## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreword</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS</strong></td>
<td><strong>SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alun School</td>
<td>Azza Supplementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Fun through Drama!</td>
<td>Creative Art Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballyclare High School</td>
<td>Churchill Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Little Linguists</td>
<td>Primary Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigroyston Community High School</td>
<td>GSCE Family Learning Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European partnership: using the foreign language in a creative way to promote languages up take</td>
<td>Leeds Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th Craigroyston Community High School</td>
<td>Community School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernulf Academy</td>
<td>Integrating Chinese drama into teaching the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Tutor Group and Global Common Room</td>
<td>Liverpool John Paul II, Polish Saturday School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Education, University of London</td>
<td>The Matchstick Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Partnership launches literature</td>
<td>Mind Your Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymstock School</td>
<td>International CIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Way International</td>
<td>Hackney Young French Speakers Theatre Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sefton College</td>
<td>Potters Bar Greek School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Languages</td>
<td>Portraits: Innovative Approaches in Heritage Language Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Polish Saturday School in Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improving fluency and bilingual language skills in order to maximise future educational opportunities and career prospects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As part of a global economy and increasingly multilingual and multicultural society, it is essential that we equip the next generation of students with the vital skills which will allow them to succeed. Language skills are an integral part of this. As the national body for the humanities and social sciences, the British Academy continues to champion language learning.

The Academy’s language programme, now in its fourth year, has continued to promote and support the development of language skills – through a series of activities, including policy research, roundtable discussions, public events, campaigns and awards. Our partnership with the Guardian is ongoing and for the second year running, we are holding a joint Language Festival to raise the profile of language learning among learners of all ages and celebrate the diverse cultural richness of the UK through a range of activities including public debates, online Q&As, downloadable schools resource packs and much more.

Building on the success of the previous two years, the Schools Language Awards once again received a large number of high quality applications from across the UK, showcasing innovative and creative projects to encourage language learning. I am delighted that the 2014 winning projects share in our vision of finding imaginative and effective ways of encouraging more learners to take languages to higher levels. We will follow their progress with great interest.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome both the staff and pupils of the winning schools to the Awards Ceremony this year to celebrate their efforts and give some well-deserved recognition for the important work they are doing. We hope they will become beacons of good practice and inspiration to schools and students in their regions and beyond.

Professor Roger Kain
Vice-President, British Academy
MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

Winners
After our successful primary liaison project based on fairy tales written by year 9 German classes, we have developed this theme further in our own version of Schneewittchen (Snow White). This drama aims to motivate students in year 9, and with differential roles it is accessible to all. We are hoping that this will foster enthusiasm and raise the profile of German amongst younger students within our school and also in our feeder primary schools.

We have carefully selected the language so that it can be easily understood by younger groups. We revise topics already taught in year 7, e.g. colours, numbers. We have also developed visual aids to assist comprehension.

In order to include all students in the project, there will be stage management roles, and opportunities for creating publicity and programmes in the target language. In addition props and costumes will be designed and created by the year 9 Design and Technology Students, who also study German. As a sequel we have written Dornröschen (Sleeping Beauty) which year 8 students will perform in 2016.

We are delighted and grateful that we have been successful in receiving a financial award from the British Academy, as this enables us to stage a more professional performance than we ever imagined possible. With such resources we envisage this project continuing in future years as part of our year 9 curriculum. Our main objective is to reverse this disheartening decline in language uptake at GCSE and A level.
Leading Little Linguists began in 2012 with the twin foci of helping feeder primary schools to introduce languages and encouraging secondary pupils to train to become language leaders. The overarching aim is to increase uptake at A-level and beyond.

We created a bespoke, in-house course for third form and sixth form pupils to learn about teaching languages to younger pupils.

The course is delivered by language assistants and teachers. Once ‘qualified’, the secondary pupils visit Ballyclare Primary School and Fairview Primary School to deliver primary French, German and Spanish.

From very small beginnings in 2012, over 60 pupils have now trained as language leaders and over 320 primary pupils have had the chance to learn a language at Key Stage 2.

This would otherwise not have been a possibility. Internal school data shows that the number of pupils choosing languages for A-level is increasing. The project has been replicated by other schools, and teachers can all see the benefit of cross-phase professional collaboration.

We are delighted to receive the British Academy Award and will use the money to extend and develop our project this academic year.
Our department wants to provide our senior, and soon to be senior students, with an opportunity to explore the possible work and educational pathways that languages offer.

Our partnership with Lycée Voltaire addresses, for example, the themes of entrepreneurship and creativity. It aims at developing our students’ employment skills through the creation of detective novellas, through their translation and distribution.

The partnership also addresses the theme of literacy through Media and Drama, as French and Scottish students will be creating short films advertising the use of languages. This then gives our students an opportunity to work on translation skills, and in turn encourages the learning of modern foreign languages.

Cross-fertilisation of ideas and cooperation with student members of another European state will also be promoting cultural awareness. We are hoping thus to establish a lasting link with our French partner school through our creative work. This will help motivate students to pick a foreign language, while celebrating the languages they already are fluent in.

Among the languages represented in the project are: French, English, Polish, Brazilian Portuguese, Rumanian and Bengali.
Ernulf Academy

Regional winner: East and Midlands
Project: International Tutor Group and Global Common Room
www.ernulf.cambs.sch.uk

The project covers three main areas:

- It develops immersion teaching of ECM (Personal, Social and Health Education) to a class of Year 7 students who form part of an International Tutor Group. Apart from receiving their ECM lessons in French, the group also has registration twice a week in French, and has been ‘adopted’ by a university language student who is currently working in Paris as part of his year abroad.

- The development of an International Common Room where student leaders can work on extra-curricular projects and where students can come to read foreign texts, listen to foreign music and watch foreign films. It is also a space where students can come to do their MFL homework and get support from student leaders.

- The development of links with local businesses to educate students about the importance of language in business in the local area.
The Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Languages course at the IOE recruits over 70 high quality student teachers every year. As a PGCE team we have always been committed to, and passionate about the teaching of culture and literature in foreign language lessons as an alternative to more transactional and instrumental approaches. With the recent changes in the National Curriculum in England, literature is on the agenda again, with the aim of developing language skills.

More specifically they will work together to develop resources and approaches to demonstrate ways in which literature can be integrated into a topic-based approach that promotes language skills and cultural understanding. The main languages involved are: French, Spanish, German and Mandarin. Outcomes will be disseminated at a conference in June.

Our strong partnership with our schools is a key element of the project. We aim through our project for student teachers to work in collaboration with experienced teachers and mentors in school. We believe this this will develop innovative ways to respond to the new National Curriculum challenges, and inspire creative responses from pupils.
Our Way International, was born from the vision of a group of passionate year 10 pupils at Plymstock School, whilst working with the Real Ideas Organisation. They understood that their futures would be full of competition for careers, and that European candidates would be fighting for jobs. They not only wanted Plymstock Pupils to know and appreciate the importance of languages (in this case French) but also create a sustainable solution.

Their first challenge; how to get more pupils enthused and engaged in Languages, whilst understanding that languages weren’t just for the classroom, but a valuable life skill ... their solution; Our Way!

Now, Our Way is an award winning social enterprise and an International Trade Company working with SMEs in the southwest. It raises their profile in the UK and introduces their products or services to the French market. They use French, in a very real and purposeful way, outside the classroom.

Our Way hasn’t only had direct impact on the group; they have raised the profile of French in their school, community and region. Externally, they have succeeded in working with 5 companies from the South West, introduced their products to France and have gained regional, national and international exposure.
South Sefton College

Regional winner: North
Project: Love Languages
www.southsefton.com

South Sefton College is a sixth form college (597 on roll) located within an Urban Priority Area of significant social and economic deprivation. We have a strong commitment to providing our students inspirational and aspirational opportunities to enhance progression to university and employment.

The Love Languages project aims to increase the numbers of students studying languages at GCSE, A-level and higher education, whilst developing students’ employability skills in the context of language learning. Our vision for the project is to be recognised as innovative and engaging in inspiring young people to study languages.

Love Languages is a student-driven programme which aims to develop students’ experience of a varied range of languages and cultures. It also aims to develop the skills and confidence of students to broaden their horizons through partnerships with schools, universities, employers and schools abroad.

Phase 1 of the programme is focused on promoting languages in local secondary schools and at languages events. Language Leaders (currently 65 A-level students) plan and deliver taster lessons for KS3 and KS4 students and work with GCSE students to prepare them for oral examinations. We also host events led by universities and local employers. Phase 2 offers A-level students opportunities to undertake volunteer placements as Language Assistants in schools or with local businesses.

Love Languages also has an international dimension with residential trips to Paris, Spain and Denmark. It also has strong links with schools in Madrid and Denmark as well as providing opportunities for A-level students to undertake work experience abroad.

Developing creative and innovative approaches to language learning is at the heart of the Love Languages project. We have ambitions to pilot our project in areas where there is a decline in languages and become established as a North West Centre of Excellence.
Azza supplementary school is a community school with children ranging from 6–16 years of age. There are approximately 50 students in total. Most of our students come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are refugees. We teach classes ranging from year 1 to year 11, teaching Arabic, Maths, English, Science and Cultural Studies. We are always looking to provide wider opportunities to stimulate our children talents and expand their skills. We are part of the Partnership of supplementary schools at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

By the age of 14 our children sit early GCSE (Arabic). We have a specialised teacher who can coach pupils to enter GCSE through their mainstream school. Those who have completed their early entry Arabic GCSE remain to study English, Maths and Cultural Studies and further become young volunteers within the school.

The creative art project will help boost pupils’ motivation and ensure commitment towards studying Arabic. In order to achieve the aims of this project we intend to:

- Write poetry
- Draw abstracts and free portraits
- Make pottery influenced by Afro-Arab culture
- Produce plays
- Create Arabic calligraphy
- Visit museums and galleries

This funding will enable future projects of the same nature, and will create confident individuals who have the potential of becoming leaders. This opportunity could inspire those interested in perusing a career in art or journalism.
Churchill Gardens Primary Academy

London
Project: GCSE Family Learning Project
www.cgpacademy.org.uk

Churchill Gardens Primary Academy is a multicultural, community primary school in South Westminster, which recently joined the Futures Academy family of schools.

Over the past year we have been running a project offering an after school Arabic club to children whose home language is Arabic – the school’s most prevalent non-English language.

There are many aspects of the project that make it special. One of the main features is that each primary school aged child studies for a GCSE alongside one of their parents. Both child and adult are entered for the exam. Students receive the opportunity to use and develop their home language to achieve something that impacts on many areas of their lives and helps develop an early love for language learning.

The acquisition of the qualification gives both children and adults a fantastic boost to their self-esteem. The unique focus on parent-child learning also engages parents with the school and their child’s education. To date all adults and children have achieved a GCSE qualification, with 100% of adults and about 50% of children achieving grade C or higher.

Due to the project’s ongoing success, Futures Academies is now offering this opportunity across all its primary schools. Our links with the supplementary school, Al-Manhaj Arabic Academy, allow a coordinated approach to providing high quality Arabic teaching in the south of Westminster.

Our project originates from an inspirational GCSE family learning project for community languages, first developed by Lynne Hannigan director of Empowering Learning.
Established in 1966, LCCS is a charity for the teaching of the Chinese language (both Mandarin and Cantonese) and culture to children and young adults irrespective of their social and cultural backgrounds. Pupils are from Leeds and its neighbouring boroughs aged from 5 to 18 with a multi-cultural background.

Our class structure is divided into 11 levels: Reception, Year 1 up to Year 6 followed by Pre-GCSE, GCSE (intermediate), AS and A2 (Advanced). We have 180 students in our school this year with only 22 pupils who are studying GCSE or above levels.

We have identified 5 main barriers to progression:

1. Chinese is difficult to learn hence students lack confidence;

2. Lack of opportunities to practise;

3. Lack of motivation to learn at high levels;

4. Lessons are not inspiring enough;

5. Day school subjects take precedence over learning Chinese.

We come up with this project which aims for three drama productions to motivate our students to continue up to A2 level Chinese. We want to inspire students to take up spoken Chinese and become more confident through drama.

In the past, we had provided ad hoc drama trainings to a small portion of students in order to prepare them to take part in an annual national drama competition.

We found that students who took part and practised regularly resulted in excellent diction and accent. They were happy and proud of what they achieved and were likely to further their study in the language.

We would like to broaden this to all levels so that all students can benefit from this project.
The Liverpool Polish Saturday School is a Supplementary school of 200 pupils. We involve ourselves in a wide range of community festivals and activities and strive to raise standards of education and culture in the Polish community.

We have been successful in raising the standards of attainment in GCSE and A Level with Merseyside Polish pupils. Our experienced and enthusiastic staff are always looking for different ways and methods of engaging with the pupils and stimulating an interest in the language learning process.

We have developed a cross-curricular project involving the study of a local and famous artist, L. S. Lowry. Here, we use the artist's different paintings as a driving force to develop language and creative writing skills. We use a variety of resources, such as electronic ‘talking books’ and ‘electronic speech bubbles’, in tandem with commercially animated software packages. We use ICT as a vehicle and enjoyment stimulus across the age ranges.

It is hoped that the cultural interest in the study of paintings and the artist will develop further interests in ‘the arts’. We are arranging fo visits by the children and their families, to cultural venues in Merseyside, so developing a strong and healthy well-being for the future.
Mind Your Language International CIC

Hackney, London
Project: Hackney Young French Speakers Theatre Group
www.hced.co.uk/tenants/mind-your-language

The project aims to increase the motivation of key stage 4 pupils in learning French. As part of the project the young people will take the OCR vocational qualifications in Entry Level French. The aim of the project is to develop confidence in speaking French using drama. It will encourage young people in making the choice to continue their French language post 16.

By focusing on one skill area, and offering them the opportunity to improve this skill, the projects will help them overcome confidence challenges and motivate them to continue their French learning post 16. After School language sessions will begin by focusing on speaking French. This will be followed by rehearsals of one of our shows to enforce the language, and finally meet the employer session to help the young people see how language learning translates to employment.
Potters Bar Greek School
Hertfordshire
Project: Portraits: Innovative Approaches in Heritage Language Learning
greekschoolpottersbar.org/index.html

Potters Bar Greek School is one of the biggest Greek Complementary Schools in the UK. During 2013–2014, 201 students were enrolled in the Greek School of Potters Bar. All of them have Greek or Greek-Cypriot origins. The school takes children from 4 to 18 years old providing Reception to AS Level classes.

Portraits project will involve Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 students and their teachers. Our aim is to empower the students’ relation with their heritage language and culture.

Learning Greek is more than preparation for exams. To sustain students’ desire to take Greek Language at higher levels and develop positive thinking towards their heritage language the project approaches learning in a fun and interesting way.

It promotes work gradually towards exam targets and offers opportunities to develop literacy skills, metalinguistic abilities and learning autonomy.

The project embraces elements of students’ experiences and culture through the arts. Drama, music, drawing, video art and literature embedded in collaborative and creative activities encourage language development naturally and holistically. Digital media will provide the medium through which to communicate, celebrate and share work.

Our partner institutions in this project are Cyprus Educational Mission in the UK, part of the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture and Goldsmiths University of London.
The Polish Saturday School in Manchester

Manchester

Project: Improving fluency and bilingual language skills in order to maximise future educational opportunities and career prospects

www.polskaszkolamanchester.org

The Polish Saturday School in Manchester was established in 1949. It continues to this day to provide a high quality educational environment for pupils between the ages of 3-19 to improve their knowledge of the language, history and culture of Poland. In addition it prepares students for examinations at GCSE, AS and A levels.

Our project is focused on raising the awareness across mainstream schools in the Greater Manchester area of the benefits in having an additional language qualifications. It also encourages young people having Polish heritage to continue their studies at an advanced level.

We are developing an outreach programme with supporting materials to articulate how additional language skills increase the prospects in further education, and enhances future career opportunities.

We look forward to cooperation with the Manchester Supplementary Schools Network and the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Manchester with this project.

With Polish being the second most popular language in England, we will offer better support at an advanced level through innovative teaching materials and facilities.

Our aim is to improve peer group interest and cohesion including targeted training for teachers.

Above all we want it to be fun to continue learning!
Acknowledgements

The British Academy would like to thank all those who have generously contributed their time to make the third year of the British Academy Schools Language Awards a success, especially Teresa Tinsley and Anne Breivik.

We are also particularly grateful to the judging panel:

Professor Nigel Vincent FBA (Chair)
Colin Bradshaw
Kathryn Board
Professor Celia Britton FBA
Baroness Sue Garden
Sunita Gordon
Ceri James
Lynne Jones
Rachel Middleton
Dr Eugene McKendry
John Rolfe
Pascale Vassie
Professor Janet Watson FBA
The British Academy, established by Royal Charter in 1902, champions and supports the humanities and social sciences across the UK and internationally. It aims to inspire, recognise and support excellence and high achievement across the UK and internationally. As a Fellowship of over 900 UK humanities scholars and social scientists, elected for their distinction in research, the Academy is an independent and self-governing organisation, in receipt of public funding. Views expressed in this report are not necessarily shared by each individual Fellow.

In 2011, the British Academy launched a programme, with funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, to address the deficit in languages and quantitative skills in UK education and research. Recognising that these deficits are rooted in the way in which these disciplines and skills are taught at every level – from school to undergraduate degrees and beyond – the Academy is supplying leadership to help strengthen skills in these vital areas.

We engage in both high level activity, working with key stakeholders with the aim of facilitating greater change and deepening awareness within relevant communities; and through identifying and promoting best practice, and supporting research and scholarship.

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