

# Professional Language Networks London Schools Excellence Fund Project (LSEF) Network for Languages London, University of Westminster

## Project Overview

Our London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF) project “Professional Language Networks” was set up in early Spring 2014 to allow language teachers involved to share ideas and approaches to teaching modern foreign languages. It provided them with the opportunity to update their professional skills as well as their subject knowledge in languages and language teaching methodology. This was in line with the Mayor of London’s policy on raising the quality of teaching in primary and secondary schools and improving pupils’ attainment in core subjects, including modern foreign languages. Our LSEF project set out to increase confidence amongst language teachers, which in turn would help boost their pupils’ motivation and engagement in the subject. Both primary and secondary schools were involved in the project and networking between teachers and schools was facilitated, both locally in the boroughs involved and centrally at the University of Westminster. From September 2014 languages became a compulsory part of the Key Stage (KS) 2 curriculum and the project came at a crucial time as it sought to address the implementation of a new primary languages curriculum.

## What project activities were offered?

The project delivered borough-specific Learning Cycles (LC), of which there were a maximum of four for teachers who joined at the beginning of the project. Each LC lasted for one term and the project was initiated by an audit/needs analysis carried out by a project mentor, to define priority themes for each teacher and school participating in the project. The support delivered included:

- One-to-one mentoring with school visits to provide bespoke help at the point where the language co-ordinator/teacher/school needed it. This included lesson observations and feedback, in order to help move practice forward.
- A learning focus decided and acted upon by the teacher who kept a reflective log to record progress. Teachers benefited from the chance to reflect on their practice and share this with their mentor. There was an opportunity to report this ‘learning

journey’ in an action research project with MA credits awarded by the University of Westminster.

- Peer lesson observations so teachers could observe colleagues in other schools in their own and other boroughs.
- Borough workshops held regularly to provide a “hub” for teachers to meet, led by a project mentor involving discussion around relevant themes and areas of interest to improve practice.
- The opportunity to improve language skills and gain confidence in the language through language upskilling classes at the University of Westminster and in the local borough where there was a demand.
- Two summer schools of 3 days each, including a portfolio of specialist courses such as pedagogical seminars and language upskilling classes.
- Access to a languages conference every 6 months held at the University of Westminster.
- Four local workshops in each borough during the lifespan of the project.
- Access to all CPD courses for teachers run by Network for Languages London.

## Where has the project been delivered geographically?

- The project has been delivered across 8 boroughs in London, comprising Bexley & Bromley, Brent, Havering, Lambeth, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth and the Tri-Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster.

## Who delivered the project?

- The project was delivered by the Network for Languages London based at the University of Westminster. The project team comprised a team of eleven highly skilled project mentors with a wealth of experience in the primary and secondary sectors and a team

## Who were the target beneficiary groups of the project and why?

- The target groups of the project were languages teachers in KS 2 - 5. As the project developed, far more primary schools than secondary schools came on board; this is likely to be due to the introduction of the new KS2 Curriculum in languages in September 2014.

## What teachers say about the project

*“Throughout the LSEF project there are many ideas that I have taken from others to use in my lessons and I have seen them work successfully. This is very refreshing; to be regularly sharing ideas with others.”*

comment from a LSEF project participant

*“Although I was nervous, I really enjoyed leading the workshop and I hope it was informative and enjoyable for participants too. I would do it again! It gave me loads of confidence and made me feel good!”*

LSEF participant leading a workshop at the Network for Languages London MFL Conference in June 2015

*“This year taking part in the LSEF project has boosted Spanish amongst the staff and this was thoroughly witnessed during the trip (to Spain). All staff used as much Spanish as possible every day and now use it at school.”*

Headteacher, participating in the LSEF project

professional development  
and support for language  
teachers