

# Active Languages 2009/2010 Linking Sport & Languages in Schools

## Case Studies

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## Introduction

Linking languages and sport can engage and motivate learners.

In partnership with the Youth Sport Trust, Routes into Languages Yorkshire & The Humber (Routes Y&H) coordinated this cross-curricular project aiming to take languages out of the classroom and combine fun language learning with sports and exercise.

Schools were able to bid for a £1000 grant, funded by Routes Y&H. With this they had to implement their language and sport project in their school, and embed it into the syllabus to enable the project to be sustainable going forward.

The following booklet contains case studies detailing the successful Active Languages projects which have been running over the past year.

The aim of this booklet is to inspire other teachers to run similar projects in their school using the case studies and associated resources as a starting point. At the end of this booklet, there are included resources used by the teachers during their Active Languages projects.

Good luck with your project and have fun!

*The Routes into Languages Yorkshire  
and The Humber Team*

The schools involved in Active Languages 2009/2010 were:

- All Saints Catholic High School
- Barlby Carr Community Sports & Science College
- Lady Lumley's School
- King Edward VII School
- Wisewood Sports and Community College

## Getting Started!

### Top tips for schools running the programme next year:

- Start small
- Identify key members of staff in each department and then make time to sit down together and create an action plan with time-scales, costs etc before you start
- Ensure that your project is not a one off event - the idea is to embed new practices in the curriculum
- Involve students from other year groups to lead or support where possible - consider training up Language Leaders
- Not all pupils are motivated by sport - include everyone by having cheerleaders, banners in target languages, journalists, people serving refreshments in target language, photographers etc

The Routes into Languages programme is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

The programme was developed by three organisations working in partnership: the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML), the HE Academy Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS), and CILT, the National Centre for Languages.

- Produce a vocabulary prompt sheet for PE staff with numbers and colours in the target language. This sort of vocabulary is used frequently in PE lessons and can be easily incorporated into the majority of lessons
- Don't be afraid to have a go yourself! Students love the novelty of seeing Languages staff trying to do PE and hearing PE staff speaking foreign languages
- Include parents - send letters home to let them know what their sons/daughters have been doing. Consider inviting them to a showcase
- Promote your project - use plasma screens, display boards and newsletters to remind students and staff and to showcase work. Create a press release for your local newspaper too!
- Get feedback - students and staff should complete evaluation forms which will provide evidence of impact and help with future planning
- The first year of your project is a steep learning curve but persevere with a smile on your face!

**Useful websites:**

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

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

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





# Case Studies





# All Saints Language Olympics

## Background:

All Saints is a mixed, 11-18 Catholic secondary school whose intake is from varied parts of Sheffield and outlying districts – providing a truly comprehensive range of students. All Saints is a designated Sports College and, as such, it has not been difficult to establish an idea such as the teaching of MFL through the medium of sport and health related themes. There is a growing sixth form intake year on year: GCSE results have significantly improved over recent years, currently standing at 81.4% 5 A\* - C grades.

## The Project

The key aims and objectives of the project were increased uptake of MFL post Y8 and increased motivation in more challenging groups.

The rationale for this project was to promote languages through sport using existing resources and the interest the majority have in respect of sport to engage them in other avenues of learning. Also to encourage other skills such as leadership and co-working, as well as it being something new and exciting for staff.

How the project was implemented:

July 2009

Project introduced to the rest of the department – well received.

September 2009

Project introduced to key Y8 group – identified as Language Leaders. Reaction was very positive, but in hindsight it would have been useful to hold some kind of focus group meeting to get them more involved in the planning and implementation.

Language Leaders started working on gathering and presenting information in French on their associated 'host city' (Barcelona; Mexico City; Montréal; Paris).

Language Leaders had a training session in the sports hall on using key French commands and specific basketball terminology.

October 2009

Language Leaders went into the four remaining French sets and gave a presentation on the project and on their associated city. Teams were chosen for the forthcoming tournament

**“They were given a basic ‘running order’ for the lesson, but the rest was down to them. Many showed remarkable initiative.”**

November 2009

Training session held – Language Leaders trained their own teams with appropriate vocabulary and a ‘mini-tournament’. Those not involved were in the classroom making banners, making up chants and songs to be used at the forthcoming tournament. This could have been better structured in respect of the Language Leaders – much more emphasis was placed on how to train others in subsequent events.

December 2009

First tournament – basketball. Teams were not only scored on baskets, but also on use of TL in encouraging each other and the scoring will continue like this. Language Leaders were also refereeing and were exceptional at communication in the TL.

Language Leader group took the theme of using the imperative to devise their own games and had a session in the sports hall in their four teams in which they had to give instructions on how to play their respective games. This was assessed as a speaking activity and most students achieved a level 4. They then used these skills again later in the year, working with primary school children.

January/February 2010

Language Leader group began the theme of healthy lifestyle by looking at food and drink, parts of the body. They worked on a peer teaching activity to teach the parts of the body through song, movement and visual prompts such as flashcards which they made themselves. They were given a basic ‘running order’ for the lesson, but the rest was down to them. Many showed remarkable initiative when things weren’t quite going to plan!!



March 2010

Training session on volleyball and how to lead a warm up given by PGCE student (French native speaker and current volleyball player). Language Leaders work on producing their own warm ups to be used in subsequent training session.

Language Leaders went into their associated French sets to present and teach parts of the body and get their volleyball teams together. This worked really well. The sets were also given the task of producing a team mascot based on parts of the body – the mascot had to have a name and a special power and should be ready for the tournament.

Team training session in which Language Leaders lead a warm up in French (video taken), followed by a practice tournament. Quite a few keen to get involved with umpiring using the FL.

Second tournament held – mascots were shown first and there was a lot of interaction in TL.

April/May 2010

Language Leaders begin working on an independent healthy living project including diet and exercise. This gave them the chance to produce work between levels 5 and 7 (with appropriate teaching sessions to allow them to achieve this). All achieved their target level and approximately 60% exceeded by at least one sub-level.

June 2010

The next tournament was pétanque (boules) – again lead by the PGCE student who is from the South of France. The theme was around a cultural topic investigating French sporting heroes and regional sports. By popular demand, the last tournament in June was football – with a link to the world cup and tourism/holidays. By now, the supporters were used to cheering their teams on and needed very little prompting.

July 2010

Language Leaders repeated and adapted the skills they acquired to run small tournaments with primary feeder schools. This became the 'Connecting Classrooms Festival' celebrating the culmination of a week's visit by students from our sister school in Uganda. The theme was African World Cup Teams. This was massively successful and that success was mainly down to the Language Leaders who organised so much.

## What impact has the project had?

Generally very positive for both staff and pupils. The half of the year not involved have been quite envious but a separate mini-project has been arranged for them to be involved in, working with an ex-professional Spanish basketball player (who is currently a trainee teacher).

Students in the target group are generally achieving or exceeding their target minimum levels.

Some have found the different approach a challenge and still separate sport and language – this is something to work on for the future.

Around 80% of the target group chose a language for Y9 and numbers are significantly up for other groups – including those less able.

Generally positive work ethic and students are keen to do extra. A massive growth in confidence for many and peer teaching in Y8 is a big achievement.

Staff have enjoyed doing slightly different approaches with their students. Contributions from staff in planning have increased as the year has progressed.

The profile of MFL has been raised and the annual Sports Achievement Evening now includes a cross-curricular award for students involved in the project who have excelled or exceeded expectation in their involvement.

Students are at or above predicted NC levels and are grabbing chances to improve. Around 60% exceeded their target minimum grade by at least one sub-level. There was also an increase in independence in respect of learning. Many commented in their evaluations that they had enjoyed the fact they had learned skills which have enabled them to improve.





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

More peer teaching is planned, together with the Language Leaders setting and marking an assignment for their teams.

The work will be developed further next year by repeating the experience, but with the other half of the year who will be doing Spanish. More 'spin-offs' such as lunch time clubs or mini projects – even showcases, would be a good idea.

The work will be with a mid-level group this year – they are extremely keen! As mentioned before, a small focus group will be set up to get more involved with the planning.



# Using Active Languages to Raise Interest in Language Uptake at GCSE

0845 345 1629

## Background:

Balby Carr Community Sports & Science College is situated on the outskirts of Doncaster, in a relatively deprived New Deal for Communities (NDC) area.

The age range of pupils is 11 to 18 yrs. In the last seven years languages at KS4 have been optional and the school has experienced a huge decline in numbers of students opting to carry on with even one modern foreign language at the end of Y9.

There is a general poor attitude to languages within the school and therefore motivation is low due to variety of factors. KS3 and KS4 results are very good, but obviously numbers at KS4 and KS5 are low.

It is a National Challenge school as English and Mathematics results are below the national average, although overall A\*-C pass rate is about 70%.

It is a Sports and Science specialism college and there is massive emphasis placed on sports, which may undermine the importance of MFL.

## The Project

The aims of this project were:

- To motivate students to want to learn languages and to improve attitudes to language learning in general.
- To encourage students to take languages as an option at end of Y9, starting with improving attitudes in Y7 and 8.
- To encourage students to see that language learning can be fun and interactive.
- The rationale and inspiration came from seeing students' enthusiasm for sport lessons and wanting to channel that enthusiasm into language lessons.

A range of activities were developed that can be adapted for use in the teaching of a variety of language topic areas, from basic vocabulary learning and consolidation to the teaching of more complex grammatical points.

The Active Languages part of the lesson sometimes took part of, or the entire lesson. The vast majority of students really enjoyed the activities, particularly the boys, who loved the opportunity to get out of their seats and do something physical.

**“Students really enjoyed the activities, particularly the boys, who loved the opportunity to get out of their seats and do something physical.”**

Behaviour of some students during certain activities, particularly those outside the classroom, could be disruptive than in the less structured setting as they were less able to cope and listen to / follow instructions. Having a back-up plan to deal with this issue is essential.

A big problem with the project was that the member of staff designated to run it left on maternity leave. Also due to poor weather conditions and staffing issues we had to wait until the very last half-term in order to implement the plan.

The Active Language activities are being embedded now within Schemes of Learning throughout KS3.

#### **What impact did the project have?**

Number of Y8 students involved: 74

Average rating of French given in pre-project questionnaire: 3.7

(1 being highest rating and 5 the lowest)

Average rating of French given in post-project questionnaire: 2.8

(1 being highest rating and 5 the lowest)

Number of students expressing an interest in continuing with a language in Y10 (according to pre-project questionnaire): 20

Number of students expressing an interest in continuing with a language in Y10 (according to post-project questionnaire): 21

Although most students enjoyed the lessons and they have shown an increased liking for French, this doesn't seem to have impacted greatly on their intention to continue with French in Y10.

If this project had been carried out over a greater length of time, this may have led to a greater sway in opinion. Also – due to staff absence, Active Languages lessons were limited. Another reason why there is not an increase in expressed desire to take a language in Y10 comes from the fact that pupils can only choose three subjects at most and that there are too many possible competing subjects.



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

Future intentions are to continue with Active Languages lessons and extend to all KS3 groups (and KS4 as appropriate), as well as embedding the lessons into new Schemes of Learning, so that students have the opportunity in every module to participate in Active Languages at least three times per half-term. Additionally to this, future activities will be shared with each department, as well as continuing to develop resources and sharing these departmentally.

A 'Y10 Language Leaders' programme is currently being developed to assist with the delivery of some of the Active Languages lessons.

Development of activities, the 'Language Leaders' programme, as well as the purchasing of equipment and resources, will ensure that this is a sustainable project and something we will most certainly build on and improve on over the next couple of years.



# Handball in French

## Background:

Lady Lumley's is an 11-18 rural comprehensive situated in Pickering.

Lady Lumley's was awarded Sports College status in 2005 followed by a second specialism of languages in 2009.

In 2009, Lady Lumley's had a total of 65% of pupils with equivalent of five or more GCSEs Grade C or above including English and Maths.

Pupils with at least one modern language at GCSE came out at 53%.

The students not only learn a new sport but also must communicate in a team.

The students taking part in the past have thoroughly enjoyed their handball experience. They have found it to be very accessible.

As part of a drive to combine sports and languages at LLS it was felt that this was the most obvious thing. Students find it very accessible and there is a sports hall which can cater for this sport. The sport is a new sport to LLS which made the project interesting for staff and students alike.

## The Project

The aim of this project was to provide GCSE Dual Language students with a new challenge which involved learning new language and sports skills. The work involved a group of students who did their GCSE in one year. During Year 11 the aim was to provide them with continued language support, but also a new challenge.

The annual Year 10 French Study Visit to Paris includes a full day in a school. During that day the students play a handball competition. This involves an explanation of the rules in French and English and a boys and girls tournament. The idea is for the teams to be made up of French and English students.

Implementation of the project:

### Step 1

GCSE students targeted who had already done their exam and in some cases already experienced handball during the French Study Visit.

### Step 2:

One lesson in the French classroom taught pupils about the game. This included the rules, uniform, equipment, terminology, clips from matches, the cultural aspect (the game being popular in France)

### Step 3:

The following few lessons were spent in the school gym where the lessons were run as close to a PE lesson as possible. Language teachers involved had to observe a PE lesson and liaise with the PE Department to acquire a space for the activity and gain some knowledge about health and safety.

The lessons combined normal warm-up activities done in lessons with language games. After some research online and working with a handball coach experience was gained in delivering handball drills. The sessions were done in French and English (when necessary).

A normal lesson would be run in the following way:

Starter: language game with handballs e.g Simon says (Jacques a dit....) with stretches/ handball terms such as pass, dribble etc. Colours were used to do a warm-up: rouge- stop, vert- pass etc.

Drill- different skills were practiced.

E.g- shooting, passing, defending. During the third, fourth and fifth sessions a handball coach came in to help with the drills.

Game- The lesson would usually finish with a game in mixed teams putting into practice the skills learned.

Plenary- Q and A session testing them on the language acquired.

### Step 4:

Having grown in confidence the students were set the task of planning their own mini lessons. A lesson was spent in the classroom researching and planning. The students had access to computers and had to plan their own mini lesson. Being a sports college the students were familiar with the Sports Leaders programme and were able to begin the process efficiently.





The students had to plan a starter (warm-up activity), a drill and an extension activity following the drill. This was planned and done mostly in French. The emphasis was on simple language and visual demos to engage students they were teaching and aid comprehension.

A lesson was spent practising each mini lesson and then organising the lessons themselves.

#### Step 5:

A group of younger students (Years 7 and 8) took part in the handball lesson during their French lesson. Logistically this worked extremely well. The lessons began with an introduction to the sport of handball and its cultural links with France. The students were split into 3 groups. We worked in a carousel.

The Year 11 students were in three groups in three parts of the school sports hall. They ran their mini-lessons for 10 minutes. At the end the Year 11 students refereed some games too. The session ended with a Q and A session about Handball.

#### Step 6:

The Year 11 students evaluated the success of their lessons and how they could improve.



# “Students commented favourably about their experience when teaching younger students.”

## What impact did the project have?

In terms of language skills the Year 11 students have gained more knowledge of French. Handball at Lady Lumley's has been very popular as a result.

The funding bought equipment which has been used in PE lessons for all year groups.

Sixth Form Enrichment Classes have been run, where handball has been popular. In terms of fixtures Year 9, 11 and Sixth Form have competed against another schools.

The biggest success has been the Year 11 group. They have travelled to and hosted fixtures against Richmond School. This was organised through the visits by the handball coach. The team was completely made up of male GCSE language students. The project has been very motivational for them considering the continued issue nationally of engaging boys in languages.

As a result, four of these students have gone on to represent Yorkshire in a national tournament and one of the students is now training with the England U16 Handball Squad. One student was selected to represent England's B Team.

Student enjoyment has been evident. An evaluation was carried out through an exit survey. Students commented favourably about their experience when teaching younger students.

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

The idea of students planning their own lessons will be developed much earlier. This will benefit them and will also mean younger students can be involved a bit more.

## Active engagement in French through Sport

### Background

King Edward VII School, situated in the centre of Sheffield, has a very wide catchment area, including from the city's (and, indeed, the country's) most deprived and socially and economically challenged wards.

Nevertheless, it is a thriving, over-subscribed school, with a very diverse intake.

Last year the school achieved 72% A\*-C grades, (66% A\*-C in French).

All the same, many pupils have limited life experiences, lack motivation, have low aspirations and drop out of education early. As a language college the students are expected to continue their language learning at KS4. This presents some real challenges in terms of motivating the lower ability groups, especially boys, who traditionally would have opted out of languages because they are perceived to be more difficult.

As pupils choose their GCSE options in February in Y9, staff are often in a position where students begin to behave poorly in the subjects that they will not be continuing with in Y10. French is the pupils' second language and of the target group when asked at the start of Y9, none of the boys said they would be continuing with French at KS4.

### Process

The aim of the project was to raise levels of attainment and motivation in a targeted bottom set French group, of predominantly boys, by the end of Y9 by linking the French learning to a variety of sporting related themes and topics, such as linking clothes to sporting activities, food to health and nutrition, body parts to movement and physical activity.

Historically, there have been difficulties with bottom sets in Y9 French due to them choosing to take Spanish quite early on in the year. As the group was predominantly boys it was believed that a linking active engagement and physical activity to the learning of French would motivate them. It also happened that the sport facilities would be available the one lesson a week that I taught them and as this group would have two teachers for the year, it seemed like an ideal opportunity to divide the two lessons up between 'Active Language Learning' and a more traditional lesson.

Firstly, students completed a questionnaire about their attitudes to language learning and also a learning styles questionnaire to establish what type of learner they are in order to tailor the tasks to their specific needs and to put them into teams where the range of learning styles are represented.



# “Pupils really enjoyed discussing their views on learning styles too and it helped them feel part of the project.”

(The teams however changed throughout the year due to prolonged absence in some cases and disputes amongst team mates in others).

The learning styles questionnaire was an excellent starting point with the pupils as it went some way to explaining why they would be taking part in a range of very different activities in French this year in comparison to their other subjects and made them much more conducive to give the new activities a try. Pupils really enjoyed discussing their views on learning styles too and it helped them feel part of the project.

The same scheme of work was followed as all the other French classes at the same time but linked it as much as possible to sport:

## Term 1

*French Content: Clothes*

Sporting context: Clothing worn to play different sports. Different French teams, geographical location, colour and kits (football and rugby).

Practical sessions: The intention was to have a football match and tag rugby session – instead two lessons focused on playing games related to clothes and colours - tag.

## Term 2

*French Content: Food*

Sporting context: The role food plays in the context of healthy living, calories burnt doing different sports and their equivalent to food items.

Practical sessions: Using the exercise bikes in the gym – counting the approximate calorie count and distance travelled etc. Pupils also completed a food diary and looked at the calorie content of food items compared to the amount of calories burnt doing different activities. The pupils then acted out role plays in two different café scenes – healthy and unhealthy – and had a discussion in English about the importance of a balanced diet. We also played ‘parachute’ outside to revise food items – this was a highly successful activity and one that can be adapted for any vocabulary content.

Across both terms the pupils have completed a one minute project on a famous French sporting personality, firstly describing what they wear and secondly looking at the demands of their sport and where possible their diet. The pupils found this very motivating and produced some very interesting Powerpoints.

### Term 3

*French Content: Body parts and Illnesses*

Sporting context: The importance of warming up. Which muscles are used for different sports. Common sporting injuries and remedies.

Practical sessions: Devising a warm up in French. Trampolining in French. Unfortunately, due to time restrictions, the trampoline activity, was not completed, despite the member of staff attending the course (the trampoline being used for other year groups, the pupils being involved in Duke of Edinburgh activities etc).

However, the warm up activities worked extremely well and the pupils had a sound grasp of all body parts by the end of the unit. It was also easy to incorporate lots of other physical activities as they were used to the routines, the weather was better and there was more to revise and recap. It definitely felt like the culmination of the project and a lot of progress had been made!

September 2010

The most successful elements of the new scheme of work were incorporated into the main stream scheme of work for all Y9 pupils.

### What impact did the project have?

An interesting experiment so far but greater evaluation needs to be conducted this academic year.

There have been no incidents of detentions or major disruption in the lessons and a very positive working relationship has been established between the pupils. Also three of the pupils have opted for French next year.

In terms of attainment, the pupils completed the same assessment tasks as their equivalent in the other year half to see if in comparison to baseline data they were performing at a different level. The results were inconclusive as there was a significant difference between the two groups' baseline data.

However, the attitude questionnaire that they completed in September was completed again and their attitudes were indeed a great deal more positive than they had been initially. They seemed to have a great deal more confidence in their own ability, despite this not being reflected in their test results (this is understandable to an extent as these pupils are the least likely to succeed in formal assessment).

Also, a greater number of the pupils have chosen to take French at KS4 than in the corresponding Y9 bottom set.

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

Elements of the sport related themes will be adopted whole scale into the main scheme of work, such as the cross-curricular look at healthy eating, calorie content and calories burnt doing physical activities.

A language sports day is now in the pipeline for the Y7s at the end of the year.





# Y9 Trampolining in French

## Background:

Wisewood is an 11 – 16 mixed state school located in the district of Wisewood on the outskirts of Sheffield.

The school has approximately 750 pupils and has three main primary feeder schools. It was judged to be outstanding in the most recent OFSTED report.

In 2009 54% of pupils at Wisewood School achieved five or more GCSEs grade C or above including English and Maths.

Pupils with at least one modern language GCSE came out at 28%.

## The Project

The aim of this project was to maintain motivation of high attaining language learners and increase the number of these students taking languages courses post KS3. Also, to introduce pupils to a new sport through the medium of a foreign language and to provide an assessment opportunity (N.C. level 6 in Writing).

The project was inspired by the trampolining session organised by LinkUp and, with the PE teacher's expertise in this sport and the lack of opportunity to teach it in the current PE curriculum, it was believed that the Y9 pupils would appreciate the opportunity.

Two teachers, one from Languages (Head of subject) and one from PE, were taken off timetable for an afternoon, which included a working lunch. The course was devised, then followed by the scheme of work and the worksheets required. Three weeks were given between devising the project and its implementation to allow for the publishing of materials; booking of venues; advising the French Assistant and the pupils.

The trampolining sessions were done in two sessions, which allowed for individual language work back in the classroom, as well as maximising the time spent on the trampoline for those doing the sport. This had the added advantage of allowing those pupils who knew that they would be absent for one of the sessions, to take part in the other.

Prior to the sports sessions, the pupils were taught the basic names of the jumps and were encouraged to research, note and learn encouraging phrases in French. They also devised a sequence of jumps in French and chose with whom they would be working. They then practiced these phrases as homework before the session. As a starter for two lessons, French Olympic, or other, videos were shown.

# The pupils have been the most eloquent about the event, both saying how enjoyable it was, and writing much the same.

Both groups wrote a paragraph anticipating the session, thus using the future tense. Upon completion of the session, they wrote a short account of the experience, using the perfect and sometimes, imperfect tense. They were thus working at N.C. level 6.

Pupils also had a challenging worksheet on Olympic trampolining to do as homework. During the sessions, the French Assistant was present to encourage the use of French; to support the PE teacher and to take photos. The pupils had many goes on the trampoline and much appreciated the session. A grid was provided to monitor their French and their success in the jumps.

Whilst one pupils was jumping, his/her partner would call out the routine (in French) and give words of encouragement. The other spotters would be encouraging as well. All pupils were provided with a certificate to celebrate their participation in this event.

## What impact did the project have?

All participants really enjoyed the project and the pupils have remained buoyant in French because of this (and other) interesting activities. Even those who shall not be continuing with French next year have maintained their interest in the subject and have signed up to go on this year's French trip.

The pupils (and Assistant) have been the most eloquent about the event, both saying how enjoyable it was, and writing much the same. Not one pupil had a negative word to say about it, and other classes were impatient to do a similar activity.

The pupils gained their level 6 in writing, as predicted, and were fluent in their use of jump names and their words of encouragement, which they have continued to use.

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

The summer term was used to embed the project in the schemes of work of both departments and to use with other classes, in both French and German during the subsequent academic years.





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