

British Academy Schools Language Awards 2012

In November 2012, the British Academy held its first Language Week, drawing together a variety of events to explore and champion the learning and use of languages in schools, universities, policy-making and public life. One of the week's main highlights was the British Academy Schools Language Awards ceremony, where schools were recognised for their creative language teaching.

Fifteen mainstream and supplementary schools were selected out of nearly 160 applications. The winning schools represent all regions of the UK, and between them are promoting the learning of French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Mandarin, Japanese, Arabic, Somali, Malayam, Polish, Cantonese, Urdu, Punjabi, and English for non-native speakers. The winners impressed an expert judging panel with the creativity of their schemes and dedication to language learning. They were able to demonstrate that their projects are sustainable and replicable, with great potential to motivate students to develop their language skills at an important age.

At the ceremony on 23 November, the overall national winner was announced as Dallam School from Cumbria (see inset). The ceremony was compered by Channel 4's

Cathy Newman, and awards were presented by CBBC's Naomi Wilkinson (right) and a representative from Arsenal Football Club. The ceremony provided an opportunity for students to display their flair for multilingualism through dancing, singing and performances. Sir Adam Roberts, President of the British Academy, extended a warm welcome to the youngest and most diverse group that has ever met at the Academy, noting that it is our hope that the awards will inspire the linguists – and indeed Academy Fellows – of the future.



Further information on the Awards and the winners, including a video montage of the ceremony can be found via www.britac.ac.uk/policy/BA_Schools_Language_Awards_Ceremony.cfm



All the winners at the British Academy Schools Language Awards ceremony, held at the British Academy on 23 November 2012.

National Prize Winner: **Dallam School, Cumbria** Project: Bilingual Tutor Groups

Bilingual tutor groups in years 7, 8 and 9 each have a form tutor who is also a language teacher. They receive Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) and various humanities lessons entirely in another language. The language tutorials ensure students get immersed in another language on a day-to-day basis, little and often. This involves discussion of daily routines and informal banter in a busy, mixed-ability environment. Tutor time is supplemented by bilingual activities that include Europe and International Days, adventure learning, a Spelling Bee, film studies, French cookery

days, visits and exchange opportunities abroad, and extra time with foreign language assistants. The judges of the awards were deeply impressed by the project's simple yet effective design. They praised the project's emphasis on developing children's language confidence so that natural use becomes the norm, and noted the parents' and pupils' enthusiasm for the programme.

Pupils and staff from Dallam School, with Channel 4's Cathy Newman (centre).



British Academy Language Programme

Prizes and events form an element of the Academy's dedicated Language Programme. The Academy has long championed the importance of languages within the humanities and social sciences as an important investment for the individual, research, economic competitiveness and society at large.

In 2011 the British Academy launched a four-year programme to support and champion the value of language learning in the humanities and social sciences. The programme, funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, reflects the Academy's longstanding concerns about a deficit in languages in UK education and research. The programme is delivered through a variety of funding, policy and other activities. This includes: scholarships and research funding; policy reports and statements; conferences and workshops; prizes; partnerships and collaborations.

Here are some key highlights of our language work so far.

Valuing the Year Abroad

In a joint statement, the British Academy and the University Council for Modern Languages called on Government and Universities to recognise the strategic importance of the year abroad – delivering both competitive employability advantages for the students themselves and wider long term benefits for the whole UK economy.



Inquiry: Lost for Words, the need for languages in UK diplomacy and security

In 2011, the Academy launched an open consultation, seeking to examine the role of foreign language skills within the UK government. Prompted by recent reports of declining language capacity within certain areas of government, the inquiry looks at current UK government capacity for foreign languages and how well it serves UK public policy objectives in the specific areas of diplomacy and security. The inquiry has been carried out through the process of both a formal consultation and informal interviews with officials, higher education institutions and interested stakeholders. A report of the inquiry is due to be published in Spring 2013.

Languages and Entrepreneurship

This event, arranged in association with the Higher Education Academy, explored how student international mobility and language learning can give rise to entrepreneurship and commercial success. The panel discussion was chaired by the *Daily Telegraph's* Digital Education Editor, Andrew Marszal, and began with a video submission from *The Apprentice* runner-up Nick Holzherr. The panel was composed of entrepreneurs, including founder of Applingua Ltd, Robert Lo Bue, founder of Claire L. Grant Language Services, Claire Lucia Grant, co-founder

of Memrise, Ed Cooke and Senior Manager at Euro London Appointments, Veronica McGuinness. A video recording is available via the Academy's website.

Language Cauldron: Making the most of Multilingual Britain

This one-day conference, arranged in association with Cumberland Lodge, brought together leading academics and public sector workers, educationalists and writers in a vibrant and constructive cross-sector discussion that took a positive approach to existing language resources in the UK.



Professor Rachel Bowlby FBA speaking at the 'Language Cauldron' event on 22 November 2012.

Multilingualism and the Internet

In a panel discussion arranged in association with the Arts and Humanities Research Council, speakers considered how the spread of a high-speed global internet and increasing use of social media has changed the way in which global citizens interact linguistically. The discussion was chaired by Professor Shalom Lappin FBA, and panellists included Professor Louisa Sadler (University of Essex), Dr Matthew Stuttle (Google) and Dr Ivan Panović (University of Oxford). An audio recording is available via the Academy's website.

Further information on the British Academy's Language programme can be found via www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Languages.cfm
