentamos uma ponte viva entre suas origens familiares e o mundo em que vivem; elas aprendem a reconhecer-se como parte de muitas histórias, explorando sua herança linguística de forma lúdica e afetiva e desenvolvendo consciência de quem são e do valor de suas raízes.

**Organizamos um guia para unidades temáticas que atravessam Amazônia, sertão, litoral e pampas, abrindo espaço para canções, literatura infantil, parlendas, quadrinhas, culinária e festas populares. Em sala, seguimos uma rotina simples e potente: ler, conversar, atuar e escrever. Cultivamos um espaço de acolhimento e descobertas por meio de histórias, músicas, celebrações e literatura, porque acreditamos profundamente no poder da leitura para aproximar as crianças da língua e fortalecer vínculos.**

Um momento especial do nosso calendário é o Carnaval. Entre fevereiro e março, transformamos as aulas em um projeto vivo que celebra a diversidade dessa festa no Brasil: dos bloquinhos de rua e marchinhas às escolas de samba, maracatu, frevo e caboclinha. Estudamos as máscaras culturais de diferentes regiões, suas origens e significados. As crianças leem histórias sobre o Carnaval e entrevistam familiares para registrar memórias, experiências e marchinhas favoritas. Produzem textos, artesanato e ilustrações; constroem instrumentos com materiais recicláveis e um estandarte para a escola, símbolo do bloco da turma. Esse percurso culmina em um evento cultural aberto à comunidade, com comidas, danças, apresentação de uma escola de samba profissional e mostra dos trabalhos dos alunos. Nas turmas on-line, também celebramos, inclusive com oficinas de maracatu conduzidas por profissionais convidados.

Os resultados são nítidos. A participação oral aumenta, com mais iniciativa para cantar, conversar e dançar. O vocabulário entra em uso real, ancorado em música, corpo e espaço público. Fortalece-se o orgulho pelas variedades do português e pelas culturas regionais, com as crianças comparando samba, frevo e maracatu sem hierarquizar. As famílias relatam mais trocas em casa, playlists compartilhadas e mensagens de voz para avós e tios com saudações e trechos de marchinhas carnavalescas.

Entre a equipe, valorizamos o conhecimento de



cada professora com projetos internos de trocas pedagógicas que fortalecem o grupo, geram aprendizado mútuo e inspiram práticas inovadoras. Promovemos workshops para o corpo docente e para a comunidade, com temas como literatura, fonética, estratégias de aprendizagem e recursos on-line. Na cidade, desenvolvemos projetos literários

em bibliotecas de Londres para aproximar a comunidade da língua portuguesa e incentivar o prazer da leitura. Criamos parcerias para realizar festas culturais que promovem celebração e integração:

momentos em que famílias, alunos e comunidade se encontram para vivenciar tradições, sabores e memórias compartilhadas.

Os desafios do ensino de herança têm respostas práticas. Em turmas com níveis mistos, trabalhamos com agrupamentos flexíveis por tarefa e grupos rotativos para garantir a participação significativa de todos. Na abordagem das variedades do português, adotamos uma perspectiva pluricêntrica, com glossários vivos e comparação positiva de léxicos e sotaques. No on-line, segmentamos os encontros em blocos curtos e interativos, mantemos objetivos visíveis e encerramos cada aula com uma aplicação concreta do conteúdo para consolidar o aprendizado.

Acreditamos que esse processo é essencial para o desenvolvimento psicossocial das crianças: fortalece o sentimento de pertencimento, eleva a autoestima e amplia a empatia cultural. É assim que construímos, com escola, famílias e comunidade, uma educação que cria laços duradouros entre língua, identidade e mundo.



# Sabia Duvida

## Portuguese as a Heritage Language in London: practices that nurture belonging



Vanessa Almeida

Vanessa Almeida and Fernanda Hernandez are teachers at Sabia Duvida, a Portuguese Heritage Language school with four sites in South and Central London and online classes for children aged four and up across Europe. Our work grows from a living relationship with Brazilian culture and recognises diverse regional roots. We prioritise vocabulary in context: we read, talk and write with purpose. We understand writing as expression, interaction and identity-building. In teaching Portuguese as a Heritage Language, we create encounters between culture, affection and identity. For children born outside Lusophone countries, we offer a living bridge between their family origins and the world they inhabit; they learn to recognise themselves as part of many stories, explore their linguistic heritage in playful and caring ways, and develop an awareness of who they are and the value of their roots.

**We have organised a guide for thematic units that travel through the Amazon, the sertão, the coast and the pampas, opening space for songs, children's literature, rhymes, culinary traditions and popular festivities. In class, we follow a simple and powerful routine: read, converse, perform and write. We cultivate a welcoming space for discovery through stories, music, celebrations, and literature because we deeply believe in the power of reading to bring children closer to the language and strengthen bonds.**

A special moment in our calendar is Carnival. Between February and March, we turn lessons into a living project that celebrates the

diversity of this Brazilian festivity: from street *blocos* and *marchinhas* to *samba* schools, *maracatu*, *frevo* and *caboclinhas*. We study cultural masks from different regions, their origins and meanings. Children read stories about Carnival and interview family members to record memories, experiences and favourite *marchinhas*. They produce texts, crafts and illustrations; they build instruments with recycled materials and an *estandarte* for the school, a symbol of the class's *bloco*. This journey culminates in a cultural event open to the community, with food, dance, a performance by a professional samba school and an exhibition of students' work. Our online classes also celebrate, including maracatu workshops led by invited professionals.

The results are precise: oral participation increases, with greater willingness to sing, converse and dance. Vocabulary enters real use, anchored in music, the body and public space. Pride in varieties of Portuguese and regional cultures grows, with children comparing *samba*, *frevo* and *maracatu* without hierarchy. Families report

more exchanges at home, shared playlists, and voice notes to grandparents, aunts, and uncles, with greetings and snippets of Carnival songs.

Within our team, we value each teacher's knowledge through internal pedagogical exchanges that strengthen the group, generate mutual learning and inspire innovative practice. We offer workshops for staff and the broader community on themes such as literature, phonetics, learning strategies and online resources. Across the city, we run literary projects in London libraries to bring the community closer to Portuguese and nurture the pleasure of reading. We create partnerships to host cultural celebrations that foster joy and integration: moments when families, pupils, and the community come together to experience traditions, flavours, and shared memories.



The challenges of heritage teaching have practical answers. In mixed-ability classes, we use flexible grouping by task and rotating groups to ensure meaningful participation for all. In our approach to varieties of Portuguese, we adopt a pluricentric perspective, with living glossaries and positive comparison of lexicon and accents. Online, we structure sessions into short, interactive blocks, keep objectives visible and close each lesson with a concrete application of content to consolidate learning.

We believe this process is essential for children's psychosocial development: it strengthens a sense of belonging, raises self-esteem, and broadens cultural empathy. Together with other schools, families, and the community, we build an education that forges lasting ties between language, identity, and the world.



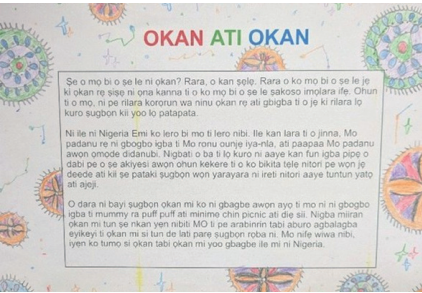
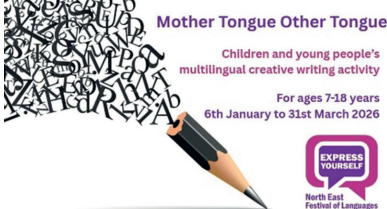
Lexicon:	
<b>Bloco</b> - a carnival unit of people dressed to a theme and parading together	<b>Maracatu</b> - term for music and dance, of African origin
<b>Caboclinhas</b> - little girls of indigenous descent	<b>marchinhas</b> - traditional Carnival songs
<b>estandarte</b> - flag	<b>samba</b> - a dance
<b>frevo</b> - term for colourful and fast paced dance moves, using colourful umbrellas for tricks.	<b>sertão</b> - a typically dry biome in the north east region of Brazil

# Celebrating all our languages

## Support and information for teachers:

	<p>ALL and British Council work with many other partners, to share the great work of the Cities of Languages on the web-page: <a href="https://www.all-languages.org.uk/cities-of-languages/">https://www.all-languages.org.uk/cities-of-languages/</a></p>
<p><a href="https://www.thelanguagesgateway.uk/blog/">https://www.thelanguagesgateway.uk/blog/</a></p>	<p>The Languages Gateway signposts resources for all languages around the UK.</p>
<p><b>Home, Heritage and Community Languages (HHCL)</b></p> 	<p>ALL, British Council, and many other partners support the work of HHCL teachers and learners in the Advocacy Group. We host a termly webinar, provide a <b>newsletter</b> and publish on the HHCL <b>webpage</b>: <a href="https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/language-zones/home-heritage-community-languages/">https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/language-zones/home-heritage-community-languages/</a></p>
<p><b>Coalition for Language Education</b></p> <p>CLE advocates for bringing all those working in language education closer together. <a href="https://coalitionforlanguageeducationuk.com/">https://coalitionforlanguageeducationuk.com/</a></p>	 <p>Visit ALL's new Collaborations page: <a href="https://www.all-languages.org.uk/collaborations/">https://www.all-languages.org.uk/collaborations/</a></p>
<p><b>ALL Decolonising Special Interest Groups (SIGs)</b></p> 	<p>These ALL SIGs (Primary and Secondary) include partners from a wide spectrum and champion social justice: <a href="https://www.all-languages.org.uk/about/community/special-interest-groups/de-colonising-the-curriculum/">https://www.all-languages.org.uk/about/community/special-interest-groups/de-colonising-the-curriculum/</a></p>

## Challenges, celebrations and competitions for your learners

<p><b>Multilingual Verses</b> is a collaborative project between Sheffield, City of Languages, Sheffield University and ALL, aiming to collect an anthology of children's verses (nursery rhymes etc.) in a great range of languages : <a href="https://sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/multilingual-verses">https://sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/multilingual-verses</a></p>	
<p><a href="https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/languages/celebrate-speaking">https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/languages/celebrate-speaking</a> includes the 2025 celebration event recording.</p>	<p><b>#CelebrateSpeaking</b> is a British Council event, run with ALL, in February each year, which invites learners of any age to record themselves speaking in a language they learn, or know, and share their performances on social media. There is a celebration event online.</p>
	<p>ALL Calligrams celebration (January-February) is for Primary aged children to demonstrate their creativity. E-books of their creations are available on this page: <a href="https://www.all-languages.org.uk/primary-2/primary-voice/">https://www.all-languages.org.uk/primary-2/primary-voice/</a></p>
<p>ALLNE has run a writing competition for the September Day of Languages (EDoL) for anyone of school age for 20 years now, and the number of languages represented grows each year! Details of this and many other competitions can be found on the webpage: <a href="https://www.all-languages.org.uk/news-events/challenges-and-competitions/">https://www.all-languages.org.uk/news-events/challenges-and-competitions/</a></p> <p>The e-book for 2025 'Hearts and minds' is here: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/EDoL2025">https://tinyurl.com/EDoL2025</a></p>	 <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Yoruba</b></p>
 <p><b>Mother Tongue Other Tongue</b> Children and young people's multilingual creative writing activity For ages 7-18 years 6th January to 31st March 2026</p>	<p><i>Mother tongue, other tongue</i> is a multilingual writing celebration available in several versions around the country, e.g. <a href="https://www.mmu.ac.uk/mothertongueothertongue">https://www.mmu.ac.uk/mothertongueothertongue</a></p> <p>The North-East Festival version has published 5 e-books illustrating students' work, available here: <a href="https://expressyourselfne.com/mtot26/">https://expressyourselfne.com/mtot26/</a></p>