

House of Lords



Dr Sandra Potesta, director of the Regional Language Network Yorkshire & The Humber was amongst 40 attendees at a meeting in the House of Lords recently, chaired by Baroness Coussins, Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages.

Baroness Coussins has frequently drawn attention to the potential disastrous consequences for the economy of Britain's lack of foreign language skills. She believes that the failure to sustain language teaching beyond the age of 14 is a shocking waste of enthusiasm and commitment among younger children and their teachers. It is a fact that the recent interim report by Sir Jim Rose on the primary curriculum revealed that 84 per cent of schools are now teaching foreign languages at Key Stage 2, mainly in French and Spanish, including 9 per cent that offer German.

Learning a foreign language benefits a child's fluency and command of their first language and also helps cultural understanding and the development of learning strategies. In 2011, languages in primary schools become compulsory and secondary schools have to be ready to provide the continuity this will require when young linguists arrive as a result of this.

The keynote speaker was Lord Davies, Trade Minister who made headlines recently by wading into the row about City bonuses and telling bankers that lessons from the financial crisis needed to be "Drilled into their skulls". This particular meeting was more concerned about the possibility of drilling modern foreign languages into skulls and Dr Potesta asked Lord Davies why the government is not providing a strong steer and clear messages about modern foreign languages. "I wanted to know, if the Government really believes this is a strategically important issue (which is what he said in

his speech), why does the government not make language and cultural skills training conditional for companies that receive funding and grant support for export through UKTI?" she said. Lord Davies replied that this was an interesting suggestion and he would be looking at the issue.

Afterwards Dr Potesta commented: "It is important for Government to provide a clear steer in terms of strategy and policy. The Department of Children Schools and Families is doing this by funding the Routes into Languages project nationwide through HEFCE, to help school students to include languages in their curriculum. And it is working. Let's do something to help business as well to become proactive in developing their language and cultural skills. Business can only succeed in beating the global competition by making their products and services fit the culture of their market."

Dr Potesta used the opportunity to present each attendee with a copy of the Routes Yorkshire and The Humber new DVD entitled 'Now You're Talking' which is available from Routes Y&H by emailing routes@hull.ac.uk.



The University of Hull

Over 100 secondary pupils from all over Yorkshire and the Humber descended on the Modern Languages Department at the University of Hull to "Go Global" on January 19.



The event included sessions in French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and Russian.

Dr Marina Mozzon-McPherson, Director of Routes Y&H, welcomed students and spoke about the vital role modern languages can play in career, life and international aspiration. Her emphasis was on how modern languages can add to international understanding and study whichever field the student decides to concentrate on. Modern languages are a route into a richer and more fulfilling global existence.

Tony Meech, Senior Lecturer in Drama, was the guest speaker and his topic: "How I survived irregular verbs and made a career in translation for performance" challenged young people to look at the how the impact of words, good memories of studying a subject and passion in a subject can accompany us for life.

Dr Meech delighted students with a brief biography charting the highs and lows of life as a university language student and how that led onto a varied career in drama lecturing and working in translation and dramaturgy for the National Theatre in London. There were amusing and serious digressions in East Germany along the way.

Dr Meech explained that he translates stage drama texts for English audiences, but a text is always best appreciated in its original language wherever possible. Languages have a vital role to play in the appreciation of international drama. "My knowledge of German has allowed me to experience performances in German theatres, to read texts which have not been translated and to access writers and theatre practitioners who would not have given interviews in English", he said.

Later the students divided into groups and went into language sessions with a university tutor and student ambassador. There were 14 ambassadors on hand and the students interacted well with them. The ambassadors were international – a vital mixture of native German, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese and also 4th year English students, as well as students from the Department of Modern Languages. Mary in Year 11 said of the ambassadors: "I loved talking to the Ambassadors that study different languages and the people who came from Italy, Spain, France and Germany. They were so lovely and fun to talk to."

Ruth Sadler, student ambassador, said: "At school I was always very motivated towards languages - but a day like this would have been useful. It helps to open people's eyes to other languages available other than the obvious. A Going Global day is a fantastic way of getting students interested in languages. The seminars were fun and people seemed to enjoy them."

Pupils took part in revision sessions in French, German and Spanish and then chose a taster session in another language. Teachers met separately to discuss the role of Routes and to see the new Routes Y&H DVD "Now You're Talking."

During the lunch break pupils were shown the campus, including the Student Union, library and the Language Learning Centre by the student ambassadors. In the afternoon there were further revision sessions in French and German GCSE topic work (Partons en Vacances and Das sinkende Schiff). These were enthusiastically taken up as well as taster sessions in Italian, Japanese and Chinese.

At the end of the afternoon, Dr Marina Mozzon-McPherson talked to the group as a whole about careers which involve languages as well as opportunities to use MFL in the 2012 Olympics. Dr Mozzon-McPherson commented: "The enthusiasm which young people have for learning modern languages and taking their place in our global future was very apparent today. Routes into Languages exists to help these young people access first class, modern language learning and make sure that it is successful and exciting for them. We are planning many more days like this in the future."

Comments by pupils and teachers at the end of the day were extremely enthusiastic and many expressed the hope that there would be further sessions of this type. "They are great for seeing how languages work and they also help with the nitty gritty of revision", said one pupil.

Nathan, Year 10, said of the French GCSE session: "The French lesson was challenging, as we learned new vocabulary and improved skills." The students were equally enthusiastic about the language taster sessions. Of the Chinese session Baris in Year 10 said: "It was amazing. I learnt a new language which means a totally new world!" Charlotte Bauer, Year 11, also commented: "It was interesting and I learnt some Chinese. It has also improved my attitude to languages and my interest in studying a language at higher education has grown."

Another Going Global event took place on 24th March 2010 at the University of Hull.

University of Leeds

418 students from 29 schools across Yorkshire during the months of December, January and February have been participating in the Languages at Work event at the University of Leeds. This event aims to inspire Y9 pupils to continue with their language studies to GCSE level.



Pupils participated in a language immersion business workshop, led by native speakers before stepping into the dragons den to deliver a business presentation in the target language. Participants rose to the challenge, presenting some of the most creative export ideas we have seen; these ranged from British Pop Music to Marmalade.

One pupil commented: "It was really good and if I had the chance to come again I would definitely try to. I would also recommend my friends to come if they were offered the chance." Another pupil added: "It made me use language in a real-life situation."

Whilst their friends were tackling the business challenge, other pupils were introduced to university life by current undergraduates and had an enjoyable taste of a new language.

One pupil commented: "I thought learning a completely new language was challenging but useful." Another pupil said: "I learnt a new language and I've been challenged to think about my future."

The afternoon was rounded off by a presentation from a local business language champion who explained how languages were useful in their career. Presenters this year included the Novotel and public service interpreters, who had plenty of anecdotes to keep the visitors entertained.

Finally, the judges awarded the best presentations a prize, though no one went home empty handed as teachers were provided with lots of useful Routes into Languages and National Network for Interpreting resources to use in the classroom.

'Thanks for such a wonderful day. The 12 pupils from Howden came away very impressed and enthusiastic about languages.' Ms Brownlee, Howden School and Technology College.

Leeds Metropolitan University

Did you smell the rich smells of Italy - tomato, basil, garlic – drifting through Leighton one Tuesday lunchtime in December? Maybe you heard 24 boys from Ermysted's Grammar School calling to one another in Italian? Did you hear them singing *Nessun Dorma*? For a few hours, Ermysted students and teachers and Leeds Met Language Ambassadors were transported to Italy for a wonderful experience of its language and culture.

Daniela Burrioni planned and led the day assisted by Simone Lomartire. Clare Hudson, from Ermysted's Grammar School, commented on the benefits of having two workshop leaders both contributing in their own way and both being hands on. After a taster session in Italian, there followed a brief introduction to modern Italy: from art and literature to style and design, from gastronomy and music to football and sports cars - Michelangelo, Prada, Gucci, Ferrari and even Fabio Capello. At lunchtime, the Italian tutors and speakers from across the faculty gathered to support the event and the day concluded with a film, *Io non ho paura*. Congratulations to Michael and his catering team for the lunch, to our two new Language Ambassadors, John and Hayley, but above all to Daniela and Simone - bravissimi!

And now from a pupil's point of view:



Reflection on the Italian Day

On 1st December 2009, a group of about 20 boys and a couple of teachers from Ermysteds Grammar School in Skipton were invited by Leeds Metropolitan University to take part in an intensive Italian day. The day was to involve learning the basics of the language, learning about the modern day country, trying some traditional Italian cuisine and watching a 'neorealism' Italian film.

When we arrived there we were greeted in the Helpzone by teachers from the languages department at the university, as well as two language ambassadors, and we were led into a modern languages classroom. We started off learning simple things, such as "I'm called" *Mi chiamo* or "I'm fine" *Sto bene*. After a break we moved on to the modern day country, highlighting points such as the car industry and the culture and fashion of many of the cities. Lunch followed, which showed off the famous food of Italy, such as pizza, bruschetta, tomatoes, Parma ham and cheese. As lunch finished the film started and it was an Italian

film about a poor Italian family in a poor village who had to resort to the kidnapping of a rich Milanese boy. This was a day to remember.

Harry Barclay, Yr10

University of Sheffield

On Tuesday 2nd February a group of 30 students from Chaucer School in Sheffield attended a 'Why Study Languages?' day at the University of Sheffield. This was a repeat of a similar event last year, which the Chaucer students had greatly enjoyed.

This year had the added advantage that the students were accompanied by Miss Jess Heal, who herself has just graduated from the University with a degree in French and History. Her students were most intrigued to visit the place where she had studied.

The Chaucer students had the opportunity to participate in a range of activities led by University of Sheffield student ambassadors. The one that really got them involved was the opportunity to learn some key words and phrases in a new language, taught by the students. Alongside the more familiar European languages like Italian, Dutch or Portuguese, some of the Y9 students got the opportunity to try a bit of Polish and even Estonian! They proved very good at mastering tricky East Asian languages such as Mandarin and were also involved in learning some Welsh. At the end of the day, Sheffield and Chaucer students joined in a lively competition to see who could produce the best poster on the theme 'Why Study Languages?', producing some excellent creations that have gone back to school to show other students, teachers and parents/carers what they have learned.

Chaucer School is planning to bring a group of Y10 students to the university later in the year to focus on speaking skills in French and Spanish.

Sheffield Hallam University

Sheffield Hallam University hosted its annual language awareness days on the 15th and 22nd of January.

The events, aimed at giving pupils a practical insight into the benefits of learning a second language, attracted over 90 Year 9 pupils from 7 schools across the region. As well as preparing a presentation in either French, German or Spanish, pupils got to meet some current international students to find out about their home country and their first few weeks here in Sheffield. They also heard personal stories of how languages had influenced their lives from Business Language Champion, Graeme Thomas from Leadergen and Vanda Priestley from Jenx LTD. Pupils also discovered more about the careers open to them through watching the Routes into Languages DVD 'Now You're Talking.'



Comments from teachers included:

"Students fully enjoyed making the presentation. We will look forward to similar days in the future.", and "The interviews with international students were excellent."

The University of Bradford

For four hours a week throughout the autumn term 2009 Laura Serra, from the University of Bradford, helped year 11-13 pupils from St Bede's School, Bradford with their Spanish speaking practice.

"It was really good to have professional help in such a small group. It meant I felt comfortable to ask questions and check I have understood without feeling embarrassed in a bigger group", said a Year 11 pupil, while an A level student commented: "It was very helpful for gaining confidence and speed in our oral work because we had a lot of small group practice." This Spanish support is scheduled to continue throughout the next term.

The University of York

On 23rd October, an "Alternative Curriculum Day" in Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, Italian and Spanish was held for 100 Year 10 pupils at Fulford School.

Five native speaker tutors from Languages for All ran taster sessions in their own language and culture to groups of pupils, with each pupil taking three different languages throughout the day. Language teachers from the school also took part in the language sessions. The day ended with a plenary inter-cultural event and quiz, at which prizes (calendars/DVDs/books relating to the countries concerned) were awarded for the pupils performing best in a questionnaire about what they had learned during the day. The aim of the event was to broaden pupils' horizons by providing an insight into new languages and cultures.

The event was run in conjunction with two teachers from Fulford School, Esther Green (teacher in French and German) and Mark Richardson (Area Curriculum Leader in Modern Languages). The teachers reported that the impact of Routes into Languages events such as the Alternative Curriculum Day

have had a sizeable impact on the pupils they teach and has encouraged pupils to continue studying foreign languages (In Year 12, for instance, the school has 10 pupils doing German now as opposed to 4 in the year before). Exposure to languages that are not normally available at Fulford has also broadened the cultural experience of pupils, who were visibly fascinated to hear about traditions in more exotic countries and to meet tutors who come from these countries. The event was seen as providing excellent opportunities for those pupils who normally find languages difficult, as everybody started from the very beginning. This gave even weaker linguists a chance to do well and enjoy a language, as well as to boost their confidence. This was helped by the fact that the event was led not by their own teachers, but by university tutors who had no prior expectations about the ability of the pupils.

York St John University

On the 26th January 2010 students at Risedale Sports and Community College took advantage of a fantastic opportunity to enjoy a Language Taster Day at York St John University in order to help them make an informed choice about taking Modern Foreign Languages as their option at Sixth Form or GCSE.

Students had a tour of the university, which made an excellent impression due to its clean and modern appearance. They were given short talks by the university's Marketing and Admissions department, student ambassadors and Graeme Thomas, a York based Business Language Champion who also gave a video presentation outlining the job prospects of linguists and the benefits of a languages qualification. Particularly the role of aid workers in disaster areas stood out, as the visit coincided with the rescue operation in Haiti.

The highlight was the taster sessions. Students were involved in British Sign Language, Arabic and Japanese. The sessions were not only enjoyable, but students realised how language learning skills were transferable, and how learning one language equipped them for future learning. In their evaluations students



expressed appreciation for the experience, and even suggested taking a BSL class after school on a regular basis.

One teacher explained: "This has been the second visit of Risedale students to York St John University, and the impact has been profound. Our college has recently come out of 'special measures' and 'national challenge status' and the Languages Department has been affected by budget cuts, reducing both the number of teaching staff and the amount of curriculum time at KS3 to just one hour per week. The visit to York St John University helps us motivate students to look at the larger picture and keep numbers at GCSE at a healthy level." Additionally a number of students commented that the visit made them think seriously about study at university, raising aspirations of some students who would normally dismiss this as out of their reach.

The final comment: "The university organised the day extremely well and Risedale staff and students are grateful for the funding that made this possible. We sincerely hope to be able to return next year."

Forthcoming events

French Film screening of La Haine

A film screening for AS/A2 students preceded by a Links into Languages teacher session at the University of Hull.

April 29th 2010

French Activity Weekend

Residential weekend at Nell Bank to combine outdoor challenges with a weekend of total immersion in French with Year 11 pupils. Organised by Leeds Metropolitan University.

April 23rd-25th 2010

Active Languages 2

An event linking languages and sport to motivate learners and improve cross-curricular understanding, to be held at York St John University.

June 9th 2010

Goal!

A one day event for Y10 boys at the University of Leeds in which they participate in language immersion workshops with a football theme, including arranging a transfer of a player and coordinating a press conference.

June 16th 2010

Eurofest 2010

A simulated trade fair event in which pupils deliver a product or promote a region of France, Germany or Spain. Awards are given for the most impressive, inventive ideas and use of the target language. To be held at Selby College and organised by the Selby Modern Languages Forum and The University of Hull.

June 24th 2010

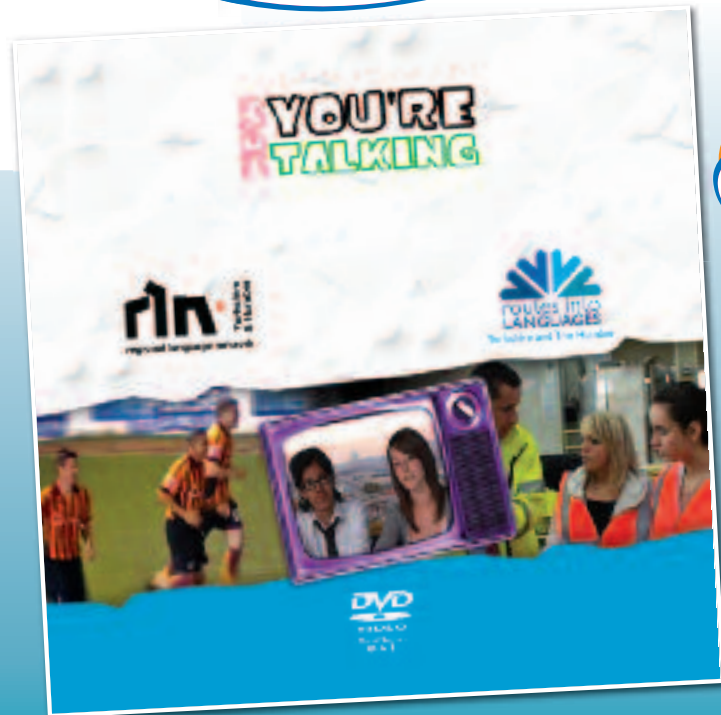
National Networks

National Network for Interpreting

www.nationalnetworkforinterpreting.ac.uk



YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER CONSORTIUM



This inspiring DVD aims to raise awareness of the importance of studying a language in today's competitive environment, as many employers argue that languages are key to successful business activities in today's global economy.

The DVD consists of a range of interviews with business leaders and employees in the Yorkshire & The Humber region and also includes interviews with young people from GCSE to A Level, as well as overseas and native University students.

To order a copy please email: routes@hull.ac.uk or telephone: 01482 462091

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