

Annual Report 2024



Teangacha
Iar-bhunscoile Éireann
Post-Primary
Languages Ireland

PPLI delivering



Supported by



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Oige
Department of Education
and Youth

PPLI - A Year in Numbers

Say Yes to Languages

84,400 Primary Pupils

1,350 Primary Schools

15 Languages

#ThinkLanguages

17,500

TY Students

200+

10

14

Schools Universities Cinemas

CPD

50 PPLI Teachers

11 CPD Sessions

3 Workshops

Leaving Certificate
Languages Information
Sessions

9 online
sessions

555
attendees

116

Primary Teachers
Upskilled

Language provision
in schools for

7,691 students:

Chinese **2,307** Japanese **2,867**

Korean **380** Lithuanian **186**

Polish **1,936** Portuguese **480**

Russian **267** Romanian **268**

330

Foreign Language
Assistants and
Co-operating Teachers
trained

30+

Communities
of Practice
facilitated

748

Saturday Class Students

Chinese **128** Japanese **115**

Lithuanian **38** Portuguese **41**

Polish **195** Romanian **132**

Russian **99**

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Foreword

As we reflect on another year of progress and innovation in education, it is my pleasure to introduce the Post Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI) Annual Report in the context of the ongoing role for PPLI in implementing key actions of Languages Connect – Ireland’s Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education. This strategy aims to support better learning of foreign languages in the Irish education system and to increase the diversity of provision for the inherent benefits to individuals, society, and the economy.

In our Programme for Government 2025 we set out to increase the uptake of foreign languages in our schools and expand the teaching of modern foreign languages in primary schools. PPLI is using the Say Yes to Languages primary sampler module to prepare the ground for the introduction of Modern Foreign Languages in the primary curriculum and participation is now at 1,400 schools and more than 88,000 pupils, with a diverse range of languages being offered to students. The diversity of languages being taught as part of the module is evidence of the multicultural plurilingual society that we live in, and the module provides a platform to raise awareness among pupils of the diversity of languages being used by their peers in their schools and community.

I am committed to enhancing the educational landscape for all students and to equipping students with the skills they require to succeed in a rapidly changing world, and I commend the work that PPLI are doing in this context. Provision of quality foreign languages education and supports is fundamental to providing students in Ireland with the opportunities and intercultural skills to access the labour market in other EU countries. Problem solving, innovation, and critical thinking are all important transversal skills fostered in the process of language learning.



PPLI is also working with partners to begin the process of upskilling primary teachers in foreign languages in advance of the introduction of Modern Foreign Languages in the primary curriculum. Post-Primary teachers continue to be trained in new methodologies in the context of blended learning, online learning and CLIL, in addition to language specific CPD, all of which is contributing to the development of valuable capacity in our system.

PPLI continue to devise and promote activities and resources which support the provision of high-quality education, meeting the needs of, and improving the teaching and learning of foreign languages in general in schools. Excellent and innovative education and training are essential to delivering a fair society and a strong economy. In this context it is good to see the alternative models of provision being explored and implemented by PPLI to provide for students with a diversity of language backgrounds, including online and blended learning.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to PPLI and all the dedicated educators, administrators, and stakeholders who have worked tirelessly to support our students in the context of access to foreign languages education. It is through such collaborative efforts that we can continue to build an education system that meets the needs of all learners. Your efforts are the cornerstone of our success, and together, we will continue to create a brighter future for education in Ireland.

Thank you for your continued commitment and support.

Helen McEntee

Helen McEntee

Minister for Education and Youth

Introduction to PPLI

Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI) is a dedicated unit providing expertise and support for foreign languages education in Ireland. PPLI is fully funded by the Department of Education and was originally set up in September 2000 with a remit of diversifying, enhancing, and expanding the teaching of languages in second-level schools throughout Ireland. This remains core to its remit with a focus on enhancing and broadening the opportunities available for learning foreign languages that are relevant to Ireland's future cultural, social, and economic needs.

PPLI exists to support the implementation of key actions under 'Languages Connect – Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017–2026'. In addition to the important aspects of implementation which relate to languages in education, there is also a role for PPLI in awareness raising, employer engagement and languages in society. An additional part of its role is to conduct applied research that informs and supports policy.

A broader remit now includes foreign languages support for the primary sector. This includes provision of the 'Say Yes to Languages' primary sampler module in schools, the main aim of which is to prepare the ground for the implementation of the redeveloped Primary Language Curriculum. Support for foreign languages at primary level recently also includes foreign language upskilling for primary teachers and the provision of a body of resources that will support teachers with implementation of the new curriculum in the context of Modern Foreign Languages.



The PPLI Team

PPLI is a diverse team of experts who successfully deliver high quality projects in foreign languages education and awareness raising. PPLI is known for its professionalism, innovation, versatility, and strong work ethic. It supports a wide variety of stakeholders including government departments, education agencies, schools and teachers, and many other partners.

PPLI Team Charter

- Employ a diverse, enhanced and expanded team that showcases best practice in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
- Facilitate an organisation where there is equality of esteem for different roles and skills
- Ensure that each member is valued, included and supported in their work
- Ensure that each member has a voice and is welcome to share their ideas and opinions without fear of reprimand
- Appreciate, respect, and promote linguistic and cultural diversity
- Work together in a way that is creative, flexible, and dynamic producing work that is fast-paced and quality assured.
- Recognise achievements, promote communication, acknowledge good practice, set objectives/goals, provide clarity around organizational expectations, be open to and accept feedback, and identify ways in which PPLI can improve support for team members.

In 2024 the core team consisted of 24 members. The PPLI Team also includes a Japanese Language Advisor seconded by the Japan Foundation. In addition, PPLI employs six Chinese, seventeen Japanese, one Korean, two Lithuanian, fourteen Polish, four Portuguese, two Romanian and five Russian Development Officers who are qualified teachers deployed to schools and Saturday classes.

PPLI Team Members 2024

Karen Ruddock
Director

Kenia Puig i Planella, Ph.D.
Teaching & Learning Manager

Chang Zhang, Ph.D.
Education Officer

Agnieszka Grochola
Education Officer

Laura Quigley
Education Officer

Salvo Cacciato
Education Officer

Alan McCormack
Education Officer

Naoko Takatsuka
*Japanese Language Advisor
(September)*

Aoife Dungan
*Marketing & Communications
Manager*

Meabh Duffy
*Marketing and
Communications Officer*

Nellie Tattersall
Project Officer

Lauri Kealy
Communications Assistant

Aoife McHugh
Clerical Officer (July)

Alice Davenport
Event Co-ordinator

Enya Fagan
Project Officer (August)

Kirsi Hanifin
Operations Manager

Kate Tyndall
*Primary Languages Project
Manager*

Agnieszka Matys-Foley
Schools and Project Officer

Jean-Marie Fournier
*Finance and Operations
Officer*

Claudia Maloney
*Primary Languages Project
Coordinator*

Dylan Collins
Finance Assistant

Aedin McConnell
Operations Assistant (March)

Aine Mullen
Clerical Officer (April)

Michele Kelly
Administrator (Retired July)

Mohana Sarwar
Clerical Officer (August)

Andrea Sanagustin Cabrero
Project Assistant (September)

PPLI Associates 2024

Vicky Bouché
Sarah Cronin
Sandra Doyle
Valerie Fitzpatrick
Patricia Mulholland
Anne Grills
Niall Gunning
Gemma Kelly
Rebecca Mooney
Ellen Perrin
Laura Nagle Kiwanuka
Aine O'Donnell
David O'Grady
Sandrine Pac-Kenny
Dominique Senard
Mark Spencer
Geraldine Zechner
Dagmara Furman

PPLI Development Officers 2024

Japanese

Midori Hayes
Brid Murphy
Irene Bermingham
Mika O'Loughlin
David McCartney
Gretta Daly
Rhonda Tsu Lambe
Chigusa O'Sullivan
Amanda Kiernan
Tetsuo Hirohama
Tomoko Ozaki
Kozue O'Dwyer
Adam Clark
Chie Weir
Tazuko Iijima-Kelly
Reiko Heinen
Mika McDonnell
Aoife McArdle

Korean

Heejung Lee

Russian

Lana Ilyin
Inna Orlovskaya
Ludmila Snigireva
Olga Vologzhanina
Ludmila McGrath

Portuguese

Helena Bidarra
Luiz Gasparelli
Paula Falcao
Estela Felipe

Chinese

Juan Huang
Tiantian Wu
Wanlin Li
Beibei Su
Yunhe Cheng
Congqing Zeng

Lithuanian

Vaida Guliokiene

Polish

Marta Majchrzak
Anna Siecinska
Luiza Blachura
Joanna Lydzinska-Boldbaatar
Mariola Wanczyk
Agnieszka Kaliska
Dagmara Furman
Agnieszka Adamska
Edyta Bakula
Laura Barszczewicz
Aneta Truchan
Ewelina Mencnarowska
Ewelina Keskiewicz
Ewelina Mackowiak
Patrycja Chelminska

Romanian

Paula Fodorcan
Adriana Gheorghe





Director Review

The numbers sitting nine of the eleven curricular languages offered at Leaving Certificate have shown a steady increase over the past few years. A more overall decrease in language sits at Leaving Certificate is a result of a reduction in those taking French and German and much of this can be attributed to the introduction of new subjects which offer students more choice catering for diverse interests and new opportunities for personal development. This, in parallel with a removal of the Modern Foreign Language (MFL) matriculation requirement for many tertiary courses is also frequently mentioned as leading some students to drop a foreign language.

Most of the work in PPLI seeks to either directly or indirectly increase participation in foreign language learning. Having a foreign language is an absolute necessity for our students to remain competitive in both the European and the global context. Every one of our students has the right to acquire skills that allow full participation in society and the labour market and limited multilingual competence remains one of the main obstacles to benefiting from the opportunities offered by virtue of being a European state. Enhanced multilingual competence would also support our young people in taking more informed decisions about opportunities in other EU countries thus putting them on a more level playing field. Multilingualism is an important priority in Europe because it is such an important element of Europe's competitiveness.

Learning foreign languages exposes students to different cultural perspectives, enhancing their adaptability and intercultural communication skills. This fosters global awareness and prepares students for diverse professional and social interactions. The need for multilingual global citizens with strong intercultural competence who can navigate diverse cultural contexts and collaborate across borders is now more important than ever to stay relevant in the job market.

PPLI seeks to support this messaging through the development of resources and dissemination of information which encourages uptake in foreign language subjects as well as highlighting the tangible benefits of learning languages and having language skills. The #ThinkLanguages festival, facilitated by PPLI as part of the Languages Connect awareness raising campaign, continues to grow and extend its reach which increases opportunities for students to think about taking a language for Leaving Certificate. 2024 was the first year that schools from all 26 counties in Ireland were represented in #ThinkLanguages. 17,500 students from over 200 schools participated. The Champion Team competition winners went to Brussels courtesy of the Department of Foreign Affairs as part of their 'A Career for EU strategy' and were able to see Ireland at the EU. Colleagues reported that it was particularly rewarding to hear the students talk about their future career plans after their visit to the EU Institutions. The students left feeling inspired and energised to take their languages with them in their respective future journeys.

Also, in the context of #ThinkLanguages, collaboration with the Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) progressed. Over 1,380 students visited a university campus, with many more acquiring insights into third-level life through talks from student language ambassadors in schools. Such collaboration is key to students understanding why language learning is important and why they should keep up their language, as well as strengthening participation in both third level language learning courses and building capacity in foreign languages for the future.

PPLI continues to provide teachers and students with resources, opportunities, and support to ensure that language lessons in schools are as engaging as possible, seeking to support the retention of students into senior cycle through much of its work. Examples of projects which enhance foreign languages provision in schools include the development of supports for innovative methodologies such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL); training in the use of digital technologies in collaboration with Oide Technology in Education; and ongoing support for the use of a toolkit for self-evaluation and supporting cultural and linguistic diversity in our schools.

The introduction of foreign languages to more than a third of primary schools through 'Say Yes to Languages' is hoped to encourage more students entering post-primary education to opt to take a language as part of their subject choice, as a result of the positive experience that they have had in primary school. Year on year there has been an increase in participation with 1,350 schools and nearly 88,500 pupils taking part in 'Say Yes to Languages' in 2024 and 15 languages represented. The number of classroom-based teachers delivering the module also continues to increase.

The success of the introduction of a full Modern Foreign Languages specification in the primary curriculum from 2025 will partly depend on the provision of foreign language upskilling for primary teachers and this is a new piece of work for PPLI. The pilot in 2024 exceeded a target of 100 teachers attending foreign language upskilling courses and reinforced positive collaboration with a range of education providers and stakeholders that will support this provision.

In 2024, PPLI sent teachers to more than 100 post-primary schools and provided new language learning opportunities for more than 8,000 students using a variety of modes of provision, including online and blended learning opportunities. The diversity of internationally qualified teachers that PPLI deploys to schools is important in the development of intercultural skills, important for the general student population in learning how to deal with 'otherness', as well as providing students with the opportunity to access additional language learning and support. The provision of heritage languages in schools also provides formal recognition of students' linguistic identities, enhancing their engagement and retention by having their cultural backgrounds valued.

Saturday classes provided 750 students with the opportunity to learn more recently introduced languages that are not available in their regular school settings. The classes support students with preparing for the Leaving Certificate exams, help students stay connected to their heritage and home languages, and support students to perform better in their exams which opens up further educational opportunities. PPLI continues to explore additional ways of supporting students with home languages other than English and Irish which is a precondition for social cohesion.

It is always good to see the work recognised and in 2024, PPLI with Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) and H2 Learning were awarded the European Language Label (ELL) in acknowledgment of their innovative and inspirational work in language teaching, learning and promotion. The winning project, 'Polish for Leaving Certificate Blended Learning Project', offers Polish as a Leaving Certificate subject to senior cycle students in CMETB who would not otherwise have the opportunity to take this subject in school. This is achieved through a blended learning model that combines online classes, face-to-face classes, and self-directed lessons.

During 2024, PPLI also became more involved in supporting the Department of Education with the English Language Assistant scheme in the context of increasing visibility for a scheme that offers the opportunity to develop language competency and deliver teaching capacity to the Irish education system, the lack of which is one factor often cited for removing mandatory foreign language participation. PPLI introduced a series of measures to raise awareness of this scheme including the production of videos, a social media campaign and dissemination of a poster across the HEIs.

Encouraging school exchanges is another important part of PPLI work. Despite the challenges associated with this e.g. increased workload for the teacher, complexity associated with child safeguarding and garda vetting and increasing difficulty with identifying potential host families, this important activity needs to be supported. Students need to have the opportunity to be exposed to and engage with the living language as effective language learning is dependent on immersion, face-to-face interaction, body language and social observation and the lack of this during Covid-19 has been another factor that mitigated against uptake of foreign languages in senior cycle.

Other highlights of the year included seeing languages provision invigorated as a result of whole school advisory sessions, getting positive feedback because of increased engagement with Foreign Language Assistants, and an increase in the numbers of teachers of the more recently added curricular languages getting registered with the Teaching Council. A number of teachers at PPLI who successfully completed their registration secured employment directly with the school through the Additional Allocation Scheme.

Further increase in the remit and scope of work in 2024 brought with it the addition of new team members, bringing additional experience and expertise to PPLI. This included both core members of the team, associates, and teachers, each one of whom contributes to expanding and extending the work. We couldn't do any of the work without this wider team which also includes you, the stakeholders.

Thank you for all your support and collaboration which is invaluable to each one of us. Please feel welcome to visit us at the Digital Hub to see how we might further leverage the synergies we have and increase the value of our work.

In the meantime, thank you also for reading our annual report.



Karen Ruddock
Director PPLI



Goal 1 of Languages Connect, *Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education* aims to create a more engaging learning environment. PPLI supports implementation of this goal by facilitating Communities of Practice; providing training and support for the Foreign Language Assistant scheme; developing resources to support teachers' classroom practice and professional development; promotion of mobility opportunities; and the development and enhancement of Content and Language Integrated Learning provision.

A group of students are dancing in a school hallway. They are wearing traditional Romanian folk costumes, including embroidered blouses and skirts. In the background, a Romanian flag is visible, and there is an exit sign on the wall. The image has a green tint.

GOAL 1

IMPROVE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BY
CREATING A MORE ENGAGING LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT



3 MFL Teachers Upskilled



3 Teachers Registered with Teaching Council

Overview:

PPLI manages funding schemes to address the current shortage of qualified language teachers in Ireland. The MFL Teacher Upskilling Scheme provides an opportunity for MFL teachers to upskill in a language they are qualified in but not currently teaching or not teaching to full capacity. With language upskilling, the teacher may be able to introduce the language in their school or increase its provision within the school.

The Teaching Council Criteria Shortfall Funding Scheme provides funding to teachers who are missing a small number of credits, to assist them in fulfilling Teaching Council criteria for registration as language teachers in Ireland.

Main aims:

- Increase the number and capacity of qualified and registered language teachers in Ireland
- The MFL Teacher Upskilling Scheme: Activate existing qualified capacity in schools and facilitate the introduction of a new language or expansion of a language subject in schools
- Teaching Council Criteria Shortfall Funding Scheme: Facilitate teachers to qualify for registration with the Teaching Council

Activity:

MFL Teacher Upskilling Scheme

In total 79 applications have been approved for funding since the beginning of the scheme in 2018. In 2024 three teachers availed of upskilling opportunities under the scheme. The scheme is open to applications on an on-going basis.

Impact:

The benefits for the schools involved include ability to introduce a new language, and development of additional teaching capacity. Teachers who have availed of an upskilling course have rated gaining confidence as the most valued outcome.

'Helped me go into Sept with confidence launching the LC programme at my school.'

'I'll be returning to school in Sept ready to take our new subject into its second year with increased confidence and credibility having recent experience in the TL country. A fantastic opportunity from start to end.'

Activity:

The Teaching Council Criteria Shortfall Funding Scheme

In total 25 applications have been successful, and seven teachers have been able to register for their target language since the start of the scheme in 2021. Two applications were successful in 2024, and an additional three teachers registered with the Teaching Council for their target language.

Impact:

- Feedback from teachers has been positive, as the scheme has assisted them to register for their target language.
- Teachers completing registration for their target language has increased qualified teaching capacity in schools.



Next steps:

- Continue to operate the schemes in 2025.



18 School Exchanges

Overview:

The Funding for School Exchanges Scheme was first introduced in 2018. The scheme makes available funding of €5,000 per year, for three years, to qualifying and approved schools, to support and incentivise schools to establish new exchanges and to increase numbers participating in existing exchanges. Almost 40 schools have received financial support since 2018, and many others have been supported with information and advice.

Main aims:

- Incentivise schools to establish new school exchanges
- Support schools with existing exchanges to increase participation in these exchanges
- Support and sustain continued exchange programmes with partner schools
- Ensure that best practice is showcased to encourage more uptake of school exchanges in more schools

Activity:

Schools approved between 2018 and 2023 continued to receive support. Exchanges took place across every month of the school calendar. Participating schools visited and hosted students in towns and cities across Europe and Asia including Annecy, Belmont-Sur-Rance, Bordeaux, Dunkerque, Lille, Montpellier, Ribeaupville, Vichy in France, Freigericht, Landau, Niederkassel, Schwangau, Trostberg in Germany, Madrid, Valladolid in Spain and Mukogawa in Japan.

PPLI attended the Individual Pupil Mobility Conference in Mechelen in Belgium in March 2024. PPLI also facilitated a workshop on exchanges in German to the German Teachers' Association (GDI) in April 2024 and to the German Teachers' Summer School at the Goethe Institut in July 2024. Funding was also made available to schools participating in language trips to China and Japan.





Impact:

- Participants from the GDI workshop are now setting up new German exchanges.
- Students who were involved in an exchange experienced life abroad in another education system with a host family.
- Hosting their partner student allowed students to demonstrate and be proud of their own culture and to see parts of their own country that they may not have visited.
- Exchanges present a unique opportunity to experience the subject and improve language skills.

Quote from participating school:

"the exchange was a hugely positive experience for both schools involved, for the students, parents and teachers. For example, one of our pairs spent another two weeks together during the summer, one week in Ireland followed by one week in Germany and have formed a lasting friendship. One of our 6th year participants took the opportunity to talk about the exchange in his LC oral exam, achieved a H1 grade in German and is now planning an Erasmus year in Germany meaning he continues his language learning at third level. Examples like these show the enduring success and far-reaching effects of the exchange and how it is well worth all we put into it."

Next steps

- Plan workshops on facilitating exchanges in 2025
- Continue to support schools with organisation of exchanges
- Continue to fund schools already approved as part of the three-year scheme
- Encourage more schools and teachers to organise new exchanges and apply to Léargas for Erasmus+ funding.



3 ITE Providers



5 Guest Lectures



50 Pre-service Teachers

Overview:

In 2024, PPLI continued its strategic collaboration with Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers to build capacity among future language teachers and highlight the resources and support available through PPLI. These partnerships aim to equip pre-service teachers with innovative methodologies, tools, and strategies to foster effective language teaching.

Main aims:

- Engage with ITE providers and collaborate on projects to build capacity in appropriate methodologies and skills for future language teachers
- Raise awareness of the work and supports provided by PPLI amongst pre-service teachers
- Make resources and supports for best practice and continuing professional development readily accessible

Activity:

PPLI engaged with three ITE providers during 2024, delivering five guest lectures designed to introduce, develop, and contextualise innovative approaches in language pedagogy:

University of Limerick (LP4004 – Language Pedagogy 2):

- 21 October: Introduction to CLIL – Explored the foundations of CLIL, its principles, and relevance in language teaching.
- 28 October: Development of CLIL – Provided an in-depth look at CLIL frameworks and how to integrate them into classroom practice.
- 4 November: Implementation of CLIL – Focused on the practical application of CLIL strategies, showcasing exemplars and tools for teaching.

Maynooth University (Professional Master of Education (PME) – Advanced Methodologies):

7 November: Delivered a session on CLIL and PPLI Supports for Teachers. This session introduced PME students to the resources available through PPLI, emphasising how these tools can support innovative practices in the classroom. PPLI's work on CLIL was also showcased.

Trinity College Dublin (PME Year 1):

5th November: Delivered a lecture on DigiTech and PPLI Support. This session focused on integrating digital tools into the language classroom and leveraging PPLI resources to enhance teaching practices.

Impact:

- Over 50 pre-service teachers across three universities were introduced to the support PPLI can offer relating to innovative language teaching methodologies and resources
- Students gained a deeper understanding of CLIL and DigiTech integration. This provides them with practical strategies and actionable insights for their future classrooms
- PPLI strengthened its relationships with ITE providers, reinforcing its role as a key supporter of teacher education and innovation in language pedagogy

➤ Next steps:

- Strengthen the developing collaborations with ITE providers
- Continue visits to ITE providers to raise awareness and disseminate the resources and supports available for future language teachers
- Encourage pre-service teachers to join their local Communities of Practice and use the supports available on the PPLI and Languages Connect websites during their school placement





300+ Course Registrations



1 TY Resource Updated



1 New TY Resource Developed

Overview:

To enhance quality and ensure consistency in teaching, PPLI develops resources and tutorials on innovative methodologies, including exemplars of best practice. This work encompasses DigiTech tutorials, CPD opportunities, the creation of engaging Transition Year (TY) resources, and promotion of existing resources such as the 'MFL Teachers Talk' podcast.

Main Aims:

- Provide a platform for teachers to share effective ideas for practical application in the classroom
- Foster adoption of innovative teaching methodologies across all languages
- Provide teachers with practical resources and tutorials to enhance teaching quality
- Promote authentic language engagement among teachers and students through a variety of resources and exemplars of good practice

Activity:

A wide range of innovative methodologies were explored and developed during 2024 and the review and revision of current PPLI resources is ongoing to ensure they remain relevant to both teachers and students. Collaboration with Oide Technology in Education continued and joint efforts were made to promote the newly developed **Digital Technologies for MFL Teachers** course.



Digital Technologies for MFL Teachers

A new three-hour online course on 'Digital Technology for MFL Teachers', was developed and disseminated in partnership with Oide Technology in Education. Following a well-received short pilot in late 2023, the course is now fully available with unlimited access to registered teachers.

Throughout the course MFL teachers are given the opportunity to learn effective ways to integrate digital technology into the teaching of MFL at post-primary level including how to enhance students' listening and speaking skills using popular tools, explore digital tools for assessment. They gain insights from videos of good practice recorded in MFL classrooms, as well as from the experiences of other MFL teachers.

The course is presented in three modules:

1. Digital Technologies for Listening Skills
2. Digital Technologies for Speaking Skills
3. Digital Technologies for Assessment in MFL

On completion, teachers leave the course equipped with practical strategies ready for immediate implementation.

TY Beginners' Modules

Building on the revised TY Beginners' Modules in German, Spanish, and Italian, and the new French edition, a module in Polish was reviewed and updated and a new version in Romanian was created. Work on Chinese and Japanese modules also commenced with a finalised version expected soon. These modules are designed for students who are learning a new language in Transition Year but can also be adapted for use with LCA or LCVP students. Each module has a selection of tasks for students, and the teacher section at the front includes a topic overview, task description, and learning outcomes.



Impact:

- The new digital technologies course had good uptake, with over 70 teachers participating in the pilot and more than 300 teachers registering for the ongoing course between September and December 2024
- Redeveloped resources brought a fresh and updated perspective to TY modules, with links to relevant content and age- and stage-appropriate tools making them more engaging for Transition Year students

➤ Next Steps:

- Encourage uptake of the new 'Digital Technology for MFL Teachers' course and continue collaborations with Oide Technology in Education, particularly focusing on AI for MFL Teachers and language learning
- Complete the review of 'TY Beginners' Modules' in Chinese and Japanese and commence review of Korean, Lithuanian, Portuguese, and Russian
- Continue to review and promote existing resources such as the 'MFL Teachers Talk' podcasts and WebQuests

Overview:

The European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe supports excellence and innovation in language learning, and PPLI collaborates with this institution in an effort to implement quality language education and keep up to date with developments across the Council of Europe member states.

Main Aims:

- Continue to collaborate with ECML, exploring avenues for dissemination with stakeholders both in terms of policy and teaching and learning
- Engage with peers and stakeholders across the Council of Europe in order to keep up to date with developments in language education policy and practice

Activity:

Using ECML Resources to Support Plurilingual and Intercultural Education for Democratic Culture

Kenia Puig I Planella Ph.D was selected to coordinate this European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) project under the 2024 – 2027 Programme, ECML Resources for Democratic Culture. The project aims to support member states with the implementation of Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec (2022)1 on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture by developing procedures to evaluate and adapt relevant ECML resources to national contexts.

The project supports the implementation of the Council of Europe's Recommendation CM/Rec (2022)1, promoting plurilingual and intercultural education across all languages, education sectors, and wider society. It aims to show how existing and new ECML resources can be adapted to different national contexts, making the Recommendation realistic and actionable.



By guiding policy and practice at institutional and classroom levels, the project helps member states advance effective and inclusive plurilingual and intercultural education.

Fostering motivation in language education: what role for decision-makers and educators?

Karen Ruddock represented PPLI at this ECML event in December 2024, where she engaged with European colleagues on the topic of language learning motivation. The event provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of addressing motivational challenges and explore initiatives at local, regional, national, and European levels that enhance engagement with plurilingual and intercultural education. Additionally, insights from researchers on emerging trends in motivation helped inform practice and policy development in Ireland.

Impact:

- PPLI is better equipped to support teachers with the knowledge and skills to foster inclusive classrooms and promote plurilingual and intercultural education
- PPLI has created a working group to develop new resources to support students, teachers and school management teams for students moving between school.
- PPLI has identified good practice in a variety of areas which can support and inform practice and policy development in Ireland.



Next Steps:

- Apply for an ECML Training and Consultancy event on Plurilingual and Intercultural Education: teacher and learner competencies in the context of the new Primary Curriculum framework, the ongoing promotion of plurilingual education through our national strategy Languages Connect, and Senior Cycle Reform.
- Continue to disseminate opportunities to attend workshops and events organised by the ECML.
- Continue to work on the ARPIDE project (Using ECML resources to support plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture) in order to support stakeholders with the implementation of Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2022).



3 Online Communities of Practice



43 Teachers Participated

Overview:

An Intercultural Look at our School (ILAOS) provides a framework for schools to address the intercultural dimension in the school. The ILAOS toolkit is designed for self-evaluation and supports cultural and linguistic diversity in schools. It promotes a whole-school approach to improvement by addressing linguistic and cultural diversity in post-primary schools. It includes a set of surveys that serve as self-assessment tools, capturing the perspectives of all members of the school community, including the Board of Management, principal, deputy principal(s), teachers, non-teaching staff, students, and parents/guardians. The toolkit was adapted from the European Centre for Modern Languages project “A roadmap for the languages of schooling”.

Main Aims:

- Provide a framework for schools to evaluate and enhance their intercultural practices
- Foster curiosity, openness, and interest towards languages
- Ensure that all languages and cultures of the school community are included and valued
- Communities of Practice (CoPs) support schools in implementing the ILAOS toolkit, promote collaboration and sharing of best practice, enhance teaching methodologies, and promote cultural and linguistic diversity in schools

Activity:

Over 40 teachers participated in three Communities of Practice (COP) where they shared good practice and supported each other in implementing the toolkit. The COPs also offered teachers the opportunity to discuss challenges and identify possible solutions.

As a result of these, a working group was established at the end of 2024 with a small number of teachers who have accumulated considerable expertise in the area. The aim of the working group is to develop additional resources to support the needs of schools and students in this area.

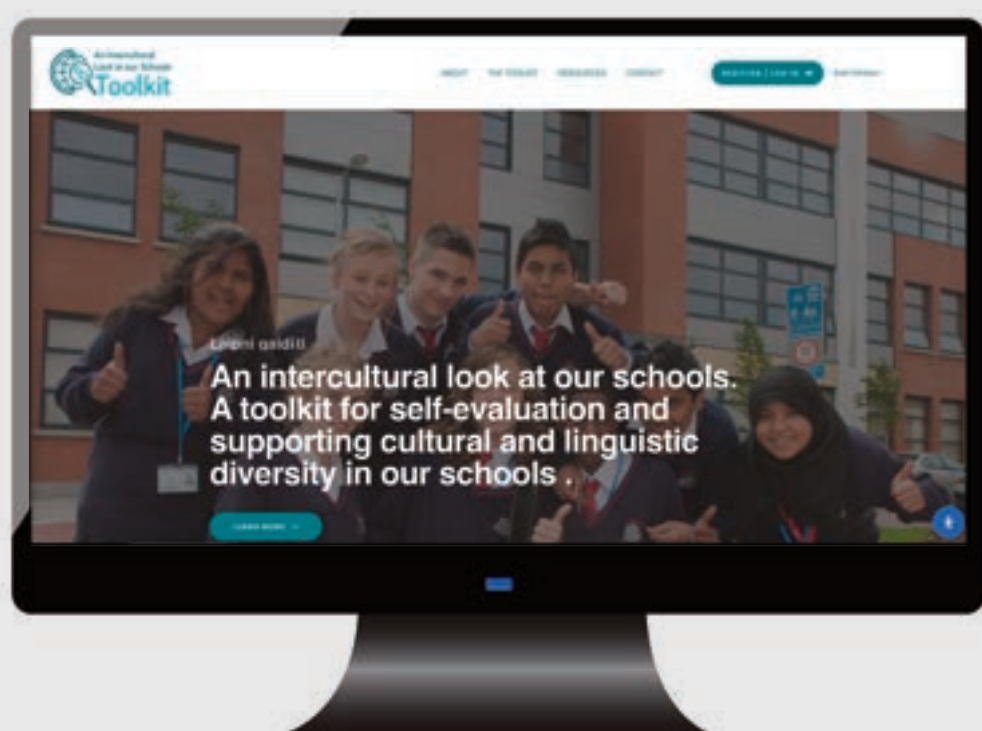


A delegation from the Servei de Llengües Estrangeres i d'Origen, Departament d'Educació, Generalitat de Catalunya, (Languages unit from Catalan Department of Education) visited PPLI to learn more about ILAOS from 29 April to 3 May 2024.

During the visit, the Catalan delegation was impressed by the inclusion of new curricular and non-curricular languages in the Irish education system. They recognised the value of promoting linguistic diversity and the various approaches taken. The visit included school visits, meetings with key stakeholders, and discussions on the implementation of ILAOS and other language initiatives.

Impact:

- Teachers' participation in the ILAOS Communities of Practice has a profoundly positive impact on schools.
- By fostering collaboration and networking among educators, common challenges can be addressed. This collaborative approach not only enhances professional development but also promotes linguistic and cultural diversity within the school, creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students.
- The positive feedback from participants highlights the value of these communities in supporting teachers' efforts to implement the ILAOS toolkit and other intercultural education initiatives, ultimately contributing to the overall improvement of the school's educational practices.
- Presenting at international conferences and hosting visiting institutions highlights Ireland's leadership in promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in education.



➤ Next steps

- Continue to host Communities of Practice
- Continue the working group to develop additional resources and supports
- Continue to participate in international forums to disseminate the work in this area



2 ELA Support Sessions

Overview:

PPLI is now tasked with increasing the visibility of the English Language Assistant (ELA) scheme as a means of developing language and intercultural awareness capacity in society as well as creating potential future teaching capacity.

Main Aims:

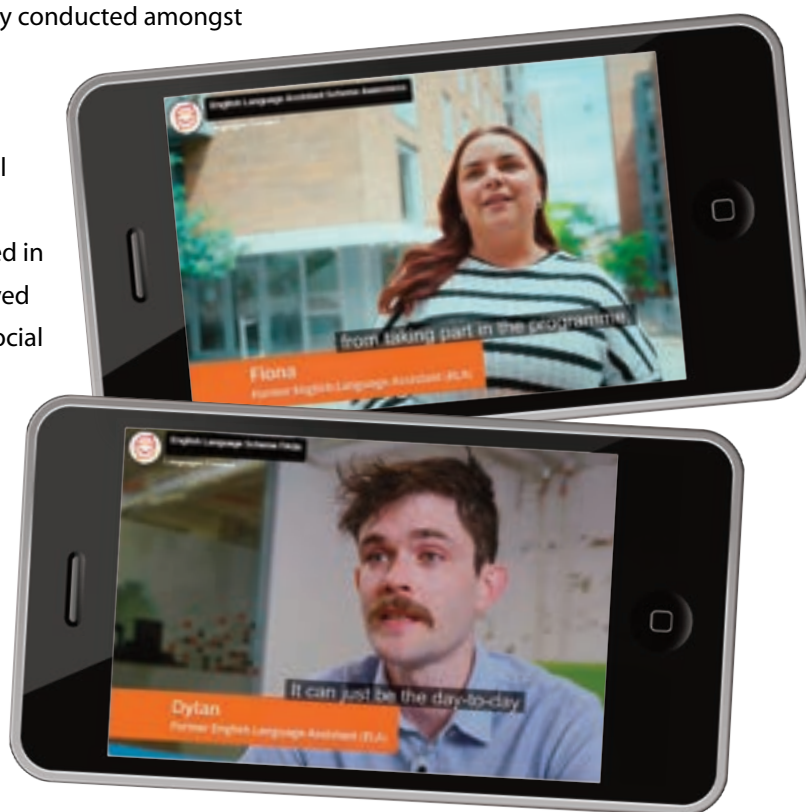
- Inform potential applicants of the many personal and professional benefits of participation in the ELA scheme
- Support increased interest in the ELA scheme through a series of initiatives that increase the visibility of the scheme

Activity:

2024 was the first time PPLI provided support for the outbound English Language Assistants. The team was able to draw on significant experience gained over many years of supporting the incoming Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs). To create supports and awareness-raising collateral the team drew input from relevant stakeholders, as well as the 2023 survey conducted amongst former ELAs.

In the summer of 2024, two new videos were created to raise awareness and inform potential applicants of the scheme. Four former ELAs participated in the videos, which were published in autumn 2024. A poster was created and displayed on university campuses across the country. A social media campaign was launched encouraging registration and promoting online support sessions. Two support sessions were organised - one for outbound ELAs, and one for those interested in applying for the 2025-26 ELA scheme.

In September 2024, a total of 90 Irish ELAs were approved to travel to Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. To assist these ELAs in their pre-departure preparations, PPLI delivered two online support sessions in August and September. Former ELAs helped deliver advice and guidance to the outbound ELAs.



Become an...

English Language Assistant

The English Language Assistant Scheme 2025/2026 opens for applications on 2nd December 2024.

Get the opportunity to live in one of these participating countries:
Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy & Spain

Closing date for applications is **13th March 2025***

* Closing dates for some countries may vary

Click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code to find out more about the scheme including eligibility and terms & conditions.



Support Teaching

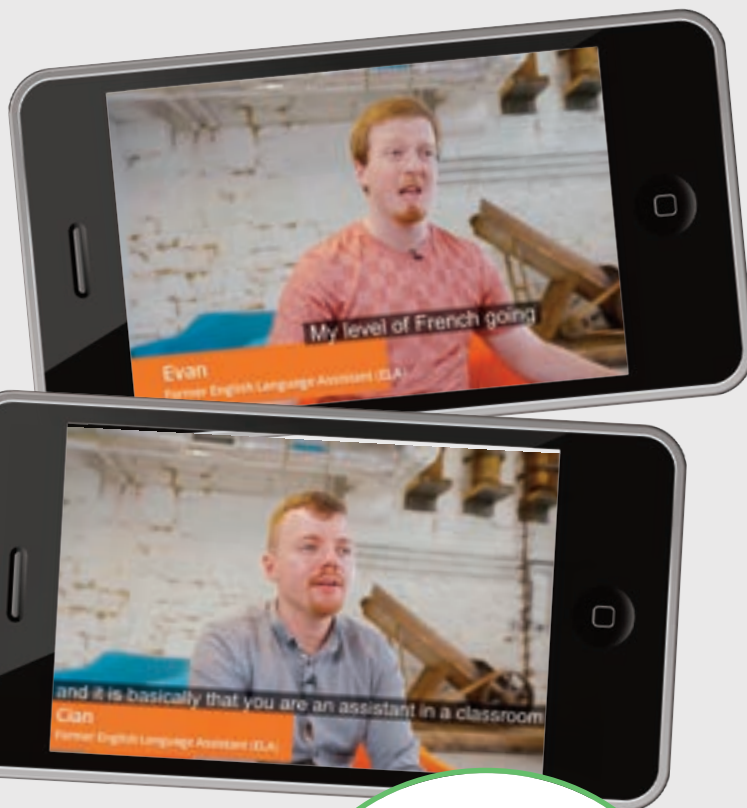
Improve your language skills

Experience new cultures

Promote Irish culture abroad

Travel

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Feedback from the support session for outbound ELAs, held in August 2024:

"Very reassuring thanks"

"Great first session!
Very insightful too.
It was great to listen to all your experiences it made me feel at ease.
Thank you!"

A meeting organised by PPLI in December 2024 with relevant embassies and cultural institutes provided an opportunity to share newly created resources and update on developments in raising awareness of the scheme. This in turn assisted in supporting further dissemination of the work completed.

Towards the end of 2024, preparations took place for a separate online session, aimed at those considering applying for the 2025-26 ELA scheme. Those registered came from a wide variety of educational backgrounds and universities.

Impact:

- New promotional videos for the ELA scheme, developed with the support of former ELAs, as well as a new poster are useful sources of information for prospective ELAs.
- Support sessions delivered by PPLI were attended by both confirmed and potential ELAs, raising visibility of the ELA scheme.

Next Steps:

- Deliver an annual social media campaign in support of building awareness of the ELA scheme.
- Provide an annual online support session, in early February, to encourage applications and interest in the scheme.



191 FLAs

Overview:

PPLI continues to expand its role in the Foreign Language Assistant (FLA) scheme, offering an evolving and growing range of teaching and learning supports to FLAs and their Cooperating Teachers (CTs).

Main Aims:

- Provide support for a high-quality teaching and learning experience for the school communities that have an FLA
- Disseminate and discuss effective teaching and learning approaches that contribute to an engaging learning environment
- Secure the best possible learning outcomes for students, by supporting planning for success and innovation in teaching and learning practices

Activity:

In January 2024, PPLI continued to support the 2023-24 cohort of FLAs and CTs through the rollout of their second round of support sessions. This was the first time in which a hybrid model of provision was offered, with a range of in-person and online offerings made available to participants.

In May 2024, together with the Department of Education and the Inspectorate, PPLI hosted an information session for schools that had been successful in their FLA applications. This session focused on providing relevant personnel in schools with important support to prepare for the arrival of their FLA. That same month, PPLI also attended and spoke at an event for French FLAs, organised by the Embassy of France in Ireland, to gather their feedback on their experience as an FLA.

PPLI hosted a two-day collaborative meeting with the German sending agency, Der Pädagogische Austauschdienst (PAD) in June 2024. This meeting included representatives from the Department of Education and allowed participants to focus on supports for both English Language Assistants and Foreign Language Assistants, and to build on existing supports for German in the Irish post-primary curriculum.





From June onwards, preparations intensified for the arrival of the 2024-25 intake of FLAs, with the development of a newsletter and a newly created Facebook page for FLAs. In September, PPLI introduced a new series of online sessions for FLAs, the aim of which was to build excitement for their upcoming FLA experience, provide pre-arrival teaching and learning supports, and respond to any arising pre-arrival queries. A total of 104 FLAs registered for these sessions and feedback was positive. Similar sessions were also held in September for cooperating teachers to support them as they prepared for the pending arrival of their FLAs.

In October 2024, PPLI once again organised and managed the FLA induction on behalf of the Department of Education. Shortly after the arrival of the FLAs at their host schools. Representatives from PPLI and the Department of Education were on hand to outline available supports to FLAs and there were opportunities for questions and answers. FLAs met their dedicated PPLI link Associate and other FLAs, allowing opportunities to network with FLAs assigned to their host regions. Their PPLI link Associate is available to support them with any teaching and learning queries they may have throughout the year. In addition, PPLI supported French FLAs with a separate event, held by the French embassy, the day after this annual induction.

330 FLAs and CTs registered for the first round of support sessions of the 2024-2025 academic year, in October 2024. These in-person sessions were delivered by PPLI Education Officers and Associates in venues nationwide over a two-week period, and participants had the choice of a wide range of dates and venues. These sessions looked at ideas to develop collaboration and plan for the academic year ahead. They also provided FLAs with opportunities to network with other FLAs based in their host regions.

PPLI organised dedicated online Communities of Practice for FLAs in November 2024. Finally, in December 2024, PPLI supported the Journée internationale des assistants de langue event organised by the French Embassy, which celebrates French FLAs and their work.

Feedback on induction from the FLAs was very positive, with comments including:



Some feedback from participants of CT-FLA support session one – October 2024:

"This was a lovely and productive session. It was nice to meet everyone and exchange with them"

Monaghan Education Centre – October 2024

"Very good session with lots of great ideas and time to collaborate"

Drumcondra Education Centre – October 2024

"The 8-point-plan and calendar were especially helpful. It gave us an opportunity to plan ahead and discuss with the other FLAs and cooperating teachers from my school!"

Galway Education Centre – October 2024

Impact:

- In 2024, as a result of feedback received during the 2023-24 programme, PPLI expanded its support for the FLA scheme. This support assisted FLAs, CTs, and schools in their preparations for arrivals of FLAs. It furthermore contributed to the development of effective collaborative teaching and learning practices that drew on FLA participation in school life.

Next Steps:

- Roll out FLA-CT support session two (January 2025)
- Review timings of pre-arrival supports for CTs
- Provide and expand the information session for successful schools (May 2025)



692 Teachers Registered



30+ Sessions

Overview:

PPLI Communities of Practice (CoPs) are meetings where teachers with a shared passion for languages and language teaching come together to exchange ideas, create new knowledge, and share best practice. These CoPs are facilitated regionally and thematically and are held both in-person and online, depending on the needs of participants. CoPs are rooted in mutual respect and trust, fostering an environment where teachers feel encouraged to share ideas, discuss challenges, ask questions, and solve problems collaboratively.



Main Aims:

- Build and sustain vibrant regional and thematic communities of MFL teachers across Ireland.
- Provide opportunities for MFL teachers to connect, collaborate, and share best practice tailored to their needs.

Activity:

In 2024, PPLI facilitated over 30 CoPs. 692 teachers registered across these sessions. The CoPs were mixed in format - regional meetings, project-specific sessions, and thematic discussions - which provided a flexible and responsive approach to meeting teachers' needs. PPLI Associates played a critical role in facilitating these sessions, bringing valuable classroom experience to enrich discussions and ensure practical relevance.

Thematic CoPs:

Topics included Open Night Toolkit, ILAOS (Intercultural Look at Our Schools), #ThinkLanguages, DigiTech, and LCA support.

Most Popular CoP:

Idea-sharing for Transition Year was the most attended, with over 150 teachers registering across three nights.

Regional CoPs:

Hosted in collaboration with local Education Centres and schools, these CoPs provided localised support.

Teacher Survey on CoP Themes and Formats:

In 2024, PPLI conducted a comprehensive survey of all teachers on the CoP mailing list to better understand their preferences for themes and formats. The survey revealed key insights into the types of topics teachers are most interested in, as well as their preferred modes of participation (in-person, online, or hybrid).

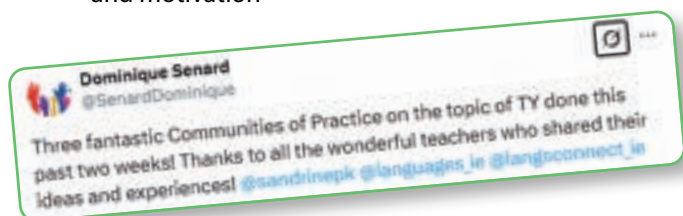
Based on the feedback:

- Preferred Themes: Teachers expressed strong interest in practical, classroom-focused topics such as creative approaches to Transition Year, integrating DigiTech into MFL teaching, and intercultural education.
- Formats: While many teachers appreciated the flexibility of online CoPs, there was a clear demand for occasional in-person sessions, particularly in regional hubs, to foster deeper connections and networking.
- Tailored Approach: The results informed the planning and delivery of CoPs in 2024, allowing for a more targeted and teacher-responsive approach.

This survey has proven invaluable in ensuring CoPs continue to meet the evolving needs of MFL teachers and provide meaningful opportunities for collaboration and professional growth. It also highlighted the importance of combining flexibility with targeted content to maximise engagement and impact.

Impact:

- Strengthened networking among MFL teachers, fostering opportunities for collaboration and shared resources
- Enhanced engagement with specific topics, such as Transition Year ideas, boosting teachers' confidence and motivation



"It was very good & useful"

"The last CoP was excellent. Thank you"

"Really enjoyed the session. Now, to find the time to incorporate the new ideas in my classroom!"

'Great facilitators'

In a online survey, MFL teachers strongly agreed that;

Overall, the topics discussed were relevant to their needs as an MFL teacher

They had an opportunity to share and discuss ideas during the session

They would recommend MFL CoPs to other language teachers



Next Steps:

- Leverage feedback from 2024 CoPs to identify emerging needs and areas of interest for teachers
- Continue organising both thematic and regional CoPs to provide targeted support and foster collaboration



17 PPLI Associates

Overview:

PPLI Associates are post-primary language teachers who play an essential role in implementing and advancing key actions outlined in the Languages Connect Strategy. They are located across the country and their involvement builds regional capacity, strengthens connections with schools, and supports the work of PPLI by engaging directly with teachers, language assistants, and school communities.



Main Aims:

- PPLI Associates serve as leaders in promoting best practice in language education by sharing their expertise at events such as Communities of Practice, Teacher Professional Network (TPN) conferences, and other relevant education conferences
- Associates act as a bridge between the classroom and the PPLI team by providing invaluable contextualised feedback and practical insights to inform strategic planning and resource development

Activity:

This year saw significant changes to the PPLI Associate team. Members of the original team, who worked with PPLI for five years, completed their term. To replace the outgoing Associates and to meet the growing demands of PPLI's expanding workload, a recruitment campaign was launched, resulting in an increased number of Associates joining the team.

The new cohort of Associates bring additional expertise to the team, including experience in school management and guidance. This diverse skillset strengthens PPLI's capacity to deliver on its strategic objectives and support teachers and schools across Ireland.

In 2024, PPLI Associates continued to support an extensive range of projects. Highlights include:

- **Facilitating National and Regional Events:** Associates played a key role in supporting projects such as #ThinkLanguages; French, German, Spanish and Italian TPN conferences; and regional education conferences, showcasing the work of PPLI and the supports offered for language learning.

- **Supporting the Foreign Language Assistant Scheme:** Associates continued to serve as mentors and key points of contact for Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs). They were central to the FLAs' induction, provided individual and group training, resolved teaching and learning queries, and supported cooperating teachers in hosting FLAs.
- **Online Support Sessions:** Associates facilitated online sessions to promote resources and support projects such as the Open Night Toolkit; the English Language Assistant (ELA) scheme; #ThinkLanguages, and Communities of Practice.
- **Creating and Reviewing Resources:** Associates contributed to the development and review of materials aligned with key actions in the Languages Connect Strategy, including content for the TY Beginner Modules, WebQuests and guidance resources.
- **Mentoring and Capacity Building:** The mentoring pilot initiated in 2023 was expanded in 2024, offering guidance and tailored support to teachers of lesser-taught languages, reinforcing capacity across schools.



Impact:

- The work of Associates has expanded PPLI's impact nationwide, fostering stronger connections with MFL teachers, FLAs, and school communities
- By providing targeted mentoring and addressing challenges early, Associates have contributed to the success of the FLA scheme and supported both FLAs and cooperating teachers effectively
- Associates' involvement in reviewing and creating teaching materials ensures relevance and practicality, meeting the needs of language teachers and students

➤ Next Steps:

- Leverage the Associates' unique position as teachers based in schools to gather relevant feedback, ensuring that PPLI remains responsive to the needs and challenges faced by teachers and students on the ground
- Foster continued innovation in resource development and teacher support, aligning with the evolving demands of classrooms and the broader educational landscape
- Ensure ongoing professional development opportunities for Associates, equipping them with the tools and skills to anticipate and address the future needs of the MFL teaching community



3 Reports

Overview:

Spotlight on Schools is a series of resources, created by teachers for teachers, that showcases best practice of modern foreign language (MFL) departments and teachers from across Ireland. The series fosters a professional learning community where teachers can engage with practical, evidence-based teaching and learning strategies, and adapt them to their own contexts.



Main Aims:

- Showcase and share examples of best practice in MFL education from schools around Ireland amongst the MFL teacher community
- Encourage MFL teachers to learn from each other
- Encourage support for, and dissemination of, innovative teaching methodologies

Activity:

Three ideas were showcased in Spotlight on Schools during 2024:

1. **Recognising and Valuing Home Languages in our School:** Emer Marschner at Woodbrook College, Bray showcased how the school recognises and values home languages to foster a welcoming environment and provide good accessibility for curriculum content using the ILAOS (An Intercultural Look at Our Schools) toolkit.
2. **Empowering and Engaging Students with Collaborative Peer Learning:** In this edition, Gloria Enrique at Sacred Heart School, Tullamore showcases how a collaborative, student-led project facilitated Transition Year students to plan and deliver a thirty-minute lesson about a topic of their choice to the rest of their classmates.
3. **Exploring Language and Culture Through Travel with LCAs:** In this edition, Elena O'Halloran at Merlin College, Galway worked with LCA students to plan a virtual trip to the target language speaking countries, combining language learning, cultural exploration, and digital literacy. This interdisciplinary project fosters teamwork, creativity, and global citizenship through hands-on, real-world tasks.

Impact:

- Bridging Theory and Practice: By demonstrating how pedagogy and policy translate into classroom practice, the series helps educators move from theoretical discussions to actionable strategies.
- Enhancing Professional Learning: Teachers gain direct access to tried-and-tested methodologies, supporting self-led CPD and professional reflection.
- Encouraging Innovation: The exemplars empower teachers to experiment with new approaches, enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes.



Next Steps:

- Plan and publish additional editions of Spotlight on Schools in 2025
- Explore the potential of the series further, and extend it to showcase best practice in other relevant areas, for example, guidance





2 Teachers Placed

Overview:

The Visiting Spanish Teacher Scheme is an agreement between the Department of Education in Ireland and the Ministry of Education and Culture in Spain. The 2024-2025 academic year was the fourth year that the programme has been running in Ireland.

Main Aims:

- Address the shortage of qualified Spanish teachers in Ireland
- Support the curriculum in Irish schools by filling vacant Spanish teaching positions with highly qualified Spanish educators
- Give students in Irish post-primary schools the opportunity to communicate and interact with native Spanish speakers
- Support schools in developing relationships and exchanges with the visiting teachers' schools in Spain

Activity:

PPLI collaborated with the Department of Education and the Consejería de Educación, which represents the Spanish Ministry of Education abroad, in the selection process for teachers and schools. Schools interviewed candidates from the shortlist and appointed the candidate that matched their selection criteria. PPLI delivered an induction program to the teachers and supported them with the required paperwork. In addition, PPLI supported the visiting teachers during the academic year in their hosting schools.

The current accommodation crisis made it very challenging for teachers to secure a place to live which resulted in not all selected candidates being able to participate in the programme. At the same time, there is evidence that the shortage of teachers of Spanish is decreasing as several participating schools were able to employ teachers already in Ireland which resulted in their withdrawal from the scheme.

Impact:

While the feedback from schools has been very positive it is becoming increasingly evident that the context for the Scheme has changed. Considering this, the Department of Education and the Consejería de Educación decided to pause the scheme for the academic year 2025-2026.



Next Steps:

- Continue to support delivery of the programme for the 2024-2025 academic year
- Explore other opportunities for collaboration



40 teachers



24 schools



4 ITE Guest Lectures



150 conference submissions

Overview:

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach that integrates language and content learning, providing students with an enriched educational experience.

PPLI continues to lead the promotion and implementation of CLIL for foreign languages across Ireland, working collaboratively with stakeholders, supporting schools, and expanding professional learning opportunities for teachers.

Main Aims:

- Advance CLIL practices in Ireland through professional learning and collaboration
- Strengthen partnerships with stakeholders to establish a unified approach to CLIL across MFL, Irish, and content subjects
- Provide targeted CPD and resources for teachers and schools implementing CLIL
- Showcase Ireland's leadership in CLIL at international levels, including hosting World CLIL 2025

Activity in 2024

Dissemination and Research Collaboration

In 2024, PPLI undertook significant efforts to disseminate the findings of the 2023 evaluation report from the national CLIL pilot. These findings were shared with key stakeholders, including the Foreign Language Advisory Group (FLAG), ensuring alignment and collaboration in driving forward language learning innovations in Ireland.

Additionally, PPLI collaborated with academics, Prof. Kim Bower and Dr Dee Rutgers, to publish a paper titled *Learner Perceptions of a National CLIL Innovation in Foreign Languages in the Republic of Ireland* in *Frontiers in Education* as part of the research topic *CLIL Beyond the Frontiers*.

This publication highlights the CLIL pilot's curriculum innovation aimed at improving motivation in language learning for Transition Year (TY) students aged 15–16. The study extracted data from an empirical evaluation focusing on the research question: What are learner perceptions of learning through CLIL approaches in a national pilot module?

This research validates the potential of CLIL to enrich language learning experiences but also emphasises the need for continued collaboration, curriculum development, and teacher support.



World CLIL 2025

In 2024 PPLI, alongside colleagues from Maynooth University and Queen's University Belfast, made a successful bid to host the World CLIL conference, which will take place in Maynooth University on 13 and 14 June 2025.

This biennial conference brings together academics, practitioners, and policymakers from around the world to share research and practices.

Key activities included:

- Launching the call for papers, which received an overwhelming response of over 150 paper submissions, 11 posters, and 3 symposia proposals from 26 countries
- Establishing a diverse programme committee to ensure a high-quality conference agenda
- Collaborating with international and Irish partners to ensure the conference reflects the latest developments in CLIL and highlights Ireland's advancements in the field

Collaboration with Stakeholders

PPLI strengthened partnerships with Oide, COGG, and NCCA in 2024 to develop a joint understanding and approach to CLIL. This collaboration aims to:

- Create synergy across projects that support schools in implementing CLIL
- Develop a common vision for CLIL that benefits MFL, Irish, and content subject teachers
- Support schools in aligning CLIL practices with curriculum frameworks and national strategies



Engagement with Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Students

Recognising the importance of preparing future teachers, PPLI engaged with ITE students in 2024 through targeted guest lectures:

- Delivered three guest lectures, which focused on CLIL's pedagogical foundations and its application in Irish classrooms, at the University of Limerick as part of the Innovative Approaches Module
- Facilitated a guest lecture in Maynooth University, introducing PPLI's supports for teachers and exploring CLIL methodologies

These engagements aimed to inspire future teachers to integrate CLIL practices into their teaching and highlighted the role of PPLI in supporting innovative language teaching methodologies.



In-Service Teacher CPD

2024 saw the largest ever number of in-service teachers attending PPLI's CLIL CPD. Forty teachers participated in a two-day CPD event, which included:

- Collaborative sessions to share experiences and best practice
- Workshops on developing and implementing CLIL resources
- Networking opportunities that led to inter-school collaborations and resource co-creation projects

Teachers left the CPD equipped with actionable strategies to implement CLIL in their classrooms and a stronger professional network to support ongoing development.

Impact:

- The World CLIL 2025 call for papers attracted global attention and fostered international collaboration
- Enhanced collaboration between PPLI, Oide, COGG, and NCCA established a unified vision for CLIL across different subjects, benefiting schools nationwide
- Engagement with ITE students ensured that future teachers are familiar with CLIL methodologies, contributing to the long-term sustainability of CLIL practices in Ireland
- The participation in in-service CPD highlighted growing interest and commitment among teachers to adopt CLIL, with tangible outcomes such as new resources and school partnerships

Next Steps:

- PPLI remains committed to advancing CLIL in Ireland, ensuring that both teachers and students benefit from this innovative approach to language and content learning.
- Continue planning and promotion for World CLIL 2025, ensuring it meets the highest standards and attracts global participation
- Finalise and disseminate resources developed through collaboration with Oide, COGG, and NCCA
- Expand support for in-service teachers with thematic CPD sessions and resource development workshops
- Increase engagement with ITE providers to further embed CLIL in teacher education programmes
- Strengthen feedback mechanisms from schools and teachers to ensure PPLI's initiatives remain responsive to the evolving needs of the education landscape



Goal 1 - Moving Forward

PPLI will continue to work with embassies to increase language upskilling and CPD opportunities for teachers. We will also continue to make available language upskilling to teachers who are qualified in a language but are not currently teaching it and to offer the language teacher registration shortfall funding scheme for teachers missing credits to register with the Teaching Council. These will all add valuable capacity to the system. Pathways for the provision of Initial Teacher Education programmes and bridging programmes to provide for the lesser taught and new curricular languages will also need to be explored.

As the Department of Education continue to increase the numbers of Foreign Language Assistants, PPLI will continue to provide resources and support to ensure the continued success and improvement in the scheme and will work with the Department to explore innovative approaches to assist schools in remote areas with securing an FLA for their students. Opportunities to leverage the complementary English Language Assistant programme further as a means of building foreign languages capacity for the education sector and beyond will also be investigated. The initial research in relation to this scheme would suggest that there is scope for development of languages capacity and addition of capacity to the teaching profession in the context of this programme with results suggesting that 42% of programme participants enter the teaching profession. Almost all improved their level of competency in the language of the country they were sent to, and 62% said they would be interested in helping to promote the benefits of learning foreign languages so mechanisms for leveraging this capacity do need to be worked on.

Erasmus+ funding is a means of supporting student mobility in the context of school exchanges and is an opportunity to bring languages to life providing for authentic language input and usage. Teacher mobility programmes facilitated by Erasmus+ are an important means of CPD. PPLI will begin to move from provision of the Funding for School Exchanges grant to encouraging schools to apply for Erasmus+ funding to support this important activity and will encourage teachers to leverage grants for language upskilling.

There is good participation by teachers in Communities of Practice and PPLI has been responding to feedback from teachers by facilitating more language and interest specific groups. Moving forward, collaboration with stakeholders needs to reinforce the importance and value of networks for teachers' professional development and mechanisms for ensuring that these networks become self-sustaining will continue to be explored.

PPLI will continue to showcase exemplars of good practice in all languages and provide relevant resources and tutorials on digital technologies to enhance quality in teaching and learning. AI now features significantly in this context, and we are committed to exploring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as a resource to support MFL teaching and learning.

CLIL needs to be expanded and introduced in earlier years in post-primary schools, and as part of the introduction of foreign languages in the primary curriculum. This would allow students to engage with the target language in meaningful and content-rich contexts, accelerating language learning and leading to improved language proficiency and fluency without negatively impacting on content learning. CLIL methodology will also support EAL learners in accessing the curriculum which ensures a quality education for them and reduces inequalities.

Collaboration with stakeholders that was so much part of 2024 needs to continue and increase in order to share and disseminate good practice and in order to explore further areas for development.

Goal 2 aims to diversify and increase the uptake of languages learned and cultivate the languages of the new Irish. PPLI is implementing this through the deployment of peripatetic teachers; provision of and support for the more recently introduced and lesser-taught languages; piloting a variety of flexible models of delivery such as shared classes across schools, blended learning, Transition Year and Leaving Certificate classes; and incentivising schools to diversify the languages offered to students through an additional allocation scheme.

A comprehensive framework of CPD and support is also provided to teachers to assist with this. Goal 2 is also being implemented at primary level through the facilitation of the 'Say Yes to Languages' primary language sampler module. Introduced in the 2021/2022 school year in the context of developments at primary curricular level, 'Say Yes to Languages' aims to prepare the ground for the introduction of Modern Languages in the Primary Curriculum from 2025. The module offers participating primary schools the opportunity to introduce elements of linguistic and cultural awareness alongside language learning. Foreign languages upskilling for primary teachers is an additional important strand of this work introduced in 2024.



GOAL 2

**DIVERSIFY AND INCREASE THE UPTAKE OF
LANGUAGES LEARNED AND CULTIVATE THE
LANGUAGES OF THE NEW IRISH**

Overview:

PPLI aims to diversify and increase the uptake of languages learned through several initiatives, including the deployment of peripatetic teachers and the provision of the more recently introduced and lesser-taught languages at post-primary level.

PPLI facilitates a variety of flexible models of delivery, including shared classes across schools, blended learning, short courses, Transition Year, and Leaving Certificate online and in-person classes on Saturdays. PPLI is committed to providing support, resources, and opportunities for both teachers and students to engage with and learn these languages.

Main Aims:

- Provide language learning opportunities not currently available to students in schools and increase the uptake of more recently introduced and lesser taught languages in Senior Cycle.
- Provide equity of access to languages that are not available in many schools due to lack of critical mass of students, using a variety of models of provision, including blended learning, shared classes, Saturday and online classes provision, and a system of additional allocation.
- Conduct research on the different models of provision to inform the further development of languages provision.
- Provide students who speak languages other than English or Irish at home with an opportunity to maintain and develop their home and/or heritage language capacity through access to Leaving Certificate classes and to have this competency recognised, resulting in wider access to education pathways.
- Incentivise schools to diversify the languages offered to students and to take ownership of new language subjects, in a way that supports long-term sustainability.
- Improve the quality of provision of the more recently added and lesser taught languages in schools by supporting and assisting teachers with implementation through a comprehensive framework of CPD and mentoring that supports effective, inclusive, and engaging teaching and learning.
- Provide Transition Year students with the opportunity to engage with a new language.

PPLI Development Officers

PPLI employs 51 Development Officers to teach the more recently introduced languages such as Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish and Portuguese in schools across Ireland. These Development Officers are qualified teachers who are deployed to schools on an ex-quota peripatetic basis.

This may be thought of as a bridging programme that enables schools to introduce new language subjects with minimum risk and resourcing. Where the provision is successful, schools may employ the teacher using additional allocation, a separate scheme facilitated by PPLI and described below.

The table below details the number of Development Officers employed by PPLI for each language, and the number of schools each language is taught in.

Language	Development Officers (Teachers)	Schools (Excluding PPLI Saturday Classes)
Chinese	6	42
Japanese	18	27
Korean (TY Module)	1	8
Lithuanian	1	1
Polish	15	21
Portuguese	4	8
Russian	4	3
Romanian	2	N/A (Saturday Class only)
Total	51	110

In-School Provision of Languages

PPLI facilitates diversification of languages provision in schools by offering schools the opportunity to add additional languages to their curriculum without having to use regular school allocation. Schools are therefore enabled to trial a new language before committing to longer-term provision. Students are offered more choice of languages which caters for diverse interests and aptitudes and an imbalance in provision of languages is addressed. There are few teachers on staff in schools that have capacity to teach the more recently introduced curricular languages and provision in schools is therefore reliant on this external provision, at least in the early years while the language is embedded and established.

Junior Cycle

In the 2024-2025 academic year, languages provision in Junior Cycle continued to grow, offering students increased opportunities to engage with a diverse range of languages. Currently, the following languages are taught by PPLI Development Officers at the Junior Cycle level across 12 post-primary schools, reaching a total of 590 students:

Language	Junior Cycle Students	Schools
Chinese	243	3 (2 in Cork, 1 in Dublin)
Japanese	57	2 schools in Dublin
Polish	290	7 (4 in Dublin, 1 in Cork, 1 in Kerry, 1 in Offaly)
Total	590	12 Schools

- The integration of additional languages at Junior Cycle in post-primary education provides numerous benefits for students, schools, and the broader education system. These include:
- Enhanced cognitive skills – learning languages improves memory, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking abilities.
 - Stronger academic performance – multilingual students often perform better across various subjects, benefiting from transferable skills such as enhanced literacy and communication.
 - Cultural awareness and inclusion – language learning fosters intercultural competence, helping students appreciate diversity and develop empathy for those from different cultures.
 - Greater student well-being – for heritage language speakers, having the opportunity to study their home language within the school system strengthens their sense of identity and belonging, which positively impacts well-being.
 - Preparation for future careers – Ireland’s economy is increasingly globalised, and multilingualism is a key asset in sectors such as business, technology, and diplomacy. Early exposure to these languages enhances students’ career prospects.

Transition Year

During the 2024-2025 academic year, PPLI facilitated Transition Year language classes in 82 schools, creating the opportunity for 7,744 Transition Year students to try learning a new language. Some schools have up to three languages for TYs supported by PPLI. The languages provided can be seen in the table below.

Language	TY Students	Schools
Chinese	1,906	42
Japanese	2,177	27
Korean	380	8
Lithuanian	157	1
Polish	1,352	19
Portuguese	444	8
Russian	176	3

- The language modules in TY foster respect, tolerance, and sensitivity towards other cultures, contributing to broader intercultural competences and global awareness.
- Guest speakers from the relevant embassies and cultural agencies added depth and engagement to the learning experience. Students explored topics such as cuisine, traditional arts, and contemporary culture, broadening their understanding of the target culture beyond the classroom.
- Activities such as games and discussions about other cultures have been particularly well-received, adding variety and relevance to the learning experience.
- Classes in heritage languages to non-native speakers in post-primary schools foster cross-cultural understanding and integration. Learning new languages exposes students to different cultural perspectives, enhancing their adaptability and intercultural communication skills.

Leaving Certificate (In-School Provision)

PPLI facilitates diversification of languages provision in schools by offering schools the opportunity to add additional languages to their curriculum without having to use regular school allocation. Schools are therefore enabled to trial a new language before committing to longer-term provision. Students are offered more choice of languages which caters for diverse interests and aptitudes and an imbalance in provision of languages is addressed. There are few teachers on staff in schools that have capacity to teach the more recently introduced curricular languages and provision in schools is therefore reliant on this external provision, at least in the early years while the language is embedded and established.

Learning languages not traditionally offered in the Leaving Certificate curriculum in schools in Ireland such as Japanese and Mandarin Chinese offers students the opportunity to engage with rich cultural heritage and acquire knowledge about societies in Asia that has not previously been accessible to them. It offers them a grasp of a language that could enable them to access technological advancements and skills that will broaden their cultural horizons and prepare them for the global context beyond Europe.

The facilitation by PPLI of classes in languages that are spoken as heritage and/or home languages by students in school encourages a shift towards plurilingual education. New language specifications and curricula integrate plurilingual strands, encouraging students to draw on multiple linguistic resources. This approach supports more flexible, inclusive language learning and aligns with national and European goals for multilingual competence.

PPLI support for implementation of these languages in schools, not only enriches the linguistic diversity of the Irish education system but also provides heritage language speakers with formal recognition of their linguistic identity. This enhances student engagement, strengthens literacy skills, and supports retention of these students in school. For heritage language speakers, being able to take their language for Leaving Certificate opens up further educational opportunities, in particular in the context of accessing higher education, as a result of the increased potential to meet entry criteria.

The table below shows the number of students studying in schools, at Leaving Certificate level, with PPLI Development Officers.

Language	Students
Chinese	52
Japanese	242
Polish	78
Total	372

An interesting feature of the provision of classes in Polish has been that it has provided additional opportunities for Ukrainian students to learn a language that shares grammatical structures and vocabulary, and this has increased options at third level for them also, as a result of having an additional subject that is more accessible for them. Learning Polish also supports them with building on their existing language skills and boosting their confidence in language learning in general. With shared historical and cultural ties between Poland and Ukraine, learning Polish can help Ukrainian students feel more connected to their own culture and foster important social connections in the community while adapting to life in Ireland.

Project Funding: In-school provision of non-curricular Romanian for Leaving Certificate

PPLI also supports the provision of Romanian language classes to encourage more students to maintain and develop literacy in their home or heritage language, by means of financial support to schools to recruit a teacher of Romanian where a critical mass of Romanian-speaking students attends.

In 2024, funding was provided to three post-primary schools in Dublin, enabling them to deliver classes to over 150 students, as well as to acquire relevant materials. These classes supported students in their preparation for the non-curricular Romanian Leaving Certificate examination.

Saturday Classes

PPLI facilitates Saturday classes to support students who wish to take the more recently added languages for the Leaving Certificate that are not accessible to them in their regular school setting. The following table illustrates the language classes and numbers of students who registered in September 2024.

Saturday Classes

Language	Saturday Classes	Students	Locations
Chinese	7	128	Dublin, Cork Online
Japanese	6	115	Dublin, Cork Online
Lithuanian	1	38	Dublin
Polish	8	195	Dublin, Cork, Galway, Online
Portuguese	2	41	Online
Romanian	4	132	Dublin
Russian	5	99	Dublin, Galway, Online
Total	33	748	

Classes in a variety of languages are provided online and at venues in Dublin, Cork, and Galway, primarily on Saturday mornings. These are attended by just under 750 students, in 33 class groups of fifth- and sixth-year students. A new online class in Russian was introduced in September 2024 to accommodate regional demand. There was also a high demand for Chinese, which resulted in the formation of two fifth year online groups. The full Leaving Certificate curriculum is implemented in all classes.

Impact:

- The number of students registered for the 2024-25 school year increased to 748 students in the 2024-25 school year registered for the Saturday Class programme provided by PPLI in September 2024. This number includes new registrations for fifth year and returning students to sixth year.
- Students are provided with the opportunity to access a Leaving Certificate subject that is not available in their schools.
- Students who live in less populated areas are given access to equity of provision by being enabled to prepare for a curricular or non-curricular language where there is neither a critical mass of students nor an available teacher.

- Students have the opportunity to take an additional foreign language for Leaving Certificate, something which can be difficult to access within a school timetable.
- Students with heritage languages have the opportunity to present for a subject at Leaving Certificate that offers them the opportunity to have their competency in a language recognised resulting in wider access to education pathways.
- Students are supported with home-language maintenance which supports the students' well-being in turn impacting academic achievement.
- The development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence is an important aspect of Saturday classes. This encourages social cohesion and inclusion of both heritage and non-heritage learners.

Next Steps

- Continue to offer Saturday classes in Dublin, Cork, and Galway
- Continue to expand online classes to cater for students who are unable to access face-to-face classes due to location
- Continue to explore innovative models of provision to support home language maintenance and diversification of foreign languages capacity

Leaving Certificate Exam Preparation

In addition to the variety of class provision, PPLI also provides targeted Leaving Certificate supports for students. In November 2024, 82 fifth- and sixth-year students joined PPLI for its first online examination preparation session for Leaving Certificate candidates interested in taking a particular language subject examination, in this case Russian. This session covered the structure of the Leaving Certificate Russian examination and was aimed at candidates who did not require tuition in the language, but who would benefit from support in understanding the examination paper structure.

Next Steps

- Continue to offer Saturday classes in Dublin, Cork, and Galway
- Continue to expand online classes to cater for students who are unable to access face-to-face classes due to location
- Continue to explore innovative models of provision to support home language maintenance and diversification of foreign languages capacity

Polish for Leaving Certificate Blended Learning Project

The Polish for Leaving Certificate Blended Learning Project is a collaborative project between Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI), Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB), and H2 Learning. Together with these partners, PPLI has provided a full Leaving Certificate Polish course in six CMETB schools via a blended learning model. The course is designed to be taught over 180 hours, over two academic years. It combines online, self-directed, and face-to-face classes in participating schools.

Building on the successful first three years of the project, a full Senior Cycle Polish course was provided from September 2024 in six CMETB schools. Two teachers and 44 students are currently involved in the project.

The following CMETB schools have been participating from September 2024:

- Coláiste Dún an Rí, Dunaree, Co. Cavan
- St Mogue's College, Bawnboy, Co. Cavan
- Breifne College, Cavan
- Beech Hill College, Monaghan
- Inver College, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
- St Bricin's College, Belturbet, Co. Cavan

CMETB have provided devices, connectivity, Microsoft 365 and Teams support to facilitate student engagement with online classes. PPLI and H2 Learning deliver continuing professional development (CPD) to Polish blended learning teachers. Ongoing CPD is important in equipping the eTeachers with the necessary skills and confidence to effectively manage and deliver lessons in this new format using a variety of inclusive teaching strategies to suit diverse learning styles and needs.

From the students' perspective, the blended learning approach works well. They feel comfortable with the combination of online classes, in-person classes, and self-directed learning activities. As part of the blended approach, a day out was organised for the students at Tanagh Outdoor Education and Training Centre.

The day was designed to provide an immersive learning experience which encouraged teamwork and collaboration that complemented their language learning journey. The eTeachers and school-based eMentors also felt that the day played an important role in strengthening the bond between them and their students.

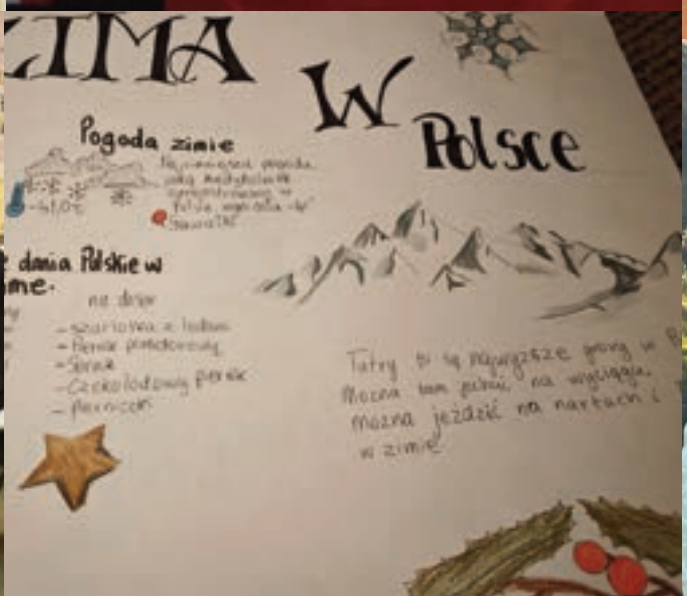
Impact:

- 44 students accessed the Polish Leaving Certificate blended learning course in the last academic year
- PPLI acquired expertise and experience in relation to blended learning methodologies, which will inform the development of blended learning courses for other languages
- Students have exhibited high levels of engagement and enthusiasm, enjoyed the learning experience, and demonstrated a commitment to their home language studies
- The project has provided students with a sense of cultural validation and inclusion within the school community, recognising the value of their language and culture

Next Steps:

- Encourage the provision and roll-out of the blended learning model in more schools in the future, enabling significant numbers of migrant speakers to maintain and develop literacy in their heritage language.
- Continue to improve the project based on feedback from the students, eTeachers, eMentors, and schools
- Disseminate the project successes and engage the participants to promote this project to other relevant stakeholders.









Additional Allocation to Schools to Support Diversification of Foreign Languages Provision

Additional allocation to schools incentivises post-primary schools to deliver lesser-taught languages and languages more recently added to the Leaving Certificate curriculum, for the purpose of diversification of foreign language provision. For the academic year 2024/25 the additional allocation is available for Italian, Japanese, Russian, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, and Portuguese. For schools to be registered, they must have fully registered post-primary teachers available to teach the languages.

In the 2024/25 academic year, 17 schools received additional allocation of hours, an increase from the 14 schools in the 2023/24 academic year. See table below for details:

Language	Students
Chinese	6
Japanese	4
Lithuanian	1
Mandarin Chinese	1
Polish	4
Russian	1
Total	17

Six different languages are included in the scheme. A total of 71 classes of students from first year to sixth year benefitted from the provision nationwide. Schools are supported with the new subject development through visits from members of the PPLI Teaching and Learning team.

Impact: Additional Allocation

- The total number of schools in the scheme has increased to 17.
- Four schools employed new teachers: two for Polish, one for Italian, and one for Lithuanian.
- In the schools already availing of additional allocation, additional classes and year groups have been introduced - the total number of classes of students benefitting from additional allocation is now 71.

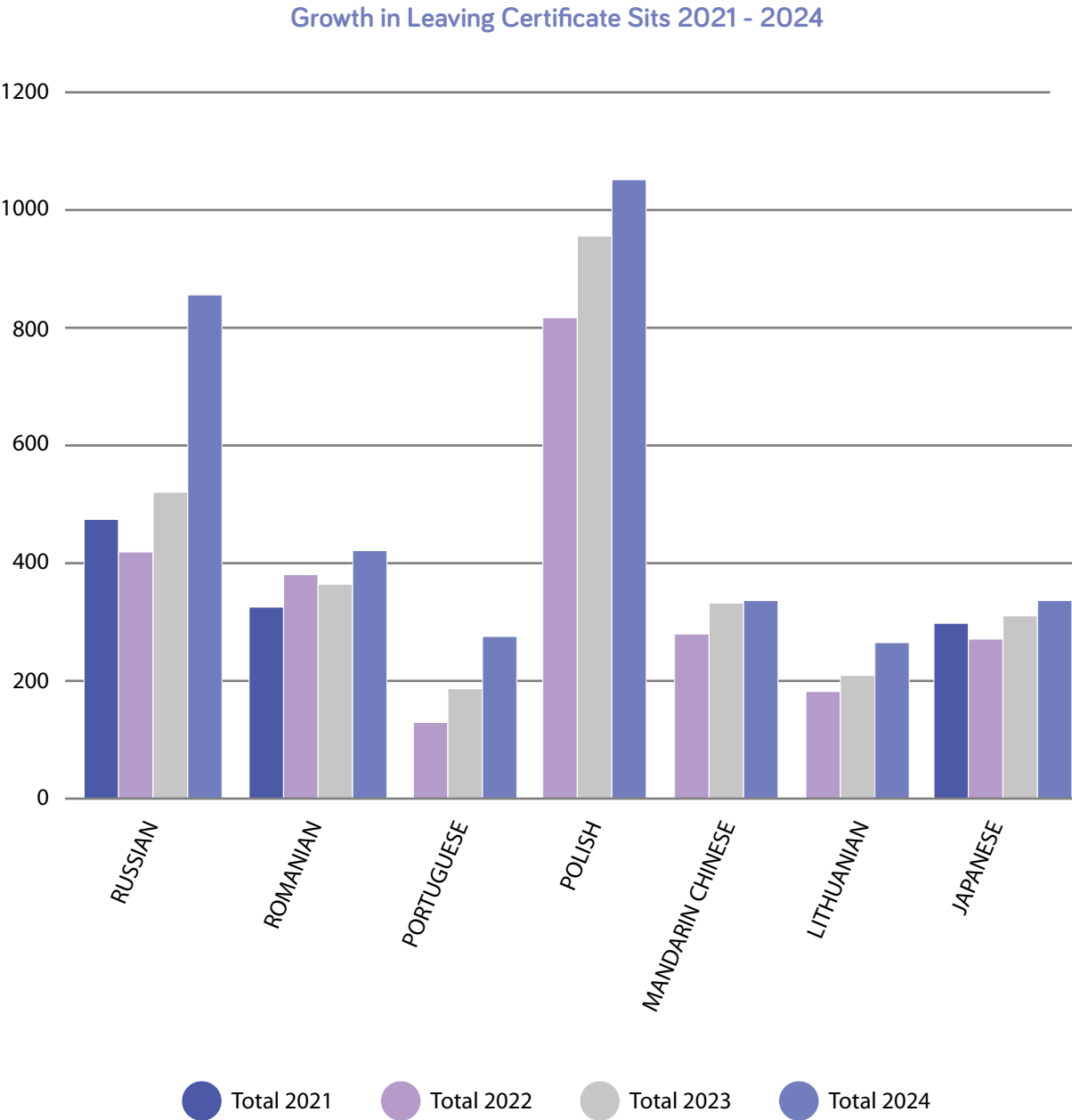
➤ Next Steps: Additional Allocation

- Conduct a full review in 2025 of the Additional Allocation Scheme as a means of sustainably embedding more recently added and lesser taught languages in the school and supporting diversification of provision
- Further promote the opportunities under Circular 0006/2020 and facilitate additional allocation for additional schools in the next academic year
- Continue targeted support for schools

Overall Impact of Language Provision: Increase in engagement in languages provided by PPLI

The number of students sitting the Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese and Polish Leaving Certificate exams since they were introduced as curricular languages continues to increase year-on-year as shown in the graph below.

There was a very significant increase in the number of students taking the Leaving Certificate Russian exam in 2024, with a total of 855 sits compared to just 521 in 2023.



Student Feedback

"Learning Korean through games and cultural activities was so much fun! My favourite was the K-pop lyrics challenge—it made learning vocabulary so exciting, and everyone got really competitive."

'My Polish teacher was a very helpful and supportive person throughout the duration of the course'

'My favourite activities in this course were the lessons about the culture and traditions in Poland. There were a lot of things that I learnt during those classes as I am a bit unfamiliar with my roots. The classes on the structure of the language were also excellent.'

'I would like to thank you for letting us have this opportunity as it gives me an extra subject for the Leaving Cert and lets me learn about my native language'

"I thought learning Chinese would be like solving a puzzle without all the pieces. Doing speaking exercises and role-plays, like practicing how to order food or ask for directions, made it so much easier and really fun."

"Learning Chinese has shown me the power of language in connecting people. It was exciting to see how much I could express and how real it made the learning feel."

"Chinese has boosted my confidence massively. During our outing, I managed to order food all on my own, and that moment made me realise how far I've come. It's made me want to learn even more."

Next Steps

- Continue to support provision at all levels, focusing on expanding Leaving Certificate programmes but also to facilitate more provision of additional TY languages to new schools in 2025
- Enhance CPD opportunities to encourage autonomous learning and professional reflection among teachers
- Recruit and train new teachers
- Continue to collaborate with ITE providers to ensure a supply of teachers in all curricular languages
- Continue to review the provision and the resources created for the TY modules
- Conduct research to explore provision for students with Special Educational Needs



50 PPLI teachers



11 CPD sessions

Overview:

PPLI has established frameworks to develop teachers' understanding of the curriculum and methodologies that suit new language subject implementation contexts. This includes the provision of continuous professional development (CPD) and training sessions, group and individual projects, school visits and class observation, communities of practice, and mentoring and self-directed learning to support teachers of new and lesser-taught languages.

Throughout 2024, PPLI maintained its commitment to offering sustained support to teachers of more recently added and lesser-taught languages. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was conducted through both face-to-face interactions and online sessions, addressing a range of topics such as adapting to new language specifications, leveraging AI in teaching, and promoting peer collaboration and well-being.

Complexity introduced in PPLI by what is now a diverse group of teachers in the context of experience in general teaching and learning, exposure to technology and AI, familiarity with a variety of teaching and learning contexts (face-to-face, online, blended learning), as well as specific needs across different languages has necessitated a shift from centrally led CPD to a more collaborative approach which meets a wide variety of teacher needs.

Main Aims:

- Improve and maintain the quality of language provision
- Support the implementation of more recently added Leaving Certificate language specifications
- Address teachers' needs in CPD, provide opportunities for peer collaboration, and address the well-being of teachers
- Equip teachers to deliver face-to-face, online, and blended learning language classes
- Address developing needs in leveraging AI in teaching and learning

Activity:

During 2024 PPLI's Development Officers achieved significant professional growth through CPD and collaborative initiatives. These included:

- Induction and training for new teachers
- Designing and implementing mock exams
- Participating in SLAR meetings
- Organising school-based events and workshops
- Creating resources to enhance student exposure to the more recently introduced languages
- Language-specific Community of Practice sessions
- Language-specific CPD workshops
- Ongoing mentoring

To support the diverse needs of teachers engaging in online and blended learning contexts, the CPD activities were structured around two core strands:

- (i) For onboarding new online teachers, sessions introduced foundational skills and strategies for effective online teaching. Topics included creating presence, online teaching models, building blocks and planning, choice boards and playlists, the role of the online teacher, and assessment and reflection. These workshops aimed to equip new teachers with essential tools and confidence to navigate online learning environments effectively.
- (ii) For upskilling existing teachers, topics focused on enhancing and modernising the skillsets of experienced teachers. These sessions addressed the integration of advanced technologies, including AI, into language teaching and learning. Topics included adapting new technologies to support language instruction, continuous assessment for online contexts, and differentiation and Universal Design for Learning in online settings. These sessions encouraged teachers to refine their practice and explore innovative approaches to engage learners.

In addition to the above, both groups of teachers benefited from support with integrating intercultural and linguistic skills, fostering plurilingual and pluricultural competencies. This holistic approach adopted by teachers allowed students to immerse themselves in the relevant language and culture.

School visits and classroom observations remain essential in supporting new teachers with onboarding. A whole-school approach has been central to this support, involving guidance on pedagogy and facilitating subject development through engagements with school management and their colleagues such as the MFL coordinators, Guidance Counsellors, and Special Educational Needs Coordinators. Subject development and sustainability have been identified as key areas to be addressed in CPD activities.

Online sessions on topics of general interest, followed by general and language-specific Communities of Practice, and incorporation of peer collaboration and observation, have become a core part of CPD. Experienced teachers are invited to share their expertise and demonstrate successful approaches, while new teachers contribute fresh insights and perspectives on teaching and learning. A strong focus on enhancing student engagement in physical and virtual classrooms emerged as a key priority in these sessions.

In the context of educational technology, workshops and follow-up clinics were organised to support teachers in navigating blended and online teaching methodologies, with a focus on practical implementation and scalability. Four additional AI workshops were introduced to cater to the increasing need, covering different levels of AI integration and practical applications in teaching and learning.

Impact:

- Teachers feel supported with school visits and classroom observations
- Specialised CPD and workshops are valued for their relevance in the evolving education landscape.
- Feedback highlights the effectiveness of delivering targeted, collaborative, and adaptive support, for the teachers' professional development.

"The subject development session gave me important information that I did not know until now, and many practical ideas to collaborate more effectively with school colleagues. It's great to feel so supported."

"The AI session really opened my eyes! I am going to try to use it to streamline my lesson planning. It was incredibly practical and immediately useful. Thank you!"

"The UDL (Universal Design for Learning) one made me look at my lesson plans differently. It really helped me see how I can make them more accessible for my students, and it might reduce some of the work I have been doing."

Next Steps

- Continue to support teachers during the implementation of more recently added curricular languages
- Encourage engagement with training available in schools and beyond
- Continue to collaborate with teachers to transition from being CPD participants to contributors
- Further develop teachers' expertise in a variety of areas





16 teachers completed registration in 2024

Overview:

The opening of Teaching Council registration for recently introduced languages in January 2023 marked a significant milestone for language education in Ireland. This step supports the professionalisation and recognition of internationally qualified teachers of recently introduced and lesser-taught curricular languages, ensuring these subjects are taught by qualified teachers. It also provides criteria to roadmap provision of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in these languages.

Main Aims:

- Support the registration and induction of internationally qualified teachers for newly introduced (Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese) and lesser-taught curricular languages (Japanese, Russian)
- Address the domestic shortage of qualified teachers for these languages
- Ensure sustainable subject development and promote teacher well-being by supporting them with the registration process
- Align with national and EU policies on professional recognition and educational standards

Activity:

- Collaboration with the Teaching Council to support teacher registration processes. The Teaching Council hosted a targeted information session for PPLI teachers and education officers to explain registration criteria, clarify documentation requirements, and address teacher concerns.
- Guidance and mentoring for teachers navigating the complexities of registration were provided through regular meetings and check-ins. These sessions supported teachers with acquiring and verifying necessary documentation and offered tailored explanations of the registration process, addressing linguistic, cultural, and systemic differences.
- Collaborated with relevant teacher professional networks (e.g., Polish Teachers of Ireland) and cultural institutes (e.g., Confucius Institute for Mandarin Chinese) to disseminate information effectively and provide targeted support for migrant language teachers.
- Published a research paper on establishing Asian language initial teacher education in Ireland (<https://doi.org/10.35903/teanga.v31i.7643>)
- PPLI also engaged with stakeholders to develop additional teaching and learning capacity through Initial Teacher Education (ITE), Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes, academic presentations, and awareness raising campaigns.

- Facilitation of the induction process for visiting Confucius Institute teaching staff in UCC and hosting a visit and seminar with MA in Teaching Chinese students at UCC.
- Provision of CPD and professional support for in-service teachers and teacher candidates in ITE.

Impact:

- Sixteen teachers completed registration in 2024 (2 Japanese, 6 Chinese, 7 Polish, 1 Portuguese)
- Five teachers are currently in the process of Droichead induction.
- Improved recognition for internationally qualified teachers, fostering opportunities for better integration and job security
- Enhanced sustainability of language provision by securing qualified teachers, thereby ensuring the availability of these subjects for state examinations and maintaining strong student engagement
- Increased teacher well-being as a result of access to registration

Next Steps

- Continue to support teachers in completing registration and induction
- Advocate for adjustments in Droichead criteria to reflect diverse teaching contexts, such as peripatetic and blended learning, and to recognise international qualifications
- Expand professional development opportunities to support teachers in more recently added languages
- Collaborate with stakeholders to address systemic barriers to teacher supply, registration and employment



6 Camps



121 Students

Overview:

Summer camps for post-primary students in lesser-taught and heritage languages are funded by PPLI. These two-week-long camps are held during the summer and are organised and taught by professionals in a variety of languages, at locations nationwide. They provide students an opportunity to improve their language skills through language classes, as well as a combination of sport and culture classes taught through the target language.

Main Aims:

- Motivate students to develop and maintain their heritage languages and sit these languages for Leaving Certificate
- Inspire students to take up a lesser-taught language for Leaving Certificate
- To raise awareness among students of the availability of these languages in the HEIs

Activity:

In 2024, six camps took place, offering students the opportunity to participate in language classes and participate in cultural activities in Chinese, Italian, Japanese, Lithuanian and Polish. Four universities managed a summer camp, bringing post-primary students on campus to spend two weeks learning a more recently added or lesser-taught language.

2024 was the sixth year in which these summer camps took place. The remit of PPLI is to manage funding for, provide advice, and assist with the collection of feedback on the summer camps. The coordinators are responsible for advertising the camps, registration of students, and devising the camp programme. In addition to language classes, students cover a variety of cultural activities and sports as outlined below:

Chinese in Dundalk Institute of Technology

In Dundalk, students covered Chinese language, writing, painting, traditional music, dumpling making, traditional board games, paper cutting, an introduction to Qigong and a trip to a local Chinese manufacturing company WuXi. On the last day work produced was showcased in an exhibition, along with a performance for parents, guests from the Chinese Embassy and senior management from DKIT.

Chinese in South-East Technological University (SETU), Waterford

In Waterford, students learnt about Chinese language and writing, and covered Chinese calligraphy, traditional Chinese operas, and had a Chinese cookery demonstration. They did cultural quizzes and games, watched a Chinese movie, and played table tennis and chess. They visited Mount Congreve Gardens which has a Chinese Pagoda. Several students are now interested in studying Chinese at SETU and spending a term in China.

Italian at University of Galway

In Galway, students learnt Italian language, created masks for the Venetian carnival, learnt Italian hand gestures, found out about art in Florence and created a piece of Botticelli group artwork, they made Italian pizza, watched an Italian movie, subtitled and dubbed cartoons and rehearsed for their final show.

Japanese at University College Dublin (UCD)

In Dublin, students learnt about Japanese language and culture. They tried Japanese manga, Taiko drumming, experienced a Japanese school sports day, tried origami and enjoyed a trip to the Japanese Gardens at the Irish National Stud. They had a Taiko performance on the last day.

Polish in Cavan

In Cavan, students had a different focus each day including Nicolaus Copernicus; famous Polish women; painter Jan Matejko; a sports day including presentations on Polish athletes, national bards; Polish movies, etc. The final day included a picnic, games, a photo booth, certificates and prizes.

Lithuanian in Monaghan

Students explored mythology, history, traditions, music and dance, made t-shirts and tried on traditional dress, tried pottery, had cookery sessions, a sports day, watched a Lithuanian film, went to a folk museum, and welcomed the Lithuanian ambassador.





Italian
Summer
Camp



Japanese
Summer
Camp





Polish Summer Camp



Lithuanian Summer Camp



What the students say...

*I think it's the best camp I've ever attended and it will be hard to find another one better! 😊
(Japanese camp in Dublin)*

*I really enjoyed this camp and would definitely recommend it to all people who love Japan. I think it's the best camp I've ever attended and it will be hard to find another one better! 😊
(Japanese camp in Dublin)*

*My favourite activity was the quiz about the singers and the trip to the folk museum
(Lithuanian camp in Monaghan)*

*The camp was amazing the best one I was ever at 😊
(Polish camp in Cavan)*

*My favourite activity was going to Wuxi, seeing the workings of a big company was interesting and educational. And learning to write Chinese.
(Chinese in Dundalk)*

*The best thing about the camp was meeting new people and Taiko - Japanese Drumming
(Japanese camp in Dublin)*

*The best thing about the camp was the friends that I made along the way
(Lithuanian camp in Monaghan)*

*I loved the cooking Chinese dishes and trip to mount Congreve. I like cooking so it was interesting for me to learn how to cook a Chinese dish and it was really good. The trip was good because the area was so beautiful, and the building was beautiful
(Chinese in Waterford)*

*Making the poster about a prefecture in Japan as I had a lot of fun researching and creating it with my group.
(Japanese camp in Dublin)*

*The best thing about the camp was getting to use the language outside of the house.
(Polish camp in Cavan)*

*The best thing about the camp was meeting up with friends and making new ones all while talking my native language
(Polish camp in Cavan)*

Impact:

- Heritage language students are more confident using their language after the camp
- The camps held on campus provided opportunity for promotion of language courses at the particular HEI
- Students experiencing a lesser-taught language for the first time are encouraged continue it for Leaving Certificate or at third level
- The average rating was 4.7 out of 5 stars

Next Steps

- Continue to promote and support heritage and lesser-taught language summer camps in 2025
- Encourage more universities to offer summer camps for heritage and lesser-taught languages

 88,400 Primary Pupils  1,350 Schools  15 Languages



Overview:

Say Yes to Languages, now in its fourth year, is a sampler module offering participating primary schools the chance to introduce elements of linguistic and cultural awareness alongside language learning.

The classes are provided over ten weeks by either in-class teachers or visiting tutors working in collaboration with their hosting teachers. Schools choose a language based on teaching capacity, demographics, and other relevant factors.

The module is delivered for an hour weekly per participating class, within regular class time. To cope with the demand for training, resources and tutors, the module is implemented in schools across two academic terms. It is currently available to pupils from 3rd to 6th class. The grant paid to schools for 2024/25 is €500 per classroom, up to a maximum of €2,000 per school.

Main Aims:

- Raise awareness among pupils of the range of languages, including Irish Sign Language, used by their peers in their schools and communities, which may help support greater inclusion and appreciation of diversity in society
- Encourage uptake of languages at post-primary level
- Provide opportunities for increased levels of collaboration among the school community with regards to the celebration of languages and cultures
- Support implementation of Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017–2026

Activity:

During 2024, PPLI continued to expand Say Yes to Languages, with over 1,300 primary schools registered to take part. This meant that over 88,000 pupils nationwide were involved in the module during the 2024/25 academic year. There was an increase of over 150 schools from the previous year, with many schools re-applying for a second or third year. Around 400 schools took part for the first time in 2024.

PPLI manages the grant payments to schools; the printing and delivering of resources to participating schools; facilitation of training sessions for tutors, principals, and class teachers. PPLI also helps schools to find tutors; administers surveys amongst principals, teachers, and tutors to obtain feedback; drives awareness of the module through promotion; and handles day-to-day queries related to the module.

Teacher/Tutor Training

A total of 13 online information and training workshops were hosted over the two terms. Some of the MFL and ISL teachers/tutors with experience of the module were invited to contribute to the sessions for new teachers/tutors. They were also invited to attend dedicated sessions to share good practice and contribute to the creation of resources, now available online. The sessions for ISL tutors were prepared and delivered in collaboration with the Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS) at Trinity College, Dublin. Over 1,200 attendees took part in the training and information sessions.

Resource Updates

Language and Languages in the Primary School – Guidelines for Teachers

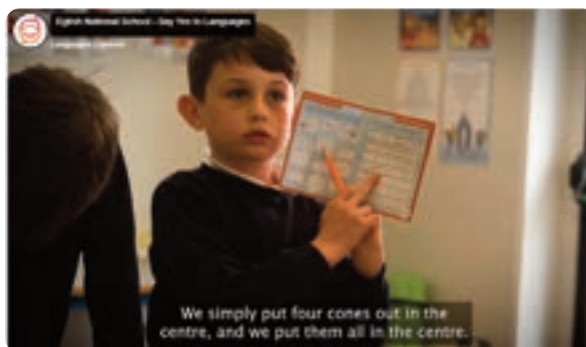
In 2024, the publication "Language and Languages in the Primary School", authored by Dr Deirdre Kirwan and Professor David Little, was updated. The revised guide addresses the latest curricular developments in Ireland and assists principals and teachers in navigating the Primary Language Curriculum. The guidelines provide strategies for incorporating the home languages of English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils into classroom activities and integrating Modern Foreign Language (MFL) education into stages three and four of the curriculum. They promote a plurilingual approach to the teaching of languages, including Irish, and offer practical suggestions for each curriculum stage. A copy of this revised edition was distributed to all participating schools in 2024.

Language Adventures

PPLI developed a new online resource called "Language Adventures", which includes suggested activities aimed at helping schools and teachers to create a positive environment for exploring diverse languages and cultures. The resource has two main components: one section provides suggestions for enhancing the entire school environment, while the other focuses on practical and useful ideas for implementation within the classroom.

Say Yes to Languages videos

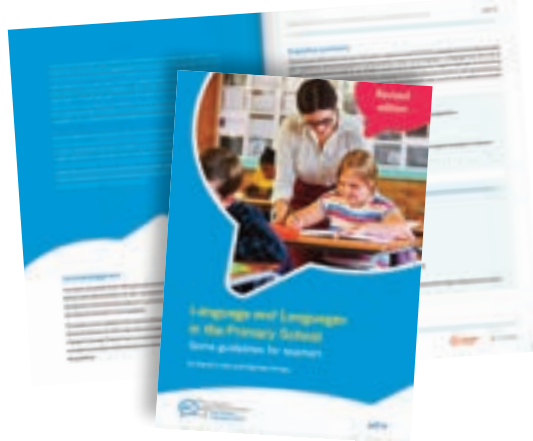
During 2024, PPLI partnered with schools involved in Say Yes to Languages to create videos that bring activities to life and demonstrate them in action. These videos highlight the enriching experiences that participation in Say Yes to Languages offers to schools, teachers, and students, showcasing how the module - and MFL education as a whole - can be seamlessly integrated into everyday practice.



The choice of language from the participating schools is illustrated here*:

Number of schools by language	
Languages Chosen	No. of Schools
Arabic	1
Dutch	1
French	595
German	114
Irish Sign Language	111
Italian	28
Japanese	9
Lithuanian	1
Mandarin Chinese	5
Polish	10
Portuguese	3
Romanian	4
Russian	2
Spanish	498
Ukrainian	4

*Some schools chose more than one language.





They provide valuable insights into the various ways languages can be embraced. The videos are available on a dedicated testimonials page of the Languages Connect website, which also features examples of how other schools have successfully incorporated MFL through the Say Yes to Languages module.

Feedback

As in previous years, feedback from school management and teachers was collected via surveys and during school visits. School visits typically involved class observation, conversation with pupils, hosting teachers and external tutors, as well as with representatives of the management team.

Teachers find the resources provided by PPLI useful, easy to use and promoting active learning. They also report a positive washback effect on the teaching and learning of Irish. Communication

with the families was improved via the leaflets included by PPLI in the resource pack, illustrating the objectives and the opportunities offered by Say Yes to Languages to parents and guardians.



Some of the most recurrent comments and suggestions can be categorised as follows:

- Extend the module to the whole school
- More resources needed for teachers in the context of implementation of the new Primary Language Curriculum
- More training needed for teachers, to include foreign language upskilling

This collection of valuable suggestions has informed future planning and actions.

Upskilling Requirements Identified

In the third school year of Say Yes to Languages there was a significant increase in the number of class teachers signing up to deliver the module in their schools. It rose to over 200, more than double the number in the previous year. In the feedback collected from schools and teachers that participated over the first three years of implementation, specific needs were identified for upskilling in foreign language competence. The requests for such upskilling opportunities were also heightened by the publication, in March 2023, of the new Primary Curriculum Framework, introducing modern foreign languages in a redeveloped Primary Language Curriculum. To address this identified need, during the fourth year of Say Yes to Languages PPLI committed to piloting a variety of language upskilling opportunities for primary teachers. Full details of the pilot are detailed in the next section.



Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement with relevant stakeholders continued, namely:

- Collaboration with An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) in relation to providing Irish-medium schools with the same level of support as English-medium schools
- Collaboration with The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) for the creation of resources to accompany the publication for consultation of the draft specification for Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) included in the redeveloped Primary Language curriculum
- Collaboration with the primary team of Oide, in the context of providing resources and supports for primary teachers and schools for the future implementation of the MFL specification
- The first-hand experience of schools and teachers who have participated in Say Yes to Languages continued to be shared in a series of articles published by INTO in the InTouch Magazine

Impact:

- 12.5% increase in the number of schools involved, from 1,200 to 1,350 schools
- 5% increase in the number of pupils to 88,400
- 17% increase in the number of primary teachers delivering the module, to over 200
- 1,200 teachers and principals attended training and information sessions

Quotes From Visiting Tutors

"There are lots of different nationalities in my school and often the children would interrupt the class to say what a word learnt in French is in their own language. It was great to see the similarities between all the languages."

"The Japanese language is so different from what most students have ever learned, which is why it captured their interest and made them aware of that side of world."

"I made a strong point of showing how much richer our lives are from learning about our own culture and others."

"I asked students before if they wanted to travel to China. Some of them said no. Now they all want to travel to China."

"Every child and every language was made to feel important and that they matter and have something to contribute. Even though we learned Spanish, we welcomed words in any and all languages. I even threw in a little bit of Euskera (Basque) to spice things up!!!"

Quotes From Principals

"Pupils are more aware of different languages in the school community as I have heard pupils asking each other how to say Hello in different languages."

"Our noticeboards would refer to the many languages used at home by children in our school. The main front door noticeboard would use phrases such as Hello, Welcome, Happy Christmas etc. in each language."

"Children built an understanding that English and Irish are not the only languages spoken in Irish homes. They learned from each other."

"The whole school sang a verse of Silent Night in German at our Christmas Concert"

Quotes From Hosting Class Teachers

"Languages are now considered cool."

"Thank you for coming to share your knowledge with us. We learned so much. We enjoyed it immensely."

"Class really enjoyed it. Will be of great benefit to them heading into secondary school next year."

"I feel that we have rekindled a little sense of wonder with an Gaeilge with introducing another language."

> Next Steps:

- Make recommendations for, and facilitate, the implementation of Say Yes to Languages for a fifth school year in 2025/26
- Continue to facilitate language upskilling opportunities for primary teachers in a variety of languages
- Collaborate with stakeholders on the development of resources and strategies for the implementation of the revised primary curriculum in MFL





lurgans.ias • Follow
Beagh, Galway, Ireland

...



lurgans.ias Rang a 3,4,5 agus a 6 are excited to Say Yes to Languages and will be starting to learn Spanish in the coming weeks. #sayyestolanguages #excited #trysomethingnew

29 w



redwood__ns • Follow

...



redwood__ns 'Say Yes to Languages' is back for the fourth year in a row! This year we are learning French 🇫🇷 for ten weeks with Ute. @bramble_art #languagesinschools #sayyestolanguages

27 w



9 likes

1 October 2024

Log in to like or comment.



St. Brigid's Glasnevin
@stbrigids_gns

Fifth and Sixth class are delighted that Francisco is back to teach Spanish as part of the Say Yes to Languages Programme.

Say Yes to
Languages

Primary Sampler Module

9:47 am • 18 Sep 2024 • 471 Views



Scoil Naomh Pédraig Kanturk
@SNPKanturk

...

We are delighted to be taking part in the #SayYesToLanguages Initiative. A big Merci Beaucoup to Mrs Hartnett who is teaching us #French. @KanturkSM



9:11 pm • 19 Sep 2024 • 374 Views





Pupils say 'Yes to Languages'

By ISABEL COLLERAN

OVER 80 pupils from Riverchapel National School in north Wexford took part in 'Say Yes to Languages' during an eight week period from January until March.

This is the third year schools have offered students this programme during the normal school timetable following its extension by the Department of Education after it was met with enthusiasm over the past two years.

"We are delighted to be bringing 'Say Yes to Languages' to Riverchapel N.S. this year. We have a variety of languages currently being used by pupils and staff and certainly recognise the benefit and importance of a module such as this. Whilst learning languages undoubtedly allows for the development of a life skill, it also helps build greater awareness of the rich and diverse cultures within our own school and local community," said Principal Martina Prendergast.

Tutors of the module are typically teachers however they may also be part of the wider school community including parents, native speakers, or other staff members. Ms Sonja McNulty delivered the module on French this year at Riverchapel N.S. and is excited to have the opportunity to share her interest in French with the pupils.

"It is a fun, interactive and engaging module which really

begins to set the foundations for an ongoing positive relationship with languages. This will be of

great benefit to the pupils as they continue through their education, hopefully bringing a love of language with them," said Ms McNulty.

1,200 schools across Ireland registered to take part in 2023 and 2024. In line with previous years, the module is being rolled out over three terms, with the support of Languages Connect and PPLI (Post-Primary Languages Ireland), a unit of the

Department of Education.

A suite of resources has been produced including lesson plans for teachers and tutors and 'Language Passports' for all participating pupils to show their family and friend. Packs have been sent to participating schools to help support both the teaching and learning, but also awareness raising objectives of the program.

"Learning a Modern Foreign Language will form part of the primary school experience for pupils over the coming years,

in line with the newly-published Primary Curriculum Framework. The future inclusion of foreign languages in the primary curriculum will be informed by the delivery of Say Yes to Languages and we look forward to another successful running of the module in 2023/24," said Minister for Education Norma Foley while speaking at the announcement of the third year of the module.

The Say Yes to Languages programme offers students between third and sixth class an introduction into a variety of

modern foreign languages as well as Irish Sign Language (ISL). Over 700 schools took part in the module last year which saw Arabic, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, ISL, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Tamil and Ukrainian being taught across the country.

The programme looks to raise awareness among pupils of the diversity of languages being used by their peers both in school and the wider community.

Enniscorthy pupils embrace P part of new initiative



Valentina De Sa Rodrigues and Daniel Brudnicki with the Polish language poster at St Andrew's Parish School, Enniscorthy. Pic: Jim Campbell.

Wexford

News Sport Business Lifestyle Wexford & District Enniscorthy New Ross Goney

80 north Wexford students say 'Yes to Languages' during exciting programme



Tiernaboul pupils say yes to Spanish

Published 1 year ago on 27 April 2024



The halls of Tiernaboul National School are echoing with excited chatter as children proudly showcase their new-found language skills.

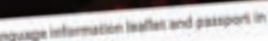
Gaelscoil Faithleann celebrated the last day of the 'Say Yes to Languages' eight-week French module in style last week.



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By James F

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launched a magazine for European Union students. The magazine, titled "European Union", features articles by the students. The magazine is entitled: "To be a European in rural Ireland on the 25th anniversary of the EU enlargement".

...es interviews, pic-
ture facts about the
common village.
Students Jack Ward
to Carey welcomed
the launch.
... years since the 2004
election where he
joined the EU,
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are: dignity, free-
democracy and equal-
ity said.

Principal Mr Rory Leonard welcomed everyone to

Ambassador checks in on Killarney's Japanese scholars

■ Diplomat pays return visit to Two Mile CNS

THE JAPANESE ambassador, Mr Norio Maruyama, visited Two Mile CNS last week to see how the pupils have been getting on learning his native language and culture.

BY AUDREY REIDY

Having visited the school last May to discuss the possibility of introducing the language and culture of Japan to the senior classes at the school, the ambassador arrived back to the school to see how far the little scholars have progressed since starting to learn Japanese back in September.

Principal of Two Mile CNS Catherine Barry said ambassador Maruyama was pleasantly surprised as the pupils, delighted with themselves, were not only able to converse with him in his native language, they were also able to sing Japanese songs and show off their Japanese writing and artwork.

The pupils are taking part in 'Say Yes to Languages' - a programme that supports the implementation of Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education, 2017-2026.

The 'Say Yes to Languages' programme is delivered to pupils from Third to Sixth Class and runs for eight hours, over a period of eight weeks. Participating schools are eligible for a grant from the Department of Education of €400 per classroom, up to a maximum of €1,600 per school.

The Japanese Embassy is keen to promote Japanese language and culture in Ireland and to strengthen links between the two countries and it has been proven that

are many advantages to learning languages at a young age - as children see connections between various languages and learn about different cultures.

Principal Mr Barry said: "Two Mile CNS is a multi-denominational school and the children are very open to learning about different languages and cultures. We are all very excited to learn about Japan and to experience a language that is so different from the languages that we speak. We

thank Ambassador Maruyama for his interest and encouragement and for taking the time to visit us."



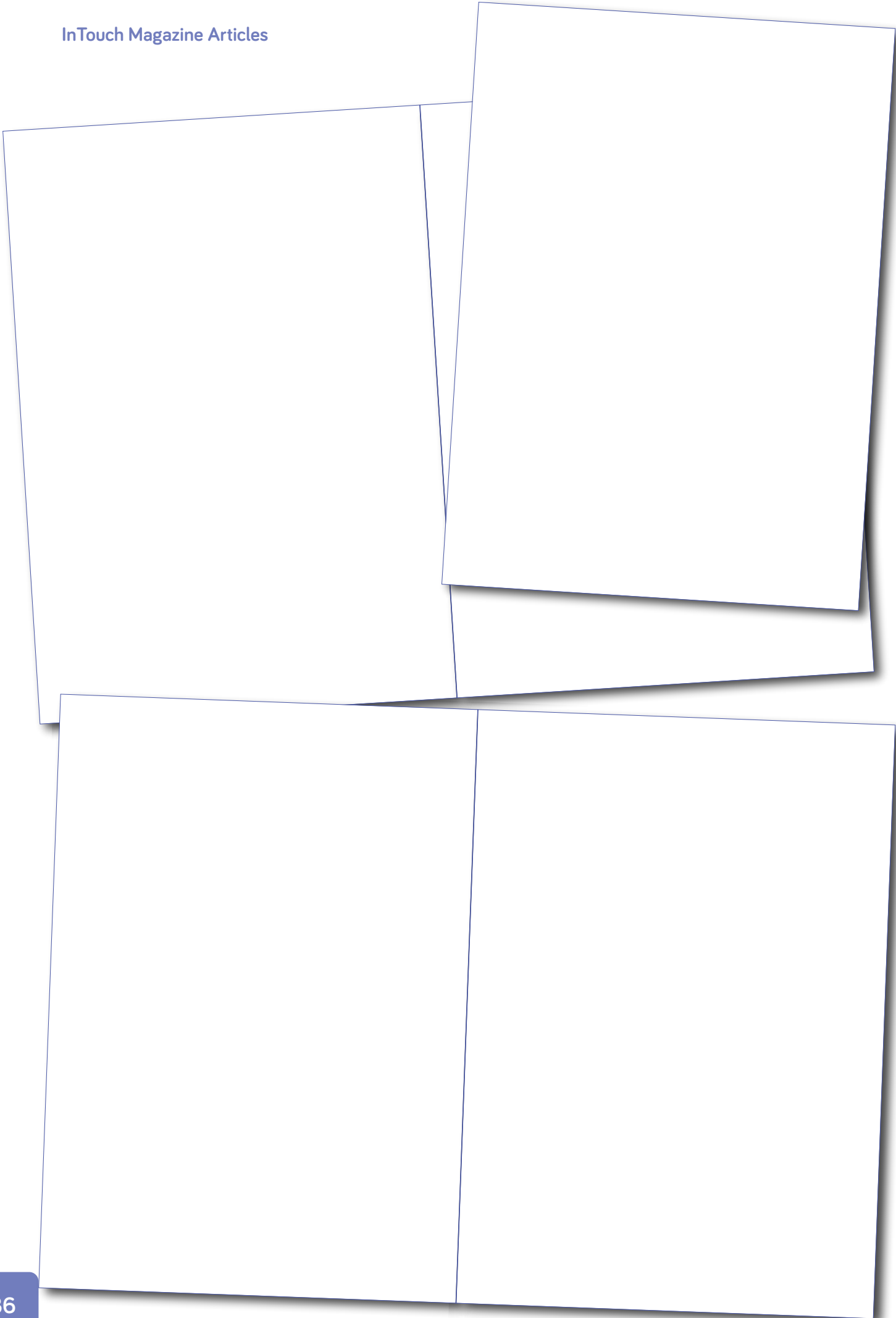
Japanese Ambassador visits
Two Mile National School

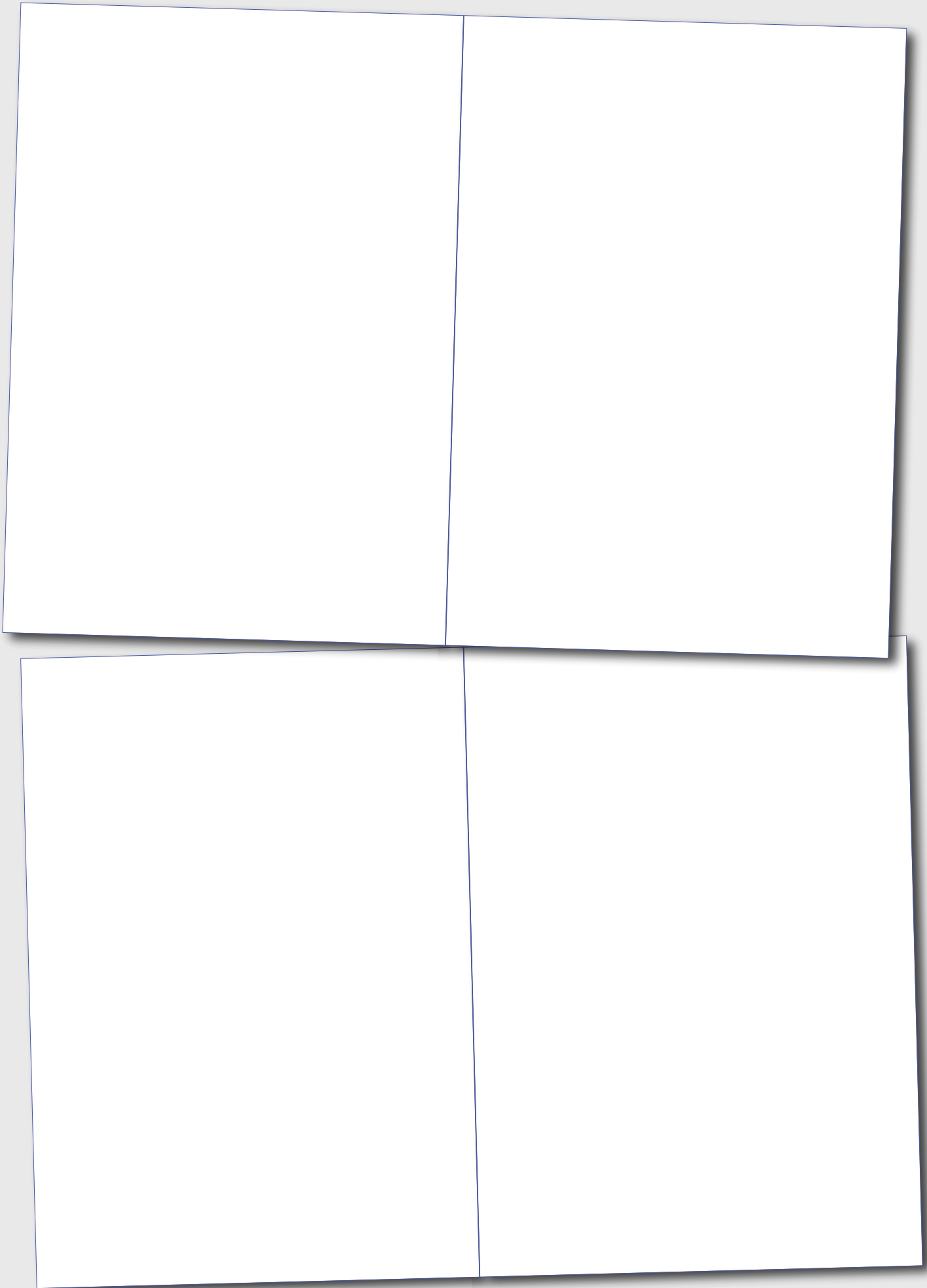
Two Mile Community National School had the honour of hosting Mr. Norio Maruyama, the Japanese Ambassador to Ireland.

The visit aimed to promote the teaching of Japanese language and culture through the 'Say Yes to Languages' programme, which aligns with Ireland's Languages Connect Strategy. The pupils of Two Mile National School were excited to learn about Japanese culture and language. They listened attentively to stories about Japan and explored the connections between the two countries. "The pupils were very interested," said Catherine Barry, Principal of Two Mile NS. "As a multi-denominational school, we are very open to different languages and cultures."



Two Mile Community National School welcomed Mr Norio Maruyama, the Japanese Ambassador to Ireland last week.







116 participating teachers



14 course providers

 6 languages

Overview:

The Foreign Language Primary Upskilling Pilot, in its first year, offered a variety of language upskilling course options to registered primary school teachers. The pilot of foreign language upskilling opportunities for primary teachers is set within the context of the implementation of the *Primary Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2023)* and the redeveloped *Primary Language Curriculum (NCCA, 2024)*. The redeveloped curriculum now includes a Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) specification, highlighting the growing emphasis on plurilingual education.

Main Aims:

The aims of the primary upskilling pilot were as follows:

- To pilot a variety of language upskilling options for registered primary school teachers, following an audit on language competence carried out in 2023.
- To explore the potential to link upskilling opportunities with Erasmus+ funding.
- To create mechanisms and make recommendations for future upskilling provision.

Activity:

In order to gauge existing capacity and the needs of primary teachers, PPLI conducted an audit among in-service teachers and student teachers enrolled in Professional Master of Education (PME) and Bachelor's Degree in Education (B.Ed.) courses. Based on the results of the audit, PPLI reached out to language upskilling course providers and liaised with primary teachers to facilitate their enrolment in a course of their choice. The choice of languages included French, German, Spanish and Italian, languages with the highest percentages of existing capacity among teachers, and, in addition to the four languages above, Chinese and Japanese were included to assess specific requirements for upskilling in Asian languages. The entry competence language level of participating teachers ranged from pre-A1 to B1. The mode of delivery varied for each upskilling course, with options of in-person, online or blended, and courses were offered up to CEFR level B1.2.

During 2024, PPLI launched the pilot for foreign language upskilling for primary teachers. In total, 116 teachers participated in the pilot in a range of 14 courses.

In collaboration with a variety of course providers, PPLI offered teachers a choice of models of provision for upskilling, including:

- Reimbursement towards the cost of a language course, as identified by teachers, in Ireland or abroad;
- Reimbursement towards the cost of courses provided by Cultural Institutes;
- Grant assistance to participating Education Support Centres to provide courses, facilitated by post-primary or primary school teachers;
- Grant assistance towards the cost of courses provided by Higher Education Institutions in Ireland;

- Courses facilitated by the Japanese Language Advisor (Japan Foundation) seconded to PPLI;
- Courses provided by a PPLI Chinese Language Development Officer; and
- Access to Erasmus+ funding for mobilities and courses abroad.

Stakeholder Engagement:

PPLI researched course providers, course options and relative costs, in Ireland and abroad. PPLI engaged with the cultural institutes for French, German, Italian and Spanish (Alliance Française Dublin and Cork, Goethe Institut, Istituto Italiano di Cultura Dublin and Instituto Cervantes), as well as two Education Support Centres (Kildare and Dublin West) and University College Cork. There were also upskilling course opportunities provided by PPLI Development Officers, the Japan Foundation Language Advisor, and other language schools, in Ireland and abroad. The potential for drawing on Erasmus+ funding opportunities will also require further engagement and support over time.

Criteria for participants' eligibility to take part in courses:

Requirements for the participation in the upskilling pilot were as follows:

- The applicant is a registered primary school teacher;
- The applicant has informed his/her school principal (if applicable);
- The applicant commits to conduct a self-assessment of the level of proficiency in the language they intend to apply for and enrolls in a suitable course based on such an assessment; and
- The applicant commits to provide evidence of an end-of-module certificate of completion issued by the course provider.

The pilot aimed to exceed the target of 100 registered teachers taking part in a course. PPLI contacted the 136 schools which had indicated that they would use staff teachers to deliver the Say Yes to Languages module.

A total of 169 teachers returned the self-assessment survey and were provided with a choice of course options according to their self-assessed levels of competence. In addition, three courses were offered to all registered teachers nationwide, regardless of their school's participation in Say Yes to Languages: Italian for beginners in UCC, Japanese via the Japan Foundation Language Advisor and Chinese via a PPLI Development Officer.

The total numbers of teachers who took part in a language upskilling course, can be found below:

Language	Cultural Institute	University Course	Education Centre	Other Language School	Course Abroad	PPLI Development Officer	Language Advisor	Total
French	29							29
German	2		2					4
Spanish	5		9	4	2			20
Italian	1	50						51
Japanese							9	9
Chinese						3		3
Total Enrolled	37	50	11	4	2	3	9	116

Impact:

- 116 registered primary teachers completed an upskilling course, exceeding the initial target of 100 teachers.
- Online, blended and in-person courses were equally popular amongst teachers. The pilot provided valuable lessons for the roll out of a second year in 2025.

Quotes from participating teachers:



➤ Next Steps:

- Engage with the wider networks of Education Support Centres and HEIs, as well as embassies, cultural institutes and other potential course providers.
- Produce a specification, to provide guidance to course designers and providers in terms of expected outcomes and to assist the quality assurance process.
- Encourage courses across a variety of modes of delivery, as feedback illustrated that this helps to ensure that the varied needs of teachers are met.
- Facilitate, where possible, arrangements where grant payments are made directly to providers, thus not requiring initial payment from teachers.
- Assist teachers in identifying their existing level of competence. Facilitate access to tools for self-assessment and explore the possibility for course providers to administer entry assessment tests.
- Evaluate courses in the context of value for money.



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Goal 2 - Moving Forward

The work of PPLI in supporting the diversification of languages provision highlights that a variety of models piloted support students with diverse needs from different contexts. In some cases, classes scheduled within the regular timetable work well and a cohort of teachers have become employed by schools which can avail of the scheme of additional allocation, an incentive for schools to diversify provision of languages. The use of ex-quota peripatetic teachers offers the opportunity for students from two or more schools with an opportunity to access classes otherwise unavailable and gives schools time to try a new language subject with limited risk as the teachers are employed and supported by PPLI.

Where more recently added and lesser taught languages are not available in schools because the number of students does not constitute a critical mass, Saturday classes and online classes increase equity and provide a cost-effective means of provision. Students who are particularly motivated by the target language can engage with it and the classes provide the opportunity for students with heritage languages to acquire Leaving Certificate points that can make a significant difference to pathways available to them at third level and beyond.

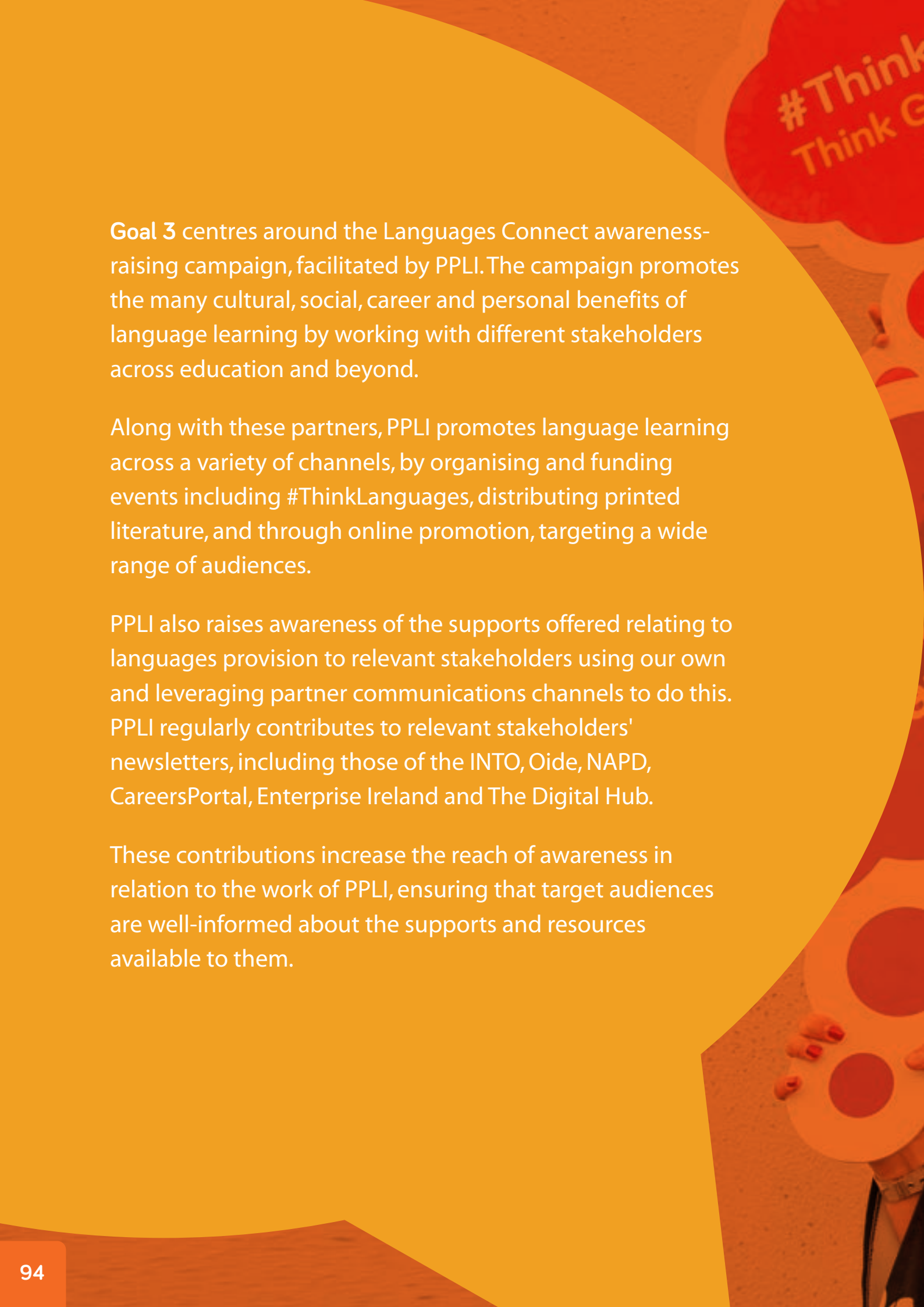
Blended learning works well in CMETB where a cluster of schools are willing to collaborate. ETBs are well placed to schedule classes at the same time and facilitate the sharing of teachers. They share IT systems which support the delivery of the online aspect of the course so it is hoped that the blended model of provision will become available to students in more of the ETBs and that this would enable significant numbers of migrant Polish speakers to maintain literacy in their home language.

It is difficult to see how any one model of provision and teacher employment would support implementation of the strategy. Innovative and alternative provision models such as blended learning and online classes are not appropriate for every context and significant time is required to train the teachers in the pedagogy required.

PPLI will continue to explore a variety of options for languages provision and will continue to provide further training and CPD to support the integration of teachers of these languages to ensure that teaching methodologies are fit for purpose. PPLI will also explore additional options for supporting internationally qualified language teachers to move across and adapt to the Irish educational context. We will also keep the needs of students as a primary focus and will continue to monitor closely their experience of learning. Provision for heritage language students will also be informed by demographic patterns, informed in the context of valuable international embassy collaboration.

The strategy advocates the development of Asian languages and additional targeted measures will be required for this. Teacher education pathways for the more recently added Leaving Certificate languages need to be developed. Implementation and development of Asian languages in post-primary currently relies on ‘accidental’ capacity e.g., internationally qualified teachers who have come to live in Ireland, or Irish teachers who lived in China or Japan and made a particular effort to acquire the language. The ‘stay-back visa’ for non-EEA graduate students has also provided some temporary capacity but much time is spent on induction, training and mentoring, and longer-term sustainability is a challenge.

The ‘Say Yes to Languages’ module is a good opportunity to prepare the ground for the introduction of foreign languages in the primary curriculum and provides an opportunity for all pupils to appreciate the value of maintaining additional home languages and learning other languages which will result in increased uptake of foreign languages in post-primary if implementation is done well. In advance of the implementation of the new curriculum, ‘Say Yes to Languages’ will continue to be used to support the raising of awareness among pupils of the range of languages used by their peers, and to encourage uptake of a foreign language in post-primary. PPLI will continue to develop and facilitate language upskilling opportunities to equip in-service teachers with delivering the new MFL specification and further resources will also be developed to support teachers with implementation of the new curriculum.



Goal 3 centres around the Languages Connect awareness-raising campaign, facilitated by PPLI. The campaign promotes the many cultural, social, career and personal benefits of language learning by working with different stakeholders across education and beyond.

Along with these partners, PPLI promotes language learning across a variety of channels, by organising and funding events including #ThinkLanguages, distributing printed literature, and through online promotion, targeting a wide range of audiences.

PPLI also raises awareness of the supports offered relating to languages provision to relevant stakeholders using our own and leveraging partner communications channels to do this. PPLI regularly contributes to relevant stakeholders' newsletters, including those of the INTO, Oide, NAPD, CareersPortal, Enterprise Ireland and The Digital Hub.

These contributions increase the reach of awareness in relation to the work of PPLI, ensuring that target audiences are well-informed about the supports and resources available to them.



GOAL 3

INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF
LANGUAGE LEARNING TO ENCOURAGE THE
WIDER USE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES



17,500 Students



200+ schools



10 Universities



14 Cinemas

Overview:

#ThinkLanguages is an annual Transition Year (TY) festival of languages and cultures held in schools nationwide and facilitated by PPLI. It includes a combination of interactive workshops, inspiring talks, fun quizzes and activities. Since the inaugural event in 2018, it has evolved and expanded exponentially. In 2024, #ThinkLanguages continued as a week-long celebration, with partners providing additional opportunities for students to experience the fun of learning languages in a variety of contexts nationwide.

Main Aims:

- Celebrate languages together in schools, higher education institutions and other organisations that can support foreign languages on a national level
- Support teachers to showcase languages in the school and what languages offer beyond the classroom
- Excite and engage TY students about the languages and cultures around them within the wider community and around the world
- Promote inclusion and the many personal, social, professional, and cultural benefits of language learning
- Encourage TY students to choose languages at Senior Cycle and into third level education
- Engage with the local community to raise awareness of the benefits of language skills

Activity:

Now in its seventh year, #ThinkLanguages Week took place in schools, universities and other venues nationwide from Monday 18 November – Friday 22 November 2024. Over 200 schools were involved in the flagship event, with over 17,500 TY students celebrating languages and cultures in their school and locality.

Resources and Teacher Support

Online information sessions and Communities of Practice for teachers were held in September and October to provide input and support in relation to project management of the festival in schools, as well as to provide an opportunity to share ideas and experiences of previous festivals. For those who could not attend these meetings, a series of #ThinkLanguages Teacher Tips videos were shared online.

A full communication programme with schools took place from September to December via the Languages Connect website, social media channels, a dedicated Facebook group, and ongoing email correspondence informing of registration deadlines, partner offerings, resource availability and competition details.

Participating schools were sent printed starter packs including a handbook and promotional posters. They also received full event kits customised for the number of participating students in the school.

Each year, more insight is gained into the supports needed by schools and supplied resources are then adapted as required. Focus group participants from previous years emphasised the importance of having support from school management to successfully implement #ThinkLanguages in their schools. As a result of this, a new resource was added in 2024 - a letter template for teachers to share with senior management teams to gain their buy-in for running the event. This letter explains the benefits to the students, teachers, school and wider community, of holding #ThinkLanguages. It was well received, and much of the feedback received from teachers indicated that this resource was crucial in getting buy-in from school management.

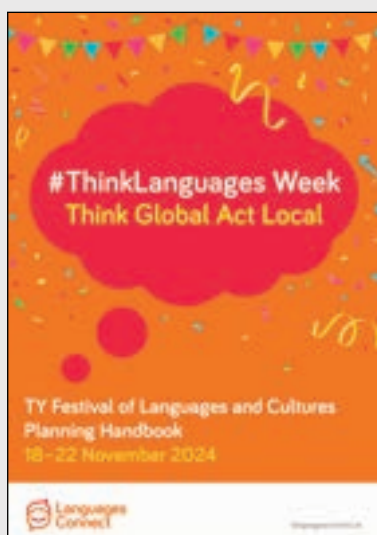
Opening Ceremony

The 2024 Opening Ceremony once again had an inspiring mix of speakers sharing their language learning journeys and explaining how languages had furthered their careers and enhanced their lives. A new addition in 2024 was Rebecca Keogh from Enterprise Ireland, whose work helps promote Irish business across Europe. She emphasised how learning a language opened a world of career and travel opportunities. Ervinas Merfeldas of Dancing with the Stars, who has Lithuanian heritage, spoke about the benefits of maintaining his home language and the benefits of studying it for the Leaving Certificate. Online influencer Ciara Walsh, whose decision to participate in Erasmus resulted in her finding a job and living in Italy, and James Maher, a senior policy advisor at the European Parliament, provided insights into how languages have impacted their lives and careers.

National Quiz

The #ThinkLanguages online national quiz ran again in 2024, with 1,635 teams taking part and approximately 6,400 students participating. The quiz, a firm favourite with students, provides students and schools the opportunity to compete against each other and against the clock in a test of languages knowledge.

The element of competition, both local and national, always adds a sense of excitement. The quiz ran twice daily each day during #ThinkLanguages Week, giving schools the flexibility to hold it when it suited them when it suited them.







Think Global, Act Local

In support of the overarching #ThinkLanguages theme of “Think Global, Act Local”, schools looked to their local community for inspiration when it came to inviting speakers for their #ThinkLanguages festival.

Individuals from businesses, higher education institutions and community groups where languages play a role got involved at schools nationwide. Local MEPs, Senators and Ambassadors visited schools to provide further insight into the benefits of foreign languages.

Student-led workshops are becoming more and more popular each year, inviting students to give their peers an insight into their own home and heritage languages and cultures. Some parents and teachers also got involved and offered insights into their heritage, cultures and languages, including playing music or baking traditional items for students to enjoy and learn about. Other locally led workshops and activities included Irish Sign Language, Samba dancing, Ukrainian cuisine and careers in languages, as well as language speed dating, a national anthem sing-off and sports from different countries.

#ThinkLanguages at Primary

In 2024, the opportunity to bring #ThinkLanguages to local primary school pupils was promoted. An outline in the planning handbook of what a primary visit could look like, and information shared in the Community of Practice sessions, inspired and encouraged schools to do this. Several schools, including Presentation Secondary School Thurles, Lucan Community College, and Portlaoise College embraced the opportunity, with Transition Year students leading fun and interactive language taster sessions. Through catchy songs, engaging stories and games, primary pupils got an exciting introduction to the fun of language learning.

#ThinkLanguages Partnerships

PPLI once again teamed up with partners, who offered a variety of activities to enhance the #ThinkLanguages Week experience. As part of the 'A Career for EU' strategy, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) sponsored the #ThinkLanguages Champion Team Competition prize for a second year. The winning team and their teachers will travel to Brussels in early 2025 to visit a variety of EU



institutions and meet Irish people who work there, to understand more about where languages have brought them in their careers. This prize was once again a significant incentive for students to get involved in helping to organise #ThinkLanguages festivals across the country.

#ThinkLanguages at the Movies

As part of the continued partnership with the Irish Film Institute, a selection of foreign language films was shown at the IFI in Dublin and its cinema network nationwide during #ThinkLanguages Week, giving students the opportunity to experience languages at the movies. In addition to in-cinema screenings, schools had the opportunity to avail of the streaming platform IFI@Schools which offers schools the opportunity to screen films directly in the classroom. Over 2,500 students watched one of the foreign language films in the cinema during #ThinkLanguages Week, and approximately 1,500 more accessed films in the classroom.



#ThinkLanguages on Campus

A hugely successful element to this year's celebrations was the continued involvement of higher education institutions (HEIs) across the country. The activity within the HEIs proved to be a highlight for many, with a diverse range of activities that TY students could engage in taking place on campus. Over 1,380 students visited a university campus, with many more gaining insights into third-level life through talks from student language ambassadors, who visited 40 individual schools.

Dublin City University kicked off the celebrations during #ThinkLanguages Week with a week-long series of taster sessions in Spanish, Japanese, German, French and Chinese. It hosted workshops for 175 students across the entire week of #ThinkLanguages, with taster sessions including Chinese greetings, Chinese idioms and calligraphy workshops.

Maynooth University hosted 180 students on campus. Students participated in Cultural Trivia with student ambassadors as well as presentations from staff. They visited lectures, took a tour of the library and took part in an Escape Room. Taster sessions in Chinese, German, French and Spanish were followed by lunch in the Pugin Hall and a Scavenger Hunt Campus Tour. Two school visits also took place during the week.

Munster Technological University sent student language ambassadors to two schools during #ThinkLanguages Week.



South-East Technological University put on a show for over 100 students with activities and games from around the world. It then hosted Italian and Chinese cooking demos for the students. Students were also given an opportunity to speak to student language ambassadors and experienced a Chinese tea ceremony. Staff members also visited three schools.

Technological University Dublin welcomed 60 students on campus during #ThinkLanguages Week, where they were given a tour of campus and took part in workshops and taster classes in a variety of languages, including Chinese, French, German and Spanish. Student language ambassadors were sent out to sixteen different schools.

Trinity College Dublin sent student language ambassadors to seven schools during #ThinkLanguages Week.

University College Cork hosted over 180 students throughout the week. Workshops available included Chinese; Japanese; Korean; French; German; Italian; Portuguese; Spanish. Students had the opportunity to engage in interactive language lectures, and language taster sessions. Students also were given a tour of the campus.

University College Dublin hosted over 360 students during #ThinkLanguages Week, with offerings including meetings with final year language students to discover more about the opportunity to study abroad on Erasmus, as well as Arabic, Korean, Russian and Swahili workshops. Students participated in drama workshops, were given a campus tour and had an opportunity to speak to student language ambassadors. Student language ambassadors visited two schools.

University of Galway provided several workshops for 150 students in Spanish, German, Italian and French, before hosting a language-based treasure hunt and campus tour for the students

University of Limerick hosted over 190 students and gave them an insight into what it is like studying languages on UL campus. This included a variety of language awareness-raising and language-learning workshops, such as language tasters, music & dance, language & culture escape room, language and culture quiz. They also sent student language ambassadors to visit eight schools throughout the rest of #ThinkLanguages Week.



National #ThinkLanguages Champion Team Competition Winners 2024

Ten shortlisted schools were selected from the competition entries and visited during #ThinkLanguages Week. The finalist teams were chosen to present to a panel of judges at the National Final at the Department of Education. The #ThinkLanguages 2024 Champion Team finalists were Beaufort College Navan, Ennistymon Community School, Nenagh College and Presentation Secondary School Thurles. The four teams presented on what they had learned from their experience. All put a commendable amount of work into the event management of their festivals, as well as into their final presentations, which thoroughly impressed the judging panel. Attendees of the event commented on the students' top quality presentation skills, their creativity, and their obvious passion for languages.

A lively panel discussion took place at the National Final, bringing together PPLI staff members to share their experience and insights into their language learning journeys, the Erasmus program, and teaching opportunities through the ELA (English Language Assistant) and JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) schemes. The discussion explored the transformative experiences of those who have studied and taught abroad, highlighting the personal and professional growth that comes from cultural immersion and embracing foreign language learning. Panellists shared their challenges and successes in acquiring new languages, emphasising the importance of international exchanges in fostering linguistic skills and global understanding. Attendees were provided with valuable advice on applying for these programs and making the most of their time overseas, leaving inspired to embark on their own language-learning adventures.

PPLI Director, Karen Ruddock and Evelyn O'Connor from the Curriculum and Assessment Unit of the Department of Education presented the Champion Team of the Year 2024, Beaufort College Navan, with their trophy and prize of a trip to Brussels. The students and teachers greatly appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about where language learning can take them.

Finalist – Ennistymon Community School

Finalist – Nenagh College

Finalist – Presentation Secondary School Thurles

Winners – Beaufort College, Navan

*Champion Team
Winners 2024*



Overall Winners- Beaufort College Navan



Finalist - Ennistymon Community School



Finalist - Nenagh College



Finalist - Presentation Secondary School Thurles

Social media and press coverage

Social channels were a hive of activity across the week, with students, schools and partners engaging in the online conversation and sharing an array of images and videos. Live updates on their activity helped bring languages to the fore for the week. Creative Instagram stories and TikTok videos showcased the students' passion for languages. Some Champion Team Members took on the role of reporters, with articles appearing in local press in the build-up to and after the events. Champion Teams were also invited to participate in interviews on local radio during the week itself, creating a great buzz in the school and wider community, and promoting the benefits of languages far and wide. Partners, including the IFI, shared coverage on their media platforms, including newsletters, social media, and websites, helping to highlight #ThinkLanguages, and languages in general, during the week.

The National Final in January, which was attended by members of the Department of Education, as well as representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs, also provided an opportunity for social and press coverage. PPLI, in collaboration with The Department of Education Communications Team, developed and shared a press release announcing the winner and providing details of the final. The release was picked up by print, online and broadcast press, including the Meath Chronicle & Tipperary Live.

Impact:

- 17,500 Transition Year students nationwide celebrated the benefits of language skills together
- More than 47 schools visited a university campus and were involved in #ThinkLanguages activities on campus
- Over 4,000 students visited a cinema or watched a streamed foreign language film provided by the IFI
- Increase in awareness of language career paths within the EU, supporting the DFA strategy A Career for EU – Ireland's Strategy to increase Irish representation in the European Unions, Institutions and Agencies
- 98% of students surveyed said they would recommend the event to others
- 63% of students surveyed realised classmates had language skills they had no prior knowledge of, as a result of #ThinkLanguages
- 75% of students surveyed said the event changed their opinion on the value of languages
- 85.55% of students said the event changed their opinion on the value of languages

Next Steps:

- Plan #ThinkLanguages Week for the seventh year from 17-21 November 2025, incorporating feedback and suggestions from participating teachers
- Continue to leverage #ThinkLanguages to support the aims of Say Yes to Languages and increase uptake of languages in post-primary
- Continue to build on partnerships to grow the reach of #ThinkLanguages into the wider community and expand the range of activities available to students during #ThinkLanguages Week
- Cultivate and increase cross-department collaboration, in support of relevant strategies, such as current partnerships with the Department of Foreign Affairs



School Social Media Posts





Glenart College, Arklow
@GlenartCollege

grats to our TY #ThinkLanguages Champion Team, who've been
artistled for the Festival of Languages competition! Our Celebration
ent takes place on 19th November. Many thanks to Ms O'Neill, Ms
arcia-Collado, Ms Fleming & Ms Becarra-Mejia for their committed
work on this.

GLENART COLLEGE

Tallaght Community School
@TCSTallaght

Ms Hayden, Ms Crowe & some of our TY MFL students had a wonderful
time today in @MaynoothUni as part of @langconnect Je Think
Languages Week.

Our students represented us so well & really enjoyed their time in a
college that has great links to our school.

ennistymoncommunityschool
Another glorious day of our
#ThinkLanguages Week.

- ✓ Arabic and belly dancing workshop with Clara McKenna
- ✓ Ukrainian cooking class with Vadym, Sofia, Ms Hession and Ms O'Dowd
- ✓ Chinese art workshop with Ms Slattery
- ✓ Languages and EU careers talk with senator @Martin Conway

153 likes
19 November 2024

Log in to like or comment.

Tallaght Community School
@TCSTallaght

We love nothing better than a day out, experiencing new environments,
mixing with different people, learning from other voices.

Our TY MFL students, Ms Hayden & Ms Crowe had a brilliant day as part
of @langconnect Je Think Languages Week in @MaynoothUni

Thank you 🙌🙌🙌🙌



Le Chéile Schools Trust and 3 others

7:32 PM · Nov 10, 2024 · 1,219 Views

bftthinklanguages · Follow

bftthinklanguages I'd like to give a big
thank you to all who participated in our
think language week here in Beaufort.
@langconnect

27 w

Liked by niamhk_09 and others
30 November 2024



50 Views

glenartcollege · Follow

glenartcollege TY #ThinkLanguages
trip to Maynooth University!

On Wednesday morning, 15 of our TY
students travelled to Maynooth
University to participate in their
#ThinkLanguages celebration.

Students enjoyed a series of
workshops including Spanish dance,
Chinese calligraphy and an
introduction to German, followed by
lunch and a guided tour of Maynooth's
beautiful campus.

Thank you to Loic Bourdeau, Valerie
Heffernan and the student
ambassadors for planning and
facilitating a brilliant day of languages
and culture for our students and



stpeters.ie · Follow

stpeters.ie Congratulations to First
Years Lola Postrana and Evan Clinton,
who recently won the Digital Poster
competition to celebrate European Day
of Languages 🏆 This competition,
organised by our TY students, was also
used to launch the
@langconnect Je Think Languages
TY Festival of Languages and Culture
which will be running again this year
from November 18-22! @stpeters
#ThinkLanguages #langconnect

89 likes
4 November 2024

Ennistymon school second in languages competition



Students from Ennistymon at the competition in Dublin.

STUDENTS from North Clare alone at the national final of the #ThinkLanguages Champion Team of the Year competition, which took place at The Clock Tower in the Department of Education last week.

Transition year students from Ennistymon Community School were awarded runners-up on the day, behind eventual winners from Ballycroy College from Navan.

The competition highlights the vital role foreign language skills play in both personal and professional development.

The four finalist teams were Ennistymon Community School and Nenagh College, the Presentation Secondary School in Thurles as well as the winners, Ballycroy College.

"I am delighted to present this award today which recognises the immense value of foreign language learning," said Karen Haddock, Director of Post Primary Languages Ireland.

"The students were in line for a substantial prize in the form of a trip to Brussels."

"The immense transversal skills they provide for, such as communication, critical thinking and teamwork will stand to each student in their futures."

"I hope today's participants will remain champions for language learning, inspiring all students, regardless of their proficiency level, to embrace the world of languages."

To enter the competition, participating teams provided an overview of their planned activities for #ThinkLanguages Week, judge's visit.

The judges faced a challenging decision due to the high standard of events across the country in November.

This year's competition focuses on how language learning enhances life skills, creates global opportunities, and fosters broader personal development. The winners will receive a trip to Brussels.

"Proficiency in a second EU language is a vital skill for those aspiring to careers in EU institutions such as the European Parliament and European Commission."

"Both English and Irish, as well as French, Spanish, German, Polish and more, are among the 24 official EU languages."

"Careers in the EU are well paid and offer a way to make a meaningful difference."

"When students finish school, they may go on to study law, technology, science, economics, agriculture, or languages."

"The European Union offers careers in all these areas and more. By mastering a second EU language, you could help shape 450 million citizens' lives."

Topic: A...

Laois school joins celeb culture and languages

Portlaoise College thanked local businesses and Portlaoise...



Nenagh College up for a...

NENAGH College are delighted to have been shortlisted for the #ThinkLanguages Champion Team Competition. The judges were very impressed by the standard and the thought that has gone into their festival line-up and out of 300 schools nationwide they are one of eleven schools that have been short listed and are now in with a chance of winning a trip to Brussels.

The Champion Team is made up of Sebastian Sovek, Charlotte Ryan, Isabelle Ryan, Zoe Parker, Esther Flores and Hazel O'Donovan.

One of the main events scheduled for the week was a live video link with Guillaume Tallon who is a teacher in a local school in Tonnerre, Nenagh's twin town in France. Guillaume chatted to our students about the school he teaches in and shared some interesting information and facts about Tonnerre.

Both schools are excited to further develop their connection after #thinklanguagesweek and are looking forward to reigniting a relationship with their twin town while simultaneously working on developing interaction between the schools with the view to organising a student exchange in the future.

A #ThinkLanguages judge visited the school on Wednesday and observed the wide variety of activities the students participated in, including workshops in Spanish, ISL and Chinese.

Spanish exchange students delivered a Spanish workshop to the First Year students studying French and their TV peers. This was followed by a sign language workshop delivered by Romie O'Callaghan and Gillian Lafferty.

The Fourth Class students from the Garbcoil popped in to learn some French at a café that...

Tipp... about the... to the... with a... workshop... students join... vocabulary... last week... Maria... who shar... in our sch... and is now... Ireland... The week... workshops... Bites to cel... cultures a... Finalists... tion will be... gauges Ch... ceremony...

North Clare students succeed at ThinkLanguage competition

THE NEWLY amalgamated Ennistymon Community School has been shortlisted from over 200 schools nationwide for the prestigious ThinkLanguages competition.

This achievement places the school among the top 10 participating schools, highlighting its exceptional commitment to celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity.

Ennistymon Community School hosted an array of vibrant activities during ThinkLanguages Week, from November 11 to 22.

The theme, "Think Global, Act Local", was brought to life through an impressive lineup of student-led workshops, interactive events, and inspiring guest speakers. Some of the highlights included the students creating a video featuring local business owners and their employees speaking various languages.

Businesses included HH Phones, The Cheese Press, The Aloe Tree, Ungler's Bakery, Foodie's Corner, Fillys Hotel, and The Salmon Bookshop and Literary Centre.

Students from Scoil Mhuirich were invited for a music presentation and a master French class, showcasing the benefits of early language exposure.

Senator Martin Conway (FG) also delivered a thought-provoking talk on the importance of languages for careers in the EU and presented videos from MEPs Maria Walsh and Regina Doherty, as well as David Garrity of World Animal Protection.

Michael Vaughan, the owner of Vaughan Lodge Hotel in Lillinstown, chair of the Education and Training Committee of BIF and parent, shared his journey to proficiency in Irish, French and Latin.

Catherine Jeannette and student ambassadors from the University of Limerick hosted an engaging virtual discussion of language courses at third level.

Five Joanneke, 2024 alumni of Ennistymon Community School who is now studying French and Russian at Trinity College, contributed a video, inspiring T.Y.s to pursue language learning education.

Transition Year students created short films in French, Spanish, and Ukrainian, combining creativity with language learning. They also enjoyed screenings of foreign films streamed by IFilmschools.

Student-led workshops also took place on Ukrainian cuisine, Polish music, and Italian culinary arts.

Online workshops on the Irish sign language, French and fashion, German and baking, Chinese art, and Portuguese and capoeira.

There was Arabic and belly dancing, with a live workshop facilitated by Clara McKenna.

Multilingual code-cracking challenge encouraging teamwork of students speaking French, German, Spanish and Ukrainian.

Global Beats, a morning music fusion celebrating international songs before classes.

Finally the school hosted an international Dress to Impress Day, a whole-school competition of costumes representing different countries.

The festival's success drew the attention of a PPLJ judge and a professional videographer, who visited the school on November 13 to document the celebrations.

Ennistymon Community School's Champion Team was instrumental in the event's success. The team, led by TV students from Spain, Ukraine and Ireland, collaborated with teachers and local partners to deliver a unique and impactful experience. Their effort is part of the school's entry into the ThinkLanguages Champion Team competition, with the winning school set to receive an exclusive trip to Brussels to explore the multicultural capital of Europe.

Funded by the Department of Education and facilitated by Post Primary Languages Ireland, ThinkLanguages promotes the personal, social, and professional benefits of learning foreign languages through the national competition, a flagship event organised by Languages Connect.

Now in its seventh year, the initiative aims to build a multicultural and inclusive society.



Mountrath students highlight importance of learning languages

Transition Year students from Mountrath Community School took part in their third annual 'Think Languages' week, starting on November 11th. During the week, six transition year students were trained up around delivering badges, posters, and stickers to the junior school to encourage more to get involved in the event.

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laoise Library for their help

LIBRARY

ward

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students and the day finished
Think Languages Chinese
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bishop was prerecorded by
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finished off with a German
and a World Cup Soccer
celebrate all nationalities and
among the student cohort,
chosen from the competi-
tion invited to the #ThinkLang-
uage Champion Teams prizegiving
in late January in Dublin.



Students
ortance
anguages

succeeded in securing a place on
the leader-board.
A 'Just Dance' competition also took
place, along with an Irish Sign Language
workshop where they all signed popular
Christmas songs in a heart-warming
event.
The eventful day was finished off
with a Chinese calligraphy

Nenagh and Thurles students feature prominently in languages competition

Foreign Language Learning in Ireland celebrated at National Final

The national final of the #ThinkLanguages Champion Teams of the Year competition took place on Thursday, 23rd January at The Clock Tower in the Department of Education, with Transition Year students from four County Tipperary schools awarded runners up on the day.

Teams from **NENAGH COLLEGE** and **PRESENTATION SECONDARY SCHOOL** were tipped to the post by Beaufort College, Navan, Co. Meath who were crowned winners and also now will get to experience a trip to Brussels and discover languages coming to life at the EU Institutions as part of the prize. The competition highlights the vital role foreign language skills play in both personal and professional development, a focus of #ThinkLanguages Week which took place in November and is the foundation for the #ThinkLanguages Champion Teams Competition.

The four finalist teams on the day included students from Presentation Community School, Co. Clare; Nenagh College, Presentation Secondary School Thurles, and Beaufort College Navan, Co. Meath.

Karen Raddock, Director of Post-Primary Languages Ireland, organisers of #ThinkLanguages Week, praised the importance of language learning in her address, saying, "I am delighted to present this award today which recognises the immense value of foreign language learning. The students serve as incredible ambassadors for language learning, demonstrating how subjects extend beyond textbooks and taking these into real life."

#ThinkLanguages Week, which this year involved over 17,000 transition year students from over 200 schools across Ireland during the week of 23-27 November, is a student-led celebration and aims to showcase the benefits of foreign language learning through diverse activities such as language workshops, talks, music, drama, film, and more. Ms. Raddock added, "The benefits of language learning go far beyond the classroom and grades, as we saw and heard today. The immersion in foreign languages provides for, such as communication, critical thinking and teamwork skills that will stand to each student in their future. I hope today's participants will become champions for language learning, inspiring all students, regardless of their proficiency level, to embrace the world of languages."

This year's grand prize was again supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and its "A Career for EU Strategy", which emphasises the need for multilingual Irish representatives in Europe to ensure effective collaboration and communication with counterparts across Europe and beyond.

Speaking about #ThinkLanguages, a representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs said, "We are delighted to see students participating in #ThinkLanguages and encouraging them to carry on their passion for languages into further education and beyond. Proficiency in a second EU language is a vital skill for those aspiring to careers in EU institutions such as the European Parliament and European Commission. Both English and Irish (as well as French, Spanish, German, Polish etc) are among the 21 official EU languages."

"Careers in the EU are well-paid and offer a way to make a meaningful difference. When students finish school, they may go on to study law, technology, science, economics, agriculture, or languages. The European Union offers careers in all these areas and more. By mastering a second EU language, you could help shape policies that improve the lives of 450 million citizens across Europe. A love of languages could be the key to building a successful career and making a mark on Europe's future," added the representative.

The annual event is in support of Languages Connect Strategy, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026. The celebration continues to grow year on year and this year, #ThinkLanguages will take place in schools and venues nationwide during the week of 17-21 November 2023.



Karen Raddock, Director Post-Primary Languages Ireland, with students from Nenagh College, at the national final of #ThinkLanguages Champion Teams of the year which took place at the Department of Education on Thursday, 23rd January.



Karen Raddock, Director Post-Primary Languages Ireland, organisers of the event with students and teacher from Presentation Secondary School, Thurles at the national final of #ThinkLanguages Champion Teams of the year which took place at the Department of Education on Thursday, 23rd January.



LEFT: Karen Raddock, Director Post-Primary Languages Ireland, organisers of the event with students and teacher from Presentation Secondary School, Thurles at the national final of #ThinkLanguages Champion Teams of the year which took place at the Department of Education on Thursday, 23rd January.

Students show a love for languages

Nenagh College make it to national final

THE national final of the #ThinkLanguages Champion Teams of the Year competition took place recently at The Clock Tower in the Department of Education, with Transition Year students from two Tipperary schools awarded runners-up on the day.

Teams from Nenagh College and Presentation Secondary School Thurles were tipped to the post by Beaufort College, Navan, Co. Meath who were crowned winners and who now will get to experience a trip to Brussels and discover languages coming to life at the EU Institutions as part of the prize. The competition highlights the vital role foreign language skills play in both personal and professional development, a focus of #ThinkLanguages Week which took place in November and is the foundation for the #ThinkLanguages Champion Teams Competition. The four finalist teams on the day included students from Beaufort College, Navan, Co. Meath; Nenagh College; Presentation Secondary School Thurles; and Beaufort College Navan, Co. Meath.

Karen Raddock, Director of Post-Primary Languages Ireland, organisers of the event with students and teacher from Presentation Secondary School, Thurles at the national final of #ThinkLanguages Champion Teams of the year which took place at the Department of Education on Thursday, 23rd January.

Countdown on at Presentation Thurles to 'Think Languages Week'



Pres Thurles TY Committee who are running Think Languages Week next week.



13 HEIs supported

Overview:

The fifth annual call for third level Languages Connect awareness-raising funding applications was made in April 2024. These grants are used to support a variety of activities to raise awareness of the courses offered by the HEIs, and to promote language learning at third level to prospective students. Ten HEIs applied and were granted funding up to a maximum of €10,000 2024.

Main Aims:

- Strengthen links between HEIs and schools to support language learning and cultural awareness
- Promote language courses at third level – as major, minor, and elective subjects
- Raise awareness of career opportunities and opportunities for studying abroad

Activity:

HEIs were involved in a wide variety of awareness-raising activities including #ThinkLanguages Week in November and the annual Japan Quiz that was held in University of Limerick, Dublin City University, and University College Cork in February. Further detail about the #ThinkLanguages activity is available in the previous report. Below are some of the main activities that were supported during the rest of the year.

University College Dublin (UCD)

- UCD produced a booklet about Living Multilingually. There was a Living Multilingually workshop at the UCD Thinking Creatively Day on 19 April 2024. Participating students from Cabinteely Community School, Firhouse Community College and Holy Child Community School Sallynoggin received copies of the Living Multilingually Portfolio booklet.
- UCD ran a languages competition. The awards ceremony was held in UCD in May 2024 and was attended by the winners along with their class, teacher and parents/guardians. A series of short talks and presentations, as well as a campus tour were organised for the event.

South-East Technological University (SETU)

- SETU continued their PicLingo competition in 2024. The competition aims to reinforce the concept of foreign language learning through art. Approximately 70 schools entered the competition.
- SETU's "Try Languages Event" was held in March 2024. The aim was to bring TY, fifth, and sixth year students on campus to experience what college life can offer. Students were given taster classes in French, German and Spanish, and heard current language students describe their courses.

Technological University of Dublin

- TU Dublin held three one-day events in January 2024 aimed at Senior Cycle students: “Love Languages” in Tallaght; “Fun with languages” in Grangegorman; and “Discover Languages at Blanchardstown”. Students got the opportunity to enjoy and have ‘real-world’ practice of all foreign languages on offer in TU Dublin. They practiced their main language (Spanish, French and German) in the morning and tried new languages (Chinese, Italian and Spanish) in the afternoon. Campus tours were included as part of the day. Students were also invited to participate in a video competition called “YouTuber for a day”.
- Student language ambassadors were sent to Loreto on the Green in April 2024. The ambassadors were coached and supported by TU Dublin Languages staff. They talked about Languages and TU Dublin study opportunities and addressed the following: making the choice to study languages; being well settled in language study; studying a Leaving Cert language and/or starting a new one; preparation for Erasmus; and Erasmus experiences: study, work and ELA experiences.
- In June 2024, an engaging video was also launched to promote the language programmes offered by Language Studies at TU Dublin to prospective second-level students.

Trinity College Dublin (TCD)

- TCD sent student language ambassadors to visit schools in January 2024. The ambassadors gave a talk that highlighted the routes to university and the language opportunities there. Ambassadors delivered talks to both whole year groups, and to individual classes. The school students had the chance to ask questions about college life in general and language courses in particular.
- TCD continued their TY Poster Competition to encourage creative thinking around language learning. The competition was launched in January and an official prizegiving reception was held in April for the winners, their teachers and parents.

Dublin City University (DCU)

- DCU ran a Student Short Film Festival in Spring 2024.



Munster Technical University (MTU)

- MTU selected student language ambassadors to increase awareness at second level of the benefits of language learning, as well as to raise awareness of the range of language options at MTU. The student language ambassadors attended an open day on 15 November 2024 and visited Coláiste Muire, Crosshaven and Coláiste an Phiarsaigh, Glanmire in January 2024.

University of Galway

- Between February and May 2024, University of Galway organised Italian outreach activities for five local schools: Claregalway College, Eide College, Clarin College, Coláiste Muire Máthair, and Galway Educate Together Secondary School. The focus was on the teaching of Italian through activities and games.
- University of Galway hosted a hands-on bilingual (German/English) science workshop in March aimed at secondary school students and facilitated by DAAD lecturer Antonia Musolff. Course Coordinator for Biotechnology, Dr Andrew Flaus, introduced the study of Biotechnology with German.
- University of Galway organised German outreach activities including a German Theatre workshop in April 2024 for three local schools: High Cross College, Tuam, Archbishop McHale College, Tuam and St Brigid's College, Loughrea.

Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)

- TUS ran a poster competition for secondary school students. The competition required students to submit a poster linking languages to employment opportunities and/or to devise a poster that would visually describe items one would need to pack when embarking on a language journey. Judging and prize giving was in May 2024.

University of Limerick (UL)

- University of Limerick took part in the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival 2024. Participants could attend sessions in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish.
- Language ambassadors promoted courses to secondary school students, teachers, guidance counsellors and parents/guardians at their Open Day in January 2024.
- A play for TY students from four local schools was hosted in March 2024.
- UL hosted Languages Week to tie in with European Day of Languages in September 2024. There was a range of activities to promote multilingualism and language learning on campus including a Japan Trivia Quiz, Language Exchange Meeting, Irish World Music Café, Multilingual Literary Readings and the launch of the Language Outreach Programme.
- UL hosted a multilingual games event in October 2024. Students played familiar games in their target languages with native speaker facilitators.
- For a 4th year Japanese student poster exhibition, students presented their posters about a dish or food from around the world.
- An Erasmus Days International Language Exchange coffee meet up was hosted in October 2024. This was an opportunity for UL and international students to reconnect with their language partners or meet new ones.
- Two open days were held in October 2024. Language ambassadors attended course talks and shared their experience of learning languages in UL. Tours of the Language Learning Hub were also provided.
- Student language ambassadors gave tours of the campus and the Language Learning Hub in German to promote language learning in UL to the German Teachers' Association of Ireland in November 2024.



Impact:

- Third level lecturers and student language ambassadors inspire both post-primary students and primary pupils to continue with a language through open days, competitions, and school visits.
- Post-primary students gain an understanding and interest in languages at third level when they visit a campus and learn about university life, studying a language and going abroad on Erasmus. The student language ambassadors, who are only a few years older than the post-primary students are able to have peer-to-peer chats and seem more approachable.

'Secondary students were very engaged. Language teachers and guidance counsellors gave positive feedback regarding the professionalism of the Language Ambassadors and their ability to engage in meaningful ways with the classes.'

Munster Technological University

'We find that the Student Ambassador scheme works incredibly well, and this is something that we want to retain and develop moving forward. TY students really enjoy getting their perspectives, which is why we'll send more of them, with tutors, to school visits.'

Maynooth University

'Real excitement from the students and a will to continue learning languages... Students loved seeing the campus and the vibrancy of UCD'

UCD

'Thanks to the Try Languages event, we established connections with local secondary school language teachers and students, giving both groups a positive learning experience. I hope we demonstrated that learning languages is fun, interesting and worth investing time and energy in and students got to familiarize themselves with SETU and with language lecturers.'

SETU

'Visitors to the various stands commented on how beneficial it was to have a student presence to get the added value of the real-life study experience. They presented their course and their language-learning experience in a relatable and engaging way, acting as mediators between staff members and secondary school students and their parents/guardians in particular.'

UL

Next Steps:

- HEI annual meeting where HEI staff will be able to exchange good practice ideas in May 2025
- Continue to support and offer advice to HEI staff on the implementation of their HEI funded projects such as competitions, guidance counsellor events, student retention events and outreach activities and events
- Ongoing evaluation of the benefits of providing HEI funding for the promotion of languages



39,700 Attendees



7 Student Events



Overview:

In 2024, PPLI participated in numerous student events, including Higher Options and Career Options Cork, as well as smaller events nationwide. The team engaged with students, teachers, parents, and guidance counsellors, providing resources and information on the options for studying languages at Senior Cycle and beyond. The careers and personal benefits of language skills were also discussed.

Main Aims:

- Raise awareness of the personal, social, and career benefits of language skills and generate enthusiasm for language-learning amongst students
- Highlight the variety of supports and resources that PPLI offers for studying languages at Senior Cycle and provide information on opportunities to study languages at third level
- Gather insights from students, teachers, and guidance counsellors on how language-learning is viewed and approached, gaps in knowledge, and areas where more support or resources could be of benefit

Activity:

In autumn 2024, PPLI exhibited at two major events for Senior Cycle students: Higher Options, which took place in late-September at the RDS, and Career Options Cork, which was in mid-October, in Rochestown Park Hotel, Douglas, Co. Cork.

Higher Options attracted over 30,000 attendees, including students, teachers, parents, and guidance counsellors, who visited stands from employers and third level institutions nationwide. For PPLI, it served as a valuable platform for discussing the role of languages in students' lives, education, and future careers.

Career Options Cork, a similar event on a smaller scale, is aimed at informing Senior Cycle students in the south of the country of their options after post-primary school. It drew approximately 6,000 students. This event was an opportunity to reach students outside of the Leinster region, particularly in the context of post-event statistics provided by Higher Options, which indicated that 86 percent of students attending that event were from Leinster, and furthermore, that 47 percent were from County Dublin.

PPLI also exhibited at School Summit in Blanchardstown, Dublin, in April, and Northwest Careers Fest in Sligo in May. These events had an attendance of approximately 2,500 students combined.

In the spring of 2024, PPLI representatives were invited to individual careers fairs in Kildare Town Community School, Lusk Community College and Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh, to raise awareness of the benefits of languages amongst students there. These fairs had a combined attendance of circa 1,200.

At all events, PPLI exhibited under the Languages Connect name and branding, informing stakeholders of Languages Connect resources and supports, and offering guidance on the role of languages at Senior Cycle, third level, and beyond. The PPLI team drew on personal experiences and real-life examples to support conversations, all members having studied and used a language in their diverse studies and early careers. The stand often saw queues of waiting students, with team members deeply engaged in conversations. Students appreciated the array of language-related items available, which included branded bags and other merchandise, "Hello" badges and language foldouts in a variety of languages.

Student language ambassadors and PPLI Associates were added to the team for the larger events - Higher Options and Career Options Cork. The student language ambassadors, being close in age to the student attendees, were able to discuss students' options on a peer-to-peer level, while the PPLI Associates added their teacher voice and unique understanding of student experience to the conversation.

Impact:

- Increased awareness of Languages Connect resources and supports amongst key target audiences – over 36,000 attendees over five days at Higher Options and Career Options Cork, the two largest events, in addition to approximately 3000 attendees at smaller careers fairs and student events
- Enhanced awareness amongst attendees of the benefits of language skills, as well as of the avenues for studying and using languages in Senior Cycle and beyond
- Connections made with other relevant exhibitors and existing partner relationships reinforced

> Next Steps:

- Maintain a presence at relevant student events in 2025
- Continue to expand the geographical reach of the Languages Connect awareness campaign by exhibiting at student events in all provinces, where possible
- Continue to strengthen relationships with partners, including the Department of Foreign Affairs, to display and promote Languages Connect literature at their stands at events

Overview:

PPLI regularly collaborates with representatives from the embassies and cultural institutes to identify needs in the context of particular languages, to investigate relevant resources and mobility opportunities to support teachers and students, and to explore synergies which support and promote the importance of learning foreign languages.

Main Aims:

- Explore synergies and opportunities for collaboration, e.g. in the areas of language upskilling and mobility, the FLA and ELA schemes, #ThinkLanguages, and Culture Night
- Increase awareness of the importance of language learning
- Identify locations where there is a level of interest and demand for heritage language supports
- Provide support to citizens from countries that participate in the Foreign Language Assistant scheme
- Participate in international events aimed at language educators
- Disseminate supports provided by PPLI

Activity:

Language Teaching and Learning Support and Resources:

- The Embassy of Japan supported PPLI with an application to the Japan Foundation for continuation of the secondment of a dedicated Japanese language advisor who continues to be in place.
- PPLI supported the Embassy of Japan with organising a programme of school visits, with Ambassador Maruyama visiting a total of 46 schools during his two-year tenure in Ireland.
- PPLI supported embassies and cultural institutes with induction for Foreign Language Assistants and visiting staff e.g. in addition to input at the national induction for FLAs hosted by the Department of Education, PPLI provided post-induction support for French FLAs at an event hosted by the French Embassy. PPLI also provided staff induction and information to visiting staff at the UCC and University of Galway Confucius Institutes.
- PPLI facilitated the Visiting Spanish Teacher Scheme, an agreement between the Department of Education (DoE) in Ireland and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain (MECS) that aims to address the shortage of qualified Spanish teachers in Ireland.
- PPLI took part in discussions with embassies on further opportunities for teacher exchange e.g. with the Korean Embassy on how challenges could be overcome.

Competitions:

- PPLI, in collaboration with the Consejería de Educación de la Embajada de España en Dublin, La Junta de Castilla y León, and the Spanish Tourist Office in Dublin, organised a Spanish video competition, with a prize of a language course in Castilla y León. In 2024, 6 students and 3 teachers benefited from upskilling courses in Spain after winning this competition. The competition provides all students with the opportunity to improve their language competence and learn about aspects of life and culture in Spain while preparing their video entries.



Events and Celebrations:

- PPLI spoke at a variety of events organised by embassies, e.g. the Embassy of France's event for French Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs) in May and its Journée internationale des assistants de langue event, organised in December.
- PPLI was represented at embassy celebrations including Bastille Day, the Embassy of Brazil's Independence Day, Korean National Day, and the Japanese Emperor's birthday.
- PPLI had an exhibitor's stand and delivered a presentation at the Brazil Showcase in Dublin in November 2024.



Collaboration and Meetings:

- PPLI had a meeting with the Brazil-Ireland Chamber of Commerce (BICC) in September to explore collaboration opportunities, including work experience for Transition Year students.
- In December, PPLI held a meeting with embassies and cultural institutes to discuss their involvement in key projects such as the English Language Assistant (ELA) Scheme, the Foreign Language Assistant (FLA) Scheme, language upskilling and mobility, and #ThinkLanguages.
- During 2024, there were also meetings involving the sending agencies for FLAs e.g. Der Pädagogische Austauschdienst (PAD).



Awareness Raising

- PPLI collaborated with many of the embassies on awareness-raising efforts, to increase awareness of the languages of these embassies, and also of the supports provided by PPLI for these languages. Culture Night, #ThinkLanguages, and information sessions provided by PPLI, are all examples of this work.

> Next Steps:

- Continue to meet regularly with relevant embassy and cultural institute representatives to discuss context and progress, and develop further appropriate collaboration
- Continue to explore mechanisms for increasing provision of and access to the more recently introduced curricular languages in particular
- Seek to leverage opportunities to develop more language capacity in schools and in society by encouraging more uptake in the English Language Assistant scheme
- Continue to explore how to better support and leverage the FLA scheme for language education in Ireland, particularly in the context of the introduction of Modern Foreign Languages in the Primary Language Curriculum.

21 Languages  337 participants

Overview:

PPLI and the European Commission Representation in Ireland hosted a joint event in Europe House for Culture Night and to celebrate European Day of Languages. Language taster classes in 21 different languages were offered at this event.

Main Aims:

- Make taster classes in a wide variety of languages available through a nationwide event
- Promote the importance of foreign languages and ensure that there is visibility for languages on Culture Night
- Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the 2004 EU enlargement by offering the languages of the countries that joined in 2004
- Host a combined event and bring together Culture Night and the European Day of Languages

Activity:

In 2024, two evening events were held – one in Europe House in Dublin to celebrate Culture Night on Friday 20 September, and an online event for European Day of Languages on Thursday 26 September. On Culture Night, participants took part in language taster classes in ten languages: Chinese, Czech, German, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish and Spanish. Participants could pre-register or drop into Europe House. The event was part of a European Cultural Trail (organised in conjunction with European Union National Institutes for Culture), and participants could get a stamp on their 'passport' at Europe House.

On European Day of Languages, online taster classes were provided in a further eleven languages - Arabic, Estonian, French, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovenian and Ukrainian.

Impact:

- Languages had visibility on Culture Night, which is a large-scale event with attendance of 1.2 million
- Over 300 people availed of language taster classes over the two evenings
- Attendees were asked to complete a survey. The average star rating for the two events was 4.6 out of 5 stars, and 45% of Culture Night attendees reported feeling inspired to learn a language.

Comments included:

*"This event was outstanding
All the instructors, sessions and activities
in which I participated were stellar. I felt genuinely
welcome, appreciated and valued, and each instructor
was kind, personable and affable. It was a true honour to attend
each session, with each one furthering my interest in languages,
and I hope to be able to do so again the future."*

*"Overall event was exceptionally good, and well organised.
Estonian teacher was by far the most interesting
personality /character - provided insight
into the Estonian people as well as
their language."*

Next Steps:

- Continue with the Culture Night and European Day of Languages events in 2025
- Continue to explore additional mechanisms for leveraging the Culture Night event to get more visibility for languages and increase awareness of the importance of same
- Consider including additional languages



Overview:

Collaboration with partner education agencies is important in order to stay aligned with broader education policy and initiatives. Different partners bring diverse perspectives, skills, and experiences and enhance both the quality of and the opportunity for dissemination of the work. Collaboration also allows for more efficient use of resources and maximises impact.

Main Aims:

- Stay relevant and aligned with broader education policy and initiatives
- Make efficient use of resources and maximise impact
- Ensure that PPLI work is disseminated through other agencies

Activity:

Collaboration with An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta (COGG):

- Provision of whole-school support (WSS) sessions in schools
- A joint contribution on languages to the Oide newsletter
- An increase in the number of PPLI resources that are available to the Irish-medium education sector
- An Irish language Community of Practice evening to raise awareness of and support teachers in effectively using the Say Yes to Languages Open Night toolkit and to explore its various applications.
- PPLI strengthened collaboration with COGG on CLIL initiatives in 2024. PPLI welcomed Caitlín Ní Ruanaidh, CLIL Education Officer at COGG, to upskilling sessions for language teachers, and were proud to support the launch of COGG's new Corpoideachas trí Ghaeilge resources.

Collaboration with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA):

- The PPLI Teaching and Learning Manager was a member of the NCCA Development Group for the new specification of MFL in Primary.
- Members of the Teaching and Learning team were involved in the Junior Cycle MFL early enactment review.
- The Primary team supported the NCCA with creation of accompanying material for the publication of the draft Modern Foreign Language specification for public consultation

Collaboration with Oide

- The Primary team have established ongoing collaboration with Oide with regards to the creation of resources and other supports for schools and teachers to facilitate the implementation of the MFL specification included in the redeveloped Primary Language Curriculum

Collaboration with Education Support Centres Ireland (ESCI)

- The Primary team established ongoing collaboration with ESCI in the context of provision of foreign language upskilling opportunities for primary teachers.

A dedicated working group was also established between PPLI, Oide, COGG, and the NCCA to explore a shared approach to CLIL implementation. Productive meetings have helped shape a joint understanding and vision for CLIL in the Irish education context.

Impact:

- Collaboration and co-operation with other education agencies in relation to key projects provides access to diverse expertise and increases opportunities for dissemination of the work, as well as professional learning.
- PPLI has deepened and expanded its collaborative professional work and made resources and experiences more widely available to relevant stakeholders.

Next Steps:

- Continue to work closely with education partners and agencies to stay aligned with policy across the education sector and increased dissemination of resources and supports
- Leverage existing collaboration to explore new opportunities to increase the impact of the work



19 Forums and Events

Overview:

PPLI presented at a variety of conferences throughout the year. These presentations served to showcase PPLI projects and supports, share best practice, strengthen partnerships, and encourage new collaborations.

Main Aims:

- Disseminate information about the work of PPLI in relation to implementing key actions in the Languages Connect Strategy
- Provide information to teachers, principals, and language stakeholders on the importance of learning foreign languages at both primary and post-primary level
- Engage in discussion on the importance of foreign language learning in primary and post-primary schools
- Disseminate resources created by PPLI to support stakeholders
- Develop and enhance partnerships with stakeholders



Activity:

In 2024, PPLI continued to contribute at relevant forums and events for teachers and stakeholders. These offered PPLI an opportunity to disseminate projects and engage with teachers and other stakeholders in relation to the latest developments in the MFL sphere and in relation to available resources and supports.

PPLI contributed to and/or exhibited at events including:

- AIPLF (Irish Association of French-Language Teachers) Conference
- ATI (Italian Teacher Professional Network) Conference
- ATS (Spanish Teacher Professional Network) Conference
- Brazil Showcase
- Education and Training Boards of Ireland (ETBI) Conference
- Experience Japan
- GDI (German Teacher Professional Network) Conference
- Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) Conference
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) Education Conference
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) Consultative Conference on Education
- Mother Tongues Festival
- National Association for Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) Conference
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Consultative Conference



Impact:

- PPLI's participation in relevant forums and events provided opportunities to share available supports with stakeholders, highlight best practice, and showcase innovative teaching methodologies
- New opportunities for collaboration and dissemination were identified

Next Steps:

- Continue to actively participate and engage in relevant forums and events enhance engagement in foreign language education and identify opportunities to support strategy implementation.
- Continue to disseminate supports and resources available to teachers and stakeholders
- Build on existing work with partners and stakeholders to continue to deliver messages that are meaningful and relevant to the work



Much of the work carried out by PPLI has a strong underpinning of research. Research helps to monitor progress and evaluate project outcomes and provides direction for the work. When research is carried out by PPLI staff they are encouraged to disseminate it both nationally and internationally. These opportunities help leverage connections with relevant experts in the broader context.

International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) World Congress

11-16 August 2024 – Hybrid

As part of the AILA World Congress on Linguistic Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Sustainability, Laura Quigley co-presented a paper on 'The potential of multiliteracies in CLIL to engage language learners in Ireland' with Prof. Kim Bower and Dee Rutgers, Ph.D., as part of PPLI's ongoing work on CLIL.

Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality Language Services (EAQUALS)

11-12 October 2024 - Online

Kenia Puig I Planella, Ph.D., in collaboration with Miranda Karjagdi Çolak, Ph.D., of the School of Foreign Languages in Bursa Technical University, presented a session at the EAQUALS conference under the theme of "Quality Practices in Language Teaching". The presentation explored current trends in plurilingual and intercultural education and addressed the needs of diverse educational contexts. Attendees were provided with actionable strategies to enhance their teaching practices, support professional development, and improve learning outcomes in their institutions. The presentation was also an opportunity to showcase the work PPLI is doing to support plurilingual and intercultural education.

Irish Association for Applied Linguistics (IRAAL) Annual Conference

15-16 November 2024, University College Cork

Chang Zhang, Ph.D., presented at the 2024 IRAAL Annual Conference on initial teacher education for Asian languages in Ireland, discussing both challenges and future prospects. A paper on this topic was subsequently published in Volume 31 of TEANGA, the journal of IRAAL.

Publications in 2024

- Bower, K., Rutgers, D., & Quigley, L. (2024).
Learner perceptions of a national CLIL Innovation in Foreign Languages in the Republic of Ireland (5474).
Frontiers in Education, 9.
<http://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1456630>
- Zhang, C., & Ruddock, K. (2024).
Bridging Gaps and Building Futures: Establishing initial teacher education for Asian languages in Ireland.
TEANGA, the Journal of the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics, 31, 231–255.
<https://doi.org/10.35903/teanga.v31i.7643>

Impact

- Continue to actively participate and engage in relevant forums and events enhance engagement in foreign language education and identify opportunities to support strategy implementation.
- Continue to disseminate supports and resources available to teachers and stakeholders
- Build on existing work with partners and stakeholders to continue to deliver messages that are meaningful and relevant to the work



Next Steps:

- Continue to use every opportunity to collaborate with academic partners and share relevant research, to further encourage collaboration and innovation in language education, both at a national and international level.



23 Languages

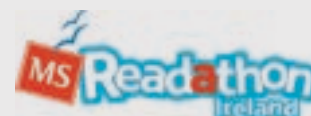


Overview:

MS Readathon encourages children to read as many books as they can during November, whilst raising funds for Multiple Sclerosis Ireland (MS Ireland). PPLI have collaborated with MS Ireland for several years to sponsor a prize in a special foreign language category.

Main Aims:

- To encourage young people to read in a language other than English or Irish
- To promote the importance of reading in a heritage language to parents



Activity:

Languages Connect contributed to the promotion of MS Readathon and encouraged participants to read in a language other than English or Irish. This year, for the first time, a foreign language book review was included in the competition. Children embraced the opportunity to read in a wide variety of languages, including Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Japanese, Italian, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish and Ukrainian. Parents were encouraged to get their children to read in their heritage language. There were prizes for both primary and post-primary level winners. The two review winners read books in Dutch and Spanish.

Impact:

- This partnership helps encourage a much wider audience to read in a foreign language and raises awareness of the benefits of language skills amongst children and parents nationwide
- The initiative encourages children to connect with and/or stay connected with their heritage languages
- In 2024 children read in 23 different foreign languages



Next Steps:

- Continue to work with MS Readathon in 2025 and leverage the opportunities to promote languages to the thousands of pupils and students nationwide who take part in such a well-established fundraising activity
- Continue to cross-promote the MS Readathon competition with schools and pupils engaged in the 'Say Yes to Languages' module



24k+ Careers Portal Site Views



2 New Guidance Associates

Overview:

PPLI provides guidance counsellors with relevant resources and supports to help them inform their students in relation to modern foreign language (MFL) subjects, as well as to assist them in the conversation around MFL uptake upon entry, and at transition points, within their schools.

Main Aims:

- Assist guidance counsellors to provide relevant information to students and parents around language subject options and methods of provision
- Increase awareness among guidance counsellors of the range of personal and professional benefits derived through language learning
- Work with relevant stakeholders to disseminate information and supports to guidance counsellors and in turn, to students, parents, and the wider school community

Activity:

PPLI continued to promote and disseminate the suite of Languages Connect guidance resources across various digital platforms, through stakeholder collaborations and in schools nationwide throughout 2024.

In March 2024, PPLI attended the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) annual conference in Munster Technological University (MTU) Kerry, to provide relevant information and distribute available resources to the 350 guidance counsellors that attended. This event proved to be a valuable opportunity to engage with guidance counsellors in areas relevant to their work.

Attendance at the annual IGC conference was also an opportunity to publicise and distribute a new resource titled "Studying Foreign Languages for the Leaving Certificate and Beyond", which arose out of discussions with guidance professionals seeking a resource to highlight key aspects of language provision at the Leaving Certificate level, including distinctions between curricular and non-curricular languages and available supports.

Following a review of existing resources, a new guidance presentation slide pack was also developed. This resource is intended to be inserted into presentations discussing Leaving Certificate languages at school events for students progressing into Senior Cycle. These resources should support guidance counsellors, and their MFL colleagues, to continue to build upon a whole-school approach to guidance.



In April 2024, PPLI provided a talk to guidance counsellors at the University of Limerick. This event was focussed on resources relevant to Guidance and provided an opportunity for those who attended to ask questions.

In August 2024, PPLI was delighted to welcome two new Associates to the team, both of whom come from an MFL and Guidance background. Their support in this area will prove invaluable.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

The partnership with CareersPortal.ie continued in 2024. Languages Connect articles are included in every CareersPortal.ie newsletter, which is circulated to guidance professionals monthly. A languages tile is featured on all 33 career sectors on the site and PPLI updates are featured regularly on CareersPortal.ie social media posts. The Languages Connect Course Finder on CareersPortal.ie is continuously updated to include all third level courses available that include a language at major, minor, or elective level.

CareersPortal.ie Career Skills Competition

The Career Skills Competition aims to encourage students to understand the role skills play in their future career and education. In 2024, PPLI continued to sponsor a specialist category award - the Languages Connect Award for Careers with Foreign Languages.

The 2024 Award Ceremony took place in May at the Department of Education. Over 100 people attended the ceremony, including the winning students, their teachers, principals, deputy principals, guidance counsellors and parents.



Close to 1,500 students entered the competition from 148 schools across the country. Aoife McCann of Sacred Heart School, Drogheda, Co. Louth won the Languages Connect category.

Impact:

- Increased awareness among key stakeholders within the guidance sector of the importance of languages in the context of study and career options
- Significant engagement with online resources on the CareersPortal.ie website, including 290k Languages Sector Page views. There were also 25k views of language, and language career-related videos, while language subject choice pages received 25k views.

➤ Next Steps:

- Continue to expand the role of the newly recruited PPLI Associates for Guidance, with a particular focus on enhancing engagement with other Guidance Counsellors to share important information and resources.
- Continue to increase collaboration, and explore additional opportunities for engagement, with all relevant stakeholders including guidance counsellors, IGC, CareersPortal.ie and other professional support services.
- Prepare and deliver two workshops at the annual IGC conference in 2025.



5 Online Support Sessions



1 Session in Irish



Overview:

The Say Yes to Languages Open Night Toolkit provides a suite of resources for teachers planning to host open nights within their schools. Through a range of engaging taster activities, the toolkit aims to support uptake of modern foreign languages (MFLs) at Junior Cycle. In September 2024, a series of online sessions were provided to support teachers on how they could maximise their use of the toolkit amongst prospective incoming first year students.

Main Aims:

- Support teachers in preparing engaging activities and presentations for open nights
- Provide resources to help teachers promote uptake of MFLs in their schools and encourage prospective incoming first-year students to Say 'Yes' to Languages when choosing their Junior Cycle subjects

2024 feedback received
on these sessions:

"Excellent presentation & resources. Very practical approach. Many thanks"

"Very helpful, a great opportunity to network with other MFL teachers and share ideas"

"Brilliant ideas. Clearly presented"

"Thank you so much. I'm an NQT and this was so helpful!!!"

"Very helpful to get tips on how to optimise the toolkit"

Activity:

To raise awareness of and to support teachers in their use of the toolkit, a series of five online sessions was delivered in September 2024, including one through Irish as a result of collaboration with COGG (An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta). A total of 124 teachers registered to attend these sessions.

Impact:

- There is increasing awareness amongst stakeholders of the toolkit and how it can be deployed to support uptake of languages.
- Teachers who attended the sessions to support use of the toolkit in September 2024 reported positive feedback.

Next Steps:

- Provide a series of online sessions in September 2025 to support ongoing use of the toolkit and other strategies to support uptake on entry to the school and at transition points from Junior to Senior Cycle.
- Undertake periodic review of the toolkit content so that it remains interesting, relevant, and responsive to the needs of school communities.



8 Online Sessions



283 Attendees

Overview:

To enhance communication with and support for students of the newly introduced and lesser-taught curricular languages (e.g. Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian) and their parents, PPLI organised regular information sessions to familiarise them with the curricular documents and information relating to state examinations.

Main Aims:

- Raise awareness among parents and students of relevant information and supports provided by PPLI and other agencies
- Support parents of existing and potential students of the more recently introduced and lesser-taught curricular languages
- Inform and engage with stakeholders in relation to key information and developments in the new specifications

Activity:

In 2024, PPLI organised eight online information sessions tailored for students of the more recently introduced curricular languages, and their parents. There were 283 in attendance at these sessions, which covered a spectrum of topics including support services, curriculum specifications, supporting documents, the state examination, and advice on effective study practices both in school and at home.

An online session for Russian Leaving Certificate was held for the first time by PPLI this year. This session, delivered through Russian, attracted 82 students in fifth and sixth year who were interested in finding out more about the Leaving Certificate examination.

To ensure broad accessibility, PPLI actively engaged with the local community, leveraged social media channels, and collaborated with relevant embassies to promote awareness of the information sessions among parents and students. Recognising the need for accessibility beyond the live sessions, PPLI compiled frequently asked questions (FAQ) lists, available on languagesconnect.ie in both English and the target languages. These resources serve to support parents with diverse language backgrounds and provide valuable information to a wider audience.

The information sessions also served as a platform to introduce Saturday classes offered by PPLI. The sessions themselves and these classes cater to students studying the curriculum outside of school, foster communication and create a sense of community among learners.

Impact:

- Delivered timely assistance for parents of Senior Cycle students and offered valuable insights for younger students planning for the future
- Informed stakeholders about the context, delivery, and examination processes for the more recently added Leaving Certificate curricular languages
- Enhanced collaboration between PPLI, embassies and the target language communities



Next Steps:

- Continue to organise regular information sessions in 2024
- Continue to identify the needs of parents, to source and/or create relevant resources and appropriate support



272 Attendees

Overview:

PPLI provides support for Ukrainian students who intend to take the non-curricular Leaving Certificate examination paper. Ukrainian is the first non-EU language to be examined as a non-curricular Leaving Certificate paper and will be available to students as an examination for the first time in June 2025. PPLI's first information session in support of the new non-curricular Leaving Certificate examination paper in Ukrainian was held in 2024.

Main Aims:

- Provide support to students who are considering taking the non-curricular Leaving Certificate Ukrainian examination paper.
- Raise awareness of the availability of this new examination amongst potential examination candidates.

Activity:

In preparation for the introduction of non-curricular Leaving Certificate Ukrainian, an event was organised aimed at raising awareness of the new examination paper among relevant fifth and sixth year post-primary students. 272 interested students, parents and others registered to take part.

PPLI developed a dedicated information sheet on the Ukrainian Leaving Certificate examination paper to support students and other stakeholders with queries in relation to this examination.



Next Steps:

- Host an online awareness-raising session, focused on the new examination paper, in January 2025.



9 Sessions

Overview:

Whole School Support Sessions provide support and guidance for whole school teams as they seek to enhance and expand provision of foreign languages on the curriculum.

Main Aims:

- Increase awareness amongst school senior management teams of the importance of language learning for all students
- Encourage uptake, expansion, and diversification of foreign language options within schools
- Provide senior management teams (SMTs) with the supports they need to enhance language provision

Activity:

Following a review of PPLI-delivered advisory sessions, a renewed approach was agreed, with a focus on supporting schools in which PPLI Language Development Officers are employed. These new Whole-School Support (WSS) Sessions continued providing support to school teams by looking at the school's overall MFL provision. In addition, the schools' PPLI-employed Language Development Officers were supported during the visit through lesson observations and professional dialogue. Examples of these sessions included one held at Coláiste Íosagáin, Stillorgan, Dublin. This visit served several purposes including collaboration with a group of educational professionals from Catalonia, a lesson observation of the PPLI teacher of Chinese in the school, and PPLI's first COGG-led and Irish-medium WSS session.



Impact:

- Positive feedback was received in relation to the WSS sessions, with participants commenting that they found the sessions to be supportive of MFL provision in their schools
- As a result of the sessions, schools felt encouraged to diversify their MFL curriculum and develop school exchanges

Next Steps:

- Continue to roll out and expand upon the WSS sessions to support schools in their implementation of the Languages Connect strategy and assist PPLI Language Development Officers in their work

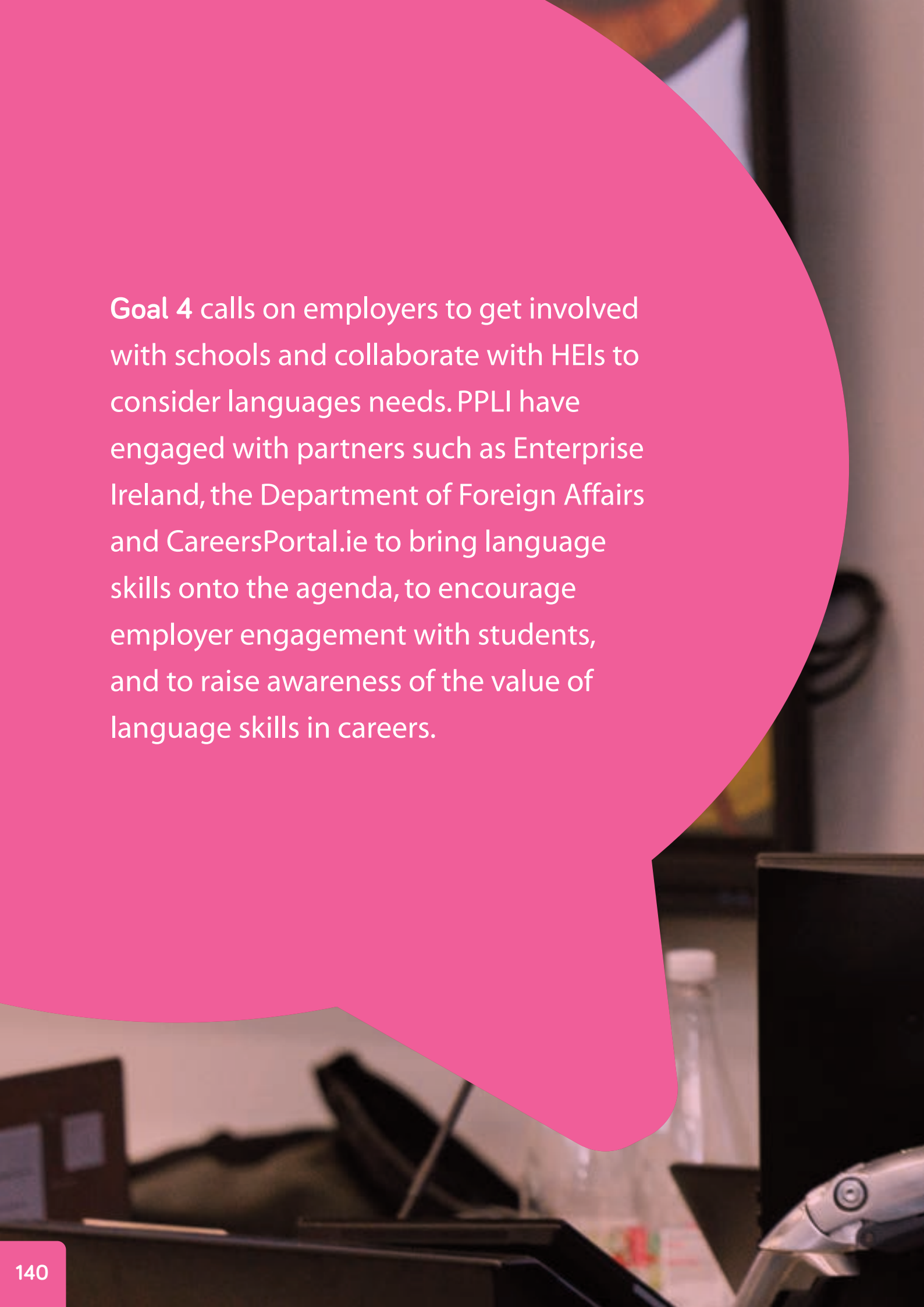
Goal 3 - Moving Forward

Partnerships, collaborations, and presence at events will continue to be important elements of the awareness-raising effort. As the team grows, capacity for hosting and attending a large variety of stakeholder events has become possible. Connections established through attendance and participation in a variety of events will continue to develop and be leveraged to build awareness of the wide range of supports and resources available. The Languages Connect name and strong branding has become well established now and will continue to have impact online, on social media, in schools and at the many events that PPLI organises and attends.

The growing bank of resources and promotional materials will continue to be developed based on feedback and research into the various target audiences. Presence and engagement at face-to-face meetings, events, and conferences will continue to be a key part of the awareness-raising effort. Many stakeholder collaborations have been developed and nurtured and will continue to grow, develop, and create impact for the awareness-raising effort. All communications will continue to promote the benefits of foreign language learning across all education sectors, for increased career opportunities, for the development of transversal skills and for social cohesion and integration.

#ThinkLanguages will evolve further with a wider offering available to schools as partnerships develop with HEIs, primary schools, other government departments and stakeholders who will be further integrated into the successfully extended week-long national celebration of languages. An integrated approach to encouraging the uptake of languages will encompass engagement with Senior Management Teams, Guidance Counsellors and teachers of foreign languages, ensuring they have appropriate resources to share with students. The growing collaboration with HEIs nationwide will give greater access to student language ambassadors to support awareness raising of language courses and careers.

Significant opportunities are also available for awareness raising amongst primary pupils and their families through the growth of the Say Yes to Languages Primary Module, and the language upskilling opportunities for primary teachers that are becoming available. The Languages Connect Open Night Toolkit and other resources will also be developed and disseminated further to support uptake of foreign languages at post-primary level. At this stage a significant body of guidance resources aimed at increasing appreciation of the value of keeping up a foreign language have been produced.



Goal 4 calls on employers to get involved with schools and collaborate with HEIs to consider languages needs. PPLI have engaged with partners such as Enterprise Ireland, the Department of Foreign Affairs and CareersPortal.ie to bring language skills onto the agenda, to encourage employer engagement with students, and to raise awareness of the value of language skills in careers.



GOAL 4

**ENHANCE EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT IN
THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF
TRADE LANGUAGES**

Media Article Campaign Reach: 2.7m Enterprise Ireland Ezine Subscribers: 9.5k

Overview:

Several activities have been undertaken by PPLI in collaboration with employers and the enterprise sector to highlight to students the significance of language skills, emphasising their relevance in professional contexts

Main Aims:

- Increase awareness among students of the importance of language skills in business, enterprise, and diverse career paths, and include employers in this endeavour.
- Offer opportunities for students to witness first-hand how languages are utilised in real-world business settings.
- Engage with industry stakeholders to understand current perceptions and discuss the necessity of language skills in today's workforce, as well as encourage growth in work experience opportunities for students learning languages.
- Validate and recognise language skills through enterprise competitions and events, fostering motivation and confidence among students.

Activity:

Collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)

In 2024, PPLI continued working with the DFA on initiatives that support both 'Languages Connect: Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education – 2017-2026' and the 'A Career for EU' strategy. At events aimed at post-primary students, information was disseminated about career opportunities within the European Union (EU) and the vital role of language skills in EU strategies. The DFA supported PPLI by sharing Languages Connect material to highlight the advantages of language skills for career development at events that PPLI was not represented at. PPLI also distributed materials on behalf of the DFA at other events.





The DFA once again took part in #ThinkLanguages Week, sponsoring the Champion Team Competition prize - a trip to Brussels - offering students a first-hand look at career possibilities within the EU.

PPLI created targeted content and materials to showcase language-related career paths within the EU, which were shared during the event. This included having a DFA staff member based in Brussels as a keynote speaker in the #ThinkLanguages Week opening ceremony, following its success last year.

Programmes with Enterprise Ireland

PPLI worked with the government's enterprise development agency, Enterprise Ireland, to drive awareness of the benefits of students learning languages for the future of the Irish economy.

Key Activities with Enterprise Ireland:

- To support student messaging, a graduate recruit with language skills working in Germany for Enterprise Ireland took part in the #ThinkLanguages opening ceremony video, showcasing the opportunities available to Irish students with foreign language skills.
- To increase awareness of the work of PPLI as well as the role of Enterprise Ireland (EI) in the Languages Connect Strategy, PPLI delivered a presentation to over 30 Development Advisors (DAs) in Enterprise Ireland, whose role is to highlight key areas of interest and need to their clients. PPLI used the opportunity to underline the importance of foreign language skills for future economic success, and to provide ideas on how the DAs and their clients can support the goals of the strategy.

How foreign language education can influence Irish business growth and talent development

Embracing foreign language skills can support the growth of Irish enterprises internationally. Find out how language proficiency future-proofs Irish talent.

Recent client surveys, undertaken by Enterprise Ireland, have highlighted that access to skills is a major challenge to company development and a critical obstacle to company growth.

Foreign language skills for business growth

The availability of human capital and a skilled workforce, as well as the commitment of those in education to address these needs, is critical to support Irish enterprises as they look to scale their businesses internationally. Language proficiency and cultural understanding are essential skills to support building international Irish enterprises. The lack of language skills is a significant trade barrier, with Ireland lagging when it comes to language proficiency, especially when compared with other EU member states.

Future-proofing Irish students

Primary, post-primary and lifelong learning initiatives are essential to develop and embed language skills in the Irish workforce. They allow us to future-proof talent and support Irish enterprises as they address the impact of globalisation, geopolitical developments and changes in international trade.

Fostering foreign language education in Irish schools is not merely an academic exercise but a strategic imperative. It prepares students for a globalised world, enhances their cognitive and cultural capabilities and ensures Ireland's active and informed participation in the European and global arenas. Critically, it ensures an agile, highly skilled talent pool for Irish enterprises with the ambition to scale internationally.

Supporting Ireland's language strategy

Languages Connect is Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026. It focuses on enhancing foreign language education, underscoring the critical importance of multilingual competence for individuals, society and the economy.

This comprehensive plan envisions a future where learning and using at least one foreign language is commonplace, emphasising the inherent value of linguistic skills. The school system has a critical role to play in language and transversal skills development for the workforce of the future. Visit languagesconnect.ie to find out more about supporting foreign language learning for Irish students.



Helen McMahon
Senior Strategic
Policy Advisor,
Enterprise Ireland

Find out more at languagesconnect.ie

Sponsored by Languages Connect



Language proficiency and cultural understanding are crucial for building international Irish enterprises.

Primary, post-primary, and lifelong learning initiatives are key to developing these skills in the Irish workforce, helping us future-proof talent and support enterprises amid globalisation and changing trade dynamics.

Enterprise Ireland's **Helen McMahon** highlights how **Languages Connect**, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026, aims to enhance foreign language education, emphasising the importance of multilingual competence for individuals, society, and the economy.

Read more here: <https://rebrand.ly/f-L-E>



10



Like



Comment



Share

- PPLI contributed to the EI newsletter, which has a reach of over 9,500 subscribers, driving awareness and knowledge of the Languages Connect Strategy and the role of Enterprise Ireland, as well as the ongoing work of PPLI in the delivery of the strategy. Possible cross-collaboration opportunities were also highlighted.
- For wider public awareness of the need for home-grown language skills for future economic success, PPLI collaborated with Helen McMahon, Senior Strategic Policy Advisor at Enterprise Ireland on a media article which featured in a special supplement of the Irish Times. The article was entitled "How foreign language education can influence Irish business growth and talent development." Working collaboratively on key messaging and final copy ensured the topic of the need for foreign language skills for business was brought to a wider audience. It was also an opportunity to highlight in national press the important work of Enterprise Ireland and PPLI. The article was shared in print, online, and across Enterprise Ireland, Languages Connect, and BusinessNews.ie social channels. It was also distributed at the NAPD conference, which had over 800 attendees.

Career Skills Competition with CareersPortal.ie

In 2024, PPLI once again partnered with CareersPortal.ie to feature a dedicated languages category in the national Career Skills competition, encouraging students to gain work experience in roles that require language skills. Career Skills is a national competition designed to help second-level students reflect on the career skills they develop during work placements and explore potential career paths. This marked the second year that Languages Connect sponsored a category focused on language skills. Other enterprise partners included AIB and Fáilte Ireland. The competition was actively promoted at various career and education events, and online, throughout the year.



Impact:

- Students are becoming more aware of the importance of language skills in business and enterprise, leading to increased interest in developing these skills.
- Engaging with industry stakeholders has facilitated a better understanding of language skill requirements, enabling PPLI to better understand and align relevant student-facing programs and messaging with industry needs.
- Exposure in national media has provided a further opportunity to bring the conversation around future-proofing Irish business with foreign language skills to key influential stakeholders.
- The inclusion of a language category in the Career Skills competition has provided students with validation and recognition for their language abilities, motivating them to further develop these skills.



Next Steps:

- Continue collaboration and innovation in this area to prepare students to thrive in a globalised and multilingual professional landscape.
- Grow current partnerships and look to other relevant stakeholders who can support.
- Coordinate messaging with enterprise agencies around the importance of foreign languages to client companies.
- Promote resources such as the Partnerships with Employers Resource, World of Work Resource, and the Working with Languages Activity Pack in schools.
- Raise awareness in the enterprise sector of the value of languages for jobs through video content, school visits, and seminars.



Think Global
Work Opportunities
#ThinkLanguages

Goal 4 - Moving Forward

The publication of the 'Languages Connect Interim Review Report and Implementation Plan to 2026' is an opportunity for PPLI to reengage with the enterprise agencies to coordinate messaging around the importance of foreign languages to client companies. PPLI will also need to work with these agencies to access companies in the enterprise sector for the purpose of research, in order to determine the value of language skills and language learning for employers.

A more cross-sectoral approach to implementation should be adopted. The importance of language learning in the development of future skills required by the workforce, such as intercultural competence, empathy, and adaptability, so important in the context of global citizenship, need to be acknowledged in the context of higher education and enterprise. Ireland needs global citizens who are multilingual with strong intercultural competence, and who can navigate diverse cultural contexts, and this message needs to be embedded beyond school. While importing language skills from abroad has been used to plug skills shortages this does little to enhance the linguistic or intercultural skills of the wider national workforce.

Governance and Accountability

The overall Corporate Governance responsibility for PPLI remains with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) Unit at the Department of Education. In this context a level of service and performance delivery is agreed with CAP and reviewed annually subsequent to consultation and agreement.

Governance is conducted in accordance with the Revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) within the restrictions of current PPLI status. In carrying out its functions in relation to the implementation of the relevant actions in the Languages Connect Implementation Plan, PPLI complies with the following codes of practice and guidance as appropriate: the Revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 and 2022 amendments; the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022 which widens the scope of the Amendment Act w.e.f 1 January 2023; Public bodies obligations under Section 25 of the Disability Act and Statutory Obligations for Accessibility of Websites/Apps arising under S.I. 358 of 2020.

In accordance with the 2019 update regarding compliance with the Children's First Act 2015, PPLI have in place a service commitment to the Children's First Act of 2015 and also the Children's First National Guidelines. This includes a Child Safeguarding Statement; reporting arrangements to reflect the Act's reporting requirements; National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017; and reporting procedures for the reporting to Tusla of any child protection concerns brought to the attention of any staff or other personnel of PPLI.

PPLI ensures that all necessary obligations, including those for General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR), Freedom of Information (FOI), a structured approach to control of risks regarding IT and cyber-security, internal audit and the Public Spending Code are fully complied with.

Operational Environment

Post-Primary Languages Ireland is an exchequer funded non-commercial agency operating under a services agreement with The Marino Institute of Education for the purposes of HR, payroll, financial and administrative services.

Funding Arrangements/Financial Management

Funding is allocated by the Department to PPLI for the implementation of relevant actions in the strategy which support further development and diversification of foreign language teaching and learning in the Irish Education System. PPLI provide details of its funding requirements and supporting documentation to the Department.

PPLI is committed to the allocation of funding within the agreed budget and commits to compliance with all Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform guidelines, Department guidelines, relevant legislation and circulars, taxation legislation, employment, prompt payment of accounts and all other legislation relevant to Bodies in receipt of Exchequer funding.

Funding is carried out in accordance with public financial procedures which provide an important overarching framework in relation to the management of funding. PPLI confirms that it complies with the guidance regarding Exchequer grant disbursement as outlined in Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Circular 13/2014, and with other relevant financial requirements / procedures / circulars / regulations / legislation as set down from time to time. PPLI Director confirms that PPLI complies with The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies financial compliance requirements set for PPLI.

PPLI provides the Department with feedback and updates on audits carried out.

Reporting and Monitoring Arrangements

The work of PPLI in relation to progressing the actions set out in the Languages Connect strategy is overseen by the Foreign Languages Advisory Group (FLAG) comprising representatives of the Department, its Agencies, PPLI, and external stakeholders, and by the FLAG Post-primary sub-group (FLAGPP). PPLI provides updates on actions in Languages Connect for which it is responsible for FLAG and its subgroups as appropriate. The committees provide advice and support where appropriate to both PPLI and the DoE; provide a forum for discussion on current policy implementation and advise the Department on future direction/priorities for foreign languages strategy; bring together key stakeholders to provide advice from a range of perspectives to support the implementation of the Strategy; and monitor progress on the roll out of policy elements/actions in the Strategy and Implementation Plan.

FLAGPP is chaired by a member of the Inspectorate of the Department of Education (DoE), currently Maria Lorigan, who also represents the Inspectorate on FLAG. The secretariat is provided by PPLI. Membership of the post-primary sub-committee includes post-primary related representatives of FLAG in addition to other relevant experts.

FLAGPP Committee Members

Inspectorate DoE, Chair	Maria Lorigan
Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit (CAP)	Leona De Khors, Lorcán Ó hAlmhain
PPLI	Karen Ruddock
ITE, Maynooth University	Céline Healy, Ph. D.
ITE, University College Dublin	Eileen Bowman, Ph. D.
NAPD	Sarah-Jane Willis
NCCA	Elisabeth Butler
SEC	Margaret Carter
Teacher Professional Networks	Mairéad O'Driscoll
Languages Expert	Mary Kenny
Languages Expert	Ian Collen, Ph. D.
Languages Expert	Jean Conacher, Ph. D.

An Annual Work Plan is prepared by PPLI for CAP, outlining the policy actions for which it has responsibility in any given year and how implementation will be achieved. Governance meetings are held between CAP Unit and PPLI at least three times a year at which the director of PPLI and/or her nominees provide CAP Unit with updates on all relevant matters.

In addition to an Annual Work Plan PPLI prepares this annual report detailing the implementation of PPLI policy actions in the previous year. PPLI is also committed to implementing an internal system to monitor performance and to reporting the outcome of same to the Department at its Governance Meetings.

Resource Efficiency/ Climate Action

As a result of Government Decision S180/20/10/0434C and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 signed into law in July 2021, PPLI is committed to resource efficiency and acknowledges government policy on Resource Efficiency and Climate Action in particular e.g. Promoting the use of Environmental and Social Considerations in Public Procurement (Circular 20/2019). PPLI complies with Circular 01/2020 for Offsetting the Emissions Associated with Official Air Travel. PPLI Climate Action Roadmap outlines PPLI’s activities regarding targets, people, buildings, and ways of working. PPLI office is located in the Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA) campus, occupying an office in the Grainstore building which recorded emissions of 80.16 kg2/m2/yr in 2024. The DHDA is currently ahead of all its GHG emission targets (currently at 58% improvement in energy efficiency versus a 51% target for 2030) and its energy efficiency target (currently at 56.8% of the original baseline).

PPLI is currently based at The Digital Hub in Thomas Street, Dublin 8.

Financial Overview	2024
Core Staff Salaries	€1,153k
Development Officer Salaries	€1,183k
Additional Allocation	€357k
Project Support: (e.g. Teacher CPD, Teacher Upskilling, CLIL, Foreign Language Assistant Training, Resources, Associates, Communities of Practice)	€380k
Awareness Raising (Summer Camps, School Exchanges, #ThinkLanguages, Research, Employer engagement, Guidance, other campaigns)	€391k
Primary Language Module	€2,239k
Operational Costs (Management, Rental, IT, Office, Printing, Postage etc.)	€439k
Total	€6,142k



