

Languages Today Special



We are still here!

A celebration of the work of the supplementary /
complementary school sector
Bilingual stories from around the country

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/>



WELCOME

Steven Fawkes, Co-President of ALL 2025-26

We celebrate in these pages the work of teachers 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. (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. A link to that story is in The Last Word.

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.

We continue to welcome other stories, presented in the same bilingual format, for sharing on the webpage, or potentially in a future edition of this LT Special. Please write to: steven.fawkes@ALL-Languages.org.uk

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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 to 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!

Dr. Mon Partovi, Young People's Foundation Trust

Across the UK, community-led supplementary schools are vibrant spaces where language, culture and community come together. These settings play a vital role in supporting children and young people to develop their heritage languages while strengthening confidence, wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

Often run by dedicated volunteers and community organisations, supplementary schools allow children to feel seen, valued and proud of who they are. Here, language learning goes far beyond vocabulary and grammar. It becomes a bridge between generations, connecting children to their families, cultures and histories as well as helping them navigate life in a multilingual society.

For many families, these settings are places where traditions, stories and shared values continue to thrive, where children understand their roots, grow in confidence and resilience, develop pride in their heritage and learn to engage confidently with the wider world.



As the sector continues to grow, there is increasing recognition of the importance of strong leadership, safeguarding and effective practice within supplementary education settings. Through initiatives such as Solid Foundations training and the Quality Mark for Supplementary Education, the YPF Trust | Centre for Supplementary Education works alongside community-led settings to support strong governance and high-quality learning environments while celebrating achievements across the sector.

The YPF Trust Quality Mark Award for Supplementary Education celebrates the creativity and commitment of supplementary schools while encouraging continuous improvement. It recognises that learning is most powerful when children are emotionally engaged, when their voices are heard and when education nurtures the whole child – mind, heart and imagination.

Supplementary schools are not simply places where languages are taught. They are powerful community spaces where culture, identity and opportunity flourish for the next generation.

<https://ypftrust.org.uk/>



Home, Heritage, Community Languages

The HHCL webpage is hosted by ALL on behalf of an Advisory Group of supportive partners from around the country:

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

You will find sections about:

the HHCL Group	the bi-annual HHCL Newsletter	Recent Events
Future Events	Good News Stories	Languages in the spotlight
Guest blogs	Stories around bilingualism and EAL	Social justice
Heritage languages of the UK	Support and opportunities for teachers	Resources
Assessment and accreditation	Challenges and opportunities for learners	
Curriculum planning	Research and publications	Settings

All contributed by the community! Interesting stories are welcome about any languages. Contact: steven.fawkes@ALL-Languages.org.uk

In Recent Events you will find recordings of the HHCL webinars hosted by ALL on Zoom and open to anyone interested. These are always in English and themes include:

HHCL, community and active citizenship / Raising the profile / AI / Culture and wellbeing

Engaging with families / Safeguarding / Emotional and social learning / Hybrid teaching and learning

Jessika Rabello, Founder of the Brazilian Portuguese Library in London

This special issue of *LanguagesToday*, *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!

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Jesteśmy tutaj

Nauka języka polskiego zaczyna się od ugoszczenia

Dr Maksi Kozińska (on left of photo) is Headteacher and Co-Founder of Eliza Orzeszkowa Language School.

W sobotni poranek wiele rodzin wyrusza w znaną sobie drogę. Dzieci przychodzą do szkół sobotnich z plecakami, różnymi akcentami i różnorodnym stosunkiem do języka, którego się uczą. Jedne mówią w nim swobodnie, inne rozumieją znacznie więcej niż potrafią wyrazić słowami, a jeszcze inne dopiero rozpoczynają swoją językową przygodę.

Są tu z wyboru. Dzieci przychodzą z rodzicami i opiekunami, ponieważ języki, tożsamość i poczucie przynależności są dla nich ważne. Oddanie weekendowego czasu jest wyrazem troski i zaangażowania. W tym kontekście czas jest miłością.

Pracuję w Szkole Językowej im. Elizy Orzeszkowej w londyńskiej dzielnicy Newham. Uczymy języka polskiego jako języka domowego, dziedziczonego i społecznościowego. Podobnie jak wiele szkół działających poza głównym nurtem edukacji, funkcjonujemy w realiach ograniczonego czasu oraz przy ograniczonych zasobach, ale z ogromnym zaangażowaniem. Wiemy, że to co oferujemy, wykracza jednak daleko poza same lekcje języka.

W szkołach sobotnich nauka języka jest nierozdzielnie związana z tradycją i dziedzictwem kulturowym. Dla wielu uczących się to właśnie kultura stanowi pomost, który nadaje językowi



sens i znaczenie. W kulturze polskiej jedną z najbardziej rozpoznawalnych tradycji jest witanie gości chlebem i solą. Chleb symbolizuje gościnność i troskę, a sól ochronę i trwałość. Razem niosą prosty, ale mocny przekaz: jesteście ważni i jesteście tu mile widziani. Ta tradycja kształtuje nasze myślenie o edukacji.

Pierwszego dnia nowego roku szkolnego witamy dzieci, rodziców i opiekunów chlebem i solą. To gest prosty, a zarazem niezwykle znaczący. Nadaje ton całej podróży szkolnej. Pokazuje rodzicom, że szkoła jest wspólną przestrzenią, miejscem szacunku, bezpieczeństwa i przynależności. Każde dziecko jest ważne. Każda droga językowa zasługuje na uwagę. Od tej chwili nauka zakorzeniona jest w realnym doświadczeniu. Młodzi nie tylko uczą się o tradycjach, oni w nich uczestniczą.

W naszej szkole stawiamy na tradycję i dziedzictwo, ale nigdy kosztem rozwoju językowego. Kultura nadaje nauce sens, a język wyposaża uczących się w narzędzia, które mogą wykorzystywać także poza salą lekcyjną.

Dzieci rozwijają umiejętności mówienia, czytania i pisanie w sposób uporządkowany i wspierający. Punktem wyjścia jest język mówiony. Rozmowy, opowiadanie historii i wyjaśnianie pomagają budować pewność siebie oraz płynność wypowiedzi. Czytanie wprowadza bogatszy język, szersze słownictwo i różnorodne perspektywy. Pisanie pozwala porządkować myśli i komunikować się w sposób jasny i świadomy.

Edukacja formalna odgrywa ważną rolę wspierającą. Zapewnia strukturę, ciągłość i wyraźne punkty odniesienia. Dla wielu uczniów oznacza to także przygotowanie do egzaminów GCSE i A-level. Umiejętności egzaminacyjne rozwijamy w sposób świadomy i celowy, zawsze w powiązaniu z treściami, które mają sens. Młodzież uczy się pisać dłuższe wypowiedzi, analizować teksty i wyrażać własne opinie jako element realnej komunikacji.

Posługiwanie się językiem polskim, podobnie jak każdym innym językiem, nie sprowadza się do zdania egzaminu. Chodzi o umiejętność używania języka w realnych kontekstach: w rodzinie, w społecznościach, w edukacji i w przyszłym życiu zawodowym. Gdy dzieci rozumieją, dlaczego język ma znaczenie, rośnie ich motywacja i zaangażowanie.

Szkoły sobotnie wspierają nie tylko wielojęzyczne dzieci, ale również ich rodziny. Rodzice pochodzą z różnych środowisk społecznych, kulturowych i edukacyjnych. Wielu z nich nie zna angielskiego systemu edukacji ani oczekiwań, jakie stawia się dzieciom i opiekunom.

Nauczyciele pracujący w szkołach sobotnich często stają się zaufanymi przewodnikami. Udzielają wsparcia w zakresie ścieżek edukacyjnych, egzaminów, komunikacji ze szkołami głównego nurtu oraz dostępnych form pomocy. Czasem odbywa się to formalnie, częściej jednak w codziennych rozmowach na szkolnym korytarzu, po zajęciach czy podczas szkolnych wydarzeń. Te drobne momenty mają ogromne znaczenie.

Dostęp do informacji przekazywanych w znanym języku buduje w rodzinach poczucie bezpieczeństwa i sprawczości. Pomaga rodzicom skutecznie wspierać swoje dzieci, podejmować świadome decyzje i nie czuć się osamotnionymi. W ten sposób edukacja językowa staje się realnym wsparciem dla społeczności.

Często pytają mnie, dlaczego zajmuję się tą pracą. Dlaczego uczę w szkole sobotniej, często poza widoczną główną rolę systemu edukacji. Odpowiedź jest prosta: to zaszczyt i przywilej uczyć dzieci. Ale to także odpowiedzialność, którą ponosimy wspólnie.

Nauczanie języków w środowiskach społecznościowych wymaga specjalistycznej wiedzy, wrażliwości i wysokich kompetencji zawodowych. Osoby pracujące w szkołach sobotnich wspierają nie tylko rozwój językowy, lecz także tożsamość, dobrostan i poczucie przynależności uczniów. Ta praca zasługuje na uznanie.

Nie działamy w pojedynkę. Jesteśmy częścią szerszego ekosystemu edukacyjnego, który tworzą rodziny, społeczności i edukacja formalna. Gdy ta praca jest dostrzegana i wspierana, dzieci zyskują najwięcej.





begin language teaching with welcome

Early on Saturday morning, families begin a familiar journey. Children arrive at supplementary language schools with backpacks, mixed accents and different relationships with the language they are learning. Some speak it confidently. Others understand more than they can say. Some are just beginning. They are here by choice. Pupils arrive with their parents and carers because languages, identity and belonging matter. Giving up weekend time is an act of care. In this context, time is love.

I work in Eliza Orzeszkowa Language School in Newham, London. We teach Polish as a Home, Heritage and Community Language (HHCL). Like many schools outside the mainstream system, we operate with limited time, limited resources and a great deal of commitment. What we offer, however, goes far beyond language lessons.

In supplementary schools, language learning is inseparable from tradition and heritage. For many pupils, culture is the bridge that makes the language meaningful. In Polish culture, one of the most recognisable traditions is welcoming guests with bread and salt:

- Bread symbolises hospitality and care.
- Salt represents protection and durability.



Together, they say: *you matter, and you are welcome here*. This tradition shapes how we think about teaching.

On the first day of the new school year, we welcome pupils, parents and carers with bread and salt. It is a simple gesture, but a powerful one. It sets the tone. It tells families that this school is a shared space. A place of respect, safety and belonging. Every child is important. Every language journey is valued. From that moment on, learning is rooted in lived experience. Pupils do not only learn about traditions. They participate in them.

In our school, we prioritise tradition and heritage, but never at the expense of language development. Culture gives learning meaning, while language gives pupils tools they can use beyond the classroom.

Pupils develop speaking, reading and writing in a

structured and supportive way. Oral work comes first: discussion, storytelling and explanation help pupils build confidence and fluency. Reading introduces them to richer language, wider vocabulary and different voices. Writing allows them to organise ideas, reflect and communicate with clarity.



Formal education plays an important supporting role, providing structure, progression and clear reference points. For many pupils, this includes preparation for GCSE and A-level examinations. We teach exam-related skills explicitly, but always in connection with meaningful content. Pupils practise writing extended responses, analysing texts and expressing opinions, not as isolated techniques, but as part of real communication.

Speaking Polish, like any other language, is not only about passing an exam. It is about being able to use language in real-life contexts: with family, within communities, in education and in future professional settings. When pupils understand why language matters, motivation grows.

Supplementary language schools support not only multilingual pupils, but also their families. Parents come from different social, cultural and educational backgrounds. Many are unfamiliar with the English education system and the expectations placed on children and carers.

Teachers in supplementary schools often become trusted guides. They offer advice on school pathways, examinations, communication with mainstream schools and available support. Sometimes this happens formally, but often it happens through conversations in corridors, after lessons or during school events. These moments matter.

For families, having access to information in a familiar language builds their confidence. It helps parents advocate for their children, make informed decisions and feel less isolated. In this way, language education becomes a form of community support.

People often ask me why I teach in a supplementary language school, often outside the visibility of the mainstream system. My answer is simple: **this work matters**.

It is an honour and a privilege to teach children. It is also a responsibility we all share: teaching languages in community settings requires expertise, sensitivity and deep professional knowledge. Specialists working in supplementary schools support not only linguistic development, but also identity, wellbeing and belonging.

We do not teach alone. We work as part of a wider educational ecosystem that includes families, communities and formal education. It is when all of this work is valued and supported that children benefit most.

<https://orzeszkowaschool.org/en/>



Jordi Garrell, Profesor de Lengua Española en la Universidad de Nottingham (Assistant Professor)

Nuestra Escuela Nottingham (NEN) es una escuela suplementaria de lengua española y culturas hispanas. Nuestra historia, en fechas:

Verano de 2022: dos madres y un deseo, una añoranza, una herencia invisible pero siempre presente. Un grupo de Facebook y la difusión de una idea.

Octubre de 2022: dos reuniones con unas 80 personas. Un grupo de intrépidos voluntarios.

Marzo de 2023: ise registra una charity! — una escuela construida por voluntarios.

Octubre de 2025: han pasado ocho trimestres de clases dominicales, con un promedio de unos 60 niños por trimestre. Familias argentinas, bolivianas, colombianas, chilenas, ecuatorianas, españolas, guatemaltecas, mexicanas, panameñas, peruanas y venezolanas... con familiares británicos, y también de China, Francia, Polonia, Japón, Italia, Bielorrusia, Nigeria, Turquía, Bulgaria, Irlanda, Brasil, Suecia...



NEN es una escuela de domingos en la que enseñamos español y culturas hispanas. Ofrecemos clases a niños que tienen el español presente en casa, como lengua familiar o de herencia, se hable mucho o poco; pero somos más que una escuela, somos un centro social donde se forman vínculos

personales y profesionales. Organizamos eventos diversos: gastronómicos, celebraciones navideñas, charlas, demostraciones de primeros auxilios e incluso idemostraciones de Thermomix! “Los domingos son como volver a España”, dijo uno de nuestros padres.

Para mí, la “lengua materna” es la lengua de mi madre. Lo que ocurre es que, en este mundo hiperconectado, esa lengua no representa todo el entorno en el que crecemos, como ocurría en el pasado. Yo soy catalán. Mi madre nació en Sevilla, y mi lengua materna es el español. Pero considero la lengua de mi padre como otra lengua materna, igual de formativa a la hora de construir quién soy. Cuando pienso en mi infancia, mis recuerdos son una mezcla de ambas lenguas, con muchos momentos, lugares y personas y con infinitas maneras de explicar el mundo. No puedo explicarme el mundo en una sola lengua. Esas lenguas son el material con el que reconstruyo mi memoria, mi experiencia y mi conocimiento de las cosas. Y todo eso se lo transmito a mis dos hijas, en esas lenguas. Ese es nuestro legado: la transmisión de lo que somos, en el lenguaje con el que podemos explicarnos.

Para muchas familias, vivir en un país de acogida es una gran oportunidad, y nos transforma al incorporar un lenguaje nuevo; pero nuestros hijos crecen en ese

lenguaje nuevo que no nos hizo a nosotros. Intentamos darles todo: lo nuestro, por herencia, y lo nuevo (que pronto también se vuelve un poco nuestro). Sin embargo, para nuestras pequeñas, lo “nuestro” a veces no tiene contexto, y las escuelas suplementarias ofrecen parte de ese contexto: un espacio pequeño pero vital para que ese legado pueda transmitirse, aunque sea en parte, aunque parezca modesto.



NEN es una de aproximadamente una docena de escuelas suplementarias de español que componen Nuestra Escuela Reino Unido (NE UK), que busca aunar esfuerzos y visibilizar el

trabajo de todas las escuelas y familias implicadas. También formamos parte de una red

local, en Nottingham, de escuelas suplementarias de otras lenguas y culturas. Gracias a una colaboración con la University of Nottingham, cinco o seis estudiantes apoyan a nuestro profesorado en clase. Este año (la tercera edición del programa), los voluntarios obtendrán reconocimiento a través de un módulo del Nottingham Advantage Award (NAA), que les aportará créditos adicionales y quedará reflejado en su expediente académico.

La propia existencia de estas escuelas (de cualquier lengua), pese a lo difícil que es sostenerlas, demuestra la necesidad real que cubren: enseñan la lengua de herencia con propósitos claros; nutren la identidad y el sentido de pertenencia, la autoestima y los valores comunitarios, la tolerancia y el respeto por los demás; conectan a las familias y construyen redes de apoyo. Todo ello mejora el rendimiento de los niños en su escuela ordinaria y les da mayor estabilidad para su desarrollo personal y para la vida.

Y esto ocurre porque hay aliados que trabajan juntos: familias, docentes, voluntarios universitarios, redes locales. Existimos para sostener ese puente entre quienes fuimos y quienes estamos llegando a ser; quizá empezamos siendo pequeños, pero hacemos a toda la comunidad más fuerte. Y Nottingham lo está demostrando. ¡Estamos aquí!





We are here!

Jordi Garrell Chair of Nuestra Escuela Nottingham

Nuestra Escuela Nottingham (NEN) is a supplementary school for Spanish language and Hispanic cultures.

Our story in dates:

Summer 2022: two mothers and a wish, a longing, an invisible yet ever-present inheritance (all this in Nottingham). A Facebook group and the spread of an idea.

October 2022: two meetings with around 80 people. A group of intrepid volunteers.

March 2023: a charity is registered! — a school built by volunteers.

October 2025: eight terms of Sunday classes have gone by, with an average of about 60 children per term. Families from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Spain, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Venezuela ... with British relatives in most cases, and also from China, France, Poland, Japan, Italy, Belarus, Nigeria, Türkiye, Bulgaria, Ireland, Brazil, Sweden...

NEN is a Sunday school where we teach Spanish and Hispanic cultures. We offer classes for children who have Spanish at home, as a family or heritage language, whether it's spoken a lot or a little; but we are more than a school. We are a social hub where personal and professional bonds are formed. We host all sorts of events: food gatherings, Christmas celebrations, talks on, say, choosing a primary school, first-aid demonstrations, and even Thermomix demos! *'Sundays feel like going back to Spain'* as one of our parents put it.



For me, 'mother tongue' is literally the language of my mother. The thing is, in this hyper-connected world, that doesn't capture the whole environment we grow up in, as it perhaps did more in the past. I am Catalan. My mother was born in Seville, and my mother tongue is Spanish. But I consider my father's language just as a second mother tongue, just as formative in shaping who I am. When I think back to my childhood, my memories are a blend of both languages, with many moments, places and people (family and otherwise) and countless ways of explaining the world, in both tongues. I can't explain the world to myself in just one language. Those languages are the material I use to rebuild my memory, my experience and my knowledge of things. And I pass

all of that on to my two daughters, in those languages. That is our legacy: the transmission of who we are, in the language with which we can explain ourselves.

For many families, living in a host country is a huge opportunity, and it changes us as we take on a new language; but our children grow up in that new language that did not make us. We want to give them everything, what is ours by heritage and what is new (but soon becomes a little ours as well). Yet for our little ones, what is 'ours' can lack context, and supplementary schools provide some of that context: a small but vital space for passing the legacy on, even if it seems modest.

NEN is one of roughly a dozen Spanish supplementary schools around the country under the umbrella of **Nuestra Escuela Reino Unido (NE UK)** which seeks to pool efforts and make visible the work of all the schools and families involved. It is also part of a Nottingham-wide network of supplementary schools in other languages and cultures. Through a partnership with the University of Nottingham five or six University students support our teachers in class. This year (the third edition of the scheme) the volunteers will gain recognition through a Nottingham Advantage Award (NAA) module, bringing them additional credits and appearing on their degree transcript.



The very existence of these schools (Spanish or otherwise) in the face of the difficulty of sustaining them, proves the genuine need for them: they teach heritage language with clear purposes; they nurture identity and belonging, self-esteem and community values, tolerance and respect for others; they connect families and build support networks. All of this improves children's performance in their mainstream school and gives them greater stability for their personal development and for life.

And this comes about because of partners working together: families, teachers, university volunteers, local networks. We exist to prop up that bridge between who we were and who we are becoming; we may start small, but we make the whole community stronger. And Nottingham is proving it. **We are here!**



تعلم اللغة العربية يوم السبت

Omiyma Saad

تعلم اللغة العربية يوم السبت

في مدرسة شجرة الزيتون، صباحات يوم السبت بعيدة كل البعد عن الهدوء. بينما يستمتع العديد من الأطفال ببدء عطلتهم نهاية الأسبوع ببطء، تكون صفوفنا مليئة بالطاقة والمحادثات وأصوات اللغة العربية وهي تتحدث وتُمارس وتُحتفى بها. منذ لحظة وصول الطلاب، يكون هناك شعور واضح بالهدف. فهم يدخلون فضاءً حيث اللغة ليست مجرد مادة دراسية، بل جزء حي وذو معنى من حياتهم.

تجمع مدرسة اللغة العربية يوم السبت الأطفال والشباب من سن 5 إلى 16 عامًا، كلٌ بخلفيته وتجربته الخاصة. بعض الطلاب يتحدثون العربية في المنزل ويعرفون اللهجات المحلية، بينما الآخرون مبتدئون تمامًا. ورغم هذه الاختلافات، يشترك الجميع في التزام قوي: التفرغ جزئيًا من عطلة نهاية الأسبوع لتعلم لغة تربطهم بالثقافة والعائلة والفرص المستقبلية. هذا الالتزام المشترك يخلق بيئة إيجابية وداعمة يشعر فيها الطلاب بالتشجيع على المشاركة والنمو. كما أن مدرسة السبت تختلف عن التعليم التقليدي لأن الحضور قائم على الاختيار والاهتمام. يحضر الطلاب لأنهم أو لأن عائلاتهم يقدرون اللغة، ويظهر هذا الاهتمام في الصف. تم تصميم الدروس لتكون عملية وتفاعلية، مع التركيز على التحدث والاستماع والقراءة والكتابة بشكل متساوٍ. تعد أنشطة التمثيل الصفي من الأنشطة المفضلة، حيث تتيح للطلاب فرصة تمثيل مواقف يومية، من تقديم أنفسهم إلى زيارة الأقارب أو التسوق. تساعد هذه الأنشطة الطلاب على رؤية العربية في حياتهم اليومية، وليس على الورق فقط، بينما تبني الثقة والاستقلالية.

GCSE التعلم من أجل شهادة

جزء مهم من عملنا هو إعداد الطلاب لشهادة في اللغة العربية. في تجربتي الشخصية كمعلمة، غالبًا ما أعمل مع فصول يتحدث طلابها لهجات مختلفة في المنزل. بينما قد يكونون واثقين في العربية المحكية، يحتاجون إلى



للامتحانات. (MSA) تطوير مهاراتهم في العربية الفصحى الحديثة قد تكون هذه المرحلة تحديًا، لكنها أيضًا فرصة للطلاب لفهم الشكل الأوسع والمشارك في لغة الذي يربط المتحدثين بالعربية عبر البلدان. تساعد الطلاب على التعرف على الاختلافات بين اللهجات والفصحى، مع بناء المفردات الرسمية والقواعد الدقيقة تدريجيًا. بعيدًا عن الامتحانات، يلعب تعلم اللغة العربية دورًا أعمق في حياة الطلاب. فهو يساعدهم على فهم القرآن ويقوي ارتباطهم بالقيم الإسلامية. من خلال القصص والنقاشات وقراءة النصوص، يتفاعل الطلاب مع المعاني والمفاهيم المهمة لإيمانهم وهويتهم. بهذه الطريقة، تصبح العربية أكثر من مجرد مادة دراسية؛ فهي جسر لفهم الثقافة والتقاليد والقيم الشخصية. التقدم في بيئة الدرس الأسبوعي يكون تدريجيًا لكنه مهم. تُحتفى



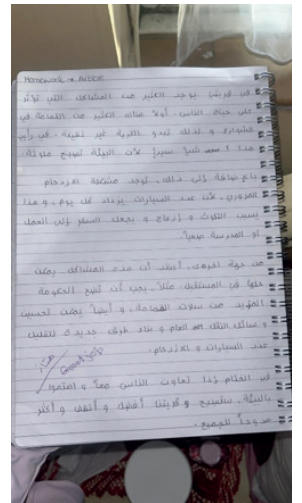
الإنجازات الصغيرة مثل التعرف على الحروف، وقراءة نص قصير، أو التحدث في محادثة بسيطة. مع مرور الوقت، تتحول هذه الإنجازات إلى ثقة ومهارة حقيقية. أحد الطلاب المبتدئين أصبح الآن قادرًا على قراءة نصوص قصيرة بشكل مستقل، وآخر كان خجولًا في البداية، أصبح الآن يتطوع للتحدث أمام الصف. تُظهر هذه اللحظات أثر التدريس الداعم والمتواصل، وتبرز كيف يقوي

تعلم اللغة الكفاءة والثقة بالنفس. كأم لثلاثة أطفال يحضرون إلى المدرسة العربية (شجرة الزيتون)، رأيت هذا التأثير عن قرب. أكبر أطفالي التحق بالمدرسة منذ ما يقارب ثماني سنوات وسيؤدي في اللغة العربية. من خلال متابعتي، أرى GCSE قريبًا امتحان كيف وسع تعلم العربية فهمه لهويته وثقافته وارتباطه باللغة. ومن الملهم أن نرى كيف شكلت خبراته في المدرسة ثقته وفخره كجزء من المجتمعات العربية والإسلامية.

الاحتفال بالتنوع

التنوع هو أحد أعظم نقاط قوة مدرسة شجرة الزيتون يأتي الطلاب من دول عربية وخلفيات إسلامية مختلفة، مما يخلق صفاً غنياً باللهجات والتقاليد والتجارب. يتم الاحتفاء بهذا التنوع من خلال النقاشات والأنشطة الجماعية والتعلم المشترك، مما يسمح للطلاب برؤية العربية كلغة حية وديناميكية.

تلعب الاحتفالات الثقافية والدينية أيضًا دورًا مهمًا. نجتمع للاحتفال برمضان وعيد الفطر، ونشارك القصص والعادات والتقاليد من منازلنا. وتعد حفلة العيد إحدى



أبرز الفعاليات، حيث يجتمع الطلاب وعائلاتهم للعب والطعام والعروض. توفر هذه الأحداث ممارسة لغوية ذات معنى، وتقوي الروابط المجتمعية، وتعزز فهم الطلاب للثقافة والإيمان. يشارك الأهالي بنشاط في دعم التعلم في المنزل، بينما تمنح الفعاليات المدرسية مثل العروض وعروض نهاية الفصل الطلاب فرصة لعرض تقدمهم للآخرين. تبني هذه التجارب الثقة والفخر والشعور بالانتماء. كما أن مدارس اللغة العربية التكميلية مثل مدرسة شجرة الزيتون تلعب دورًا حيويًا في الحفاظ على اللغة حية. فالطلاب لا يتعلمون العربية فحسب، بل يعززون هويتهم، ويفهمون الثقافة والدين، وبينون مهارات ستفيدهم في جميع مجالات حياتهم.

أميمة سعد



Olive Tree Classes

Saturday mornings are anything but quiet at Olive Tree Classes! Our classrooms are buzzing with energy, conversation, and the sounds of Arabic being spoken, practised, and celebrated. From the moment pupils arrive, there is a clear sense of purpose. They step into a space that brings together children and young people aged 5 to 16, each with their own background and experience. Some speak Arabic at home and are familiar with local dialects, while others are complete beginners - they all give up part of their weekend to learn the language that connects them to culture, family, and future opportunities. This shared motivation creates a positive, supportive environment where pupils feel encouraged to participate and grow.

We plan lessons to be practical and interactive, with equal focus on speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Role-play activities are a favourite, giving pupils the chance to act out everyday situations, from introducing themselves to visiting relatives or going shopping. These help learners see Arabic in real life, not just on paper, while also making learning enjoyable, building their confidence and independence.

For example, pupils may practise a simple shopping conversation:

- البائع: ماذا تريد؟ (Shopkeeper: What would you like?)
- الطالب: أريد خبزاً وعصيراً من فضلك (Student: I would like bread and juice please.)
- البائع: تفضل (Shopkeeper: Here you are.)

Diversity is one of Olive Tree Classes' greatest strengths, creating a classroom rich in accents, traditions, and experiences. This diversity is explored through discussions, group activities, and shared learning, allowing pupils to see Arabic as a dynamic, living language.

A key part of our work is preparing pupils for the Arabic GCSE. While learners may be confident in their spoken Arabic, for exams they need to develop proficiency in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This can be a challenge but is also an opportunity for pupils to understand the broader form of the language that connects Arabic speakers across countries. We help learners recognise the differences between dialects and MSA, gradually building formal vocabulary and accurate grammar.

For example, a pupil may say in dialect:

- شلونك؟ (Shlonak? - Iraqi dialect for "How are you?")

While in Modern Standard Arabic they would learn:

- كيف حالك؟ (Kayfa haluk? - "How are you?")

Another example is the word for "want":

- بدي (Baddi - Levantine dialect)
- أريد (Ureed - Modern Standard Arabic)

Exploring these differences helps pupils appreciate the richness and diversity of Arabic.

Beyond those exams, Arabic learning has a deeper role in pupils' lives. Through stories, discussions and reading texts, learners engage with meanings and concepts

that are important to their faith and identity. In this way, Arabic becomes a bridge to culture, tradition, and personal values.

Progress in a once-a-week setting is gradual but meaningful. We celebrate small achievements such as recognising letters, reading a short text, or speaking in a simple conversation.

A beginner may first learn individual letters such as:

- أ ب ت

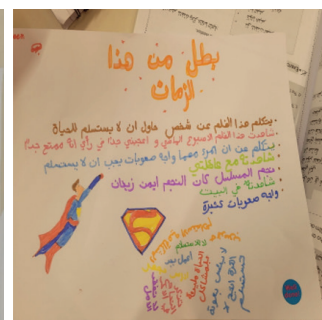
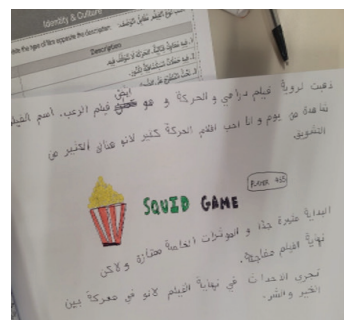
Then move on to simple words:

- بيت (house)
- كتاب (book)

Eventually, they are able to read short sentences and texts independently, such as:

- ذهبت إلى المدرسة مع أصدقائي. (I went to school with my friends.)

Later they will be able to write a formal letter, informal letter and a short article in Arabic.



Moments that show the impact of consistent, supportive teaching: a beginner who can now read short texts independently, another who was initially shy, volunteering to speak in front of the class. Over time, these small steps build into confidence and real skill.

Cultural and religious celebrations also play an important role. We come together for Ramadan and Eid, sharing stories, customs, and traditions from home. Our Eid party is a particular highlight, bringing families and pupils together for games, food, and performances. Children proudly perform nasheeds, poetry, and short Arabic presentations, while families contribute dishes and traditions from their own cultures. These events provide meaningful language practice, strengthen community bonds, and deepen pupils' understanding of culture and faith.



Supplementary schools like Olive Tree Classes play a vital role in keeping languages alive. Pupils do not just learn Arabic; they strengthen their identity, understand culture and faith, and build skills that will benefit them in all areas of life.



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

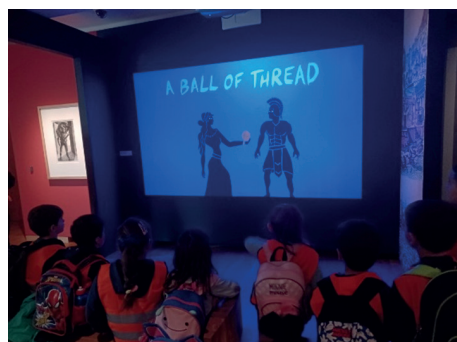
Ελευθερία Καπαραλιώτη, Διευθύντρια Ελληνικού Παροικιακού Σχολείου Κόβεντρυ

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:

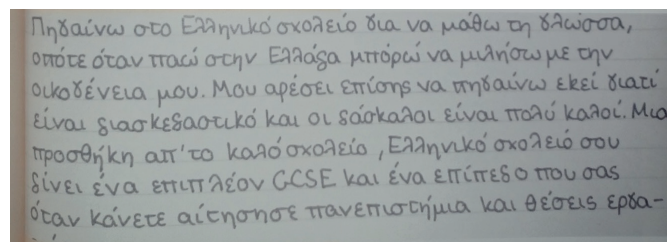
- να αγκαλιάζουν τη μοναδικότητά τους
- να αισθάνονται περήφανοι για την κληρονομιά, τη γλώσσα και τον πολιτισμό τους
- να εκτιμούν τις πλούσιες παραδόσεις της Ελλάδας
- να δείχνουν φιλοξενία, καλοσύνη και γενναιότητα
- να σέβονται τους άλλους



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?



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.



Giggling Panda 咯咯熊中文学校：在快乐中学习中文

Emily老师 Giggling Panda Chinese School 创始人
Emily Liu, Founder of Giggling Panda Chinese School

在英国教授中文，既充满挑战，也充满机会。很多孩子在日常生活中接触中文的机会并不多，因此课堂就显得格外重要。

Giggling Panda Chinese School（咯咯熊猫中文学校）致力于为孩子们创建一个轻松、有趣的学习环境，让他们在快乐中学习普通话（Mandarin Chinese），同时了解中国文化。学校目前主要面向3-16岁的儿童，通过周末课程、主题活动和文化节庆活动，让孩子们在真实的情境中接触语言。



语言与文化结合

语言学习离不开文化背景，每年春节庆祝活动都是学校最受欢迎的活动之一，2026年的活动吸引了500多位家长和孩子参加。

活动中不仅有舞狮表演，还有来自四川的变脸表演。孩子们还能参与各种互动体验，例如：

- 写福字
- 套圈、投壶等传统游戏
- 制作新年挂饰

这些活动不仅好玩，还能帮助孩子们理解语言背后的文化意义。

很多老师发现，活动之后孩子们在课堂上会更加积极，也更愿意使用中文表达。

课堂中的学习方式

在日常课堂中，我们特别注重提升孩子的参与度。

我们的教学方法包括：

短时间、多环节的学习设计

孩子的注意力持续时间有限，因此课程会分成多个小环节，包括游戏、对话、歌曲和书写。

视觉化学习

通过图像和故事帮助孩子理解汉字结构，让汉字学习不再枯燥。

表演与故事

孩子们非常喜欢表演。通过角色扮演、故事和歌曲，语言学习变得更加自然。

例如，在一次课堂活动中，孩子们通过一个“熊猫过春节拜访动物朋友”的故事学习动物词汇。每个孩子扮演一个角色，并用中文说一句简单的台词。



家庭与社区的力量

社区语言学校最大的优势就是家庭参与。

很多家长希望孩子能够保持与中国文化的联系。对一些家庭来说，中文学校成为孩子了解文化的重要桥梁。

今年学校迎来了10周年纪念。我们为每位孩子准备了纪念礼袋，而更令人感动的是，很多以前的学生也回来担任志愿者。

这让我们看到了社区教育的长远影响。

展望未来

社区语言学校在推动多语言学习方面发挥着重要作用。我们希望通过更多创新活动，让孩子们在真实的体验中爱上中文。

学校网站：

<https://www.gigglingpanda.co.uk>

三个优点与一个愿望

★ 优点

- 家庭和社区的积极支持
- 文化活动让语言学习更生动
- 孩子们在学习建立信心和快乐

🌱 愿望

未来希望与更多主流学校合作，让更多孩子有机会接触和学习中文。



Building Joyful Pathways to Language Learning

Teaching a language outside a mainstream school setting presents both challenges and opportunities. At Giggling Panda Chinese School, we teach Mandarin Chinese to children growing up in the UK. Many of them have little exposure to the language beyond our classroom. Our goal is simple: make Chinese learning joyful, meaningful, and connected to culture. We currently teach pupils aged 3 to 16 through weekend classes, themed workshops, and cultural events.

Our school was founded to create a space where children could develop language skills with confidence through an enjoyable process. Over the years we have learned that engagement is the key to sustained language learning.

Learning Through Culture

Language and culture cannot be separated. Cultural context helps children understand not only words, but meaning.

One of our most successful learning experiences each year is the Chinese New Year celebration. In 2026, more than 500 families attended our event, where they saw our pupils performing songs and dances, watched a traditional lion dance, and experienced face-changing (Bian Lian) from Sichuan opera.



But the event is more than a performance. It is also a learning opportunity.

Children take part in activity stations such as:

- Writing the character 福 (fortune)
- Solving lantern riddles
- Playing traditional games such as ring toss and pitching arrows into a pot
- Making Spring Festival decorations

Each activity introduces vocabulary, symbols, and cultural stories – important learning for children, without hard studying. Teachers often comment that pupils return to class after the event with a stronger interest in the language. They suddenly have something real to talk about.

Creating Engagement in the Classroom

In weekly lessons, we aim to create a classroom environment where children are active participants.

We use strategies such as **short learning segments**: young children concentrate best in short bursts, so we divide lessons into small sections that combine speaking, movement, games, and writing.

Visual learning: Recognising and understanding Chinese characters can feel intimidating at first. We use visual storytelling and character decomposition to help pupils understand how the characters work.



A person leaning against a tree=rest

Performance and storytelling: Children love to perform, and using a language is all about performing. Songs, short dialogues, and storytelling help them practise language in a natural way.

For example, in one class our pupils learned animal vocabulary through a short story about a panda visiting different animals during Spring Festival. Each pupil played a character and spoke one line in Mandarin. Even the shy pupils could join in.

The Power of Community

A school works best when families feel involved. Parents often tell us that they want their children to keep a connection to Chinese culture, but, while some parents do speak Mandarin at home, others do not. So for many families, our school becomes the bridge.

We encourage parents to participate in events and celebrate learning milestones with their children. When pupils see their families enjoying the language and culture, their motivation grows naturally.

Our recent 10-year anniversary reminded us how powerful this community has become. Every child received a small anniversary goody bag, but the real celebration was seeing former pupils return as volunteers and helpers.



Looking Ahead

Community language schools play an important role in supporting multilingualism. They also create spaces where children can develop cultural identity and curiosity about the world. We hope to continue developing creative ways to connect language learning with real experiences.

More information about our school can be found at: <https://www.gigglingpanda.co.uk>

Three Stars ... and a Wish

- Strong community support from families
- Cultural events that make language learning meaningful
- Pupils who show confidence and joy in using Mandarin

Our one wish would be to build more opportunities for collaboration with mainstream schools so that Chinese language learning can reach more children.



Tiemar Temesgen is Headteacher at the Teit Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Supplementary School in North Kensington, where she also teaches Amharic.

ጤት የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ማጠናከሪያ ትምህርት ቤት የምናስተምረው የቋንቋ ዓይነት - አማርኛ ትዕማር ተመስገን ርዕሰ መምህርት

ዘወትር ቅዳሜ በትምህርት ወቅት ተማሪዎች በ ClementJames Centre ቅርሳችን የሆነውን ጥንታዊ የግእዝ ፊደል በመማርና ባሕላቸውን በጠበቀ መልኩ ፊደላትን በመለየት፣ ቃላትን እና ዐረፍተ ነገሮችን በመመሥረት፣ የተለያዩ ታሪኮችን በመጻፍ እና በማንበብ እንዲሁም የተለያዩ ተውኔቶች ላይ በመሳተፍ የአማርኛ ቋንቋቸውን እያዳበሩ ይገኛሉ።

ጤት ኢትዮጵያ ለተማሪዎች መረጃ መስጠት ብቻ ሳይሆን ይልቁንም በትምህርት ሂደት ላይ እንዲሳተፉ በማድረግ ትልቅ ሚና የሚጫወት ሲሆን አንዳንድ አስቸጋሪ ፀባይ ሊያሳዩ የሚችሉ ተማሪዎች የበለጠ ሊያተኩሩበት የሚችሉበትን ሥራዎች በመስጠትና ትንታኔና የመፍትሄ ሃሳብ እንዲሰጡበት በማሳተፍ ትምህርቱን አስደሳች በሆነ መልኩ በማቅረብ ላይ ይገኛል።



የንባብ ጊዜ

የፈጠራ ችሎታቸውን ለማዳበርና የማስታወስ ችሎታቸውን ለማሳደግ የተለያዩ መንገዶችን እይተጠቀምን ሲሆን ከእነዚህም ውስጥ ሥዕል እንዲሰሉ ወይም ቅብ እንዲቀቡና የሥዕላዊ መግለጫውን ጽንሰ ሃሳብ በአማርኛ እንዲያብራሩ ማድረግ፣ የተለያዩ ተውኔቶች ላይ በማሳተፍ

የተለያዩ ገጸ ባህርያት እንዲኖራቸው ማድረግና ራስን በሌላ ሰው ጫማ ሆኖ ማየትና ስሜትን መረዳትን እንዲያዳብሩ ማድረግ ይገኙበታል። የተወሰኑ የጤት ኢትዮጵያ አማርኛ



መምህራን Artis ከ YPF ጋር በመተባበር የሚሰጡት ሥልጠናዎች ላይ በመሳተፍ የተለያዩ የማስተማር ዘዴዎችን ተጠቅመዋል። ከእነዚህም ውስጥ የጭውውት መድረኮችን ማዘጋጀትና ለተማሪዎች የተለያዩ ገጸ ባህርይ በመስጠት ለምሳሌ እንደ ንጉሥ ወይም እንደ ንግሥት ሆኖ ጥያቄዎችን ማቅረብና ከሌሎች ብልጋት የተሞላበት መልስ ለማግኘት መሞከርና የመሳሰሉት ይገኙበታል።



የጥቁር ሕዝብ ታሪክ በሚዘከርበት ወር ሁለት የጤት ተማሪዎች እንደ አፄ ቴዎድሮስ እና እንደ እቴጌ ተዋበች ሆነው ተጫውተዋል

እንዲሁም ተማሪዎች ሥዕል በመሣልና ቴክኖሎጂን በመጠቀም ያንኑ ሥዕል ተንቀሳቃሽ ምስል በማድረግ የተለያዩ ጥያቄዎችን በተንቀሳቃሽ ምስል የመለሱበት ጊዜ አለ። ለምሳሌ የምወደው የአማርኛ ቃል አረንጓዴ ነው፣ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ነው፣ ኢትዮጵያ ነው፣ አበባ ነው... ከጤት የምወደው አማርኛ መማር ነው፣ ሥዕል መሣል ነው፣ ስለ ኢትዮጵያ መማር ነው የመሳሰሉት ይገኙበታል። ሙሉውን በጤት Youtube channel ይመልከቱ።

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziPy9Wb8J7E> እንደ “የኔታ” የመሳሰሉትን መተግበሪያዎች አውርደን የተለያዩ ቴክኖሎጂን በመጠቀም ፊደላትን መለየት፣ መጻፍ እና አዳዲስ ቃላትን መማር እንዲችሉ እናደርጋለን። እንዲሁም “ቃል በቃል” የተሰኘ የተለያዩ ፊደላትን የያዘ የጠጠር መጫወቻን በመጠቀም ተማሪዎች ፊደላትን መለየት ብቻ ሳይሆን ፊደላትን በመገጣጠም ቃላትን መመሥረት እና ልጆችንና አዋቂዎችን በሚያቀራርብና በሚያዝናና መልኩ በማስተማር ላይ እንገኛለን።

ዘወትር ኅመስ St James Church የሚሄዱ ተማሪዎች የንጉሥ ዳዊት የበገና፣ የመዝሙርና የዜማ ትምህርት በመማር ቋንቋቸውን የበለጠ እያዳበሩ ይገኛሉ። በቅርቡ

በኅዳር ወር ፳፻፲፰ ዓ.ም. ታዋቂና ዝነኛ የሆኑት ሰዓሊና ሊቀ መዝሙራን ይልማ ኃይሉ ወደ ለንደን በመጡ ጊዜ በበታችን ተገኝተው ከተማሪዎች ጋር በመዘመር ትልቅ ማበረታቻ ሰጥተዋል።



የጤት ኢትዮጵያ በኅ አድራጎት ሊቀ መንበር መጋቤ ሐዲስ ቀሲስ ዶ/ር አባተ ጎበና የጤት ተማሪዎችንና ረዳት መምህራንን ሲባርኩ



At Teit Ethiopia, we use interactive learning by involving students in the learning process and making them active participants, rather than passive recipients of information. We give opportunities to all our students, including those with challenging behaviour, to think, to analyse and to problem solve by making learning more enjoyable.

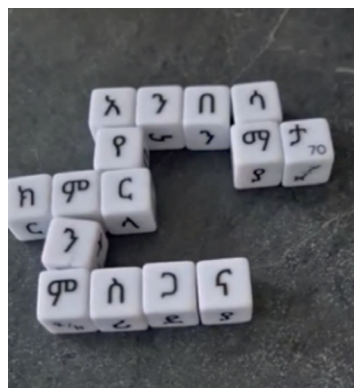
Recently we have done role play CPD training (with Artis through YPF) and this has greatly helped in engaging our learners. We use the role play techniques to create an imaginary story, and children take turns to act out characters and historical figures (e.g. asking questions and creating responses). This interactive and enjoyable experience is something children always find fun, while developing their learning. It also gives them more opportunities to express their true feelings in a safe and supportive environment. Most of our volunteers and assistants are parents, with friends and families getting involved in organising various activities and events.

Our learners range from Year 1 to Year 11 in three groups. Some speak Amharic at home on a day-to-day basis, while others speak Amharic only with us on weekends. They enjoy the traditional way of practising the ancient Ge'ez script (writing letters, words, sentences, paragraphs and stories), reading out loud, memorising and engaging in performing arts to learn our heritage language, Amharic, every Saturday in term time at the ClementJames Centre.

There are different language development techniques beside role playing that we use:

- describing a picture in Amharic after doing some drawing or painting,
- building a narrative around a concept
- storytelling to make concepts memorable and engaging

One strategy we use for developing learning the language skill is by utilising digital technology such as the Yeneta App. This enables the children to trace over a text and focus closely on learning how to write the scripts.



The word-building game Kal be Kal (ቃል በቃል) helps children to learn through play. Beginners learn by identifying the letters while advanced level learners use letter cubes to form a grid of words – this combines strategy with cultural discovery.

This picture was drawn by an 8-year-old pupil for Ethiopian New Year, the numbers for the year are written in Ge'ez, the girl is holding the Ethiopian Flag on one hand and a flower on the other hand and the new year wish and the name of the pupil are written in Amharic.



Some learners have learnt how to create animated characters based on their artwork and shared their views about what they like about Teit, what their favourite Amharic word is, etc. Here are some examples:

What I like about Teit: Amharic - አማርኛ, Poetry writing - ግጥም መጻፍ, Drawing - ሥነ ልቦና መሣራ...

My favourite Amharic word: አረንጓዴ - Green, ኢትዮጵያ - Ethiopia, ቤተ ክርስቲያን - Church, አበባ - Flower

All of these approaches help develop our students' oracy and confidence – positive attitudes we encourage them they take with them into the world and their mainstream classrooms.

In addition, with a focus on the accuracy of spoken Amharic, children who attend King David's Harp (Begen) lessons do hymn practice in Amharic to develop their ability to speak, read, write and understand the language by mastering synchronised lyrics, melodies and harmonies in a significant cultural context.



Caption: Yilma Hailu from Minneapolis visited children of Teit playing Begen when he came to London in November 2025.

Teit Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Supplementary School <https://www.teitethiopia.org.uk/>

Artis is a creative learning charity enabling children to sing, act and dance in their curriculum: <https://artisfoundation.org.uk/>

YPF (Young People's Foundation Trust) supports children and young people: <https://ypftrust.org.uk/>

The ClementJames Centre is an education charity based in North Kensington that supports people in one of London's most underserved communities to achieve their ambitions. <https://clementjames.org/> Children of Teit in Art <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlPy9Wb8J7E>

The Begen is a 10-stringed box-lyre, revered as a holy instrument used to praise God and for spiritual healing. It is associated with King David's Harp in the Bible.



Românii din Kent

Eutalia Leonte este profesor înregistrat și lider educațional comunitar stabilit în Kent, Marea Britanie. Ea este Director și Fondator al RO KENT CIC, unde oferă leadership strategic pentru inițiative care promovează incluziunea socială, educația și coeziunea comunitară.

În diminețile de sâmbătă din Kent, o sală este plină de limba română. Este o sală pe care o închiriem și pe care o transformăm într-o clasă de curs, sală de joacă sau spațiu pentru masă, deoarece este mai accesibilă decât o sală de clasă propriu-zisă și mai ușor de utilizat pentru comunitate.

Am deschis Școala Românească de Sâmbătă „Ștefan cel Mare” în anul 2019. De atunci, am primit aproximativ 50 de elevi în fiecare an. Elevii au vârste cuprinse între 4 și 16 ani, iar în total peste 250 de copii au învățat alături de noi.

Majoritatea elevilor noștri sunt născuți în Marea Britanie, cu foarte puține excepții.

Astfel, la început, elevii sunt în mod firesc ezitanți, nesiguri și uneori chiar anxioși. Își fac griji legate de pronunție și evită să vorbească în fața celorlalți. Unii spun: „Nu prea vorbesc românește.”

În timpul sesiunilor noastre, acest lucru începe treptat să se schimbe, pe măsură ce copiii trec de la tăcere la încredere. La început, copiii se bazează foarte mult pe limba engleză, iar unii sunt reticenți să citească cu voce tare. Însă, prin expunere constantă, exercițiu structurat și un mediu de susținere, lucrurile încep să se schimbe.

Elevii care inițial răspundeau în cuvinte izolate încep să construiască propoziții scurte.

Cei care evitau cititul încep să se ofere voluntari pentru texte scurte și poezii.

În timp, tot mai mulți elevi sunt dispuși să își asume riscul de a vorbi românește în fața colegilor.

La finalul anului, copiii care spuneau odinioară „Nu prea vorbesc românește” pot participa la conversații simple, pot citi texte scurte și pot scrie propoziții structurate de bază.

Îmi face mare plăcere să văd cum încrederea lor crește pas cu pas. Ceea ce începe ca ezitare se transformă adesea într-o mândrie vizibilă de a folosi limba.

Părinții raportează frecvent și o utilizare mai mare a limbii române acasă, precum și o dorință mai mare a copiilor de a comunica cu membrii familiei extinse.

Pentru noi este important să facem legături între limbi. Mulți dintre elevii noștri studiază spaniola sau franceza în școlile lor, iar noi evidențiem aceste conexiuni lingvistice, deoarece româna este de asemenea o limbă latină.

Elevii încep rapid să observe rădăcini și tipare familiare, iar româna nu mai pare o limbă izolată. Devine parte a unei familii mai largi de limbi.

Elevii noștri încep să vadă transferul de competențe. Recunosc tipare lingvistice, iar acest lucru le consolidează încrederea în toate limbile studiate. Înțeleg că bilingvismul este un avantaj.

Famiiliile ne pun adesea o întrebare foarte practică despre învățarea limbii:

„Va conta acest lucru?”

Dacă elevii își sacrifică dimineața de sâmbătă, atunci învățarea trebuie să aibă o valoare vizibilă. Limba română merită recunoaștere.

În 2019 nu exista un parcurs clar de acreditare a învățării în cadrul școlii noastre. Din acest motiv, am introdus AQA Unit Award Scheme și am început să scriu unități special pentru limba română:

- unități de citire,
- scriere structurată,
- exprimare orală,
- cunoaștere culturală.

Astfel, elevii mei lucrează acum pentru rezultate clare, își construiesc portofolii și primesc certificare oficială AQA.

Când țin acel certificat în mâini, ceva se schimbă. Limba română nu mai este doar „o limbă vorbită acasă”; devine o competență cu valoare academică recunoscută – o învățare acreditată.

Important este faptul că aceste unități pot fi folosite și de alte școli românești suplimentare și clase comunitare din Regatul Unit, precum și de inițiative educaționale românești din întreaga lume.

Dacă o școală creează un parcurs, și altele ar trebui să îl poată folosi.

Noi nu replicăm lecțiile din școlile primare sau generale.

Noi construim fundamente; construim încredere; construim identitate.

Limba română este o limbă vie.

În timp, elevii trec de la a spune: „Nu prea vorbesc românește.” la a spune: „Vorbesc două limbi.” Sau uneori chiar trei.

Această revistă electronică se numește „We Are Still Here”, iar acesta este mesajul nostru:

Româna este aici. Elevii noștri sunt aici.

Iar limbile de patrimoniu merită să fie văzute, auzite și recunoscute.

This e-magazine is testimony to the impact that can be made by people working together (often in their own time). ALL has marked the power of Collaborations on a new page:

<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/collaborations/>

We have also created a page to inform school-aged students, which includes a section specifically for those who are bi-/multilingual <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/languages-for-living/>

Please send your suggestions for other content: steven.fawkes@ALL-Languages.org.uk



Romanian in Kent

Eutalia Leonte is a Chartered Teacher and community education leader based in Kent, UK. Eutalia coordinates the Romanian Saturday School “Ștefan cel Mare”, working closely with families and schools to support heritage language development among children growing up in the UK.



On Saturday mornings in Kent, one classroom is full of Romanian. It is a rented village hall that we transform into a classroom, play or dinner area, because it is more affordable than an actual classroom and easier to access.

We opened the Romanian Saturday School “Ștefan cel Mare”

in 2019. Since then, we have welcomed around 50 pupils between 4 and 16 years old each year.

Most of our pupils are born in the UK with very few exceptions, and arrive barely speaking Romanian; some recognise a few words; some answer only in English. Some are simply unsure where they belong linguistically.

So, at the start, pupils are understandably hesitant, unsure, even anxious. They worry about pronunciation; they avoid speaking in front of others. Some say ‘*I don’t really speak Romanian.*’

During our sessions, that slowly changes as they move from silence to confidence.

Across the school, we see a clear and consistent pattern. While children start off relying heavily on English, and a few are reluctant to read aloud. With regular exposure, structured practice and a supportive environment, this begins to change.

Pupils who initially respond in single words start to build short sentences.

Those who avoid reading begin to volunteer for short texts and poems.

Over time, more pupils are willing to take risks in Romanian in front of their peers.

By the end of the year, those children who once said ‘*I don’t really speak Romanian*’ are able to participate in simple conversations, read short texts and write basic structured sentences.

I enjoy seeing their confidence grows step by step. What begins as hesitation often develops into visible pride in using the language.

Parents also frequently report increased use of Romanian at home and greater willingness from children to communicate with members of the extended family.

It is important for us to make connections across languages. Many of our students learn Spanish or French in mainstream schools, and we make the linguistic links explicit, as Romanian is also a Latin language.



Pupils quickly begin to notice familiar roots and patterns, and Romanian stops feeling isolated. It becomes part of a wider language family.

Our learners begin to see transferability. They recognise patterns, and this strengthens confidence across Languages. They understand that bilingualism is an advantage.

Families often ask the very practical question about our language teaching: ‘*Will this count?*’ If pupils are giving up their Saturday morning, the learning must have visible value. Romanian deserves recognition.

In 2019, there was no clear accreditation pathway in our setting, and so, for these reasons, I introduced the AQA Unit Award Scheme and began writing units specifically for Romanian: I developed units in reading, structured writing, speaking and cultural knowledge.

So my pupils now work towards clear outcomes; they build portfolios, and they receive official AQA certification.

When they hold that certificate in their hands, something shifts. Their Romanian is no longer ‘*just a home language*’; it has recognised academic value - accredited learning.

Importantly, these units can also be used by other Romanian supplementary schools and community classes across the UK, and by community-led Romanian education settings globally.

If one school builds a pathway, others should be able to use it.

We are not replicating mainstream lessons.

We are building foundations.

We are building confidence.

We are building identity. Romanian is a living language.

Over time, pupils move from saying, ‘*I don’t really speak Romanian*’ and start saying ‘*I speak two languages.*’ Or sometimes three.

This e-magazine is called *We Are Still Here*, and this is our message: Romanian is here. Our pupils are here.

And heritage languages deserve to be seen, heard and recognised.

Three stars and a wish

- ★ Romanian is visible and valued in our community.
- ★ Pupils receive recognised accreditation (in our case through AQA).
- ★ Our units can support Romanian community education in the UK and beyond.
- 🌱 **Wish:** stronger collaboration with mainstream schools, so that home languages are consistently recognised as assets.

બીજગણિતથી મૂળાક્ષર સુધી



Sonal Shah is Headteacher at Oshwal Association of UK NW Gujarati School

મારા અઠવાડિયાના દિવસો સંખ્યાઓ, તર્ક અને પાઠ, ઘરકામ અને મૂલ્યાંકનોની એકસરખી લયથી ઘેરાયેલા છે કેમ કે હું માધ્યમિક શાળામાં ગણિતની શિક્ષિકા છું. પરંતુ, સપ્તાહના અંતે હું રંગ, સંગીત અને હાસ્યથી ભરેલી એક અલગ દુનિયામાં પ્રવેશ કરું છું. દર શનિવારે સવારે, ઓશવાળ એસોસિએશન નોર્થ વેસ્ટની ગુજરાતી શાળામાં, હું સાત વર્ષનાં બાળકોને તેમના પરિવારની ભાષા અને સંસ્કૃતિ શીખવું છું. પહેલી નજરે આ બંને શૈક્ષણિક ભૂમિકાઓ જુદી લાગે, પરંતુ સમય સાથે મને સમજાયું કે તે એકબીજાની પૂરક છે.

જ્યારે હું પહેલીવાર **OAUK NW** ગુજરાતી શાળામાં જોડાઈ ત્યારે હું આ સંસ્થાની સમાજસેવાની ભાવના તરફ આકર્ષાઈ હતી. અહીંના ઉત્સાહી શિક્ષકો અને સ્વયંસેવકો યુવા પેઢીને માત્ર ભાષા જ નહીં, પરંતુ તેઓનો સાંસ્કૃતિક વારસો શીખવાનો સંપૂર્ણ અનુભવ આપે છે. એસેમ્બલી, પ્રદર્શન અને સહ-શિક્ષણ દ્વારા, આ શાળા ગૌરવ તથા એકતાની સાથે સાંસ્કૃતિક ઓળખ ઊભી કરે છે. સમય જતાં, મને સમજાયું કે ગણિતના વર્ગખંડમાં જે સિદ્ધાંતો મને માર્ગદર્શન આપે છે તે જ મારા ભાષાનાં શિક્ષણને પણ સમૃદ્ધ બનાવે છે.

ગણિતની શિક્ષકા તરીકે હું શીખી છું કે માળખાગત શિક્ષણ આત્મવિશ્વાસ વધારે છે. ગણિતમાં સમસ્યાઓનો ઉકેલ, એકબીજા સૂત્રો પર આધારિત હોય છે તેમજ દરેક પાઠ તર્કરૂપી સીડીમાં એક પગલું બનાવે છે. હું મારા ગુજરાતીના વર્ગોમાં આ જ રીત અપનાવું છું. બાળકો નિયમિત ક્રમથી ખીલે છે તેથી, અમારા વર્ગ શુભેચ્છાઓ, ગીતો, વાર્તાઓ, રમતો અને સર્જનાત્મક પ્રવૃત્તિઓના પરિચિત ક્રમને અનુસરે છે - નિયંત્રણ કરવા માટે નહીં, પરંતુ એવી જગ્યા બનાવવા માટે જ્યાં બાળકો નિશ્ચિત બનીને નવું નવું શીખી શકે. કોમ્યુનિટી શાળાઓમાં શિક્ષણ મેઇન-સ્ટ્રીમ જેટલું ફોર્મલ નથી, છતાં જો પદ્ધતિસરનું શૈક્ષણિક માળખું હોય તો અભ્યાસ એક આનંદદાયક અનુભવ બને છે.

ગણિતશાસ્ત્રીઓ વિશ્વને પેટર્નમાં જુએ છે અને ભાષાઓ આવી ભાતોથી ભરેલી છે! જેને ઓળખવાથી ગુજરાતી ભાષા શીખવવાનું સહજ બને છે. હું બાળકોને શબ્દોમાં પેટર્ન શોધવા પ્રોત્સાહિત કરું - જેમ કે અંત કેવી રીતે બદલાય છે, સ્વરો કેવી રીતે પાછા વપરાય છે અથવા બદલાતી વાક્યરચના શેને અનુસરે છે એની નોંધ લેવાનું તેઓ ઝડપથી શરૂ કરે છે: 'આ બે શબ્દોમાં સમાનતા છે!' અથવા 'તેનો અર્થ એક કરતા વધુ છે!' બાળકોની પેટર્નની શોધ, મોટા વિદ્યાર્થીઓની ગણિતના સૂત્રો વચ્ચેની કડી શોધવા જેવી જ છે. સમજણ અને જિજ્ઞાસા જગાવતી આ બંને ક્ષણો, શિક્ષણને એક સંતોષજનક અનુભવ બનાવે છે.

ગણિત ચોક્કસાઈ શીખવે છે. જટિલ સમસ્યાઓને સ્પષ્ટ, સરળ પગલાઓમાં વહેંચવી જોઈએ. નવી રીત સમજાવવા નાના પગલાંઓમાં એને વહેંચી, ઉદાહરણ આપ્યા પછી અમે વિદ્યાર્થીઓને પ્રેક્ટિસ કરાવીએ છીએ. મારા શનિવારના વર્ગખંડમાં પણ આ રીત અમૂલ્ય છે. નાના બાળકો લાંબો સમય ધ્યાન ન આપી શકતાં હોવાથી હું આ જ રીતે ઉદાહરણ બતાવીને ટૂંકમાં સમજાવું. મેઇન-સ્ટ્રીમ શાળાના અનુભવે શીખવવાની ઝડપ, શીખવેલું ફરીથી તાજું કરાવવું અને નાની સફળતાઓની ઉજવણીની મહત્તા વિશે મને માહિતગાર બનાવી છે. એક સ્મિત અથવા સ્ટીકર પણ પ્રેરણા આપી શકે છે.



નર્સરીથી ધોરણ સાત સુધીનાં બાળકોની કળા કારીગરી

સારા શિક્ષકો જાણે છે કે સૌથી કીમતી મૂલ્યાંકન ચાલુ વર્ગમાં થાય છે: મૂંઝવણભર્યો ચહેરો, આત્મવિશ્વાસથી જવાબ આપવો, બીજાને સમજાવતો એક વિદ્યાર્થી. આ બધું મને ગુજરાતી શીખવવા માટે માર્ગદર્શન આપે છે. અમારી પાસે પરીક્ષાનું શેડ્યુલ નથી, પરંતુ તેઓના પ્રગતિસૂચક સંકેતોનું હું સતત ધ્યાન રાખું છું જેવા કે કોઈ બાળક નવા શબ્દનો ઉપયોગ કરે અથવા ગીત ગાવા માટે આત્મવિશ્વાસથી

જોડાય. શીખવા માટે હંમેશાં માક્સની જરૂર હોતી નથી, કેટલીકવાર બાળક કહેલાં “હું હવે તે મારી જાતે બોલી શકું છું” શબ્દોનાં મૌન ગર્વમાં સાચી પ્રગતિ છુપાયેલી હોય છે.

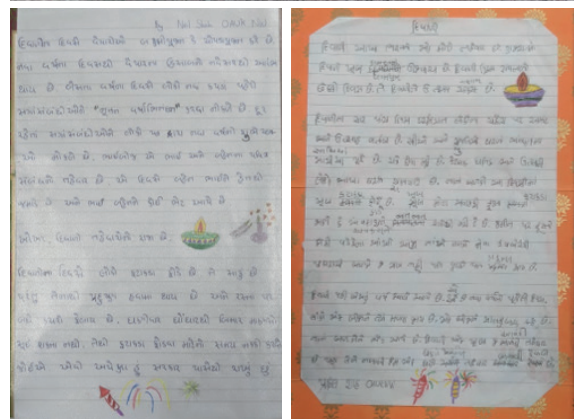
ગણિતનું હૃદય એટલે સમસ્યાઓનો ઉકેલ. જીવનમાં સમસ્યા ઉકેલવાની ક્ષમતા એક કૌશલ્ય છે. એક શિક્ષક તરીકે મારે હંમેશા તૈયાર રહેવું પડે છે: જ્યારે કોઈ રીત ન ચાલે ત્યારે પ્રવૃત્તિઓને બદલાવવી, વાતને સમજાવવા માટે સર્જનાત્મક રીતો શોધવી અથવા વર્ગને શાંત પાડવો. જ્યારે કંઈક કામ નથી કરતું ત્યારે હું શાંતિથી બીજો રસ્તો શોધું છું. વિદ્યાર્થીઓ પણ આવું કરતા શીખે છે જે મારા ગુજરાતી વર્ગખંડને સકારાત્મક અને પરિવર્તનશીલ રાખે છે.

મારા શનિ-રવિના કામમાં, સમુદાયની ભાવના મને સૌથી વધુ ગમે છે. ઘણા પરિવારો માટે ગુજરાતી શાળા, ભાષા શીખવાની જગ્યા કરતાં વધારે એક ઓળખ, સંબંધ અને મૂળ સાથેનું જોડાણ છે. બાળકો માત્ર બોલતાં નથી શીખતાં, પરંતુ તેઓ ક્યાંથી આવ્યાં છે તે સમજતાં થાય છે. ગણિતની શિક્ષકા તરીકેનું મારું કામ મને શીખવે છે કે જ્યારે જ્ઞાન આપણી ઓળખ સાથે જોડાય ત્યારે વધુ અર્થપૂર્ણ બને છે અને **OAUK NW** ગુજરાતી શાળાનું કામ મને સમજાવે છે કે શિક્ષણ એ માત્ર પરીક્ષાઓ અને ગ્રેડ્સ વિશે જ નથી, પરંતુ જિજ્ઞાસા, આત્મવિશ્વાસ અને સબંધો વિશે પણ છે.

એક વ્યવસાયિક અને બીજાં સ્વૈચ્છિક, એમ બંને વિશ્વમાં ભણાવવાથી હું શીખી છું કે વિષય કે સ્થળ કરતાં સારું શિક્ષણ ચડિયાતું છે. બીજગણિત હોય કે મૂળાક્ષરો, ધ્યેય એક જ રહે છે: વિદ્યાર્થીઓ પ્રગતિ કરે, ગમ્મત સાથે જ્ઞાન મેળવે અને પોતાની જાત પર ગર્વ લઈ શકે.



દિવાળી કાર્ડ



દિવાળી પર નિબંધ

We Are Here:

From Algebra to Alphabet



Bhavna Dodhia is a Gujarati teacher at Oshwal Association of UK NW Gujarati School

On weekdays, I'm a secondary school Mathematics teacher surrounded by numbers, logic and the steady rhythm of lessons, homework and assessments. But at the weekend, I enter a different world, filled with colour, music and giggles. Every Saturday morning, at the OAUK NW Gujarati School, I teach seven-year-olds the language and culture of their families. Though these two teaching roles seem worlds apart, I've realised how deeply they complement each other.

When I first joined the Gujarati School, I was drawn to its strong sense of community. The passionate teachers and volunteers provide the younger generation with a wholesome experience of learning not just a language, but also their cultural heritage. Through assemblies, performances and shared learning, the school instils pride, unity and cultural identity. Over time, I discovered that the same principles that guide me in a maths classroom also enrich my language teaching.



Students showing their Diwali rangolis

As a maths teacher, I learned that structure builds confidence. In maths, concepts build on one another and each lesson forms a step in a logical staircase. I bring that same rhythm into my weekend classes. Children thrive on routine and predictability, so our sessions follow a familiar rhythm of greetings, songs, storytelling, games, and creative activity - not to control, but to create a space where children feel secure enough to explore. Even in a community setting, where learning feels more informal, a clear framework keeps learning joyful and focused.

Mathematicians see the world in patterns, and languages are full of those! Recognising this makes teaching the Gujarati language both exciting and natural. I encourage the children to look for patterns in words, in the way endings change, how sounds repeat, or how phrases follow a rhythm. They quickly start noticing connections themselves 'These two words sound the same!' or 'That ending means 'more than one!'' Their discovery of patterns is like my older students spotting a link between concepts. Both are

moments of the genuine understanding that makes teaching rewarding.

Maths teaches precision. Complex ideas need breaking down into clear, simple steps. This is invaluable in my weekend classroom too. Young children have short attention spans, so I use concise, visual demonstrations, not long explanations. As with a new maths process take small steps, demonstrate and then let students practise. My weekday teaching has made me aware of pacing, reinforcement and the need to celebrate small successes too; a smile or sticker can mean a lot.

Good teachers know that the most valuable assessment happens in real time: a puzzled look, a confident answer, a student explaining something to a peer. That guides my teaching of Gujarati. We don't have a testing schedule but I do constantly watch for signs of progress: a child using a new word unprompted, or confidently joining in a song. Learning doesn't always need marks or scores, and sometimes meaningful progress is in the quiet pride of a child's words 'I can say it myself now.'

Problem-solving is a life skill. As a teacher, I often have to think on my feet, adjusting activities when something doesn't work, finding creative ways to explain ideas, or calming a class down. When something doesn't work, I calmly look for another way, and the pupils learn to do the same. That mindset keeps my Gujarati classroom positive and adaptable.

What I love most about my weekend role is the sense of community. For many families, Gujarati school is more than language, it is identity, belonging and continuity. Children learn about not just language, but also their roots. My role as a Mathematics teacher reminds me how powerful learning can be when it connects to who we are. And in return, my role at the OAUK NW Gujarati School reminds me that education is not just about exams and grades but about curiosity, confidence and connection.

Occupying these two worlds, one official and the other voluntary, has taught me that good teaching transcends subject or setting. Whether through algebra or alphabets, the goal remains the same, to help learners grow, explore and take pride in who they are.



Using a sudoku to practise numbers



Jana Nahodilová, Česká a Slovenská škola Okénko, Londýn

Česká a Slovenská škola Okénko byla založena v Londýně v roce 2012, kdy mnoho českých a slovenských rodin, které se po roce 1989 usadily ve Velké Británii, začalo vychovávat děti. V celé Velké Británii dnes působí jedenáct českých doplňkových škol. S téměř 200 dětmi navštěvujícími sobotní, nedělní i online výuku je Okénko druhou největší.

„Okénko“ znamená „malé okno“. Nabízíme okno do českého a slovenského jazyka a kultury — prostor, kde je bilingvní identita oceňována.

Proč je gramotnost důležitá

Od začátku jsme stavěli gramotnost do centra našeho kurikula.

Ve školách s dědictvím jazyka může mluvená plynulost skrývat mezery ve čtení a psaní. Děti mohou doma mluvit sebedůvěrně, ale potýkat se s delšími texty. Bez gramotnosti zpomaluje rozvoj slovní zásoby a omezuje přístup k literatuře.

Proto jsme založili knihovnu.

Co začalo jako police s darovanými knihami, se proměnilo v profesionální zdroj. Investovali jsme do katalogizačního systému a zaměstnali knihovnici. Dnes máme přes 3 500 tištěných knih a poskytujeme licencovaný přístup k e-knihám a audioknihám — více než 52 000 českých a slovenských titulů. Členství je otevřené nejen žákům a jejich rodinám. Knihy si lze půjčit osobně, poslat poštou ve Velké Británii nebo přistupovat digitálně po celém světě.

Pro naše studenty má tato dostupnost velký význam. Jejich jazyk má hloubku a status.

Jak z přístupu vytvořit návyk

Pouhý přístup k knihám čtenáře nevytvoří. Návyk ano.



Každá třída knihovnu navštěvuje týdně. Každý žák dostane čtenářský deník a zapisuje krátké reflexe přečtených knih. Dvakrát ročně slavíme nejpilnější čtenáře v našich 14 třídách a mezi dospělými.

Hodiny obsahují vyhrazený čas na čtení. Právě tehdy často váhavý čtenář začíná být zaujat a pokračuje doma. Třídy také sdílejí román, na který navazuje kreativní aktivita, například drama nebo výtvarné zpracování.

Dvakrát ročně pořádáme literární festival. Autoři a ilustrátoři z České republiky a Slovenska vedou dílny a nakladatelé poskytují knihy rodinám. Pro děti vyrůstající mimo zemi jazyka je setkání s živým autorem silným zážitkem, který literaturu oživuje.

Dospělí jako vzory

Děti se učí příkladem, proto podporujeme i dospělé čtenáře.

Náš měsíční online knižní klub diskutuje současnou českou a slovenskou literaturu. Následuje online rozhovor s autorem a soutěž o knihy poskytnuté nakladateli. Když děti vidí dospělé číst v dědictvím jazyce, potvrzuje se jim, že gramotnost je celoživotní.

Naše knihovna získala druhé místo v národní soutěži školních knihoven v ČR, kde soutěžily školy napříč republikou. Pro londýnskou doplňkovou školu to bylo významné uznání. Vzdělávání v komunitních jazycích může být ambiciózní a kvalitní.

Vytváření vlastních materiálů

V roce 2025 jsme vydali Okénko do češtiny s českým nakladatelem Nová škola. Je to jediná učebnice určená specificky pro češtinu jako dědictví. Kurz kombinuje učebnici, doplňkové materiály a interaktivní online verzi.

Materiály vznikly z našich zkušeností ve třídách. Naši žáci přemýšlejí v angličtině a přirozeně přepínají mezi jazyky. Potřebují strukturovanou podporu v gramotnosti. Kromě učebnice poskytujeme metodické školení a online komunitu pro učitele.

Učebnice určené pro české děti nebo cizince často nestačí. Když vhodné materiály neexistují, komunitní školy je vytvářejí.

Dva jazyky, jedna komunita

Naše škola spojuje českou a slovenskou komunitu. Třídy probíhají samostatně, ale všechny spojujeme na společných akcích, což odráží blízké jazykové a historické vazby. Vzdělávání a budování komunity jsou nerozlučné: kromě sezónních oslav pořádáme širší komunitní akce a víkendové pobyty, kde se děti setkávají s vrstevníky s podobným jazykovým zázemím a rodiče navazují trvalá přátelství. Jazyk vzkvétá nejen ve výuce, ale i v každodenním životě.

Podporuje nás 48členný tým, z nichž mnoho je zároveň rodiči našich žáků. Jejich osobní zapojení zajišťuje kontinuitu mezi výukou a komunitním životem a pečuje o jazyk i kulturu.

Tři hvězdy a jedno přání

- ★ Fungující komunitní knihovna.
- ★ Učebnice dědictvím jazyka vytvořená praktikujícími učiteli.
- ★ Silná česká a slovenská komunita v Londýně.

Naše přání? Trvalé uznání a financování komunitních jazyků. Nejsme periferní. Jsme součást vzdělávacího prostředí.

Jsme tady. A stále jsme tady.



Building literacy, community and confidence

Jana Nahodilová, Czech and Slovak School Okénko, London

Okénko means little window. We offer a window into Czech and Slovak language and culture — a space where bilingual identity is valued.

Czech and Slovak School Okénko was founded in London in 2012, when many Czech and Slovak families settled in the UK after 1989 and were raising children. We rent a primary school in Lambeth on a Saturday.

From the start, we placed literacy at the centre of our curriculum. It matters to us all. In heritage language settings, spoken fluency can hide gaps in reading and writing. Children may speak confidently at home but struggle with longer texts. Without literacy, vocabulary growth slows and access to literature narrows.

So we built a library. What began with donated books became a professional resource. We invested in a cataloguing system and appointed a librarian. Today we hold over 3,500 printed books and provide licensed access to eBooks and audiobooks - more than 52,000 Czech and Slovak titles. The school has a large room for the library and dedicates a quarter of this to us.

Membership is open beyond pupils and families. Books can be borrowed, sent by post in the UK, or accessed digitally worldwide.

For our learners, this visibility matters. Their language has depth and status.

Access alone does not create readers. Habits do. Each class visits the library weekly. Every pupil receives a reading journal and writes brief reflections on completed books. Twice yearly, we celebrate our most committed readers in each of our 14 classes and among adults. Our lessons include dedicated reading time.

This can be when a reluctant reader suddenly becomes absorbed and continues at home. Classes also share a novel to explore and give a creative response such as drama or art.

Twice a year we organise a literary festival. Authors and illustrators from the Czech Republic and Slovakia lead workshops, and publishers provide books for families. For children growing up outside the country where the languages is used, meeting a living author makes literature feel real.

Children learn by example, so we support adult readers too. Our monthly online book club discusses contemporary Czech and Slovak fiction. We follow this with an online author interview and a competition for books provided by publishers. Seeing adults read in the heritage language reinforces lifelong literacy for younger people.

Our library received second prize in a Czech national competition for school-based libraries, competing with schools across the Czech Republic. For a London supplementary school, this recognition was significant. Community language education can be ambitious and of high quality.



In 2025, we published *Okénko do češtiny* (Window into Czech) with the Czech publisher Nová škola. It is the only textbook designed specifically for Czech as a heritage language. The course combines a textbook, supplementary materials, and an interactive online version.



The materials grew from classroom experience. Our pupils think in English and switch codes naturally. They need structured support in literacy. Alongside the textbook, we provide live methodological training and an online professional community for teachers.

Our school embraces both Czech and Slovak communities. While classes run separately, we bring everyone together for shared events, reflecting the close linguistic and historical ties between the languages. Education and community building are inseparable: alongside seasonal celebrations, we organise wider community gatherings and residential weekends where children meet peers with similar linguistic backgrounds, and parents may form lasting friendships. Language thrives when it goes beyond lessons into relationships and daily life.

This is reflected in our dedicated team of 48, many of whom are also parents of pupils. Their personal investment ensures continuity between teaching and community life, nurturing language and culture.



Three stars and a wish

- ★ A thriving community library.
- ★ A heritage-language textbook created by practitioners.
- ★ A strong Czech-Slovak community in London.
- 💡 Our wish? Sustainable recognition and funding for community languages. We are not peripheral. We are part of the language education landscape. We are here.

Across the UK, eleven Czech supplementary schools now operate. With almost 200 children attending Saturday, Sunday, and online, Okénko is the second largest, teaching children from infancy to age 16.



الگوی موفق در آموزش زبان میراثی و هویت فرهنگی

Rustam School

در راستای پاسخگویی به نیازهای زبان‌آموزان دوزبانه، مدرسه رستم منابع آموزشی اختصاصی خود را از طریق انتشارات رستم، از سطح ابتدایی تا پیش‌دانشگاهی، به چاپ رسانده است. این منابع علاوه بر استفاده داخلی، در سایر مدارس فارسی در بریتانیا و حتی در سطح بین‌المللی نیز به کار گرفته می‌شوند. همچنین، معلمان که بسیاری از آنان دارای مدارک حرفه‌ای هستند، در دوره‌های آموزشی هدفمند شرکت می‌کنند تا کیفیت تدریس به‌طور مستمر ارتقا یابد.

این مدرسه دارای کتابخانه‌ای با بیش از ۳۰۰۰ جلد کتاب بوده و به‌عنوان مرکز رسمی برگزاری آزمون‌های جی سی اس ای و جی سی ای فارسی نیز فعالیت می‌کند. برنامه‌هایی مانند روز حرفه و فن و مراسم فارغ‌التحصیلی نیز هر ساله برای تشویق دانش‌آموزان و حمایت از انتخاب‌های آگاهانه در مسیر تحصیلی آینده آنان برگزار می‌شود.

مدرسه رستم همچنین از طریق برگزاری آیین‌های فرهنگی مانند نوروز و شب یلدا، به بازنمایی و بازتولید فرهنگ ایرانی می‌پردازد. این فعالیت‌ها به شکل‌گیری حافظه فرهنگی مشترک و تقویت هویت در میان نسل جوان کمک می‌کند.

مدرسه رستم زبان فارسی را نه تنها به عنوان یک حق، بلکه به عنوان منبعی برای ارتباط فرهنگی آموزش می‌دهد. پژوهش‌ها نشان می‌دهند که یادگیری زبان میراثی موجب افزایش اعتمادبه‌نفس و بهبود عملکرد تحصیلی می‌شود. بسیاری از دانش‌آموزان از طریق موفقیت در این حوزه، مهارت‌های قابل انتقالی کسب می‌کنند که در سایر درس‌ها نیز به کار می‌آید.

سارا، دانش‌آموز دوره‌ی جی سی ای، بیان می‌کند:

هیچ‌گاه فکر نمی‌کردم بتوانم در درسی نمره‌ای خوب کسب کنم، اما در فارسی موفق شدم. حالا یاد گرفته‌ام چگونه درس بخوانم و برای رسیدن به نتایج بهتر تلاش کنم.

آموزش زبان میراثی همچنین به تقویت روابط خانوادگی و شکل‌گیری هویت کمک می‌کند و مزایای شناختی و عاطفی متعددی به همراه دارد

علی دانش‌آموز سال چهارم، می‌گوید:

مادر بزرگم همیشه می‌پرسد چه چیزی یاد گرفته‌ام و من با علاقه برایش توضیح می‌دهم.

شناخت و احترام به هویت ملی در این فرآیند نقش محوری دارد، زیرا زبان و ارتباطات اجتماعی به شکل‌گیری درک فرد از خود کمک می‌کنند. با این حال، با وجود انگیزه اولیه، عواملی مانند فشارهای برنامه‌ی درسی مدارس انگلیسی، محدودیت زمانی و اولویت‌های دیگر می‌تواند تعهد دانش‌آموزان را کاهش دهد. این مدارس با چالش‌هایی همچون کمبود منابع آموزشی، فضاهای نامناسب و نبود حمایت کافی مواجه هستند. بنابراین افزایش توجه و حمایت از سوی نظام آموزشی و سیاست‌گذاران برای تحقق عدالت آموزشی و ایجاد برابری اجتماعی ضروری است.

یکی از دانش‌آموزان سابق مدرسه رستم:

"وقتی درگیر یک بحران خانوادگی بودم، زمانی که همه چیز نامطمئن به نظر می‌رسید، این مدرسه فارسی بود که به من آرامش بخشید. این مکان فراتر از یک محیط آموزشی، به پناهگاهی برای من تبدیل شد. دانش‌آموز رستم بودن به من قدرت داد تا با ترس‌هایم روبه‌رو شوم و دوباره روی تحصیل تمرکز کنم. بدون حمایت و دلگرمی دوستان و معلمانم، امروز در جایگاه فعلی‌ام نبودم".

زبان فارسی، به‌عنوان زبان رسمی ایران و کشورهای مانند افغانستان و تاجیکستان، توسط میلیون‌ها نفر در سراسر جهان صحبت می‌شود و دارای میراثی غنی و چندصدساله در زمینه‌ی ادبیات است. آموزش زبان‌های میراثی نقش اساسی در حفظ هویت فرهنگی در خانواده‌های فارسی‌زبان ایفا می‌کند. اگرچه سیاست‌های آموزشی در بریتانیا به مزایای دوزبانی‌ها باور دارند، نظام آموزشی رسمی همچنان بر مجموعه محدودی از زبان‌ها تمرکز دارد و سایر زبان‌ها را به حاشیه می‌راند. این خلأ منجر به شکل‌گیری مدارس تکمیلی مانند مدرسه رستم شده است که با هدف تقویت زبان میراثی، هویت فرهنگی و انسجام اجتماعی فعالیت می‌کنند و در عین حال دانش‌آموزان را برای زندگی در جامعه‌ای چند فرهنگی آماده می‌سازند.

مدرسه رستم بیش از چهار دهه در خدمت جامعه ایرانی بوده است. این مدرسه در سال ۱۹۸۱ توسط گروهی از معلمان ایرانی تأسیس شد و در ابتدا به‌عنوان یک مرکز آموزش زبان برای فرزندان خانواده‌های مهاجر فعالیت خود را آغاز کرد. امروزه این مجموعه به یک مدرسه تکمیلی معتبر با بیش از ۳۵۰ دانش‌آموز و ۷۰ نفر کادر آموزشی و اجرایی تبدیل شده است. با وجود این‌که فعالیت رسمی آن تنها چهار ساعت در روزهای شنبه است، در عمل به‌عنوان نهادی منسجم و متعهد عمل می‌کند. معلمان زمان قابل توجهی را خارج از ساعات کلاس صرف طراحی منابع آموزشی، شرکت در دوره‌های تخصصی آموزشی و اجرای روش‌های خلاقانه مانند هنر، نمایش و آموزش ترکیبی می‌کنند تا همه دانش‌آموزان به‌طور برابر در فرآیند یادگیری مشارکت داشته باشند.

اکثر دانش‌آموزان از خانواده‌های انگلیسی‌زبان نسل دوم یا سوم هستند و یادگیری زبان فارسی را عمدتاً از طریق ارتباطات خانوادگی و اجتماعی دنبال می‌کنند. آموزش از سنین پایین با فعالیت‌های پویا به همراه استفاده از هنر و موسیقی آغاز شده و به تدریج به سوادآموزی، ادبیات و مطالعات فرهنگی گسترش می‌یابد. در مقاطع بالاتر، دانش‌آموزان به سطح قابل توجهی از مهارت زبانی دست یافته و اغلب برای اخذ مدارک رسمی جی سی اس ای و جی سی ای در زبان فارسی آماده می‌شوند.

مشارکت والدین نقش کلیدی در موفقیت این مدرسه دارد. بسیاری از آنان به‌عنوان دستیار آموزشی یا در حوزه‌های دیجیتال و اجرایی فعالیت می‌کنند و در برگزاری رویدادهای فرهنگی و اجتماعی نقش دارند. این فعالیت‌های مشترک به تقویت حس تعلق در میان دانش‌آموزان و خانواده‌ها کمک می‌کند.



A longer version of this article in English is online here: <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/language-zones/home-heritage-community-languages/>



Academic, personal and community Impact

Parvaneh Delavari is a Teacher and Deputy Headteacher (Secondary phase) at Rustam School, and a PhD Student at Middlesex University.

I first entered Rustam School on a Spring morning, twenty years ago, almost 5 years after my migration from Iran. I was interviewed with kindness and care. Although there was no formal role available, I was offered the opportunity to volunteer in supporting students one-to-one with their learning. This small beginning meant everything to me - it gave me a place to belong, surrounded by the language I love, and a renewed sense of identity during a time of uncertainty.

I have spent every Saturday since at Rustam School. Within its walls, I redefined myself in a new society. I found a voice, a sense of purpose, and the confidence to become a contributing and compassionate member of the wider community.

Our school has been serving the Iranian community here since 1981. Rustam now has over 300 students and 60 staff members. Although we officially operate for only four hours on Saturdays, the school is a well-structured organisation. Our dedicated team puts in countless hours - crafting teaching materials to meet each child's unique needs, attending professional courses to deepen their understanding of innovative teaching methods, and planning activities that inspire creativity and expression. They also prepare hybrid classes, combining in-person and online learning, for students who cannot always attend physically, so that everyone remains included, regardless of circumstance.



Family involvement is pivotal to our success; parents often volunteer for roles in website management, online marketing or teaching assistance. Activities like Persian buffets featuring delicious dishes such as *ghormeh sabzi*, saffron rice and fresh *barbari* bread, clubs, and assemblies, foster a strong sense of community.

Our teaching resources are specifically designed for bilingual learners' unique needs and experiences. Rustam Publications has developed a comprehensive set of books from Year 1 through to A-Level, out of necessity to support this community; these have become valuable tools for other Persian schools across the UK and in countries such as Sweden and Canada.

Most teachers are native Persian speakers with teaching backgrounds, including those who hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and teach in UK mainstream schools. We run our own teacher training sessions to make sure that our approaches are up to date and based on the needs of students.

We boast our own library catering to a wide range of learners and their families. It includes everything from children's storybooks and poetry to literature for adult readers. Persian is one of the world's oldest literary languages, with a rich cultural and poetic heritage

spanning centuries. The library organises events, competitions and storytelling sessions, and plays a vital role in enhancing students' language skills.

In addition, Rustam School is an approved examination centre, offering GCSE and GCE Persian exams for students each year. This benefits other schools in UK and abroad, as students can sit their exams in a specialised Persian centre.



Successful Persian academics and professionals share valuable insights and inspiration at our annual 'Open Horizon' event, which introduces students to university subjects and career opportunities. We

recognise hard work and success, and demonstrate how effort can open doors to future opportunities.

Students who struggle with their study at their mainstream school find that the confidence they gain through their success with us, helps them perform better in other subjects. Achieving a high grade in Persian also offers access to higher education, transforming their academic and personal journeys. At Rustam school we strive to give students the skills to thrive in a multicultural society where future generations can flourish.

Sara, an A-level student, says: *'I never thought I could achieve a good grade in any subject, but I did it in Persian. Now I've learned how to study and practise to achieve better grades.'*

A former pupil, now at university, writes: *'In the midst of a difficult family crisis, when everything felt uncertain ... the Persian school that gave me stability. It became more than just a place to learn - it became a sanctuary ... that ... gave me the strength to ... refocus on my education. Without the comfort and encouragement of the friends and teachers I found there, I wouldn't be where I am today.'*

All references for this article are in the longer English version available on this page: <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/language-zones/home-heritage-community-languages/> in the section: Languages Today Special



معصومه مجددي

مسئول بخش تعليم، و مدير مكتب ژ. سسه پيوند

زبان پلي ميان نسل هاست و هر کلمه اي را که مي آموزيم ميراث و کلتور «
» ما را زنده نگه مي دارد.

ما هنوز اينجا هستيم: پرورش زبان دري و پشتو از طريق آموزش در جامعه

مكتب آخر هفته براي زبان هاي دري و پشتو

هر صبح شنبه، زماني که بيشتر مکاتب بسته اند، در صنف هاي ما باز مي شوند

کودکان و بزرگسالان با کتابچه هاي شان با شوق وارد مي شوند و والدين براي چاي مي مانند. ما زبان دري و پشتو تدریس مي کنيم، اما در حقيقت ما هويت، اعتماد به نفس و پيوند ميان نسل ها را تقويت مي کنيم. مكتب شنبه ما زماني آغاز شد که خانواده ها احساس کردند فرزندان شان به چيزي بيشتر نياز دارند. در خانه دري يا پشتو صحبت مي کردند، اما در مكتب همه چيز به زبان انگليسي بود. کم کم بعضي کودکان فقط به انگليسي پاسخ مي دادند. بعضي ها از صحبت کردن به زبان مادري خجالت مي کشيدند. برخي مي فهميدند اما نمي توانستند بخوانند يا بنويسند.

ما با يک صنف کوچک شروع کرديم، چند آموزگار داوطلب اما با اميد بزرگ.

امروز ما به کودکان و بزرگسالان آموزش مي دهيم. برخي براي تقويت سوادشان مي آيند. برخي مي خواهند فرزندان شان را در دروس شان کمک کنند و برخي مي خواهند دوباره با زبان کودکی شان ارتباط برقرار کنند. در صنف هاي ما کودکان:

با افتخار به زبان خود صحبت مي کنند، مهارت خواندن و نوشتن خود را تقويت مي بخشند، اعتماد به نفس بيشتر پيدا مي کنند و با فرهنگ و تاريخ خود آشنا مي شوند.

ما مي بينيم که وقتی کودک بتواند با پدر بزرگ يا مادر بزرگش به زبان مشترک صحبت کند، رابطه عميق تر مي شود. وقتي نوجواني بتواند براي خانواده اش ترجمه کند، احساس توانمندی مي کند. زبان فقط دستور زبان نيست. زبان، داستان، شعر، ضرب المثل و خاطره است.

ما خارج از سيستم رسمي آموزش فعاليت مي کنيم، اما تاثير ما واقعي و عميق است. ما پلي ميان خانه و جامعه مي سازيم و نشان مي دهيم که دوزيانه بودن يک قدرت است، نه يک مانع.

دستاوردها و آرزوي ما:

ما به پيشرفت شاگردان مان دريادگيري زبان مادري شان افتخار مي کنيم. ما به همکاري قوي خانواده ها افتخار مي کنيم. ما به فضاي صميمي و حمايتي جامعه خود افتخار مي کنيم. **آرزوي ما:** دسترسي به منابع آموزشي بيشتر و حمايت پايدار - مالي براي گسترش برنامه هاي مان.



ژبه د نسلونو ترمنځ پل دی، او هره خبره چې موږ کوو، زموږ ميراث «
» ژوندی ساتي.

موږ لا هم دلته يو: د شنې دري او پښتو ښوونځي

هره د شنې سهار، کله چې نور ښوونځي تړلي وي، زموږ ټولگي له انرژۍ ډک وي.

ماشومان په خوبحالۍ راځي. ميندې او پلرونه يو بل سره گوري. لويان د زده کړې لپاره ناست وي. موږ ورته دري او پښتو ورزده کوو، خو تر ټولو مهمه دا چې موږ هويت، باور او د نسلونو ترمنځ اړيکې پياوړې کوو.

زموږ ښوونځي هغه وخت پيل شو کله چې کورنيو احساس کړه چې د دوی ماشومان خپلې ژبې ته اړتيا لري. په کور کې به دري يا پښتو ويل کېده، خو په رسمي ښوونځي کې هر څه په انگليسي وو. ځينو ماشومانو يوازې په انگليسي ځواب ورکولو پيل وکړ. ځينې شرمېدل چې خپله ژبه ووایي.

موږ له يو کوچني ټولگي او څو رضاکاره ښوونکو په مرسته کار پيل کړ، خو لوی هدف مو درلود.

اوس موږ ماشومانو او ځوانانو ته درس ورکوو. ځينې لويان غواړي خپل ليک لوست ښه کړي. ځينې غواړي د خپلو ماشومانو ملاتړ وکړي. ځينې غواړي د خپل ماشومتوب ژبې سره بيا اړيکه ټينگه کړي.

موږ گورو چې کله يو ماشوم له خپل نيکه يا نيا سره په خپله ژبه خبرې کوي، اړيکه ژوره کېږي. کله چې يو ځوان د خپلې کورنۍ لپاره ژباړه کوي، هغه ځان پياوړی احساسوي ژبه يوازې گرامر نه ده. ژبه کلتور، کيسې، شعر او تاريخ دی.

ژبه يوازې گرامر نه ده. ژبه کلتور، کيسې، شعر او تاريخ دی.

که څه هم موږ د رسمي تعليمي سيستم برخه نه يو، خو زموږ اغېز ښکاره دی. موږ کور او ټولنه سره نښلوو. موږ ښيو چې دوه ژبې لرل يو ځواک دی.

مهم ټکي او هيلې

موږ د خپلو زده کوونکو په پرمختګ وياړو.

موږ د ميندو او پلرونو په همکاري وياړو.

موږ د خپلې ټولنې په يووالي وياړو.

زموږ هيله: دوامداره مالي ملاتړ او نور درسي مواد دي، تر څو خپل فعاليتونه پراخ کړو.





Nurturing Dari and Pashto through Community Learning

Masumah Mujaddedi: Education Project and Saturday School Manager at Paiwand Afghan Association - Stag Lane Saturday School, Edgware



'Language is the bridge between generations, and every word we speak keeps our heritage alive.'

Every Saturday morning, while most schools are closed, our classrooms come alive.

Children run in, parents linger for tea, and adult learners arrive with notebooks in hand. We teach Dari and Pashto, but what we are really building is **confidence, belonging and continuity**.

Our Saturday School began because families noticed something important slipping away. At home, children spoke Dari or Pashto. At school, everything was in English. Slowly, some children stopped using their heritage language. Some understood but could not read or write.



We started with a small class, a few volunteer teachers, and big hopes.

Today, we teach children and adult (16+) students. They come to improve literacy and reconnect with the language of their childhood.

- 1000 children enrolled
- 50 adult students
- 19 years running
- 20 volunteer teachers

Our school operates outside the mainstream system, but our impact is real.

Children and Adult students

- develop bilingual confidence
- strengthen listening and memory skills
- gain pride in their identity
- connect across generations
- improve reading and writing
- build confidence in public speaking
- form friendships and support networks



End of year Graduation ceremony

Time at our school gives them more than Language lessons: they take these skills and attitudes into their mainstream schools and social lives. When children value their home language, they participate more confidently in wider society. They feel seen, rooted, and strong. Languages carry history, poetry, and culture. Teaching Dari and Pashto is also teaching stories, proverbs, and respect.

We face challenges: limited funding, volunteer teachers, planning in evenings. Yet community energy keeps us going. Parents organise cultural events, older students mentor younger ones, and we celebrate International Mother Language Day.

In times of migration and change, heritage languages are fragile but powerful tools for resilience. Children communicating with grandparents, young people translating for families, and adults returning to learning, all show that bilingualism is a strength. This matters now!

'We Are Still Here' is not just a statement of survival; it is an assertion of contribution. Supplementary schools like ours sustain languages that might otherwise fade, nurturing confident bilingual citizens and bridges across generations. And we do it every Saturday.

Three stars and a wish

- ★ Pupils confidence in speaking and reading
- ★ Strong parental engagement
- ★ A community of learners, young and adult
- 🔧 **Wish:** Sustainable funding and more teaching resources to expand classes and train new teachers

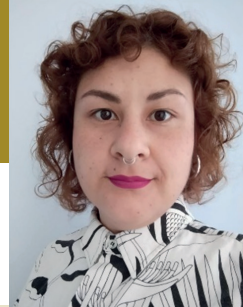
A Classroom Moment

One pupil, aged eight, refused to speak Dari in his first term. He understood everything but answered in English, feeling embarrassed to 'sound different'. We did not force him. We just celebrated small steps through storytelling, games, and drama.

One Saturday, during a group activity, he spoke three full sentences in Dari. The whole class applauded. His mother later told us he now speaks more Dari at home and reads simple books to his grandmother online. Moments like this show why we do this work.

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.





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:

Bloco - a carnival unit of people dressed to a theme and parading together

Caboclinhas - little girls of indigenous descent

estandarte - flag

frevo - term for colourful and fast paced dance moves, using colourful umbrellas for tricks.

Maracatu - term for music and dance, of African origin

marchinhas - traditional Carnival songs

samba - a dance

sertão - a typically dry biome in the north east region of Brazil



Sandra Bea Mbong is a secondary school French and Spanish teacher and MSc student at the University of Oxford.

Translanguaging in the Classroom: Bridging Theory and Practice

In today's increasingly diverse classrooms, multilingualism is no longer the exception, it is the norm. Pupils bring a wide range of linguistic resources shaped by their backgrounds, families, and communities. Yet many educational practices remain rooted in monolingual assumptions. This raises an important question:

How can teachers meaningfully integrate pupils' linguistic repertoires into learning?

One concept that has gained increasing attention is translanguaging. While widely discussed in research, it can sometimes feel abstract or difficult to apply in practice. This article aims to bridge that gap by offering a clear explanation of translanguaging and exploring how it can be implemented through simple, realistic strategies.

Translanguaging refers to the use of a learner's full linguistic repertoire as an integrated system, rather than viewing languages as separate. Developed from the Welsh term *trawsieithu* and later expanded by García and Wei (2014), it challenges traditional views of language as fixed and bounded.

It is often contrasted with code-switching, which is typically understood as switching between distinct languages. Translanguaging instead emphasises fluidity: learners draw on all their linguistic knowledge simultaneously to make meaning.

This perspective shifts how we think about language in education. Rather than seeing multiple languages as a complication, translanguaging positions them as a valuable resource for learning.

Why does it matter? Research suggests that translanguaging can support both cognitive and social aspects of learning. It can enhance comprehension, increase participation, and support the development of biliteracy (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). It can also boost confidence, particularly when pupils engage with complex ideas.

Importantly, translanguaging also plays a key role in inclusion. In many classrooms, pupils' home languages are often invisible or undervalued. Recognising and incorporating these languages can help create an environment where pupils feel seen, valued, and empowered.

However, translanguaging is not without debate. Some scholars, such as MacSwan (2017), question the clarity of the concept and highlight tensions with traditional language teaching approaches. Its impact can vary depending on context, so it is best understood as a flexible pedagogical tool rather than a universal solution. A common concern among teachers is how to translate theory into practice. The good news is that translanguaging does not require major changes; small, intentional strategies can make a meaningful difference.

- For example, pupils can be encouraged to use their first language (L1) to support understanding. They might discuss a concept in their L1 before expressing it in English or the target language. This can support comprehension and build confidence.
- Another effective strategy is cross-linguistic comparison. Pupils can compare vocabulary or grammatical structures across languages, identifying

similarities and differences. This approach activates prior knowledge and deepens understanding, echoing Cummins' (2007) work on linguistic interdependence.

These strategies reflect a simple but powerful principle: pupils' linguistic knowledge is an asset, not a barrier.

Despite its potential, translanguaging presents practical challenges. Teachers may not speak the languages represented in their classroom, and the diversity of languages can make implementation complex. In addition, assessment systems are often monolingual, making it difficult to evaluate multilingual learning. These challenges highlight the need for a thoughtful and context-sensitive approach.

Translanguaging should be adapted to each classroom rather than applied as a fixed method.

Translanguaging supports learning and inclusion, but does not replace the need for clear objectives. Nor does it mean abandoning the target language; rather using all available linguistic resources to support understanding.

Teachers can start with simple strategies which can significantly enhance engagement:

- Acknowledging and valuing pupils' languages
- Using multilingual word banks or displays



Dog
Chien
狗



Man
Homme
男人



Reward
Récompense
奖励

As classrooms become increasingly multilingual, there is a growing need to rethink traditional approaches to language in education. Translanguaging offers a way of recognising pupils' linguistic resources and using them to support learning.

While still debated, its core message is clear: language is not a barrier, but a resource. A balanced and reflective approach can help teachers bridge the gap between theory and practice and create more inclusive classrooms.

Further reading

García, O. & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*

Creese, A. & Blackledge, A. (2010). *Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom*

Cummins, J. (2007). *Rethinking monolingual instructional strategies*

MacSwan, J. (2017). *A multilingual perspective on translanguaging*

Dr Judith Rifesser, former ALL President



Where Voices Meet: Multilingualism, Identity and the Role of Supplementary Schools

It is estimated that there are around 5,000–6,000 supplementary/complementary schools across the UK. There is no exact record of them, as many operate in precarious circumstances, occupying the in-between spaces of formal and informal education. Often working with limited funding, these schools rely largely on the sheer dedication and tireless efforts of teachers and other people who volunteer their time and share their resources. They recognise the vital importance of nurturing linguistic and cultural capital and passing it on to the next generation.

These schools are vital not only for learners, but also for families and entire communities. They help young people deepen and strengthen their knowledge of their home or heritage languages and cultures, and they play an important role in identity formation and building community. In these spaces, multilingualism is not treated as a challenge to overcome but as a resource to celebrate. Supplementary schools offer environments where young people's multiple identities are acknowledged and valued. For families, they provide opportunities to support the development of home and heritage languages while connecting with other parents and carers who share similar experiences. Communities benefit as well, investing in future generations who will continue to sustain and protect their linguistic and cultural heritage. These schools help cultivate voice: the ability to express identity, belonging and experience across languages and cultures.

The urge to communicate with one another and to make our voices heard is deeply embedded in human beings. Despite our long history as communicators, however, it is a skill we have not fully mastered. Research suggests that in the United States alone, miscommunication costs organisations an estimated \$1.2 trillion annually. Leaders identify several key areas that require attention: **clarity, efficiency, consistency, tone** that conveys both authority and respect, and above all, **empathy**.

Communication, however, is never culturally neutral. In her book *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer reminds us that effective communication depends not simply on

knowing a few visible elements of culture, such as food, festivals or flags. What matters more are the invisible expectations that shape how people speak, listen and interpret meaning.

These unspoken conventions guide social and professional interactions and determine what we consider important, respectful or appropriate. Communication, therefore, is not simply about making oneself understood. It also requires understanding those with whom we communicate. As Anne Karpf observes, listening to someone's voice becomes '*a partnership of vibration*', a dynamic exchange rather than a one-sided act.



Our capacity to listen is both cultural and deeply human. The ear begins forming as early as the third week of foetal life and is structurally complete by around three months. Newborns are highly sensitive to sound; remarkably, their cries often reflect the intonation patterns of the language spoken by their mother or primary caregiver. Infants can also distinguish between their own cries and those of other babies, and research suggests that they may become distressed when they hear another baby crying. As Anne Karpf notes in *The Human Voice*, '*Human empathy develops early, and it's expressed vocally*.' Listening, empathy and responsiveness are therefore fundamental components of communication.

In this light, multilingualism expands the possibilities of connection. As Professor Zhu Hua (UCL) has suggested, '*Multilingualism is not just about 'being me' – it is about imagining 'us'*.' Supplementary schools embody this idea. They are not simply language classes, but spaces where voices are nurtured, identities affirmed and communities strengthened. By supporting these schools, we help ensure that multilingual young people grow up knowing that their languages and cultures are not barriers but bridges, bridges that allow them to speak, listen and imagine a richer and more inclusive '**us**.'

The images in this article were created using Artificial Intelligence (Claude)





Jane Driver and Ania Norman

Collaboration between mainstream and Complementary Schools - a Win-Win partnership

North Cambridge Academy (NCA) hosts a large complementary Polish School, of which Ania Norman is headteacher; it runs with over 200 students on Saturdays.

The Polish School sits within an already diverse school community where over one-third of students speak languages other than English, representing 37 languages. Jane Driver (Head of the mainstream school, NCA) sees many advantages.

The important word is **school**: we are both **schools** and both supporting students and learning.

A number of NCA's students attend the Polish school, and this strengthens us as a multilingual hub by building a culturally rich environment that normalises multilingualism, encouraging cross-cultural connections and supporting whole-school events celebrating diversity (e.g. International Day of Languages, Cultures Day, etc.). Our mainstream school offers the complementary school security for its future planning along with accommodation, further support and some established status.

We promote the school to new Polish students who arrive at the Academy, and support the Polish school by allowing them to use our facilities each Saturday, they use a range of classrooms and photocopying. They also use our Hall for special events a good example being the Polish Constitution Day celebrations which I also attend. The Polish school is able to use our grand piano and hall for this event.

Heritage Language Achievement (GCSE Polish)

The Polish Saturday School provides structured instruction towards GCSE Polish, with students historically achieving high marks. This benefits NCA as it helps bilingual Polish students gain formal qualifications, whilst reducing the pressure on the Academy to deliver specialist Polish teaching (the Headteacher of the complementary school provides tutoring during the week for students who do not attend her school at the weekend).

Supporting Student Identity, Wellbeing, and Belonging

Complementary schools help fill the cultural and linguistic gap that mainstream schools may not fully address, giving children a strong sense of identity and connection to heritage. This benefits the mainstream school as students who feel connected to their cultural identity tend to show higher engagement and greater wellbeing. Additionally, it improves confidence and self-esteem as students are better supported, more settled and resilient.

David, an NCA student: *'I went to Polish School for about 4 years and did my GCSE last year in Year 9. It was good meeting up with Polish-speaking friends at the weekend and the teachers really helped me prepare for GCSE.'*

Olivia, also an NCA student: *'I did Polish GCSE last year and got a Grade 9! I met lots of new friends at Saturday school and it was really good to meet up with them at the weekend as most didn't go to my school. On Saturdays we prepared for the GCSE and Ms Norman also helped me at NCA to do the speaking test.'*

Strengthening Community Partnerships

Hosting the Polish School strengthens NCA's standing as a community hub, giving us increased community and parental engagement, and enhancing the Academy's reputation for inclusivity, diversity, and internationalism.

Overall Impact on the Mainstream School

Hosting the Polish Saturday School benefits NCA by:

- Creating a richer, more inclusive school culture grounded in diversity.
- Improving student attainment through heritage language qualifications.
- Strengthening student wellbeing and identity, which supports mainstream learning.
- Enhancing community cohesion and raising the school's profile.
- Contributing to NCA's global citizenship ethos through authentic international engagement.

These combined benefits make the Polish complementary school not just an add-on, but a powerful partnership that enhances the mainstream educational experience at North Cambridge Academy.

Other stories

In the Sampler version of this e-magazine (still available from <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/language-zones/home-heritage-community-languages/>)

are more stories: **Polish School in Cambridge** (as in the story above)

Spanish School in Cardiff

The Storyhouse Project in Chester



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.

**Home,
Heritage,
Community
Languages**

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.

References:

Collen, Ian, and Jayne Duff. 2025. *Language Trends England 2025: Language Teaching in Primary, Secondary and Independent Schools in England*. London: British Council. https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/language_trends_england_2025.pdf

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/>

The Last Word



We Are Still Here!

Sabine Little is Professor of Literacy and Multilingualism at the University of Sheffield, and co-lead for the Sheffield City of Languages initiative. Her work focuses on the links between multilingualism, identity, and belonging, exploring how multilingual children grow up navigating the various spaces that form parts of their lives.

This edition of *Languages Today* is full of inspiring stories that detail the ongoing work done by heritage language / complementary / supplementary schools around the country. But in my view, **'We Are Still Here!'** is about more than that - it is a reminder that the UK is full of brilliantly multilingual / plurilingual children, who, every day, navigate the world around them, using their various languages to thrive.

Just how many children are growing up speaking multiple languages is a bit of a puzzle - the annually published *'Schools, pupils, and their characteristics'* gives the latest figure of *'children known or believed to have a first language other than English'* as 21.6% - just over 1.8 million. But we know, of course, that a language classification is not as straightforward as that: that 'first' and 'second' language can be evolving and changing terms, and that plenty of children might state that their 'first' language is English, but that they still speak another language. One boy I spoke to during one of my projects told me that, in his six years at primary school, nobody ever realised he spoke Hungarian at home. His Hungarian was not confident, and he struggled with it, but he nevertheless classified it as an important part of his identity: the language he spoke to his grandmother, the language they would use to track the horse racing results, the language they shared. When we think about our country's multilingual / plurilingual children, we need to remind ourselves - and schools and policymakers - that children like this Hungarian-speaking boy are *'still here'*. They may be invisible within the formal education system, not identified as part of EAL measures, but nevertheless *'still here'*, and worthy of our consideration and concern.

I spend a lot of my time trying to create space for multilingualism in formal education contexts, and I am heartened by what I am seeing...

More and more teachers are realising

- the linguistic skills our children bring to the classroom,
- that two or more languages absolutely fit into one brain, and
- that these languages have a symbiotic relationship that can provide a holistic and meaningful approach to learning.

Initiatives such as multilingual storytelling (as shared on *World Book Day* this year), the *Quilt of Welcome* (on the cover of this special edition), and the *Seal of Biliteracy* (in the United States) serve to break down artificial linguistic barriers between home and school, offering formal education classrooms an opportunity to support and normalise multilingualism on a daily basis.

And, of course, the heritage language / complementary / supplementary school network community all around the world tirelessly supports our children with lessons, cultural events, and opportunities to build and maintain roots in as many countries and languages as a child needs, in order to feel they belong.

We come together, as representatives of a specific language around the globe, or as a collection of schools supporting a wide range of languages in a city or region, supporting each other as well as the children in our care. We upskill tirelessly, whether in pedagogy, finance management, safeguarding, parental engagement, literacy development, or technology, so that families will continue to trust us, and children will be safe and well supported in their learning - and, hopefully, have fun while they are doing it!

Yes, as a heritage language / complementary / supplementary school community, *'we are still here'*, and that message is important. But what is even more important is that we are bringing up the next generation of children to be confident in their multilingual and multicultural identity, so that they will continue to advocate for themselves, reminding the world that **'we are all here'** as they go through life.

Schools, pupils and their characteristics, DfE (2026)

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2025-26>

Multilingual storytelling via World Book Day: <https://www.worldbookday.com/resources/embedding-multilingualism-in-shared-reading-and-storytelling/>

Quilt of Welcome: www.quiltofwelcome.org

Seal of Biliteracy: <https://sealofbiliteracy.org/>



A very special ALL membership offer to those teaching a language in the
Supplementary / Complementary / Out of School sector.

ALL welcomes members teaching all languages – our members learn from each other to develop their professional knowledge and skills. Our languages and sectors all have their own individual issues of course, but we all have so many interests in common!

ALL invites you, or your school, to join our community of teachers of languages at a very special membership rate

- Add your voice to the Association which represents teachers of all languages
- Get access to the weekly ALLNet e-newsletter curated for language teachers
- And to the Association's renowned academic publication Language Learning Journal online
- And to our termly magazine Languages Today in a digital format online
- Discover the annual Language World Conference at a discounted member rate
- Develop your skills as a speaker or writer: explore, and contribute to, the ALL website, and / or one of our regular webinars or events
- Raise the profile of your own language(s).

We know that many teaching in the Supplementary / Complementary / Out of School sector are volunteers, working on behalf of communities and families often for no pay, and for this economic reason the ALL Board offers:

Individuals teaching solely in supplementary/complementary schools / out of school settings **our lowest annual membership rate of £27.50 per year.**

Additionally we offer a group membership to cover all of the language teachers in the same school **at our lowest group membership of £50 per year.**



accredited
association

The Association for Language Learning (ALL) has recently been awarded the Kitemark of the Council for Subject Associations (CfSA) which writes about ALL:

The CfSA Kitemark recognises subject associations that have demonstrated sustained excellence over at least three years across areas including subject expertise, professional development, research-informed practice, advocacy, governance and support for members.

ALL's application highlighted the scale and breadth of support it provides to language educators across the UK. Alongside weekly communications and a substantial programme of professional learning, ALL demonstrated sustained engagement with policy and public debate through contributions to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages, House of Lords briefings, consultation responses and ongoing advocacy around language grading and teacher recruitment.

Join us to add your voice to ours, and to be part of a national, forward-looking community dedicated to Languages, International Understanding, Cultures and Communication.

Steven Fawkes and Anna Lise Gordon.
Co-Presidents of ALL 2025-26.

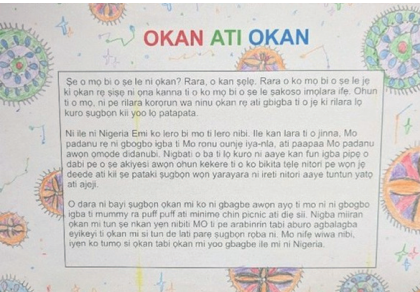


Celebrating all our languages

Support and information for teachers:

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

Challenges, celebrations and competitions for your learners

Multilingual Verses 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 : https://sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/multilingual-verses	
https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/languages/celebrate-speaking includes the 2025 celebration event recording.	#CelebrateSpeaking 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.
	ALL Calligrams celebration (January-February) is for Primary aged children to demonstrate their creativity. E-books of their creations are available on this page: https://www.all-languages.org.uk/primary-2/primary-voice/
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: https://www.all-languages.org.uk/news-events/challenges-and-competitions/ The e-book for 2025 'Hearts and minds' is here: https://tinyurl.com/EDoL2025	 Yoruba
 Mother Tongue Other Tongue Children and young people's multilingual creative writing activity For ages 7-18 years 6th January to 31st March 2026 	<i>Mother tongue, other tongue</i> is a multilingual writing celebration available in several versions around the country, e.g. https://www.mmu.ac.uk/mothertongueothertongue The North-East Festival version has published 5 e-books illustrating students' work, available here: https://expressyourselfne.com/mtot26/