

## Stirling Castle and Braehead Primary



SCILT's Business Language Champions (BLC) scheme helps schools and businesses to build partnerships through languages in order to support teachers in developing young people's learning about the world of work and their understanding of the value of language skills to their future employability. These projects build a partnership between the school and a local business and enable the school to deliver on Developing the Young Workforce and the National Improvement Framework, as well as build crucial partnerships outlined in HGIOS 4.

### Background

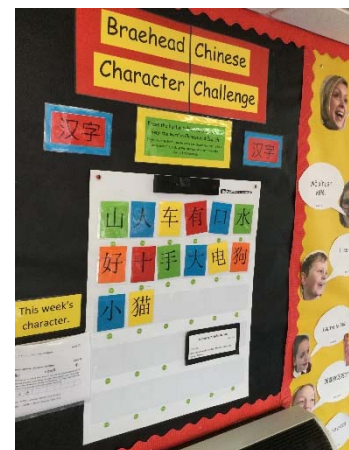


Braehead Primary School in Stirling has a school role of 348 (P1 – P7), with 60 in the Nursery. Mrs Mairi Breen is the Head teacher and there are two deputy head teachers. The priorities for the year 2017-18 included the 1+2 agenda where L1 is English, L2 French and L3 (P4 – P6) is Chinese. The school's spacious communal area is used for shared resources and activities, especially to do with languages taught in the school or which are part of their community.

There are six classes at Braehead Primary learning Chinese, from P4 to P6. The P5s are the trail-blazers and at the time of the project they had been learning the language for nearly two years.

Braehead Primary Languages Café sees pupils write and record a series of podcasts which aim to help others learn key vocabulary and phrases in a variety of languages, with the tagline, 'Language lessons for you from us'. So far the children have produced and broadcast episodes in Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, French, Portuguese, German and Greek.

Staff at the school take part in regular CLPL sessions to learn Chinese, given by class teacher Susan Lawson. The school has launched a Chinese Character Challenge, a whole school competition whereby one character a week is introduced on the Interactive Wall in the dining hall. At the end of term, pupils and teachers take part in a quiz based on these characters with Chinese themed prizes up for the taking.



The school has recently become a Primary Confucius Classroom for Stirling Council. The aim of the Primary Confucius Classrooms is to support the learning and teaching of Chinese language and culture in primary schools.

Further information about the school can be found on the [Braehead Primary website](#).

Access the [Braehead Primary Languages Café podcasts](#).



### **Aims**

The project aimed to provide pupils with a fun, relevant and challenging context for learning Chinese. The context for this was Stirling Castle. At the time of the project, P5 pupils had been studying Chinese language and culture for nearly two years. The project aimed to allow pupils to apply their skills and to increase their awareness that having a language is an employability skill which is valuable and useful in their own local economy. Languages can open the door to a variety of jobs which they might not have considered prior to the project.

The project also enhanced subject areas across the curriculum, enabling pupils to develop in literacy, drama and self-confidence, as well as their language skills and an understanding of the world of work.

### **Partners**

SCILT/CISS and Braehead Primary worked in partnership with staff at Stirling Castle. The partnership was facilitated by Education Officer for Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Kirsten Wood, who worked alongside school staff and pupils.

### **Stirling Castle**

Stirling Castle is one of the largest and most important castles in Scotland and is one of Scotland's top attractions. Visitors come from various countries, including an increasing number from China. Not all visitors speak English well. Linking with the castle demonstrated to P5 pupils the value of language skills in the workplace, in particular within the tourism industry in Scotland.

Stirling Castle is looked after by HES. More information on the castle is available from the [Stirling Castle website](#).

## **Project**

The partners worked together to devise a project with the aim of making Chinese language learning interesting and relevant, as well as enhancing P5 pupils' understanding about the world of work.

Pupils were given a tour guide's perspective of life working at Stirling Castle. The fifty-five P5 pupils chose to focus their subsequent work around helping the castle's staff make their many Chinese visitors feel welcome with a particular aim of teaching the tour guides a few key phrases in Chinese. However, the project soon expanded to encompass other areas of the curriculum, enabling pupils to develop their literacy and drama skills as well as Chinese and employability skills.

The pupils were divided into six groups. Each group was led by a teacher and decided what aspect of supporting Chinese visitors in Stirling Castle they were going to focus on:

- Group 1: Map designers
- Group 2: Tour guides
- Group 3: Design of a quiz
- Group 4: Virtual Tour Group
- Group 5: Signs
- Group 6: Information leaflet

Pupils visited the castle in order to get a better understanding of why and to what extent languages are used in the tourist industry and how they can enhance employability skills.



Pupils explored what might be useful for visitors and identified a need for signage in Chinese. They then used their creative skills to design these signs in the shape of a panda.



Pupils discovered what is involved in making a film, considered possible story lines and how these might relate to the history of the castle. The castle was able to provide costumes for the pupils and support the filming. Watch the film [on YouTube](#).



A similar process was followed by the group who looked into how to create a podcast, with pupils deciding on, preparing and performing the script. Thinking about what and how to express ideas and creating an interesting podcast all supported the development of literacy skills and allowed pupils to work as a team to decide what to include and what to edit out of the final podcast.



Access the [Braehead Primary Languages Café podcasts](#).

Another group designed ‘help cards’ for castle staff to use to support them in greeting visitors in Chinese. Pupils also delivered presentations to teach staff simple Chinese words and phrases for welcoming visitors. This proved to be very popular with both staff and pupils.

Mairi contributed to pupil feedback on the project: “The virtual tour is a tour of the castle without leaving your seat. We act out a few key scenes from the castle's history and show some places such as the courtyard, dungeons and the Great Hall.”

Katie, meanwhile, worked with the tour guides: “We went on a tour to find out what we needed to teach. We took notes and we made presentations. At the end of the project we presented them to the tour guides and made little booklets with the phrases on them in case they forget.”

HES Education Officer, Kirsten Wood, explained how the tour guides had benefited from the project: “Stewards learnt a bit of Chinese taught by the pupils and were given a laminated card with some phrases on it to use in tours. We had a great session with pupils and stewards today.”

Some examples of the work produced can be seen in the Confucius Classroom below:



## Impact

Learners in school and staff at the castle thoroughly enjoyed and benefited in many ways from the project. The pupils were hugely enthusiastic.

Sophie, who plays James VI in the virtual tour said: “It’s been so much hard work but we’ve had lots of fun doing it.”

Adam, who presented a podcast in Chinese about how to say the days of the week said the following about his involvement: “I enjoyed writing it with Emily and Taylor. We wanted to make it funny but not too funny that it took away from the learning. I have played it back at least five times! It felt good when my mum and dad listened to it with me.”

Daisy presented an episode in Chinese about the weather. She said: “We had lots of fun making it but we worked really hard. When we recorded the episode I was excited, not nervous. My mum and dad were really proud of me.”

Susan Lawson, the class teacher who has been leading this project, commented: “As well as developing their language, pupils have had the opportunity to build a wide range of skills including art and design, presentation, drama, script writing and public speaking while becoming more aware of their role as global citizens. The project demonstrates that they

don't have to wait until they grow up to make use of their Chinese, but that their language skills can be used right here and now."

Eleanor Muir from HES gave feedback on behalf of the tour guides at the castle: "The guides loved the presentations and were very, very impressed. A great wee project. Well done to all involved."

### Literacy

Chris French, Depute Head Teacher at Breahead Primary commented on the impact the project has had on literacy: "The impact of the podcasts has been highly successful in that it has helped learners build their confidence of communicating in a modern language. By making languages come alive through the microphone we have created a meaningful, relevant and exciting context for language learning and skills development."

### Wider community

The project has had an impact on the wider school community. A learning wall has been created in the communal area in the centre of the school to invite staff and pupils alike to contribute to a 'What I have learnt wall'. Pupils and staff have been able to learn and test their Chinese, and build on their experiences from the project.



## **Next steps**

The film they made has been entered into the British Film Award in London and the school and staff at the castle are looking forward to further developing this link.

The impact the partnership has had goes beyond the school to the wider community. In partnership with Braehead Primary School, SCILT/CISS and HES hope to develop and promote this model of partnership working and skills development across Scotland.

Craig Fletcher, Senior Learning Manager for Commercial and Tourism, HES, said: “Well done to all involved – a great model emerging here that will help inform how we roll out this innovative approach to learning at other sites.”