



**International Learning and Research Centre**



# **Case Study**

## **Job Shadow Visit to France**

**11 – 17 March 2007**

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### **Case Study**

#### **Summary**

The International Learning and Research Centre invited six primary schools, from South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire local authorities, to nominate a teacher involved in primary languages teaching, to take part in a Job Shadow opportunity. The aim was to model a professional learning opportunity through additional support offered for the teaching of foreign languages at KS2 in England. For the teachers and schools involved there were clear aims, including establishing partner school links. These would be discussed with French teacher colleagues during the week. The Job Shadow teachers planned to investigate effective teaching and learning in language lessons. Two further aims were to give the teachers first hand experience of life in a French primary school and to build confidence in their ability to communicate in French.

#### **What did we do first?**

- established the objectives of the Job Shadow week
- formulated a Job Shadow plan together with the Institut Universitaire Formation des Maîtres (IUFM), Orléans-Tours and the partner schools in France – an outline of where we planned to go, who each teacher would shadow and what we would do each day
- made sure each teacher had a named teacher in a new or existing partner school in France
- obtained an invitation in writing from our hosts in Châteauroux
- investigated travel costs
- compiled a travel plan
- completed the British Council Comenius 2.2 funding application forms, including all the relevant information about budget

#### **What was the purpose of the Job Shadow visit?**

The purpose was to:

- job shadow a colleague in a French primary school to investigate effective teaching and learning in language lessons
- improve confidence in spoken French and receptive understanding of French
- gather new strategies for language teaching
- collect authentic resources – photographs, stories, songs, poems and rhymes
- find out about the stages of French education and school life in France

## **Where and when did the Job Shadow visit take place?**

In Châteauroux, France :

- Institut Universitaire Formation des Maîtres (IUFM) Orléans-Tours, Châteauroux site, France where a round table discussion with teacher trainers took place
- three classes in a primary school next to the IUFM in Châteauroux, including the école maternelle, were visited for three days
- two primary schools in Bourges, one primary school on the outskirts of Châteauroux and a maternelle were also visited for one day during the course of the week
- the Job Shadow visit took place between 11-17 March 2007

## **How many teachers took part in the Job Shadow visit?**

Six teachers took part in the Job Shadow visit. Three teachers from primary schools in South Gloucestershire and two teachers from Wiltshire primary schools. The Job Shadow visit was planned and led by the Languages Consultant and Advanced Skills Teacher from The International Learning and Research Centre together with the Director of the IUFM, Châteauroux.



*The Job Shadow participants with the Director of the IUFM, Châteauroux*

## **How was the Job Shadow visit funded?**

The teachers applied to the British Council for a Comenius 2.2 funding in-service training grant. They were also able to access the British Council offer of 50% supply cover costs (up to a maximum of £500). The grant was paid in two instalments. The first instalment, 80% of the total grant, enabled the teachers to book their flights and accommodation. The remaining 20% was paid following submission of a financial statement, evaluation report and a certificate of course attendance. This was submitted to the British Council by each participating teacher on their return to England.

As a result of accessing this funding the teachers should be able to stimulate their pupils' interest in French and the culture of France, support their colleagues in their teaching of the target language, share insights into the similarities and the differences between the education systems and create a wider awareness of the DfES international and language strategies.

## **What were the benefits of the Job Shadow visit?**

### **The Job Shadow teachers were able to:**

- establish new links between partner institutions
- strengthen existing links between partner schools
- gain a greater understanding of school education in France
- increase their cultural awareness
- refresh their language skills
- exchange ideas and best practice with teacher colleagues
- self-assess own methods, teaching style and ideas
- raise the levels of achievement among pupils
- enhance cross-curricular work
- gather authentic resources, songs, games and rhymes
- improve the quality of provision at their school
- develop their skills of leadership and project management

### **How do the teachers in the group know they achieved what they set out to achieve?**

The classroom teachers deliver the language lessons to the students in their school. This is in line with the DfES National Languages Strategy which endorses this model of provision. They were extremely clear about the aims of the Job Shadow week, having attended preliminary planning meetings at The International Learning and Research Centre. They had identified their needs and listed these on their application forms for Comenius funding from the British Council.



*An English Job Shadow teacher telling the story 'The Hungry Caterpillar' to a class of French school children*

During the Job Shadow week there were timetabled discussion times at the end of each school day when the teachers met together to discuss what they had observed.

### **What happens next?**

- each primary school now has a partner link school with whom they are exchanging curriculum projects
- one primary school hosted a visit by teachers and children from their French partner primary school in May 2007
- the Job Shadow teachers will enable the expansion of language teaching in their schools through their increased enthusiasm and confidence
- they will enable a deeper understanding of the Intercultural Understanding strand of the KS2 Framework for Languages
- the teachers in KS2 in each primary school will consider ways of bringing the objectives to life by links with real children in a French primary school
- the Job Shadow teachers will disseminate new activities to a wider group of primary schools through half day seminars and twilight meetings at The International Learning and Research Centre

### **Impact on pupils – as a result of the Job Shadow Visit pupils will be:**

- learning new language structures in classroom dialogue eg greetings and instructions noted during the observation of French teachers



*A French child shares a story with an English Job Shadow teacher*

- experiencing activities observed in French classrooms (stories, songs, games, drama) using authentic resources
  - using authentic materials about France – photos, texts, maps, leaflets gathered by the teachers
  - developing deeper intercultural understanding through taking part in curriculum projects and sharing these with the children in their partner schools
  - developing a sense of purpose and audience when composing short messages in the target language for their friends in the French school
- communicating with new French friends by sending and receiving letters and e-mails this using ICT skills for a real purpose

### **An example of story making in French**

A story making lesson in a maternelle was observed during which the children told the story of 'Roule galette'. They had made a story board to help them remember the sequence of events when telling the story. Using props the children had made themselves to denote the characters, they took part in the re-telling of the story as a whole group. The children had internalised the story language and were confident about their ability to tell the story fluently with lively expression and enthusiasm.



*A French partner teacher starting the day with her class*

## **Teachers gave written feedback to the British Council**

### ***Teacher 1***

#### **Recognition from own institution:**

My head teacher has asked me to present to the rest of the staff and also schools in the cluster about how French children learn language, authentic materials I have collected, photographs etc. My school has also established a strong link with a school that I visited in Châteauroux. This link will allow us to send and share work between the schools and set up a future exchange programme. We are currently developing a web link between the schools.

#### **Main gains and experiences**

##### **Personally**

First hand experience of working in a French school. I found it invaluable observing and teaching French children and having discussions with the teachers about language learning. I also learned a lot about the French education system as a whole and the changes it is going through. I feel that as teachers we have a duty to teach with a global dimension in mind and I intend to pursue the link with the French school to enrich the school culturally.

##### **For your institution?**

I have many new ideas about how to take language learning forward. Setting up a link with the school has been brilliant. It makes it all the more real to my children when I can show them photographs and talk from my own experience of being at a French school, rather than just finding them on the Internet. My school wants to develop its global dimension and really embed the inter-cultural understanding strand of the KS2 Framework for Languages in the language learning opportunities for the children. Using authentic materials in lessons has already proved to have had an impact. The children are learning lots about language use and the similarities and differences between life in an English school and life in a French school.

##### **Challenges**

The partner school in France is rather limited in terms of ICT equipment, compared to our school. However, they do have Broadband and an interactive whiteboard. They will be buying a webcam to facilitate our link.

## ***Teacher 2***

### **Recognition from own institution**

The school has recognised my participation in the Job Shadow week by allowing me to form links with primary schools in France. Also, the school ask me to teach French to the pupils alongside a specialist language teacher.

### **Main gains and experiences**

#### **Personally**

The biggest gain for me was the opportunity to be involved in this project. From the project, I gained an insight into how the French school system works and their teaching pedagogy. I took away resources and ideas, particularly those to help me teach French and also I took away an enthusiasm for the French language and the desire to learn more of it.

#### **For your institution?**

The biggest gain for the school I work at was the chance to form link schools. With these now established, it gives real purpose to learning a language, and gives the children a reason to learn French. In addition, it provides children with the opportunity to hear real French speakers and also shows our pupils that the French children are learning our language in a similar fashion.

#### **Challenges**

I found the biggest challenge was my lack of French vocabulary. Having come back from the training activity I have a strong desire to further my French knowledge by learning more of the language.

## ***Teacher 3***

### **Recognition from own institution**

I have given an oral report to the head teacher in addition to providing a written report. The written report will also be available for all members of staff who wish to read it. I will hold a staff meeting to inform all staff of ideas and activities that can be used through the school when teaching a foreign language. I will also give them any copies of authentic resources that I have collected from France, such as CDs, photos and books.

### **Main gains and experiences**

#### **Personally**

It reinforced the importance of teaching a foreign language at primary level and rekindled my enthusiasm for it. It also provided me with an opportunity to collect ideas, activities and authentic resources such as songs, books and photos. Due to the differences in the educational systems, it also provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my general teaching practice which was greatly beneficial.

#### **For your institution?**

I will disseminate the ideas and resources I have collected for the other teachers to use throughout the school when teaching the foreign language. It has also greatly strengthened the link between ourselves and our partner school in France. I met the French children and teachers and was able to share this with our children whom they correspond with. They are now very much looking forward to meeting the French children when they come to visit in May. This link with a French school gives the children a purpose and an audience for their learning and as such, encourages their enthusiasm for it.

#### ***Teacher 4***

##### **Recognition from own institution**

The members of staff in my school have been interested to know about the visit to French schools and I will disseminate good practice and ideas at a later date.

##### **Main gains and experiences**

###### **Personally**

I have a better understanding of the French education system and the language and the way in which areas of the curriculum are taught.

###### **For your institution?**

I will disseminate ideas that I observed during the teaching of home and second language. There were recognised attitudes and different approaches to teaching and teachers which I will share with staff. I have also purchased authentic books for reading and teaching of French in our school.

###### **Challenges**

None. If I had been alone, it would have been a very intense week but as we were able to meet up in the evenings and discuss our day it was fine.

#### ***Advanced Skills Teacher***

##### **Recognition from own institution**

I planned and led the Job Shadow visit for five teachers from two local authorities in conjunction with the Head of the International Learning and Research Centre and M Fouassier, IUFM, Châteauroux. I will disseminate new ideas, resources and activities through planned languages in-service training in a wider area, locally and nationally.

##### **Main gains and experiences**

###### **Personally**

First hand experience of a week in a French primary school and discussion with teachers in French primary education. I gathered resources, materials, photos for use in training activities for primary class teachers in England. I improved my language skills in French – speaking, listening, reading and writing. The discussion with French children about their work was beneficial.

###### **For your institution?**

The visit strengthened our links with this region of France and started new partner links for some of our English primary schools. It strengthened partner school links for some of our schools who had started partner school projects last year. The visit extended a shared understanding of the need to base language learning in a real context whenever possible and emphasised the importance of the Intercultural Understanding strand of the DfES KS2 Framework for Languages

###### **Challenges**

Teachers need to be able to plan at least a term ahead so information about funding at the earliest opportunity is appreciated.

##### **Additional data from the feedback forms completed by the participating teachers:**

Grade given to the training activity delivery:

Good 40% Excellent 60%

100% of the teachers had received recognition from their institutions.

## **RATING**

Have your teaching skills improved as a result of attending the training activity?

Very Much 20%    Quite a lot 60%    Too early to say 20%

How useful in terms of classroom practice were the skills you acquired?

Very much 40%    Quite a lot 40%    Too early to say 20%

Has attendance on the training activity helped enhance your career prospects?

Very much 40%    Not very much 20%    Quite a lot 20%    Too early to say 20%

Has participation refreshed your interest in teaching?

Very much 60%    Quite a lot 40%

Have you increased your knowledge of other countries/cultures in ways which have helped you develop further the international dimension in the subject(s) you teach?

Very much 80%    Quite a lot 20%

## **WORKING WITH OTHERS**

Observing classroom teaching in other countries

Very much 80%    Quite a lot 20%

Sharing practice with other teachers

Very much 60%    Quite a lot 40%

Finding partners for future collaboration

Very much 80%    Quite a lot 20%

## **Other comments from participating English teachers:**

*'The opportunity to participate in this training activity has had a big impact upon my career and attitudes. I now have an even greater enthusiasm for learning other languages and will undoubtedly pass this on to my pupils.'*

*'The Job Shadow visit will strengthen the link between Year 3 and our partner school in Bourges. I will be teaching Year 3 next year and hope to develop this with the class I have. I have already made a Powerpoint of photos of Bourges, with captions, and shared it with this class. I have suggested sharing information on our local church or Bristol Cathedral to link with the work the French children are doing.'*

*'The personal link with my French partner teacher is very important. It will be interesting for our English children to find out about the organisation of the school day, the subjects taught, the differences in clothes worn to school, homework and meal arrangements.'*

*'It was a reflective opportunity.'*

*'The Job Shadow week reinforced the place of Language teaching within the primary school as well as reinforcing my own teaching practice.'*

*'I saw good use made of photos of the local area for work in Geography and excellent use of Bourges as a focus for History and Geography work. I realise how much can be gained from using the local area as a resource. I have some authentic French songs to use in singing lessons.'*

The Job Shadow group of teachers commented that they enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to work alongside, observe and discuss with the French teachers but also each other during the lunch break and at the end of the day. This led to discussion about practice and questions about reasons for similarities and differences observed in a variety of school settings.

### **Background Information**

The International Learning and Research Centre is a self-funded, not for profit, innovation and development centre; it invests in school-based research and enquiry, through a research and development strategy which includes learning from international contexts. The research investigations undertaken support teachers to reflect on, analyse and learn from their own practice and the practice of others. By so doing they are refreshed as professionals, take a lead in their own learning and increase the knowledge and understanding of how to improve the quality of teaching and transform practice in their own schools.

The IUFM Orléans-Tours and the International Learning and Research Centre have been co-operating since 2003 in the field of teacher training especially through a programme of school based placements of French primary trainee-teachers in English schools. The placement teachers are coached and monitored by Centre staff.

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