

CASE STUDY

The Wherry School

Special Education School, ages 4 - 19
Norwich, Norfolk



Why WoLLoW

We were aware from observation of Key Stage 3 pupils learning within a mainstream curriculum that Modern Foreign languages was an area of increased anxiety. Communication, fear of speaking, anxieties around failure and fear of this, meant that these sessions were seeing increased numbers of pupils (and their parents) seeking to absent themselves – changes to the curriculum structure and delivery, including the introduction of a Culture session, exploring aspects of French culture, comics, books, music and food did not alter this perception. It was noticeable that the pupils were disengaging almost completely by KS4 with only 1/14 pupils taking GCSE French 2021-2023.

Alongside this, we know working in a rural county, like Norfolk, that there is a need to explicitly explore the diverse nature of the region and also the Country.

Children have also missed significant aspects of learning, around English language, communication and comprehension for varying reasons, therefore learning a Modern Foreign Language is impacted by the gaps in learning: areas we had to tackle

- Disengagement
- Loss of learning
- Promoting positive engagement with MFL

Staff felt the programme was relevant for the pupils as

- Learning and discussion **started from the individual.**
- It allowed opportunities to **work collaboratively** for pupils joining into Year 7.
- Pupils have **autonomy** within the lessons where they can research areas of personal interest.
- **Co-construction of the curriculum** – pupils were allowed to use their own thinking and questions to determine the next areas of learning or exploration.
- Pupils developed **an understanding of the similarities and differences between themselves and their peers** – they could share what made them unique!
- **Engaging activities**, often child-led, supported the development of Attentional Behaviours, contextualised in learning – which for pupils joining in Year 7, is vital.
- Increased **multicultural/multi-faith learning** beyond Religion Philosophy and Ethics lessons.
- Reinforced the school's **non-determinist approach to learning.**
- **Reinforced the children's confidence** answering questions, posing questions, listening skills and to-and-fro social communication.
- Allowed for **individualisation** – adaptation to personal interest within a shared objective or area of exploration.
- **Developed strong relationships** between peers/staff.
- **Pedagogically flexibility** – children will access learning on a computer, high quality resources such as LYFTA being languages, culture and imagery to life.
- The most challenging **pupil presentations can be supported** – eg selective mutism ; exploration of non-verbal communication such as isiXhosa (clicking), whistles even yodelling
- **The fear of being wrong, or speaking is removed.**
- Children move from being dependent through co-dependency to **independency in learning.**
- The children are able to **transfer learning** from other lessons

PUPIL FEEDBACK

A simple survey of some (not full cohort) pupils in Year 7 to 9 asked pupils to

- Rate enjoyment of WoLLoW so far (Started in April 2023) – 5 faces scored 1 lowest – 5 highest
- What have you enjoyed about WoLLoW
- What have you not enjoyed about WoLLoW

Pupil	Score	What have you enjoyed?	What have you not enjoyed?
A (9)	4	I have enjoyed the lessons like bread tasting.	Nothing – it is better than French.
B (9)	5	How it's much more different than French and also learning about stuff not from England.	N/A
C (9)	4	Learning about Countries around the world.	Nothing really.
D (9)	5	I like Countries – it's better than French.	I like WoLLoW.
E (8)	5	Learning about the different cultures in the world and making up your own language.	I have no negative things to say – its beneficial to me.
F (8)	5	It's simple and engaging – I especially enjoyed future English.	The waiting involved in group discussions – just a small problem.
G (8)	4	The new facts we learn, cooking, working with people.	I don't know.
H (8)	5	Romans making bread.	How long the lessons are (too short).
I (8)	4	I like how it teaches all languages instead of just French.	Nothing much really.
J (8)	4	All of our activities – the capitals and different cities I enjoyed.	N/A
K (7)	5	Languages.	N/A
L (7)	5	The Norman and Anglo Saxon languages.	Nothing.
M (7)	4	Trying the different breads.	Nothing.
N (7)	4	The history aspects.	Nothing.
O (7)	4	Learning about places.	I don't know.
P (7)	5	Everything.	Nothing.
Q (8)	5	The history of languages.	Nothing.
R (8)	5	Learning about different languages.	BSL (British Sign Language) – this child has a particular aversion to visible disability.
S (8)	4	Trying and labelling the food.	Nothing.

