

MAPE Focus on MFL

ICT supporting Modern Foreign Language
teaching and learning in primary schools

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MAPE

Focus on MFL

ICT supporting Modern Foreign Language teaching and learning in Primary schools

Editorial

'The fundamental premise is that unless our children learn languages earlier we will fail them' (DFES Green Paper 14–19, 2002)

Currently there seems to be an upsurge in interest in, and access to a whole host of modern foreign languages. The Green Paper cited above notes that some 300 languages are spoken in London alone, and on the BBC web site the news is given nowadays in 43 different languages.

It's almost as if the subject MFL (Modern Foreign Languages) should in fact be AFL – Any Foreign Language. Modern mass communications and technology bring about the potential situation of anyone learning almost any language he or she wants.

Certainly things seem to be moving. The Green Paper sets out its aim to make language learning an entitlement in every primary school in England, and to that end, more Language Specialist Colleges are being set up, and more primary MFL teachers being trained. NACELL (the National Advisory Centre on Early Language Learning) and ELL (the Early Language Learning initiative) have been established, along with several local and regional networks to support primary schools with high quality resources. The QCA has produced a scheme of work geared precisely to primary MFL.

This impetus does not seem restricted to England alone. LEAs and schools in all four corners of the UK are establishing regional support networks, and various projects, sometimes using Advisory Teachers and native speakers. Some schemes indeed have been going for many years already.

Commercial interest is on the increase, with many more publications, often exploiting multi-media, more readily available. Resources are multiplying on the Internet too, some directly aimed at, and relevant to, early language learners.

However, in one sense, that really is the tip of the iceberg. Probably only about one fifth of primary schools in England teach any modern foreign language (CELTE, 2000) and about half of that takes place in after school 'clubs'. The extra funding necessary is not there at the moment, nor the time within a crowded curriculum. In order to reach the target of MFL being an entitlement for primary age children by 2012, there is some way still to go.

ICT and MFL?

Again it is part of the government's aim to use ICT more effectively in supplying teachers and learners with high quality electronic and digital support materials. Curriculum Online should play an increasing part here, as well as the development of e-mail and video conferencing.

In theory, current information and communication technology should be able to 'support, enhance, and extend', to use Anita Straker's adage, the development of more effective teaching and learning in MFL quite effectively. Sonia Jurich maintains further that ICT promotes:

- *Multi-sensory stimuli*
 - Visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic
 - Speaking/listening/reading/writing

- *Motivation*
 - Various types of activity to maintain interest (able to cater for differing styles of learning)
- *Collaborative learning*
 - Fluency developed through group learning
- *Cultural understanding*
 - Bridging physical and cultural distances
- *Self-expression*
 - Exploring and developing creativity

All of that would seem in fact part and parcel of good practice in using ICT for teaching and learning a foreign language at primary level. When given the facilities and the right environment, young learners seem particularly adept at making posters, passports, quizzes, reports and comics using digital cameras, video clips of their own scenarios, adding own dialogues, e-mailing children in other schools around the world, video conferencing, working with each other, being creative etc. – basically at putting their own learning to authentic use.

In practice, however, it is generally not there. The CELTE report quoted above found little evidence of ICT being used. Heather Govier, in the summary of the BECTA ICT and MFL short term evaluation, that was managed by MAPE, notes that the ICT infrastructure is currently not in place to make such learning easily and effectively available. Indeed, sometimes ICT seems to get in the way.

However, the BECTA report did also state that ICT can increase motivation. That's something that comes through very clearly in nearly every article in this MAPE Focus. As always, there are those explorers and pathfinders who are prepared to go that little bit further and take a risk or two. Luckily some of them are detailed in this publication.

The ELL summary states very clearly the major concerns and issues in getting primary MFL up and running effectively. Helen Walker offers a positive picture of how much ICT can help, but coupled with the professional expertise of the teacher. In some ways, counterbalancing the Becta ICT/MFL report, Peter Barber and Marie Therese Cornes give an insight to their approach and what their children have been capable of, stretching the application of ICT to their MFL teaching and learning very productively and successfully.

Nigel Pearson gives an enthusiastic LEA perspective of an effective, centralised approach, and Julia Duffy shows how ICT and MFL can

really take off with Y7 pupils in a high school environment. Also from the Isle of Man, Mary Callow has sent some work samples of Year 4 and Year 5 children, usefully combining their ICT and French skills. Tracey O'Keeffe-Pullan describes how she set about starting up a French club during the lunch hour, and in a similar vein, Angella Streluk writes about the use of a particular web site that proved useful for her after school club. In his 'Spanish Mums' Night', Roy Topping, comes up with a really imaginative way of giving his children an authentic stage to present their linguistic skills.

Finally, there is some information on how to get those MFL accents and characters from your PC, plus a brief list of some useful web sites.

In conclusion, the contents of the following pages do not set out to be best ideas and best practice in combining ICT and MFL. This is not a 'what to do' but more ideas and experiences of 'what has been done'. Hopefully they will spark off further ideas, suggestions and activities so that when 2012 does arrive, things will be totally different.

'The monolingual approach of the UK is unacceptable in the modern world,' said Graham Lane, leader of the 150 LEAs in England, at this year's annual conference of the Association for Language Learning in Bath. What is really needed, he maintained, is to start language teaching at three.

Now that could be the subject of another MAPE Focus ...

Barry Wake
MAPE
July 2003

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The Early Language Learning Initiative

Report on Phase 1 1999–2001

The Early Language Learning initiative of the DfEE/DfES is being delivered in two phases: April 1999–March 2001 and April 2001–March 2004. This summary report covers Phase 1. The initiative has been carried forward into Phase 2. For further information on current developments consult the NACELL website.

CILT (Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research)

Executive summary

Dr Lid King
Director, CILT

The Early Language Learning initiative (ELL) was funded by the DfEE for two years (1999–2001). Its aim was to support and develop foreign language learning in the primary sector, providing a basis for future developments. Following a positive outcome to the first stage of the initiative it was extended with new objectives and is now feeding into the developing national strategy on primary languages. The report which follows is based on the first two years only of the initiative (until April 2001).

1. General

The ELL initiative was a collaboration involving all the national agencies with an interest in the field of Early Language Learning, as well as the main teacher organisations, publishers and other providers, schools and LEAs. It was managed by CILT on behalf of the DfEE.

The initiative was characterised by a high degree of cross-organisational cooperation and joint work. A core element of the initiative – the Good Practice Project – was also externally evaluated.

The initiative met all of its agreed objectives. Specifically, the main milestone targets set for March 2001 were achieved:

- A national system of advice and support for ELL was established (NACELL).
- National guidelines and a curricular framework had been produced. (CILT Guidelines and QCA Guidelines and Scheme of Work).
- An ELL support network was in place, centred at NACELL and based in Comenius Centres.
- Agreement had been reached to introduce a pilot PGCE Primary French course in collaboration with the French authorities.

- The first elements of a video-based resource for a distance-learning training package had been completed.
- A national framework for regional INSET linked to courses abroad had been established.
- A national resource bank of materials had been created.
- In collaboration with providers a framework had been established for the expansion of commercial materials (badging system).

2. Progress towards main objectives

The initiative had three main objectives:

- to provide advice and support for institutions involved in or considering early language learning;
- to offer greater support and coherence for existing initiatives;
- to establish a basis for future developments.

These objectives were implemented through concrete activities in five interlinked areas. Four of these were set out in the original project description agreed by the Minister and the first (2.1 below) was added in the course of the project.

Overall progress on these issues has been good. Specifically:

2.1. The establishment of a National Advisory Centre on Early Language Learning (NACELL)

An information unit was set up early in the initiative. Subsequently, a physical information and resource centre was created at CILT (opened by the Under-Secretary of State in October 1999). NACELL built up a collection of resources for ELL and established an on-line databank of materials. It maintains a database of interested institutions, an enquiry service and produces a regular bulletin.

2.2. *The development of high-quality curriculum materials for teachers*

A Resources Group of publishers, broadcasters and other providers was established to stimulate the market and take forward quality issues. One concrete outcome was a 'badging' system for ELL materials. Good progress was made on the provision of materials.

2.3. *The development and dissemination of models of good practice*

The Good Practice Project (GPP) was set up as a core element of the initiative. Eighteen projects in a wide range of areas, schools and schemes were supported by project officers to develop and evaluate their work on key areas. The findings from this project fed into other areas of the initiative – for example on curricular development and materials production. An independent researcher evaluated the project.

In November 1999, QCA published non-statutory guidelines on MFL at Key Stage 2 and in September 2000 an optional scheme of work was published for French.

2.4. *The involvement of practitioners in networking (making particular use of ICT)*

The NACELL website was set up as a core networking instrument. Both 'hits' and 'user sessions' continue to increase steadily. By the end of 2001 the average number of user sessions per day was 124.

Electronic forums have been established for both project partners and general users and access is steadily increasing. An *ELL Bulletin* is disseminated in both hard copy and on-line versions.

Regional support groups were set up in Comenius Centres from September 2000. There are currently ten such groups.

2.5. *Review and coordination of training for teachers of MFL in the primary sector*

A design for a distance-learning package for teacher training was produced in 2000. A major component – the first ELL video *Making it happen* – was published in March 2001.

Existing provision – both courses and publications – targeting ELL teachers was enhanced and information made more widely available.

Estelle Morris approved a pilot scheme for 100 places for Primary MFL from September 2001. This includes school experience in France.

3. Key issues

From the experience gained during this initiative, and in particular through the work with schools (GPP) and the comments of the evaluator, a number of key issues emerged. Many such issues are flagged in the full report and evaluation and were in most cases confirmed by the QCA feasibility study. These have provided the rationale for the extension of the Initiative in 2001–2004.

In terms of 'establishing a basis for future developments' (objective 3) the key issues identified were as follows:

- a) There is and remains considerable enthusiasm among parents, teachers and learners for ELL. This has been further stimulated by the existence of the initiative (and in particular the GPP).

Whatever policy is agreed by ministers, this is expected to continue and we anticipate that at least current levels of support will be justifiable in the future.

- b) Much of what is being done is effective. There are signs of linguistic progression making use of the enthusiasm and capabilities of young learners. Although this is not at this stage generalised, for reasons highlighted below, some interesting work is indicating how some of the main obstacles may be addressed (for example, addressing issues of primary–secondary transfer issues through a Portfolio approach).

It is pedagogically viable to envisage a coherent ELL programme based on the best of current practice. But some major issues will have to be resolved.

- c) A number of obstacles to the more widespread introduction of ELL (whether compulsory or voluntary) have been identified. The main, but not sole, ones are as follows:

- **Time.** There are significant time constraints in a heavily loaded curriculum. There is also a wide range of practice in this area. It is likely that, whether or not ELL becomes a compulsory part of the KS2 curriculum, solutions will have to be found in the kind of curriculum models proposed and the degree of flexibility and differentiation allowed.
- **Curriculum.** The current absence of agreed models or approaches creates significant difficulties both in relation to classroom delivery (see training) and in transfer to secondary. There is little evidence to suggest

that a 'top-down' approach alone would resolve this issue, but greater clarity about the purposes of MFL at primary level will be indispensable, if ELL is to have a meaningful impact on children's education. A clear rationale indicating the relationship of MFL to other areas of the curriculum, including links to literacy, citizenship and the international dimension would prove beneficial.

- **Teacher training.** Less than half of the cohort in the GPP have higher level MFL expertise and this is unlikely to be bettered elsewhere. There is also an identifiable dichotomy between the approaches of 'subject experts' and that of 'primary experts'. The staffing base for maintaining and developing ELL is thus inherently fragile. This underlines the need for building on current ITE developments in partnership with European institutions, for taking forward appropriate in-service support as well as developing other kinds of support (see below).
- **Support.** The main needs are for recommended approaches (guidelines) and robust networks and pedagogic support, building on the Good Practice Project, which has in itself played a major role in maintaining standards and enthusiasm. There does not, however, appear to be a particular shortage of appropriate materials, as there are a wide and growing number of good quality resources for ELL, which are supported by NACELL and the initiative. This will continue if ELL receives greater official backing and clarity of purpose, which will encourage the major publishers to commit resources to this area.

4. Conclusions

Based on the evidence of the two year Early Language Learning initiative it was concluded:

- a) that Governmental support for the development of early language learning should continue;
 - b) that in continuing that support three priorities should be addressed (as highlighted in the Key issues above).
- **Development of flexible curriculum models**
Given the restrictions of time, the current absence of agreed approaches and the foreign language training needs of primary teachers, curricular models should be devel-

oped which build on the strengths of primary teachers and abilities of young learners. Further expert input, consultation and monitoring will be required but such models may perhaps be linked to the Literacy Strategy. These models should seek to provide flexible modes of delivery, which include opportunities for tuition within school and out of school; offer guidance for parents on how to support learning at home; provide support for the development of the use of ICT; develop the use of the Languages Portfolio to record progress and ease transfer into secondary.

- **Training for teachers**

The current pilot programme for ITE should be evaluated and expanded to provide ITE in three languages for a steadily increasing number of trainees with an intake of Level 3 competence (i.e. lower than graduate linguist level). This model to be supported by linguistic updating and school experience abroad in collaboration with European partners.

In-service training should be further developed, based on three elements:

1. the distance-training model;
2. access to training and support through local partnerships with LEAs, Language Colleges, HEIs, primary consortia and CILT's partners in the Comenius Network;
3. regional courses abroad. Courses abroad may incur further cost implications given recent changes in European funding for courses for language teachers.

Both initial and in-service training would need to take account of the proposed curricular models and approaches for ELL.

- **Support**

The physical and virtual support centre and networks (NACELL) should be maintained and expanded regionally. As far as possible, the regional support mechanisms now being developed (**Regional Support Groups** in Comenius Centres), including through the GPP, should be expanded. Additional provision should be made to advise parents and to involve ICT providers and broadcasters.

Such an approach to future developments has a number of advantages, in addition to its basis in the reality of current needs and possibilities. In particular, it could be delivered at whatever level of funding was made

available (beyond a certain irreducible minimum). It thus provides the basis for expansion in response to public demand or political priorities, without committing open-ended resources.

It is this approach which is being taken forward in the new phase of the Early Language Learning initiative (2001–2004) and which is underpinning much of the current strategic thinking about primary languages.

Editor's note

This Executive Summary is reprinted here with kind permission of CiLT. The full document, **The Early Language Learning Initiative, Report on Phase 1: 1999–2001** is available in pdf format on the CiLT web site at: http://www.cilt.org.uk/primary/ellreport_phase1.pdf

Further information about many aspects of MFL in the primary sector is also available on the NACELL web site at: <http://www.nacell.org.uk/index.htm>

Becta Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) short-term evaluation project

Heather Govier
Chair of MAPE

Becta ran a short-term evaluation project (from October 2002 to the end of March 2003) to investigate what ICT may be able to add to language learning at Key Stage 2. The project set out to track the effect of introducing ICT to language teaching and learning in 12 schools; it sought for evidence of increased confidence and competence in the use of ICT and investigated whether the use of ICT enhanced teaching and learning of modern foreign languages. Teachers were introduced to the project at a one-day conference and each school received two visits from project staff. Further qualitative data was gathered by initial and final questionnaires to the participating teachers.

Conclusions

- MFL teaching in primary schools is very patchy. Where there is an LEA-wide strategy and teachers trained in MFL teaching are used, practice can be excellent. Where individual teachers are working unsupported, perhaps learning the language only one step ahead of the children, the quality of teaching can be variable. Pronunciation is a particular problem where access to native speakers or qualified teachers is not available.
- There is little monitoring or assessment of MFL learning in primary schools. Schools lack the range of resources required to allow for progression and differentiation and the work is rarely coordinated with local secondary schools.
- Commercial MFL schemes have some excellent resources linked to the QCA scheme of work.

These offer good support to teachers who are not MFL trained. However, few schemes make specific use of computer software or equipment such as digital cameras. MFL work is rarely integrated into the wider curriculum and schools are battling against the odds to increase the profile of MFL or to allocate time and resources.

- The technical difficulties of setting up communication technology (especially video conferencing) are still such that primary schools, most of which have little or no technical support, are unable to achieve this without help. Thus video conferencing and video telephones are unlikely to be able to contribute much to MFL teaching in the near future.
- Primary school computer suites are rarely conducive to MFL teaching as many are small and cramped and the children are sitting at screens facing away from the teacher. There is little software available for MFL teaching in the primary school. Most is too adult oriented or aimed at fluent speakers. More software aimed at primary MFL would be useful.
- Software is especially useful where it can be integrated into whole class teaching through the use of interactive whiteboards. The provision of whiteboards in every classroom (and appropriate MFL software) would be the best way of using ICT to support MFL.
- Even using older style technology (e-mail, letter post) schools found it difficult to find the time to work effectively with partner schools. MFL teaching has usually only a small timetable allocation and primary school teachers have very little free time. There would seem to be little

value in 'partner' schools except where one is a specialist (e.g. in videoconferencing) or where one of the schools is abroad and can provide native speakers.

- In some cases the use of ICT got in the way of good MFL teaching, diverting the focus from whole-class oral work and slowing the pace of the lesson.

- ICT did add interest and enjoyment (for pupils and some teachers), enhancing motivation.

The teachers in the Project had put much effort and creativity into looking for ways to make effective use of ICT in MFL but it is clear that, at present, the contribution that ICT can make to MFL teaching in the primary school is very limited.

A personal report on the Becta short term ICT/MFL project – French

Peter Barber

Maidensbridge Primary School

Introduction

During my teaching career I have always taught French in the primary school. In recent years the year group has been Year 6, although in the past I have taught pupils from year 4 up to year 7. Initially I was trained using the Nuffield 'En Avant' scheme, which was promoted in all Dudley primary schools in the 1970s for French teaching in what is now called Key Stage 2. Teachers were given a half day a week at the Teachers' Centre for specific training in the use of the scheme by a native French speaker. Unfortunately, the teaching of French did not survive the strains of new initiatives over the years and the shortage of interested or trained staff. The time for MFL teaching was eventually whittled away and was particularly affected by the demands of the National Curriculum.

Finally it came down to individual schools to decide whether or not to teach a foreign language. At Maidensbridge, with the support of staff and governors, it was decided that a foreign language should be part of a broad and balanced curriculum, as long as there were enough staff with the knowledge and skills to continue. French was chosen as the language to be taught and the scheme to be followed was the BBC Radio/Cassette 'Le Club' with some of the elements of the now defunct 'En Avant' scheme – mainly songs and games. With the advent of ICT in the 1990s little attempt was made to use this resource, except for the provision of a single CD with interactive capabilities for use by individual pupils in an after school club. Even so, the majority of pupils always showed a keen interest in learning a language and the school was supported by most of the parents. Also some support was occasionally offered by feeder secondary schools. Eventually, as with many

events in the educational timetable, the wheel came full circle, and the government issued guidance for MFL in Key Stage 2 – exemplifying French, German and Spanish.

The question that schools now face is how they can include a foreign language into an already congested curriculum, and from where staff will come to teach any language chosen and what resources could be used. In Maidensbridge most of the decisions have been taken. However, the BBC 'Le Club' scheme appeared to be dated and thought was being given to what other resources might be used.

In the Autumn Term 2002, the opportunity to take part in a short term Becta project on the use of ICT in MFL was communicated to schools by the Dudley ICT Inspector, Shirley Hackett. As ICT Subject Leader and 'unofficial' MFL Subject Leader, I decided to apply to participate. Another consideration in my decision was the fact that I had transferred to Year 4, where there would be a little more room for manoeuvre, with few worries about taking time out for preparations for National Tests. Fortunately, my application was approved and the project was begun.

The Project – Initial Meeting

The first meeting of those involved in the project took place at the Martineau Centre, Birmingham. Teachers and advisory staff from various areas of the country attended the meeting – even from the Isle of Man. Becta staff also introduced themselves. There were displays of various ICT resources that could be used in teaching MFL. Most importantly everyone met the representative of their partner school: Peter Barber, Deputy Head

and Year 4 teacher of Maidensbridge Primary School, Dudley met Rachel Bennett, an NQT from Southborough C. of E. Primary School, Kent. We spent one session on an activity using a digital camera with docking facility and another using the sound morpher to pass instructions in French on how to draw a clown. Finally we were told that our part in the project was to use video-conferencing as a means for helping to teach French. Other partners were to use other forms of ICT to teach other languages including German and Spanish.

The partners were given some hardware and software which was demonstrated or used during the course – for example a digital camera, a sound morpher, CDs with French ‘Three Little Pigs’ and German ‘The Musicians of Bremen’ stories and other means of using ICT in MFL: Crick *Clicker* ‘Foreign Language Voices’, a *My World 3* floppy disk with screens for using French and German, another floppy with a sorting flags activity, a Becta ICT Advice disk on video-conferencing along with booklets, and a list of useful MFL related websites.

The Equipment

Maidensbridge already had a video-conferencing facility and Southborough was given a video-conferencing system to install in their school for the project. So Maidensbridge was given a digital video camera. Much e-mailing and telephoning was done regarding the efficacy of the Maidensbridge video-conferencing system as all the schools in Dudley are on an RM (Research Machines) Network. The system had been tried out within Dudley, but little did we know that no one had made the connection to ‘the world beyond Dudley’. (More later about the situation regarding this aspect of the project.)

Maidensbridge Year 4 French

The initial lessons were based on BBC ‘Le Club’ Radio Cassettes from a pack purchased from BBC Publications which also contains teachers’ notes for both radio cassette and television video series plus photocopiable worksheets and transcripts. (The radio cassette series was first published in 1995.)

Programme 1 ‘Salut’ introduces the core language covering greetings and saying ages, as well as the numbers 1–12 using Robot – a robot. To help with numbers there is a song ‘Un, deux, trois’ which the pupils enjoyed singing and later recorded using the sound morpher, which has software to produce faces with mouths moving to the pronunciation.

Programme 2 ‘Ma Famille’ introduces using structures to talk about brothers and sisters, their names and ages. It also extends the numbers to 20

with another song. To reinforce knowledge of numbers we also played ‘Ploof’ (Splash – a game from ‘En Avant’ days) and Loto.

Also included in class teaching sessions were other games and songs from ‘En Avant’ in particular ‘Simon dit’ (Simon says) using parts of the body and some classroom instructions, and ‘Pan, pan, pan, pan. Qui est à la porte?’ to introduce some animal sounds and names. Some incidental vocabulary included days of the week and birthdays, as well as some weather terms, but these still need further reinforcement.

The digital video camera was used to record:

- class teaching sessions,
- groups singing the number songs,
- individual pupils talking to the teacher,
- pupils talking and questioning each other using the structures learned,
- pupils counting
- practice sessions for video conferencing with the partner school.

The sound morpher was used to record:

- groups singing and counting,
- instructions in French to pupils using the structures learned.

The software supplied with the morpher was used by the pupils to play back the recordings using different sorts of faces. The full spectrum of this software has still to be investigated.

Meanwhile another resource was investigated – BBC Schools Primary French ‘Language Lab’ website (www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryfrench)

This website ‘provides a means of teaching the spoken language with accurate pronunciation and intonation, and shows how the spoken word relates to the written word. It provides progression and continuity, as the consolidation activities build on language already learnt’. (Teachers’ pages: About the website.)

The website appeared to fit in well with the structures already learned in the first two units of ‘Le Club’. So the class had a French afternoon where they were introduced to the participants of the Language Lab site through ‘Meet the gang’. The printable materials enabled the children to make paper finger puppets of some members of the gang, and to make cards to play a game of snap to get to know the rest of the gang.

During one afternoon the whole class was given access to the website in two half class sessions. Half the class was introduced to the website and its contents while the other half worked with a classroom assistant in making their puppets and snap game. Some pupils were able to prepare short dialogues using the structures from ‘Le Club’ such as ‘Salut’, ‘Comment t’appelles-tu?’, ‘Quel âge as-tu?’.

Using the website the children were able to work through the various segments at their own pace, explore the possibilities offered and learn new vocabulary: *Hello! How are you? Numbers 0–6, What's your name? What's this? Where do you live?* etc.

The children liked the website and were immediately motivated to investigate it by the skateboarding character of Roller and his gang. They were shown how to follow the sequence, starting with the cartoon story, then the song, processing to the 'En France' section and interactive game or printable activity. Eventually they could decide which vocabulary they wanted or needed to repeat or practise, or they would return to certain parts just for fun! Unfortunately, the 'En France' interactive section did not perform well on the RM Network – the Flash function had to be loaded for *each* video clip. (This situation should improve with the installation of broadband in the future 'Refresh' proposals).

Some input was required by the teacher where the pupils encountered new vocabulary, and they knew they should participate by repeating the language, particularly in the song, and that they could select their choice of frames to re-hear and repeat as often as they wished. Generally they were occupied for well over 30 minutes and learning to apply their knowledge of French as well as enjoying playing the reinforcement games! This enabled groups to practise and reinforce their language further in using the paper finger puppets and recording their conversations using the video camera.

Along with whole class teaching sessions, these activities were continued every Tuesday afternoon for four or five weeks, until the majority of the children had a good grasp of the vocabulary and structures used in both the first two units of 'Le Club' and 'Language Lab'. Their progress was assessed by using the 'Pupil Profile' sheets provided in the Teacher's pages of 'Language Lab'. At the moment these two sheets are being used alone as a type of Record of Achievement, but could be later incorporated into a pupil's language portfolio. The sheets have been designed to complement the European Languages Portfolio (ELP), which can be downloaded from the NACELL website. The 'Language Lab' sheets could be adapted for use for any MFL and are concerned with aspects of *speaking* the language. The ELP can be used for, or by, any pupils in most European countries to keep a detailed, personal record of their MFL skills and also show progress in *reading* and *writing*. (See below.)

Some pupils also used the Channel 4 – Modern Languages website 'Chez Mimi' which complements the Channel 4 television series. This website

'has been designed to enhance language learning in as fun a way as possible'. It is not a full language course; instead it concentrates on key areas such as family relationships, food, weather, colours and clothing. Some of the games can be used to introduce or reinforce vocabulary for younger pupils and some of the Maidensbridge Year 4 pupils were able to understand some of requirements of the games where the users have visual, audio, and interactive experience in another language. 'Instructions are given in English so that users clearly understand what each game involves before they start playing. All the games have been designed to complement the Scottish Curriculum 5–14 Modern Languages Guidelines: Listening for Information and Instruction and Reading for Information and Instruction. Most of the games have three levels allowing for progression.'

The games at Level 1 are useful for extending the vocabulary of more able younger pupils particularly if they use some of the structure and vocabulary used in 'Le Club' and BBC 'Language Lab'. At other levels the pupils need much wider experience or more input from the teacher in small groups. However, with the progress made by some Year 4 pupils and with weekly French lessons, they could be ready for the full programme of games at some time in Year 5 or Year 6, and certainly before going onto secondary school.

The areas covered in 'Chez Mimi' include 'Family Ties', 'Who's Who?', 'Dressed to Impress', etc.

'Chez Mimi' would also complement 'Le Club' television programmes.

What about the video-conferencing, you may ask?

All these resources would provide a sound basis for teaching French in any primary school as long as the staff has the expertise and inclination to use them appropriately. Year 4 pupils at Maidensbridge certainly enjoy using most of them and they were looking forward to communicating their knowledge with the pupils in Class 4b at Southborough C. of E. Primary School in Kent using video conferencing. Many phone calls were made to facilitate this: Maidensbridge teacher to Southborough teacher, teacher to RM technician, teacher to Southborough technician, Becta to RM, and so on, but in the first term of the project there was no success in establishing a link. It was left in the hands of RM to try and resolve the issue, while the pupils made contact by letter (snail mail) or e-mail. (Each Maidensbridge pupil has an e-mail address and Southborough pupils have a class e-mail address). Early in the Spring term we thought that the problem had

French

My name: _____

TALKING TO SOMEONE:

I can say Hello and Goodbye ☐

I can say how I am ☐

I can ask someone how they are ☐

I can say my name ☐

I can ask someone their name ☐

I can say my age ☐

I can ask someone how old they are ☐

I can say where I live ☐


I can ask someone where they live ☐

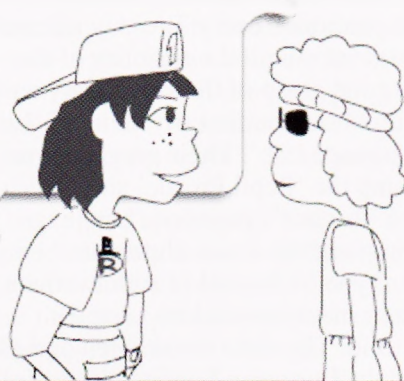
I can understand someone talking about their name, age and where they live ☐

I can understand someone asking questions about my name, age and where I live ☐

I can ask for something ☐

I can say Thank you ☐


☒



BBCi

Language Lab

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryfrench BBC© 2002

been sorted out and eventually contact was made ... a picture! BUT no sound or only intermittent sound. Then when we were ready to try with the pupils ... nothing! And that is the story to date, but we intend to persevere and one day it might happen! The situation is still in RM's court and the realm of ICT technicians.

Spring term 2003

During the first half of the Spring term Year 4 continued with French using BBC 'Le Club' and 'Language Lab', more pupils having experience in using the sound morpher, digital camera and digital video camera, as well as with some of the software pro-

French

My name: _____

SPEAKING:

I can say the numbers 0 - 6 ☐

I can sing a song ☐

I can say the numbers 7 - 12 ☐

I can say a rhyme ☐

I can name some objects in the classroom ☐


I can act in a sketch ☐

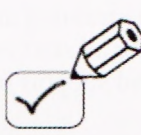
I can say the numbers 13 - 21 ☐

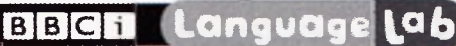
I can spell my name ☐

I can say the alphabet ☐

I can say the days of the week ☐







www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryfrench BBC © 2002

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vided by Becta. RM eventually validated the Crick Foreign Language Voices disk for use on one workstation in my classroom. This can be used for listening to and writing French. The accent is very authentic and there are male and female voices. Its full potential has yet to be investigated as is the case with much of the MFL software. *My World 3*

was not validated as it will be put on the system at 'Refresh' and so will *Textease*, but the school will probably have to purchase the MFL software independently. The morpher proved to be a great motivator for some pupils who enjoyed experimenting with the faces they could produce and at the same time practising using new vocabulary and songs.

The pupils completed Unit 3 'Chez moi' and parts of Unit 4 'En ville', learning about places where people might live and rooms in the home, as well as numbers up to forty. They especially enjoyed the song 'Dans la maison de Robot' set to the tune for 'Alouette'.

At half term, however, I was involved in another initiative which took the spotlight away from French and turned it towards German.

Although the Becta project may have come to an end, both Maidensbridge and Southborough want to continue developing links.

Finally

My conclusions about teaching MFL and the use of ICT are as follows:

- appropriate training and good practice in teaching MFL for all staff involved;
- training and support in the use of ICT in teaching MFL:
 - including the use of cassettes tapes, CDs, videos;

- hardware and software, and Online resources;
- the teaching and learning of MFL should include elements of enjoyment and fun.

I look forward to the use of an interactive whiteboard in teaching all subjects where appropriate, but especially language teaching and with the advent of more online content in all areas of the curriculum. I also look forward to the links that will be developed with the local secondary school when it hopes to include Maidensbridge as one of its partners in its bid to be a specialist language college. In September 2003 it is proposed that secondary school staff will be coming to teach two lessons per week in French and German to pupils in Years 5 and 6. With the start given by involvement in this project the present Year 4 pupils will be at an advantage and should be able to progress towards being competent communicators in French and/or German by the end of the primary school. Already one of the pupils who is a gifted and talented boy has been particularly motivated by the project and has learned to count up to one thousand in French and German by teaching himself. What better indicator can there be?

ICT and early language learners

Helen Walker

Becta

Observing young learners engaged in foreign language learning can be a delight. You get a real sense of children learning through play as they test out their new words through group responses, recognise patterns in language, role play, create the dynamics of new situations and take risks. My encounters with primary liaison sessions in primary schools left me in no doubt of the sheer levels of energy and imagination required to keep up with children who were excited by the possibilities, demanding in their willingness to let you know what they already know about and raring to learn more. What might information and communication technologies (ICT) have to offer a learning environment that is characterised by constructivist learning and human interaction? And when time for languages in the primary timetable is so precious, where might ICT best enhance learning?

For me, the two most compelling uses of technology for early language learning are the two which are perhaps most tricky to organise – in that they have nothing really to do with technology and everything to do with setting up opportunities to

communicate with others. Using video-conferencing and e-mail can add real value to the language learning process. The integration of these technologies for authentic purposes, i.e. to use language to communicate with native speakers, has much to offer linguistic and cultural competence. The issue with these two particular uses of technology is not a technological one, but rather the time and effort required to set up and then maintain links with teachers at schools in other countries. In schools where it works well, there is real purpose for learning languages and an added dimension to the curriculum that brings diversity into every classroom and transports the learners into the world-wide arena. Yes, it can be fiddly to manage the equipment for video-conferencing and e-mail technologies, so as a school, take advice on costs, systems and platforms and e-mail protocols and take advantage of the short cuts suggested by the early adopters of these uses of technology for language learning.

Data projectors and interactive whiteboard software have the potential to enhance whole-class teaching strategies. Have fun reading some second

language big books with the class and if you are feeling confident, you and the children can begin to create your own big books with sounds and animation to add to the experience. There are also some brilliant second language web-based materials for children now being developed by UK educational publishers, conscious of the possibilities offered by the National Languages Strategy. Sites like www.nacell.org.uk offer signposting to some of the better web-based materials produced in this country and first language sites for younger children produced in the target language countries. Used as teaching resources, these sites offer native speakers as models of spoken language – great if

you don't happen to have a native speaker around. Just make sure you've got an audio player and sound card on the machine – and don't forget headphones if you are going to ask the children to use the sites themselves!

With all these uses of technology, the skill is not in being a whiz with the equipment, but rather in what the teacher does to bring together the 'right':

- *teaching methods*
- *technology and resources*
- *classroom and lesson organisation*

in a way that *addresses individual learning needs to meet teaching and learning objectives.*

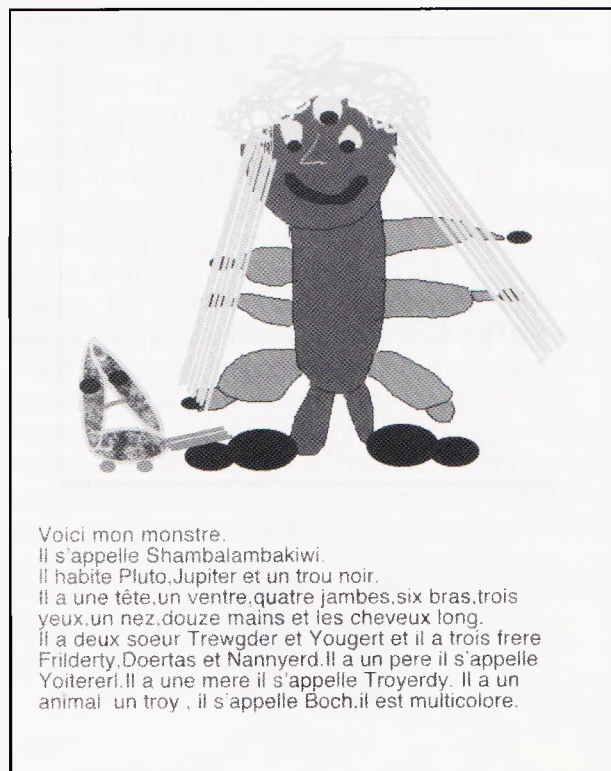
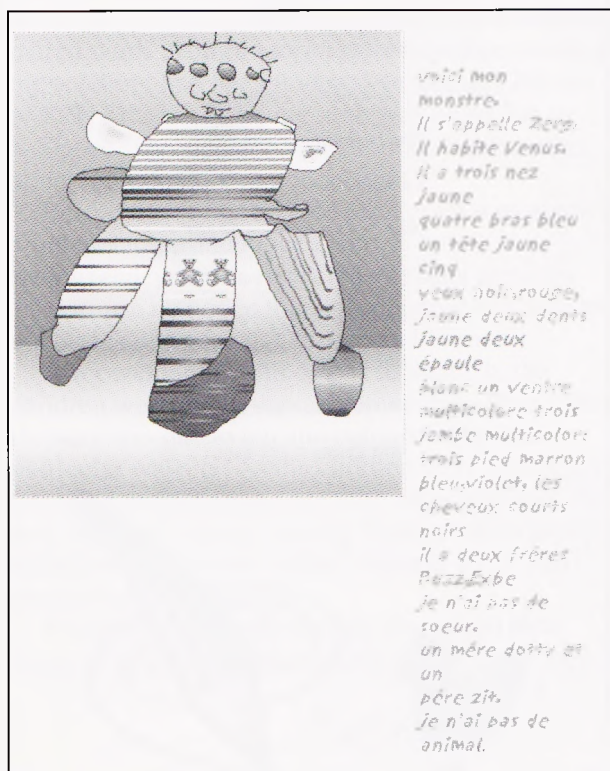
PMFL posters

Mary Callow
Isle of Man

These posters are part of a display of children's work in their primary MFL lessons.

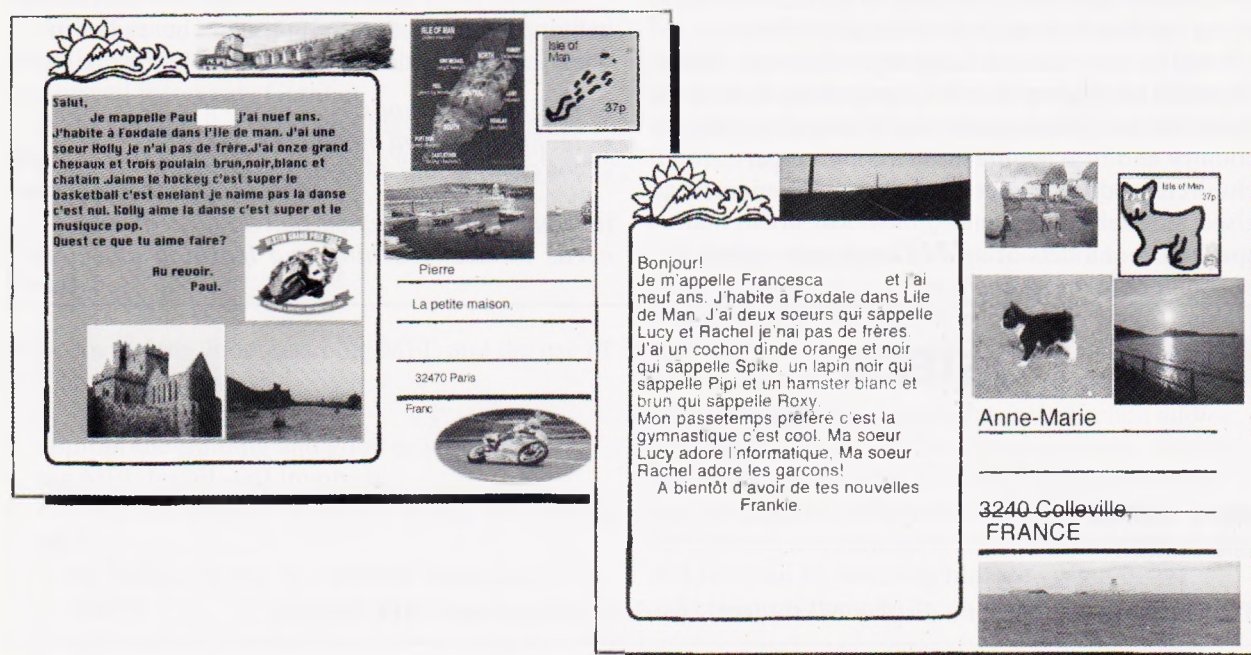
Monsters

The monster pictures were created by Y4 children at Foxdale School, as part of a topic on 'Le corps'. They designed and drew their own monster, using Appleworks *Draw*, created the text boxes and described their monsters in French.



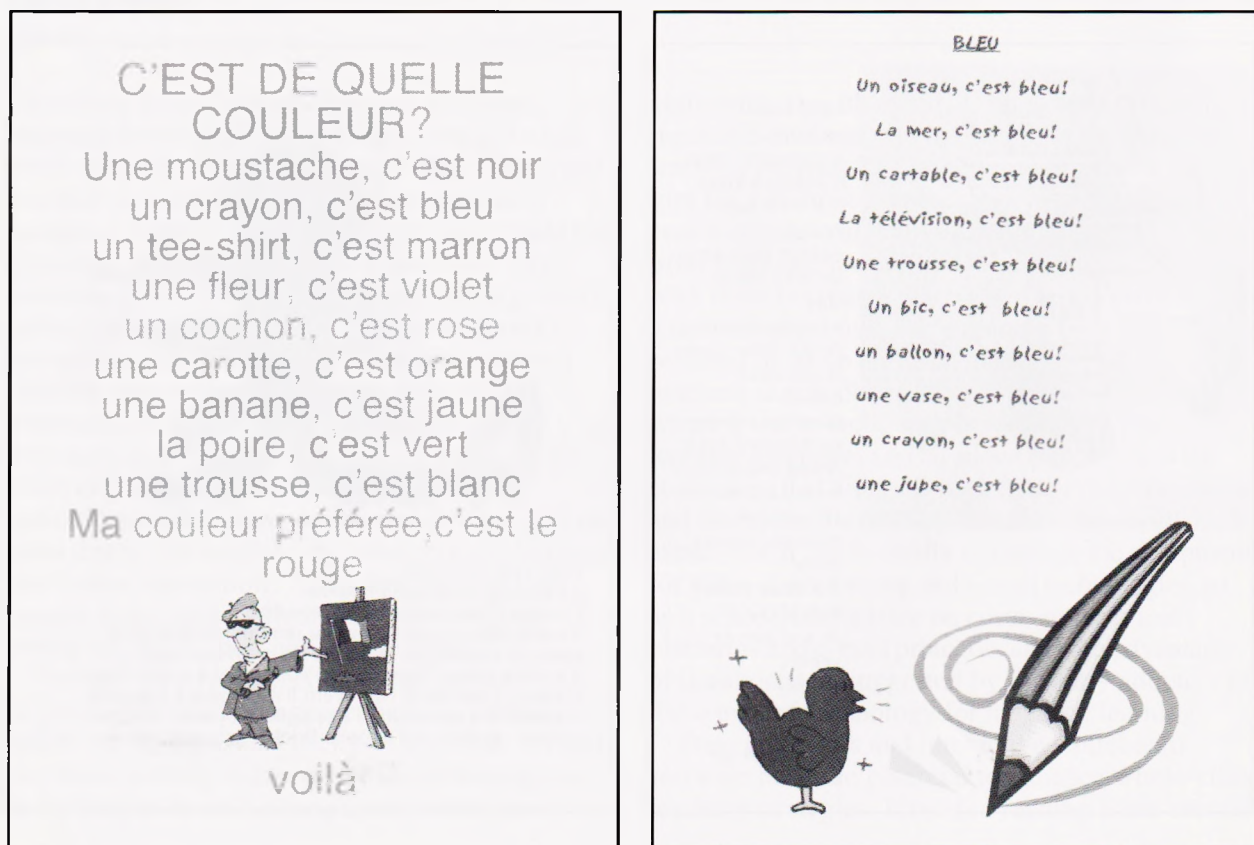
Postcards

The postcards were created by Y5 children at Foxdale School, IOM. A template for the postcards was scanned onto the school server. The children then searched on the internet for pictures of IOM, drew pictures for the stamps, created their text boxes and wrote personal information in French.



Colour poems

These were word processed in a colour the children selected, to which they then added clip art pictures.



Spanish Mums' night

Roy Topping

Halsnead C.P. School

Up until the start of this academic year I hadn't uttered a word of Spanish since 1974 when I reached the dizzy heights of language acquisition with a grade 5 C.S.E. in Spanish. With this wealth of experience and emphasis being placed on MFL in the primary curriculum I decided now was the time to start a Spanish after-school club!

Prior to starting the club I purchased the BBC Talk Spanish book with accompanying audio CDs. I read the book at every opportunity and instead of listening to Terry Wogan on the way to work I was muttering away to the Talk Spanish CDs. Once I had acquired the basics and felt confident I invited our Year 4 pupils to join my new after school club. I realised that there was, and still is, gaping holes in my Spanish and that I was massively under qualified to teach Spanish as a formal subject. I decided that the bulk of my teaching would be through the use of ICT.

I am extremely lucky in that in my classroom I have access to a multimedia projector, interactive whiteboard and a set of wireless computers. The projector and whiteboard allow for whole class teaching where normally you may have a pair or trio of children huddled around a computer monitor while the wireless computers allow for individual or paired work. After a term's activity, where much of the teaching had been undertaken through the use of ICT, I decided that my club was ready for an audience. The children were to invite their mums along for a 'Spanish Mums' Night'.

Before the mums arrived each child was given a wireless laptop and logged onto www.literacycentre.net. (This website provides easy-to-use activities that introduce the children to the basics of Spanish, German and French.)

After welcoming our guests in Spanish, the children were given the task of teaching their mums the numbers one to ten and colours using this particular website. As the children were tutoring, I became a waiter, complete with tea towel over the arm and tray in hand, passing from group to group, taking orders for tea, coffee, mineral water and orange juice in Spanish.

Following the laptop activity we moved onto Spanish bingo where the parents could apply their

newly acquired knowledge as the numbers on the cards were limited to below twenty. Everybody thoroughly enjoyed the activity and the winners went home with a 'I've worked my socks off for Mr Topping' stickers. A star prize if ever there was one!

After the bingo we moved onto Spanish 'What's my line?' During the term I had used the EuroTalk interactive Vocabulary Builder to teach the children the Spanish for different professions. The parents now were the audience as a child mimed a profession which the others had to identify in Spanish.

The next activity, a memory game, revolved around the interactive whiteboard. Using the NGfL Scotland Spanish staff development CD-ROM, the children had learnt the Spanish for a variety of animals. I had prepared a *PowerPoint* presentation in which the first slide had nine animals, the second eight animals and a question mark, the third eight animals with a different animal missing and so on. A child and mother were volunteered and the competition began, who could identify the missing animal? The mothers answered in English while the children answered in Spanish. Another chance to win a sticker! I based this activity on one I had seen at a recent MFL presentation.

To finish off the evening the children sang 'enero, enero' for their mums. They learnt this song (which gives the names of the months in Spanish) using the NGfL Scotland CD-ROM. The evening ended in rapturous applause.

The 'Spanish Mums' Night' provided the children with an audience for their work and an opportunity to use their Spanish beyond the usual classroom setting. For me it was satisfying to see children who had no previous knowledge of Spanish using it with confidence: to greet others, to order a variety of drinks, to recognise numbers, to name different animals, identify differing professions and recite the months of the year. But perhaps the thing I found especially pleasing was seeing the children tutoring their mothers, consolidating their knowledge, with the mums clearly enjoying the learning experience. Without doubt, the 'Spanish Mums' Night' proved to be a great success which both mothers and children thoroughly enjoyed.

Starting a French club – lunchtime conversation

Tracey O’Keeffe-Pullan
The Coppice Primary School

The idea for starting a French Club came from my own interest in languages and a desire to offer an extra curricular club.

I was not altogether sure how popular it would prove to be, and so decided to open up places to Year 3 in the first instance. I wanted to ensure that the content and process of what I delivered would be appropriate, so my research led me to purchase the QCA schemes of work for primary French. These gave me a good overview of topics and a sound starting point.

I then contacted our County advisor for Modern Foreign Languages to talk through issues with him. Steve gave me useful advice on looking at the conventions and structure of a language, for example making children aware of the masculine and feminine in French. He also directed me to making children aware of conventions in our own language, such as changing intonation for questions and using expression to enhance understanding. I also spoke to the head of MFL at our local High School to ensure that they were happy with our approach.

The Internet has a number of websites which have been a great source of ideas and an inspira-

tion for resources, although at this formative stage there is little if any recording for the children to do. However, I found that the BBC website for primary French is invaluable for beginners (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryfrench/>).

Another resource that I have found particularly useful is a book I purchased called ‘C’est Français’ by Brilliant Publications which has lots of ideas, photocopiable resources and a tape. To go alongside that I have bought another book in the same series called ‘Chantez plus fort’, which contains a lot of basic French sing-along songs (<http://www.brilliantpublications.co.uk/>).

I have taught the children a number of songs to remember simple phrases and days of the week, etc. I hope to develop this idea of learning through song.

Currently I meet 25 children for a 30-minute session at lunchtime on Mondays. Hopefully I can keep the same group next academic year so that we might make some more progress, particularly if we can make more use of the ICT support available.

I am pleased to say that our lunchtime French Club is proving very popular and I am excited at the prospect of incorporating French into the primary curriculum in the future.

Linguascope

(a useful website for MFL vocabularies)

Angella Streluk
Amington Heath Community School

These observations are based on a teacher’s brief encounter with a useful website. When my after-school project club asked if they could spend a few weeks looking into the French language to see what it would be like when they went to their respective comprehensive schools I immediately thought of using the school computer suite. We spent about four weeks of our club, on Wednesdays from 3.15 to 4.15 p.m., on this topic. I thought the eight pupils, all ten- to eleven-year-olds, would appreciate using

ICT to help them. The next thought was that there may well be some resources online which would take the place of a fluent French speaker and give the pupils the experience they required. After a little searching *Linguascope* at <http://www.linguascope.com/> was the site we settled on. Although the main emphasis was on helping pupils with their vocabulary, this site was varied and interesting, just enough for a few weeks of our after-school club. As it happened all the pupils



knew that they were going to be studying French, but they could have just as easily been preparing to start learning German or Spanish and would have still been able to make use of the other branches of the site available in a similar format to the French section.

We were lucky to use the site at a time when many parts of the French section were available free of charge. There are now only a couple of sample sections available without subscription. Subscription to all languages offered by *Linguascope* is £25 a year at the time of writing. This gives access to all language sections and a large and varied set of resources. The worksheets are excellent and would save teachers many hours of

work. The posters present a set of illustrated words for building vocabulary and supporting the activities and worksheets. There are *PowerPoint* presentations which are for varied levels of ability. There are many which would support primary pupils.

This site is copyright of *Linguascope*, Language Resources Online, 99 Gilberd Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7LX. The modern foreign languages included are: French (*Bonjour*), German (*Hallo*), Spanish (*Hola*), English (*Hello*) and Italian (*Buongiorno*). The Spanish section is not as developed as the French and German ones, although many worksheets are available. The Italian and English sections currently consist of limited worksheets and resources. It is clear that the site is being developed and will continue to change.

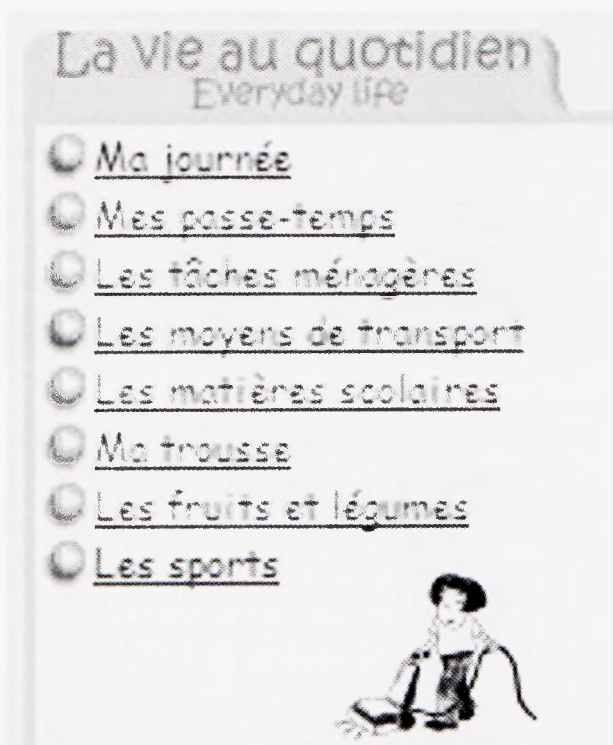
In this instance it was the French section which was used. This is currently the most developed section. Unless otherwise stated the examples below are taken from this section. I feel sure that combined with other activities this website would help pupils to increase their vocabulary and have some knowledge of how to recognise and say words. It would be particularly helpful where the teacher was less confident in his/her own French.

The home page gives a choice of folders on various subjects such as:

- Self and family
- The world around me
- Tools
- The world of work
- Just4fun
- Miscellaneous
- Everyday life
- Exams (for older pupils)

Within each folder are several subsections. In *The world around me* the subsections are:

- Weather forecast
- Cardinal points



Quel jour es-tu né(e)?

découvrir quel jour tu es né(e)  Enter your date of birth to find out which

le dix-neuf juin 1954 Calculer

Retour (Back)



- Household goods
- Countries

Each topic has various activities which appear in a menu when selected. These include such practice methods as:

- general introduction of the words
- matching words by dragging them
- multiple choice questions
- word searches
- crosswords
- jumbled words
- hangman
- pelmanism
- jig-word

Most of the topics also have a worksheet which can be printed out and used on paper. There are plenty of novel ways in which the user is entertained whilst learning. The *Dates* section has an activity which asks pupils when they were born and tells them what day of the week it was. This is certainly an interesting way to learn ordinal numbers and the days of the week!

The *colours* section has a colouring in exercise where pupils colour a strange monster. When

learning how to tell the time in French or German a clock with movable hands helps pupils to understand what time is being shown.

The *Tools* folder has links to sites outside *Linguascope*. It includes links to French (and, on the sister sites, to German and Spanish) search engines and other sites which may assist pupils to learn French. It includes links to French newspaper websites which may be of interest to pupils researching France as well as learning the language. Although these seem suitable for use by primary pupils they may lead to other sites which the teacher may find harder to supervise. It may be best to avoid this folder unless close supervision is possible. The bright yellow background of the *Linguascope* site is helpful when the teacher is keeping an eye on the various screens to see if they have strayed.

The *Just4fun* folder also has external links. The football folder and the wrestling folders lead to sites beyond the control of *Linguascope*. Although these seem to have been carefully chosen they could change and they have links to other sites as well. However, some of the football pages have been carefully written in French with some words hyperlinked to their English translation, which works very well (a useful idea if thinking of making MFL documents for pupils). One item which I did not think as educational as others was *The lines Bart Simpson had to write on the blackboard*. I had to get quite insistent to stop my small select group from dwelling on this



activity. This was perhaps aimed at a different age range.

The sound files which support each group of words are useful. When I first used this site each block of words has been saved as one sound file. This makes it a bit harder to relate each word one hears to the word on the screen. It made it difficult to encourage pupils to repeat the word after they have listened to it. Since that time some of the sets of French words have been made into point and click activities which play the individual word. This is much more satisfactory. It seems likely that this will happen to all sections of vocabulary.

In general this is an excellent site. It encounters the usual problem when trying to depict vocabulary. Choice of images can be difficult. The images selected to portray various countries may be rather stereotypical, and perhaps not to be encouraged. Despite this the good points far outweigh the bad. The units of vocabulary could easily be organised to be used to support other work being covered in class, and the worksheets could act as reinforcement and a record of the

vocabulary learnt.

Similar points apply to the various language sections. Naturally the same topics, those of interest and use to those learning a foreign language, have generally been used. Once formulated it would seem sensible to use the same topic layouts and subdivisions. Grammar differences are reflected in the French and German sites. Grammar, however, does not play a vast part in either of the sites at primary level. The useful feature of having an English translation appear when one points to the headings helped me considerably in trying out the German and Spanish language sites.

As is the case in all pre-prepared educational material, look at the materials and evaluate them, then select those that are best suited to achieving the desired outcomes. These sites will almost certainly be of considerable use in most primary school MFL schemes.

The support of Linguascope in writing this article is gratefully acknowledged.

How effective is ICT in the teaching and learning of MFL in Primary education?

Marie Therese Cornes
St Joseph's Primary

At our school, St. Joseph's Primary, Hednesford, I decided to incorporate ICT with the teaching of MFL. I wanted the teaching of MFL to have a multi-sensory learning approach, which proved to be fun and effective. Our teaching of French consisted of an after school club one day a week, for Year 6. In addition to the club, I decided to incorporate MFL into the Year 6 ICT lessons. I was interested to see if by introducing ICT into the framework, it would enhance the teaching and learning. I felt that the more senses the children used, the more easily they would learn, which proved to be the case with our children.

I managed to include ICT in my MFL teaching by merging QCA ICT Unit 6A and 6D, with QCA MFL Units 1, 2 and 11. I had collected a large sample of software for the children to research and evaluate which covered the requirements of Unit 6D which states:

In this unit children learn to use large sources of information, such as those found on the internet.

They will use, skim read and take in information to be able to own it for themselves and interpret it with others. At times they will be critical of content and may be able to check for different viewpoints.¹

The children presented the researched information in a form of evaluation sheets where they concluded that they could do better! Therefore we decided to create our own ICT/MFL resources which would be suitable for the needs of their peer group or of younger children.

I also used 6A in the teaching of MFL. In this unit it states that:

"... children learn to create a multimedia presentation using text, images, and sounds. They will be taught to create links between pages and show sensitivity to the needs of their audience.

Children will apply what they have learnt in this unit when communicating and presenting

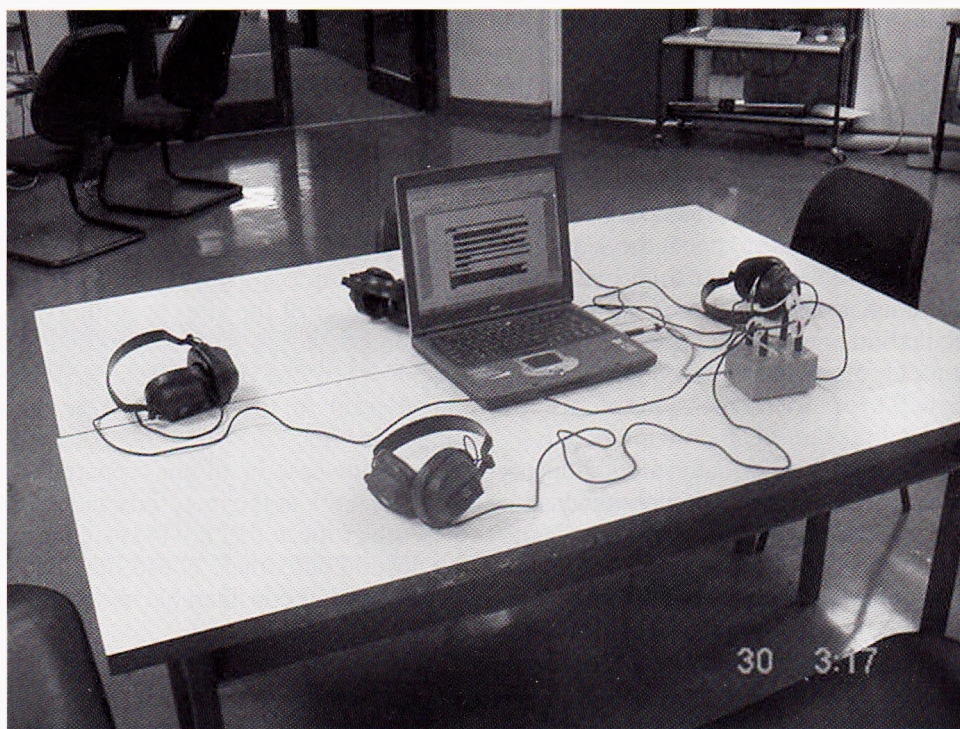


Fig. 1. *The mini language lab.*

information in music, art, history, geography, science, design and technology.”²

I felt that the children would be able to add Modern Foreign Languages to the list. The children created interactive multimedia presentations using Microsoft *PowerPoint*. Their task was to create re-

sources which would be suitable for younger children learning to speak French. They produced various multimedia presentations which included text, images and links between pages and they were sensitive to the needs of their audience. They created talking French number books with animation, as well as the alphabet and colours. The



Fig. 2. *The children around the Coomber with microphone attached to take in turns to record their activity. Worked together well in groups encouraging each other with pronunciation.*

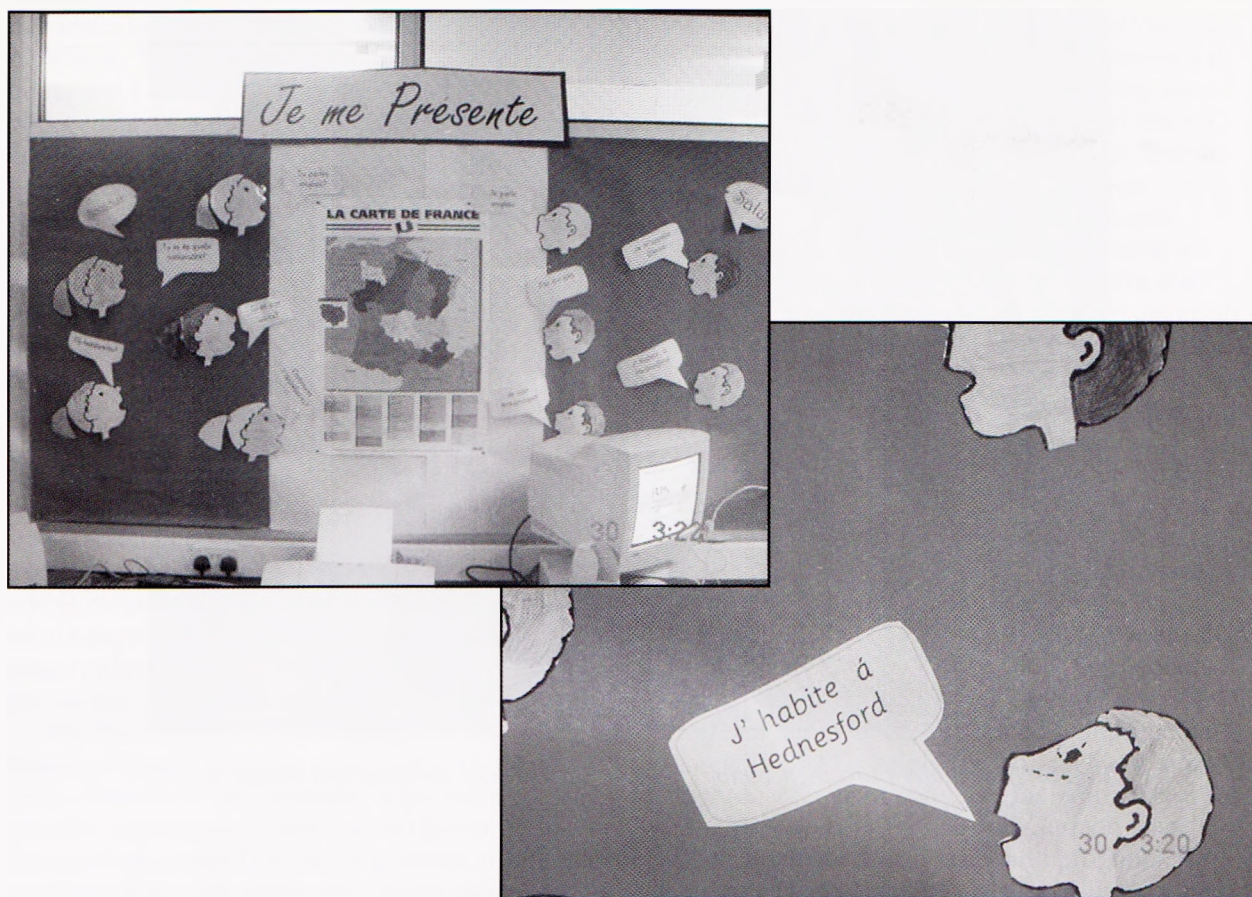


Fig. 3. The children had now created a prop which helped the visual learner.

children recorded their own voices onto the presentations and made excellent use of animation and colour.

I created a mini language lab by attaching a Coomber device to a laptop and used the resources from "La Jolie Ronde: Entrez dans la classe"³ which consists of a book of photocopiable resources and an audio CD. The CD presents the target vocabulary and phrases to give both class and teacher the chance to hear and copy authentic pronunciation, from a variety of child and adult voices. The children listened to various scenarios with a script which had been translated into

English. Then the children were presented with a French translation.

The children in this activity took on the role of teacher. They asked each other questions such as:

- Quel temps fait-il?
- Comment t'appelles-tu?

The children got a lot of satisfaction from taking over the role of the teacher. Their confidence and self-esteem significantly increased, because they were able to work successfully within very closely defined parameters.

The children also worked individually on desktop computers creating various resources to consolidate their learning but also to build up a bank of resources to pass on to other children.

They created 'speech bubble' signs to create a display, using Microsoft *Publisher*, on the topic 'Je me Présente'.

They created their own 'Ma carte d'identité' by taking each other photographs and using Microsoft *Publisher* designed cards.

Some children created 'raps' to learn and pronounce their numbers in French to 100. They attached a microphone to their computer and composed away!

Adding actions helped the kinaesthetic learners



Fig. 4. 'Ma carte d'identité'.



Fig. 5. *The children lost their inhibitions once they placed the head-sets on and spoke to the computer!*

and provided a lot of fun. Songs or raps are ideal for this, but gestures added to any phrase (e.g. 'Je ne sais pas') helped the pupils to learn and provided the whole class with a useful cue, to remind them of that phrase. The children had a lot of enjoyment creating the 'raps'. It assisted their memory retention especially counting in French up to 100 but most importantly it encouraged their creativity.

I feel a positive relationship occurred between ICT and MFL. Combining the two elements definitely enhanced the teaching and learning!

Editor's note

Coomber supply a range of audio equipment such as a junction box that allows six users to listen to a PC via headphones or talk to each other using headsets. See <http://www.coomber.co.uk/>

Notes

1. QCA ICT Unit 6D.
2. QCA ICT Unit 6A.
3. Entrez dans la classe by Barbara Nielsen. Published by La Jolie Ronde.

French revolution?

Julia Duffy

Ballakermeen High School

It's last lesson on Tuesday, at the end of a long year. While I take the register, Year 7 set 6 struggle with barely concealed impatience. As soon as the last one has said 'Présent', the hands are up and the chorus of 'Can I be first today? Can I set the board up?' starts. The board in question is my interactive whiteboard, and they love it.

I'm fortunate enough to work in the Isle of Man, where the Department of Education has made

investment in ICT a priority, providing every teacher with a laptop. My school, Ballakermeen High School, has built on this initiative throughout the school; all nine rooms in the MFL Faculty are equipped with an interactive whiteboard and a projector. The result has been little short of a revolution in the way we deliver the curriculum.

For me, the days of fumbling round with badly drawn, dog-eared flashcards are gone. Instead, I

introduce new vocabulary in *PowerPoint* or *Smart Notebook*. The visual impact on the large screen is huge, and I use animations and sounds to target a wider range of learning styles. Action buttons with appropriate sounds for right or wrong answers test language acquisition in a way that students respond really well to; Bart Simpson saying 'Eat my shorts!' takes the sting out of a wrong answer. New presentations are saved on the MFL network, where the whole faculty can access them, sharing both workload and good practice. With *Smart Notebook*, I can change quickly between pages, and I use it to play a lot of the traditional flashcard games. It has a really handy screen capture function, which I use to cut small pieces of an image which students have to identify; a quick and easy version of the 'through the keyhole' game I used to play. The smartboard also affords the whole class access to language websites; both www.bonjour.org.uk and www.frenchrevision.co.uk work well with the interactive whiteboard..

What really excites 7B6, though, is the variety of language games they can play on the whiteboard. *Smart Notebook*, for example, is great for playing noughts and crosses. Their current favourite is *MatchWord*, created online in a matter of minutes at the brilliant www.spellmaster.com, then saved to our network. They play it in two teams, the two students at the board calling on their teams to remember where pairs of words are. The score is kept automatically, 10 points for a correct answer, -2 for a wrong one. Other games from SpellMaster include *JigWord*, where words or phrases are dragged and dropped next to their meanings, and *SpeedWord*, a dash against the clock to spell out vocabulary. On a more sophisticated level, *PhraseDaze* requires students to drop the correct word into a sentence, providing more challenging work for our gifted and talented students.

It's definitely worth taking a look on the Internet to see what freeware is available. At www.adders.org/freeware you can download a very simple but very effective Hangman game. It comes with some English categories already created, but you can quickly create your own in whatever language you choose. It also gives a score for each round and is another firm favourite from our list of team games. The site also offers many different educational downloads, including maths games, dinosaur fossil hunt and a pairs game all about music. Programs are also available on CD for a minimum donation of £5.00 (all proceeds go to Thanet ADHD support group.)

Our students, especially but not exclusively the boys, enjoy the hands-on nature of the smartboard, and playing in teams takes the pressure of individuals to answer. To me, the real benefit is that

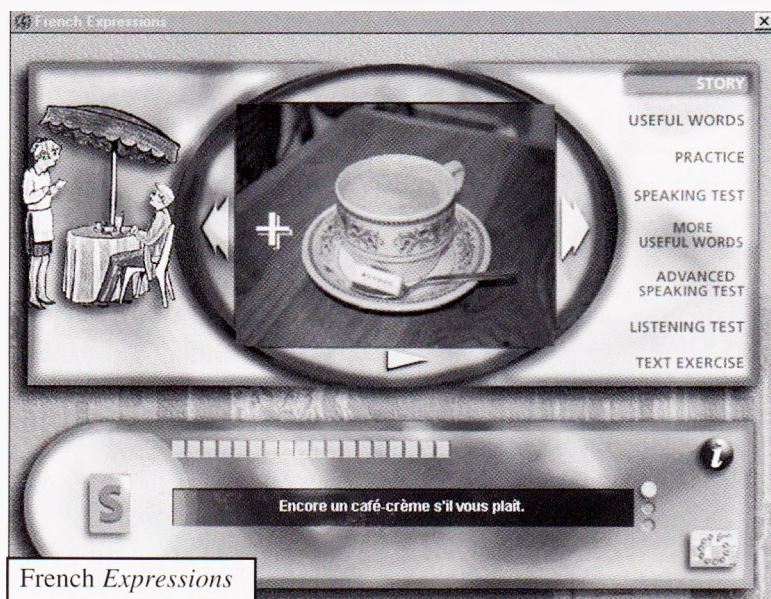
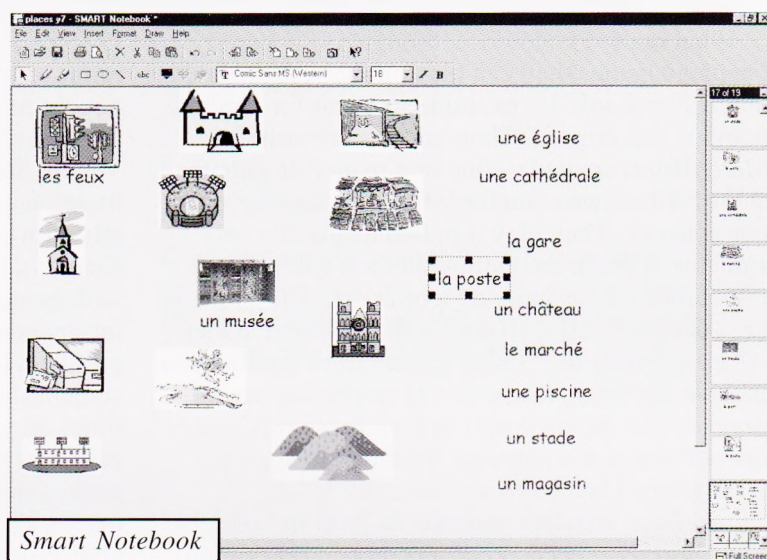
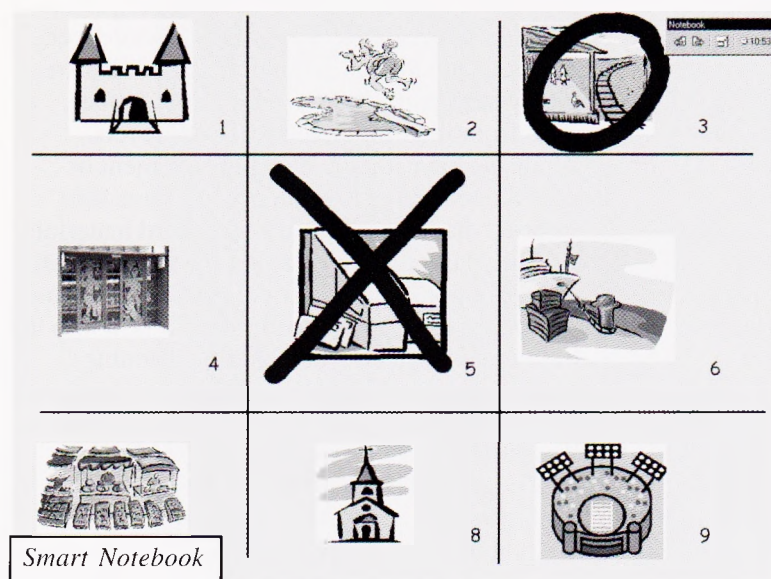
ultimately they get all the answers right. Vocabulary and grammar are drilled without them realising it and, more importantly, without demoralising crossings-out and corrections in their books. Moreover, the effect on attainment is tangible; all of 7B6 are currently performing above their target grades, derived from their predicted MIDYIS levels.

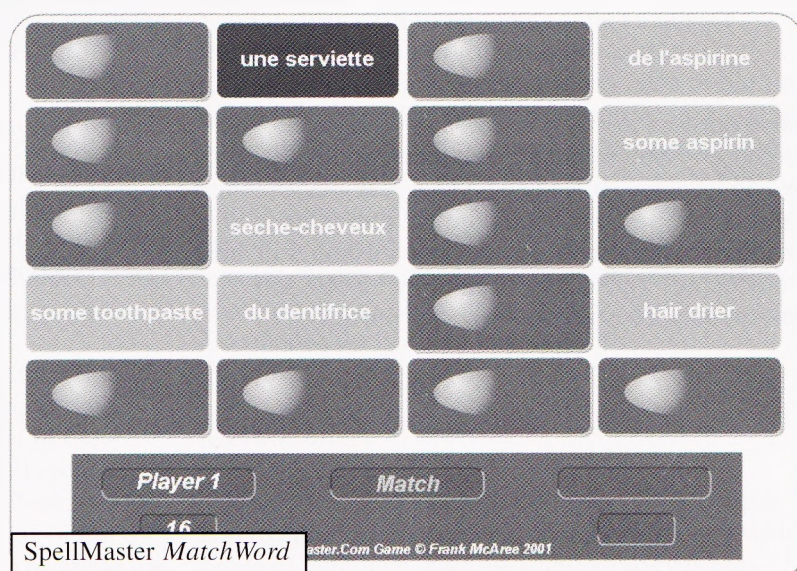
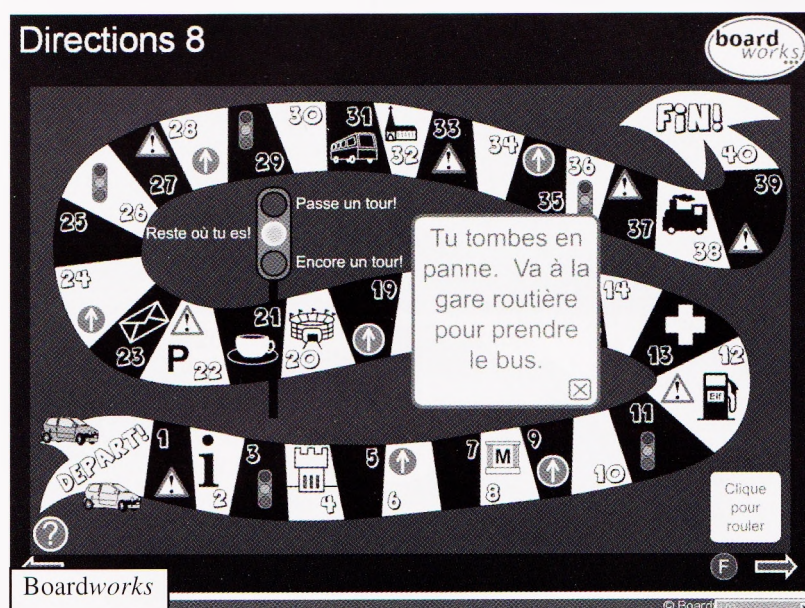
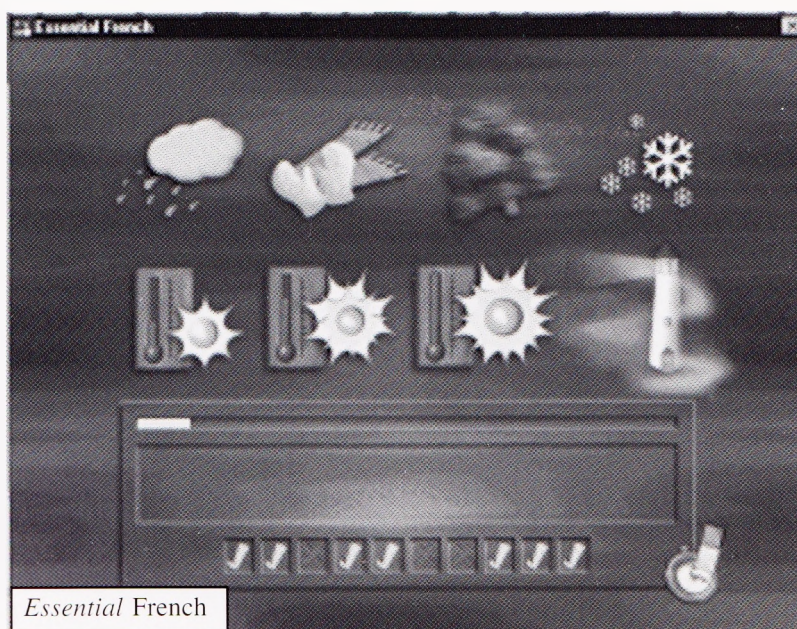
While we have all noted an improvement in students' retention of vocabulary, we have also recognised that our in-house smartboard materials don't really target listening skills. To address that, I've just bought in packages in French and German from Boardworks. These incorporate Flash into the *PowerPoint* presentations, including listening exercises by native speakers. One of my students' favourites is a race round town between 2 cars; as well as correctly identifying buildings in French, students have to follow different instructions at traffic lights in the target language.

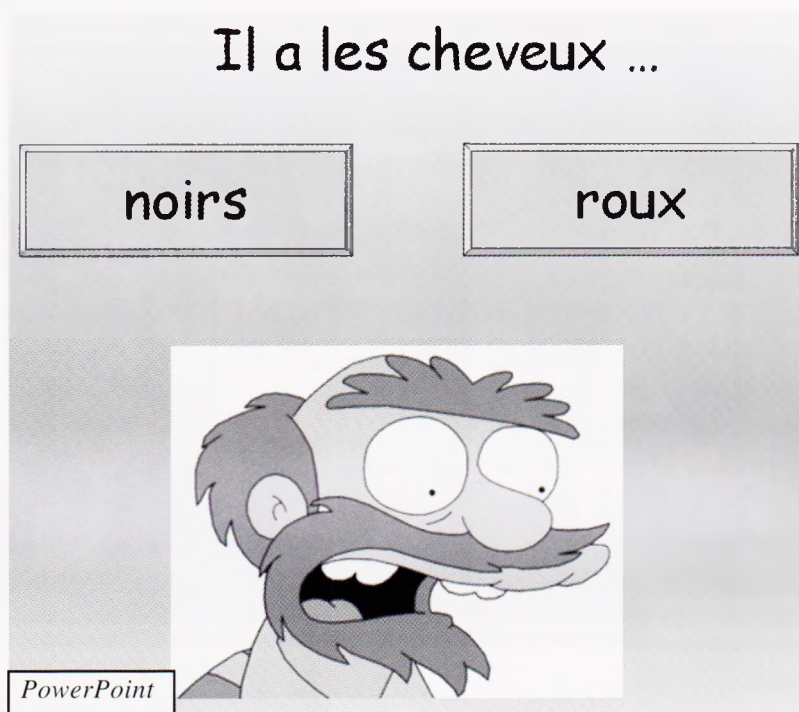
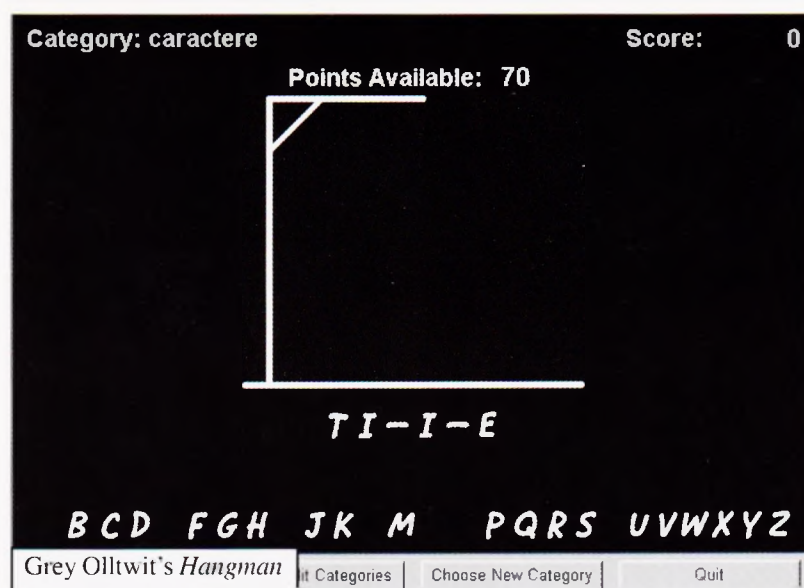
Despite its obvious appeal, the ICT revolution in our faculty didn't actually begin with the smartboard. During a major extension to the school a few years ago, we were allocated a multimedia room with 30 PCs solely for language teaching. We bought in a range of software, including *Essential* and *Expressions* in French and German from Vektor. Students mainly use these programs for listening and speaking activities, working individually with headsets and built-in microphones. *Essential* offers simple aural recognition exercises, with games against the clock, as well as a recording function. *Expressions* is a more sophisticated package. Dialogues are modelled with pictures, and students have complete control over how many times they replay items. There are speaking activities to record, as well as listening and reading tests at different levels. They can listen and respond at their own pace, on tasks either of their choice or dictated by the teacher. The variety and quality of available software is increasing all the time, and we have just introduced ICT activities for *Métro* and *Logo* alongside our existing software. Next year, we will be working in partnership with the Primary French team, offering the use of our facilities to Y6 classes.

A visiting Head Teacher recently asked me how I get teachers to use new technology. My answer was simple: I don't have to persuade anyone, it sells itself. Although initially time-consuming to get to grips with, using ICT has ultimately saved us all time and, more importantly, energy. We no longer work in isolation from each other, constantly reinventing the wheel because no one knows what the teacher in the room next door is doing. A quick look in the relevant folder on the network saves us a lot of unnecessary preparation. We share ideas, e-mailing each other when we've found a good website, or created a resource that works really well. We don't

Screen shots







have drawers full of flashcards or worksheets, because resources are all stored electronically. What we do have are students who enjoy language lessons because we've connected with them through a medium they can relate to and enjoy using. Still need convincing? Spend a few minutes with 7B6 last lesson on a Tuesday and see for yourself.

Editor's note

Julia says she would be delighted to offer advice, free samples etc. to anyone who may be interested in what they do there. She can be contacted at j.duffy@bhs.sch.im

ICT and Primary Modern Foreign Languages - Liverpool and PMFL

Nigel Pearson
Liverpool

Currently Education and Lifelong Learning in the City of Liverpool is pioneering exciting developments of a very high standard in Primary Modern Foreign Languages. These developments closely mirror the focus on starting MFL earlier in the national debate.

Many pupils in the City learn French in Y5 and Y6 as part of the Good Practice Project, and the City has six Centres of Excellence for Primary Modern Languages at which all pupils learn either French, German or Spanish.

My name is Nigel Pearson and I am fortunate enough to work as Advisory Teacher for German at two Centres of Excellence for Primary German in the city, Greenbank Primary and Knotty Ash Primary. It is a lovely and most enjoyable task teaching German to children at these schools. Both schools are totally committed to the project and offer wholehearted support.

The initiative concerning the Centres of Excellence started in 2001 and at these remarkable schools all pupils from the Nursery up to Year 6 have up to three lessons of their foreign language each week. In addition staff learn the language both alongside their pupils and at special staff meetings.

All the Centres of Excellence work closely with a number of agencies such as CiLT in London, the Goethe Institut, NACELL and Becta to enhance quality learning and share good practice.

My role at the Centres of Excellence for German

In this role there are a number of specific duties.

- To teach German language lessons to all age groups
- To teach the staff at the teachers' lessons
- To demonstrate and use effective and methodology
- To liaise with external agencies in order to enrich the PMFL curriculum for the school community
- To embody with enthusiasm the ideal of the German language as an enjoyable and inclusive ideal which is challenging and yet achievable for the pupils
- To liaise with high schools in order to promote the

further continuation of language learning across the key stages

- To work with the other Advisory Teachers to write schemes of work, policies and other documentation both to support quality learning and as a model for others in this sphere. This work also includes holding regional support network meetings at which good practice is shared.
- To establish good links abroad which enable primary language learning to be put into a real and relevant context for the pupils.
- To primarily focus on the listening and speaking skill areas.
- To work closely with a native speaker FLA (Foreign Language Assistant) in order to secure high quality language teaching.
- To be aware of new methodology that takes account of recent developments in the sphere of ICT and to look for opportunities to incorporate this.
- To see and use opportunities such as language festivals, class assemblies to communicate to the wider community the purpose and success of the initiative and to give the pupils positive feedback on their work.

How are schools chosen to become Centres of Excellence

Schools that wish to be granted the Centre of Excellence status have to follow a certain set procedure in order to attain it. They have to bid for this status and fulfil certain set criteria, such as the commitment and enthusiasm of head teacher and staff, teacher expertise, willingness to undertake training, a potential MFL co-ordinator, and good access to a range of ICT to support language lessons. There is, of course, considerable prestige associated with being nominated a Centre of Excellence for primary languages.

Methodology

In order to secure enjoyable learning for all pupils and to attain high standards of achievement a wide range of language teaching methodology is em-

played at the Centres of Excellence, which typically would include some of the following:

- Almost exclusive use of the Target Language as a means of teaching.
- Lessons that focus very much on the speaking and listening skill areas
- Lessons that have pace, enthusiasm, humour and maximum involvement
- Close collaboration and interaction with the FLA to provide an excellent spoken model with speech at almost normal delivery speed to enhance comprehension
- The use of movement in a kinaesthetic manner when appropriate to heighten learning
- The use of music and songs to provide stimulation, challenge and help pupils to recall words and phrases
- The use of rhymes and language games to make learning enjoyable and memorable
- The use of recent ICT developments to bring a new dimension into quality learning. This includes involving pupils in activities with the interactive whiteboard.
- The use of video, video conferencing, guest native speakers and links abroad to bring the language to life
- Extensive use of praise to motivate and to promote achievement

The list above is not exclusive, but indicates the direction and purpose of the methodology employed to secure enjoyment and quality learning experiences. Two very recent Ofsted inspections of the Centres of Excellence have confirmed this approach to offer pupils excellent and motivating learning opportunities leading to very high standards.

ICT and Primary Language Learning

Many new and exciting developments are now becoming available to teachers such as myself in the primary languages sphere, which can be used alongside other means to enhance learning. Many children now associate learning with sitting in front of a screen and whilst this is not a full time substitute for interactive learning nevertheless valuable opportunities can be found and employed to incorporate this dimension into the PMFL curriculum.

A number of approaches for effective use of ICT that have worked are listed below.

- Using video conferencing as a live means to enable instant interactive discussions and to share projects
- Using emails to communicate to a pen friend in the country of the target language
- The use of some of the many commercial language

games to provide interest and reinforcement

- The supervised internet as a valuable source of obtaining information about the countries in which the target language is spoken and for accessing specific language learning programmes
- The interactive whiteboard as a means for whole-class teaching and other language activities such as games
- Older pupils (Y6) taking laptops home to use them for language learning activities.

Conclusion

Teaching languages in the primary sphere is an immensely rewarding and fruitful vocation. The pupils are unburdened by later inhibitions, eager to participate, they also have a formidable capacity to recall and use words and phrases. In addition young children are natural mimics and when given a good model of speech will be able to use this in order to produce language themselves of a very high quality.

Pupils are almost without exception very enthusiastic about learning another language, regardless of ability, and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds for whom English is a second language appreciate the level playing field that learning another language offers. The pupils also are in the main unaware of many of the stereotypes associated with various nations and approach the learning activities with an open, enquiring mind.

Learning another language in the primary phase also heightens pupils' awareness of intonation, expression and gesture. The ICT work employed also enables pupils to work on their mouse and keyboard skills.

It is most encouraging as a teacher to note the natural aptitude with which pupils operate in the target language and welcome the opportunity to use this beyond the classroom, in encounters with teachers in the corridor, or on the playground.

Parents and carers also value the new skills that their children have acquired and are frequently very interested in supporting and encouraging them in their language work. I am often amazed at the number of parents who approach me and say their child has been teaching them German language phrases or songs. Without exception they are all very proud of their children and their new skills.

I believe the good work in Liverpool with the Centres of Excellence and the Good Practice Project offers valuable lessons for the future. These lessons are available to interested parties in education and point the way forward to our young people becoming articulate, tolerant and confident users of language. These positive advantages they gain now will serve them well in their adult lives at work and leisure.

Common MFL accents and characters

Rhona Dick and Barry Wake

MAPE

There are three main ways of inserting accents into your documents that will work in most cases, though not all:

- Alt key plus number code
- Insert symbol, and
- Shortcut keys, e.g. in MS Word

(Similar methods are available for Apple systems, making use for example of the Apple key.)

a) Alt key plus number code

Hold down the Alt key and type in the numbers using the numerical keypad (see table for examples), with NumLock on, and then release:

e.g. Alt 133 gives à

b) Insert symbol

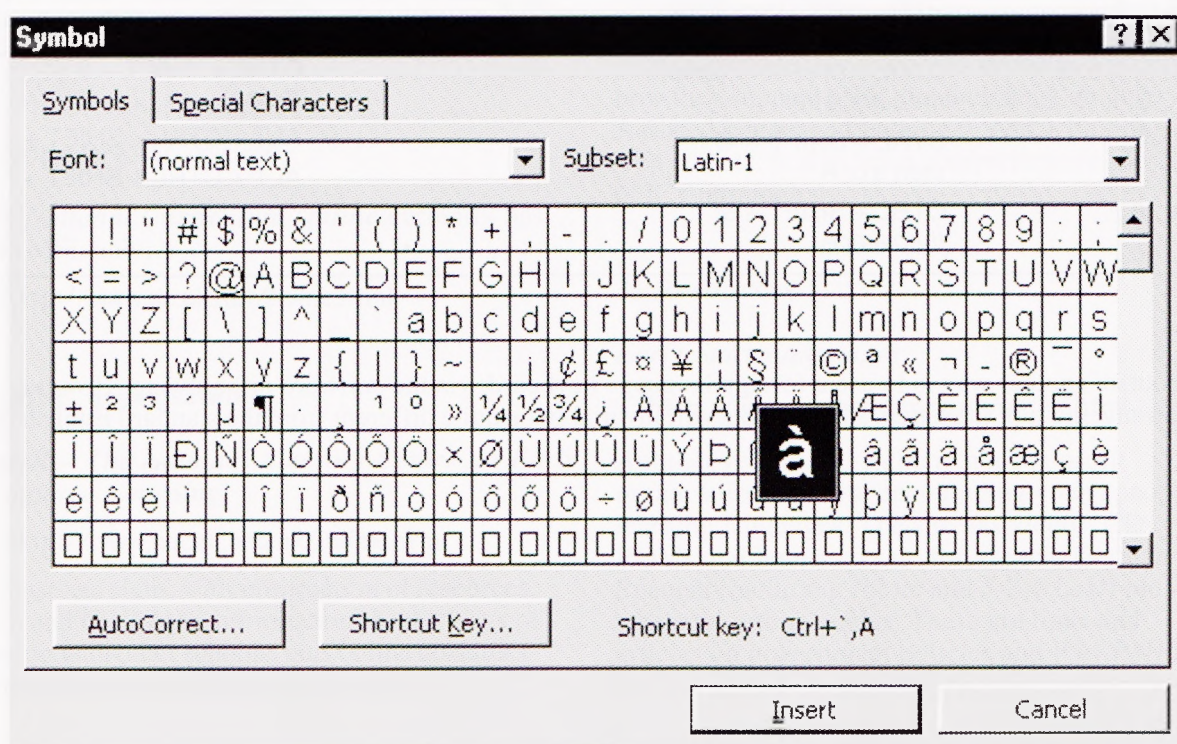
This works with most Microsoft applications for example, but not with all fonts.

Click on the Insert command and from the drop down menu select Symbol, then choose the accent you want and click on Insert.

e.g. Insert > Symbol > à

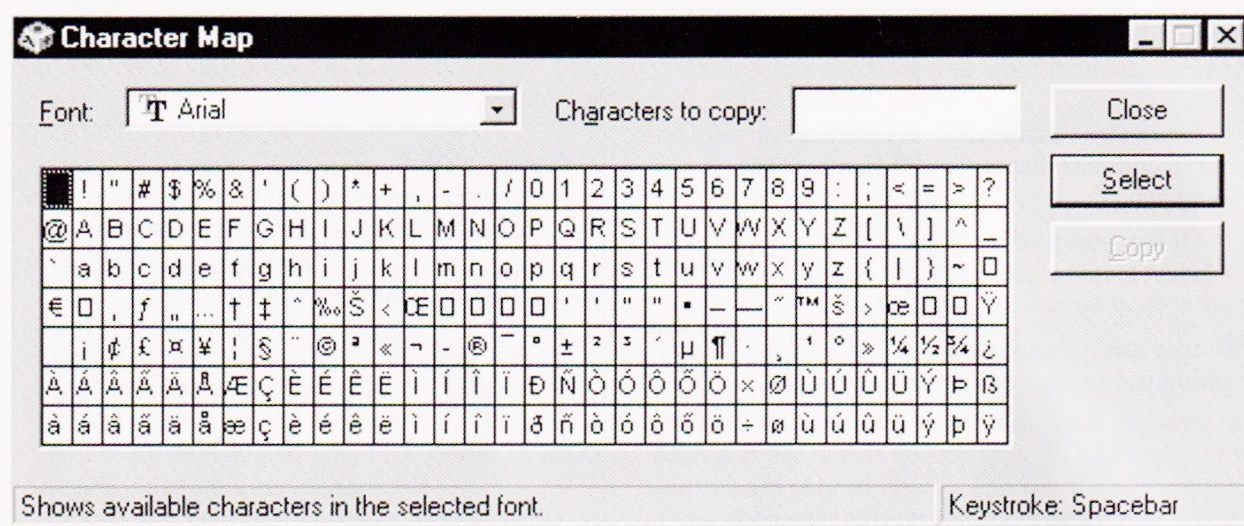
Alt Key Codes

	Lower case	Upper case		Lower case	Upper case
á	160	181	ñ	164	165
à	133	183			
â	131	182	ó	162	224
ã	132	142	ô	149	227
ä	134	143	ö	147	226
æ	145	146	ø	148	153
			œ	0156	0140
ç	135	128			
			ú	163	233
é	130	144	ù	151	235
è	138	212	û	150	234
ê	136	210	ü	129	154
ë	137	211			
			ß	225	
í	161	214	¿	168	
ì	141	222	¡	173	
î	140	215			
ï	139	216			



You can often access accents and characters from the Character map, too. This is found in the System tools folder:

e.g. *Start > Programs > Accessories > System tools > Character map*



c) *Using a shortcut key in MS Word*

e.g. for á, hold down CTRL and ' (the apostrophe) keys together, release and then press the letter a.

To insert	Press	To insert	Press
à, è, ì, ò, ù À, É, Í, Ó, Ù	CTRL + ` (accent grave) then the letter	œ, Œ	CTRL + SHIFT + & then o or O
á, é, í, ó, ú, ý Á, É, Í, Ó, Ú, Ý	CTRL + ' (apostrophe) then the letter	ç, Ç	CTRL + , (comma) then c or C
â, ê, î, ô, û Â, Ê, Î, Ô, Û	CTRL + SHIFT + ^ (caret) then the letter	ð, Ð	CTRL + ' (apostrophe) then d or D
ã, ñ, õ Ã, Ñ, Õ	CTRL + SHIFT + ~ (tilde) then the letter	ø, Ø	CTRL + / then o or O
ä, ë, ï, ö, ü, ÿ Ä, Ê, Î, Ö, Ü, Ý	CTRL + SHIFT + : (colon) then the letter	ß	CTRL + SHIFT + & then s
å, Å	CTRL + SHIFT + @ then a or A	¿	ALT + CTRL + SHIFT + ?
æ, Æ	CTRL + SHIFT + & then a or A	¡	ALT + CTRL + SHIFT + !

Note

Of course, another way is to use a foreign language keyboard, via the software or hardware. However, the arrangement of the letters and symbols will invariably be quite different from the standard English one!

Useful Web links and resources

There has been an unprecedented increase in the number of websites available to support MFL at the primary level. Here are just a few, and no doubt we have missed some vital ones out, for which we offer apologies.

N.B. resources, activities and examples of software applications will be available via the MAPE web site: <http://www.mape.org.uk>

1. General

The QCA Scheme of Work for MFL at Key Stage 2, offering a flexible framework of 12 units detailed in French with overviews and exemplars for German and Spanish:

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes3/>

BECTA

Various useful information sheets and links to resources using ICT for MFL, though more KS3/4 than KS2. The Say IT ones (b) contain ICT terminology in various languages:

- (a) <http://curriculum.becta.org.uk/docserver.php?temid=90>
- (b) <http://www.becta.org.uk/teachers/teachers.cfm?section=1321&id=2625>
- (c) <http://www.becta.org.uk/teachers/teachers.cfm?section=1321&id=804>

The **Virtual Teacher Centre** and the **Teacher Resource Exchange** are worth periodic checks for ideas and resources:

<http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk/>
<http://tre.ngfl.gov.uk/>

The **National Curriculum Online** currently has KS3 MFL only:

<http://www.nc.uk.net/home.html>

2. MFL organisations

Nacell – The National Advisory Centre on Early Language Learning:

<http://www.nacell.org.uk/index.htm>

A must-see sight, with information of resources, ELL and CiLT (q.v) information sheets, ways of linking with other schools, plus online resources (although not all the links are working):

Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research:

<http://www.cilt.org.uk/primary/>

See especially their sheets on materials for young beginners, and the online document **Early Language Learning Curricular Models**. There is also the:

ELL-forum

Part of the DfES Primary Initiative in Modern Foreign Languages, the *Early Language Learning forum* aims to encourage and facilitate exchange of ideas etc., for and between those involved or interested in early language teaching and learning. To join online go to:

<http://www.mailbase.org.uk/lists/ell-forum/>

ICT for Language Teachers:

<http://www.ict4lt.org/>

This site is directed generally focused on KS3/4, eg giving introductions to the new technologies and how they support MFL, the internet, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), building a web site etc. It also has a comprehensive glossary of ICT terminology.

3. Resources

Early Start Languages

<http://www.earlystart.co.uk/index.html>

Another very useful sight: a 'not-for-profit' organisation aimed at encouraging young people learning languages. The site has videos, CD-ROMs and books on sale for French, German and Spanish (including *Pilote* and *3-2-1 Los!*) plus teachers' online guides. There are links and articles on government policies and *Why PMFL* too.

BBC Education

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/languages/>

Details of language programs, plus online courses using sound and video clips. Not specifically designed for primary but useful for ideas and resources. Or just to brush up your expertise.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryfrench/>

Excellent multimedia activities for primary. Level 2 French is just online, and German and Spanish are expected to be added later.

Channel 4 learning

<http://www.ltscotland.com/5-14/c4modernlanguages/>

Again not specifically designed for primary, but with some suitable games and activities, Chez Mimi or in Hennings Haus.

The *Bonjour* site – for French, and similar sites for German, Spanish, Italian and English

<http://www.linguascope.com/>

Aimed at developing MFL to GCSE standard, this excellent site contains lists of vocabulary on a wide range of set topics, with activities, scenarios and downloadable worksheets, many useful for primary. There is an online bookshop and links to other useful sites. Access to further downloadable resources is available at a fee.

MFL Primary Resources from Ashcombe School, Surrey

<http://www.ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk/Curriculum/modlang/primary.htm>

It has a set of photos of French shops where you can look inside and practise some of the relevant language (though often quite detailed and advanced). There is a similar set of photos of street scenes and shops from Germany. A PowerPoint slide show has images from England, France, Germany and Italy, which could be useful in a primary classroom.

The sets of video clips cover a wide range of topics, with gap-fill exercises, but really support GCSE level French and German.

Primary Resources

<http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/mfl/mfl.htm>

A bumper site for other subjects but a new section for MFL here has a few good ideas for games and activities, as well as sample worksheets and flash cards from Keynotes Education to download.

The Early Childhood Education Network

A variety of clear, colourful multimedia learning activities in English, French, German and Spanish designed for young children in California

<http://www.literacycenter.net/>

4. Search engines and translators

If you want to search using a foreign language, Google, Lycos and Yahoo search engines are available in French, German, Italian and Spanish as well as many, many other languages.

Translators**Babelfish**

<http://babelfish.altavista.com/>

Aimed at adults, it translates words and phrases, or even web pages, from and into almost any language. Not always that accurate but may be enough to remind you of the right word or give the gist of a longer passage.

Logos

http://www.logosdictionary.com/pls/dictionary/new_dictionary.home_project?pjCode=10&lang=en&u_code=4395

This site hosts hundreds of languages (and their flags), and a fairly extensive children's dictionary that offers visual explanations. More useful for older children.

The views expressed and any errors are mine and not the responsibility of MAPE.

Barry Wake

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