

Priorsford Primary School and Holland & Sherry



SCILT's Business Language Champions (BLC) programme helps schools and businesses to build exciting and sustainable partnerships that equip young people with the international communication and employability skills they need for their future careers.

Background

Priorsford Primary School

Priorsford Primary School is the largest primary school in the Scottish Borders. The original building was constructed in 1972. The school is non-denominational and serves an area of the town of Peebles to the south of the River Tweed, including Whitehaugh, Kittlegairy as well as the village of Cardrona and the rural areas of Manor.

There are 18 classes, including the nursery classes. The classrooms are set up in semi-open plan areas. Presently the school roll is 404 pupils in 16 classes with a further 70 places in the nursery.

For more information about the school, visit <http://www.priorsfordprimary.com/>.



Aims

The aim of this BLC project is to raise learners' awareness of what Holland & Sherry does in their local town while building learners' language skills by showing the importance, heritage and value of the weaving industry in the Scottish Borders. In addition, it provides a local context to show youngsters the opportunities that arise from learning a modern language.

Partner

Holland & Sherry

Holland & Sherry, one of the world's most well-established cloth merchants, was founded in 1836 in London. The company moved to Peebles in 1965. They have been based there ever since and employ 86 people in the sourcing, cutting and distribution of some of the finest cloths in the world.

The business has customers around the world, and international demand is growing.

For more information about the company, visit <http://www.hollandandsherry.com/>.



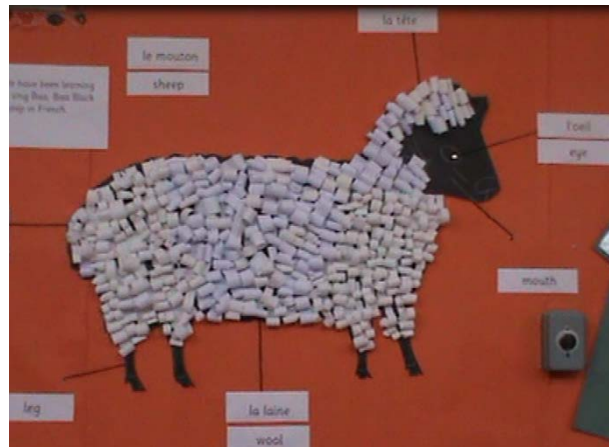
Project

A committee of pupils, the 1+2 Development Officer, Le Français en Écosse (LFEE), the merchandising director of the company and the teachers worked together to plan a programme of identified activities and visits for all year groups. The project was then called “From Sheep to Shop – the story of wool”

To start the project, Holland & Sherry visited the school to present the company and teach some classes how to weave.

The learners then took part in a range of different activities appropriate to their age and stage.

Children in nursery and primary one were helped by parents to make clothes from wool. They also created a woolly sheep. The children learned some French through song and labelling parts of the sheep.



The children in primary two class learned how to weave with paper and wool and learned about colours and a weaving song in French.

The primary three class visited a woollen mill to see the weaving process. Back at school they experimented with mixing colours in French and learned a rainbow song.



Children in primary four studied the process of getting the wool from the producer to the shops and investigated how to go from Peebles to Paris where Holland & Sherry has an office. They also learned about the landmarks in Paris. Then, learners created a French animation showing different methods of transport. The children developed their talking and writing skills by adding speech bubbles and voice overs to their animation.



Children in primary five visited Holland & Sherry to create clothing designs on their software, and then made models using different fabrics.

“My colleagues and I enjoyed being able to give some time to the school, it was an experience that enlightened us all, we found it amazing at just how talented some of the children were in the field of design and hoped that one day some of them would pursue a career in design of some kind.” Merchandising Director-Holland & Sherry

In French, the youngster learned how to describe items of clothing and parts of the body through a variety of activities, including song.



Primary six learners also visited Holland & Sherry to interview the staff who spoke other languages in French and English. They also found out that learning another language can help them in the future.

“When the initial visits to Holland & Sherry started the main emphasis was about learning French and the importance of being able to speak another language, but during the visit it became apparent that there are numerous languages spoken within our business that are equally as important; without these language skills our business would not function.” Merchandising Director-Holland & Sherry

“We thought it was a great experience interviewing the staff, learning about all their different languages and cultures. For example, if you lay your chopsticks on a table pointing at someone, it is an insult!”- P6 pupil

“From these interviews, we found out how important another language really is to get a job with the competition for jobs these days.” P6 pupil



Children in primary seven developed role plays, taking on the role of employee from Holland & Sherry working in various parts of the world and 'interviewing' each other about certain aspects of their job.

Impact

"After the project that we've done with Holland & Sherry, we now realise what an inspiring company we have on our doorstep! We didn't realise how famous it is worldwide. Doing this project with Holland & Sherry was an unforgettable experience that we think has helped us realise the importance of learning languages." P7 pupils

Some teachers remarked: "We have noticed a definite improvement in pupil confidence in class, in other subject areas. Those who had been reluctant to speak out before in discussion were now less inhibited. Children, who did not perform well in the core subjects, found themselves on equal footing with very able children. Self-esteem is raised. Children are motivated."

Nursery staff added: "It was interesting to note the added benefits such as boosting self-esteem and confidence. It was not the children we expected who were most confident and it was nice to see children flourishing who were not as able in other areas of nursery life."

Teachers also highlighted that it was great to get a local business (Holland and Sherry) involved. It provided a real-life context for learning French. There was also a great fun element to a lot of the French activities. All pupils from Nursery to P7 were engaged with it and it gave primary seven pupils a great confidence boost, giving them a meaningful language learning experience that can be built on by the secondary school.

At the end of the project a DVD was created and presented to parents at the open day. It was well received and many commented on how impressed they were with the children's knowledge and enthusiasm. Some commented that children were keen to share their learning at home. Many were teaching their parents French.

Next steps

The Head Teacher says: "The project 'From Sheep to Shop' fitted perfectly with what we were aiming to do in raising awareness of 1+2 within a local context. We would be delighted to do such a project again although we would approach it with a different focus."