

CASE STUDY: Inspiring a Love of Languages through the WoLLoW Community Service Programme

Magdalen Gates Primary School

Primary School, ages 4 - 11
Norwich, Norfolk



Pupils at Magdalen Gates Primary School took part in the WoLLoW Community Service Programme, delivered by Charlie, a Norwich School Sixth Form student with a passion for languages. The programme introduced Year 4 and Year 5 pupils to the origins of modern languages, exploring etymology, language families and the connections between languages across the world.

Through a series of engaging lessons, pupils discovered where everyday words come from, explored different writing systems and alphabets, and learned about a wide range of languages and cultures. The sessions encouraged curiosity, discussion and active participation, helping children see language learning as exciting, relevant and inclusive.

Teaching staff said:

“Interest in languages has increased alongside knowledge of how languages evolved. EAL students enjoyed the opportunity to share that they knew other languages and were proud of their home languages. The project complemented our school ethos of inclusivity, linking to refugee week and culture day. The children were most enthusiastic about learning other languages, particularly those with different alphabets.”

“The lessons fed nicely into Kapow French because the WoLLoW project talked about cognates and near cognates, as well as masculine and feminine, so the children could make links.”

“The children were keen and enjoyed the lessons. There was lots more enthusiasm in language lessons.”

“EAL children, who can find things tricky in English language lessons, could make connections as they have experience of another language. They were more vocal and happy to contribute.”

Pupils said:

“Learning new things about languages that exist- I didn’t know Greek was a language.”

“I didn’t know there were different alphabets, but now I do. Guessing which language the letters belonged to was really fun.”

“I want to learn Thai as my Nanny speaks it, so I want to learn.”

“When I travel to different places I want to be able to understand what people are saying to me.”

“I worked with my partner to learn how to say things in different languages.”

“I would teach them about WolloW the hippo, he’s very ancient.”

“I know some Japanese now. I learnt about a river in Mexico and a language that is spoken there.”

“It has made me want to learn new languages – Bengali, Japanese and Korean.”

“I would tell other children that WoLLoW is great as you learn facts and language about other countries.”

Parents said:

“My child enjoyed taking part in the programme, she talked about it enthusiastically when she got home, showing me the print outs that she had been given - she used these to have a go at writing some names and words at home. She was interested in the Latin and it sparked conversations about how lots of words that we use have routes in Latin.”

“I’m not sure if it was part of the same programme but she also learned about Japanese Kanji which she enjoyed as she has an interest in Japanese culture generally.”

“My child was happy and very much enjoyed the programme. They enjoyed learning different languages and wish they could do lessons like that more. She asked if I spoke any additional languages. She has become more interested in different cultures and languages.”

“My child told me about the ancient hippo from Egypt and she learnt about different languages.”

Conclusion

The WoLLoW Community Service Programme successfully fostered curiosity about languages, strengthened pupils’ understanding of language origins and encouraged greater appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity. By celebrating multilingualism and making meaningful links across the curriculum, the programme inspired pupils to become more confident, curious and enthusiastic language learners while reinforcing the school’s commitment to inclusion and global citizenship.

