

The response of one Irish primary school to linguistic diversity

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Overview

- Scoil Bhríde (Cailíní)
- Home languages
- Examples from the classroom
- Reflections from teachers, parents and pupils

Scoil Bhríde (Cailíní), Blanchardstown

- Girls' primary school in a western suburb of Dublin
- 1994: First non-native speaker of English enrolled
- 2018: 80% of pupils have a home language other than English or Irish
- Most of the 80% had little or no English when they started school
- Currently more than 50 home languages in addition to English and Irish:
 - Afrikaans, Amharic, Arabic, Bangla, Benin, Bosnian, Cantonese, Dari, Cebuano, Estonian, Farsi, Foula, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Igbo, Ilonggo, Indonesian, Ishekiri, Isoko, Italian, Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Konkani, Kurdish, Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Malay, Malayalam, Mandarin, Marathi, Moldovan, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Shona, Slovakian, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Tamil, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Visaya, Xhosa, Yoruba.

What about home languages?

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart –

Nelson Mandela

The limits of my language are the limits of my world - Wittgenstein

- Historical influence
- Identity
- Cognitive benefits
- Why monolingualism in the midst of linguistic diversity?

Two overarching educational goals

- To ensure that ***all*** pupils gain full access to education, which means helping them to become proficient in the language of schooling
- To exploit linguistic diversity for the benefit of ***all*** pupils by implementing an integrated approach to language education that embraces the language of schooling, languages of the curriculum (Irish and French), and home languages.

Strengths and supports – school

School strength:

- Curriculum delivery of English and Irish languages

Primary School Curriculum – aim:

To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his/her full potential as a unique individual (Government of Ireland 1999: 7)

Strengths and supports – parents

Parental strength:

- Supporting the maintenance and development of their home language
- Rich resource for learning – crucial for literacy development

Primary School Curriculum – principle:

Parents are the child's primary educators, and the life of the home is the most potent factor in his or her development during the primary school years (ibid.: 24)

Strengths and supports – children’s learning

The home language:

...is the default medium of [the child’s] self-concept, their self-awareness, their consciousness, their discursive thinking, and their agency. It is thus the cognitive tool that they cannot help but apply to formal learning, which includes mastering the language of schooling (Little, 2014).

Primary School Curriculum – principle:

The child’s existing knowledge and experience form the basis for learning (ibid.: 8)

School policy: four principles

- **Inclusive ethos:**
 - the school welcomes the diversity of its pupil population and acknowledges that each pupil has much to contribute to her own education (autonomy, identity, 'action knowledge')
- **Open language policy:**
 - no restrictions placed on pupils' use of their home languages at school, whether inside or outside the classroom (agency, 'action knowledge')
- **Strong emphasis on development of language awareness:**
 - home languages treated as a resource for all learners
- **Strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills in English, Irish, French and home languages:**
 - writing and speaking support one another in many different ways; importance of parental involvement in their daughters' literacy development.

Unexpected outcomes

The Irish language:

- Raised status for Irish language
- New perception of Irish language by children – using it for communication purposes
- Increased interest – request from Parents' Association (indigenous Irish and migrant parents) for Irish language classes for members

Unexpected outcomes

Learner autonomy

Primary School Curriculum – aim:

- *To prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning (Government of Ireland, 1999: 7)*

Primary School Curriculum – principle:

- *The child is an active agent in his/her learning (Ibid.: 8)*
- *Collaborative learning should feature in the learning process (ibid. 9)*

Social engagement/cohesion

Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war – Maria Montessori

Primary School Curriculum – aim:

- *To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society (Government of Ireland 1999: 7)*

Examples from the classroom

Junior Infants: age 4 - 5

- Teachers cultivate a secure, nurturing classroom environment
- Pupils encouraged to:
 - express themselves using whatever language comes naturally to them;
 - share words and phrases in their own language(s) relevant to topics under discussion;
 - use English, Irish, French and/or their home language when carrying out tasks that support the learning of the various concepts encountered in primary school

Senior Infants: age 5 - 6

Classroom displays include the home languages of pupils

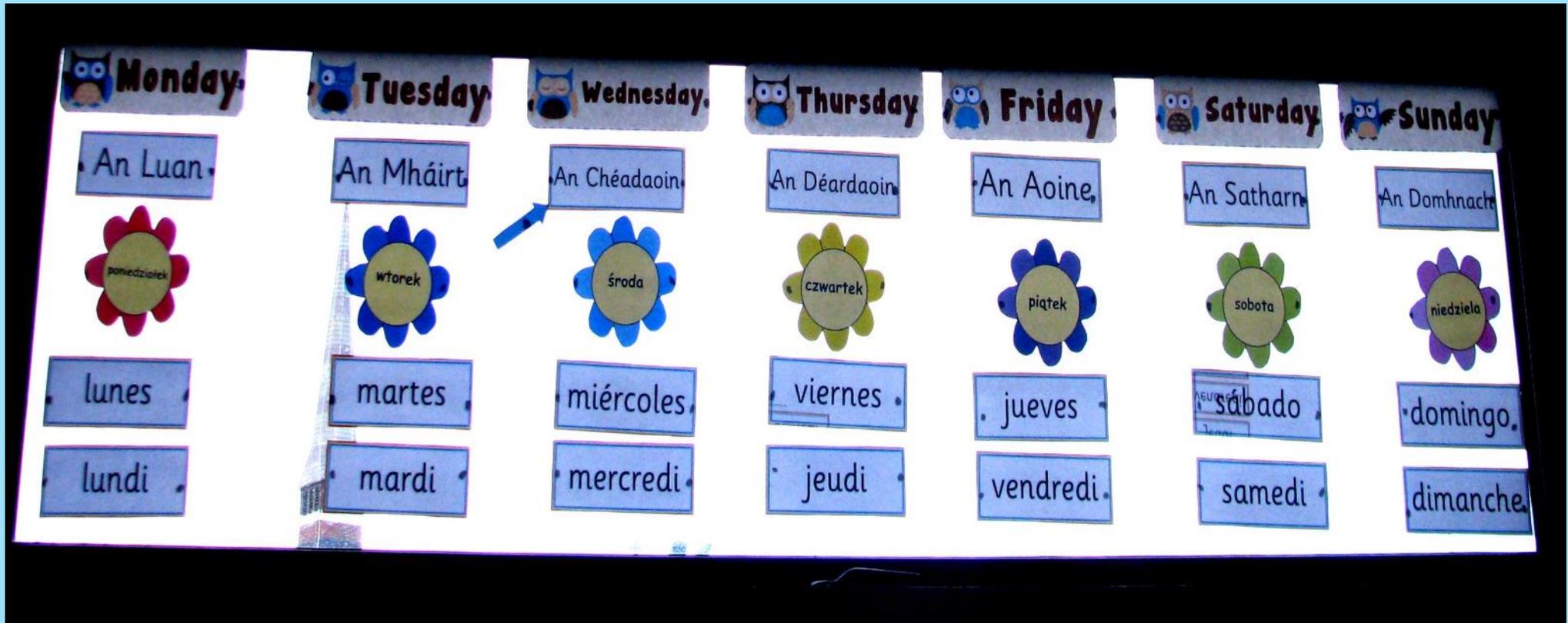
English

Irish

Polish

Spanish

French



Teachers provide worksheets that can be completed using English, Irish and home languages

Draw pictures of food.
Write the names in Irish and English

<u>Butter</u> iM	<u>Apple</u> uill	<u>Orange</u> oráiste	<u>carrot</u> caitead	<u>cheese</u> cáis
<u>Bread</u> arán	<u>CEREAL</u> gráin	<u>egg</u> ubh		
<u>sugar</u> súicra	<u>MILK</u> Bainne	<u>chocolate</u> seacáid		

English

Malayalam

Food Bia ഭക്ഷണം

I like to eat egg.
എനിക്ക് മുട്ട തിന്നാൻ ഇഷ്ടമാണ്

My favourite fruit is apple.
എന്റെ ഇഷ്ടഫലം ആപ്പിളാണ്

My favourite vegetable is cucumber.
എന്റെ ഇഷ്ട പച്ചക്കറി കക്കരിയാണ്

Coconut comes from my country.
കേരളം എന്നാണ് വരുമ്പോൾ

English
Irish

First Class: age 6 - 7

- Translation of key words and phrases into home language(s) is a regular feature of classroom interaction
- Emergence of language awareness
- Texts in two languages: English and Irish; English/Irish and home language

English
Russian



I am Seven years old
I am from Latvia and my town is called Riga
I Love To Wear a Cap.
Я люблю есть яблоки.
Я люблю свою маму и папу
Мой Папа и Моя Мама любят меня тоже

November 6th

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

My name is _____
mi nombre es _____
I am 6 years Old
tengo 6 años.
I live in Dublin
Yo vivo en Dublin
I am in 1st class
Yo Estoy en Primera
I am in sciol 1st class
Yo voy al colegio - Pringida
I like school
Me gusta el colegio
I am from Spain
Yo soy de España

English and Spanish

Second Class: 7 - 8

- A more elaborate approach to written composition in English
 - Choose a topic
 - Write a first draft
 - Revise the draft
 - Present it to the teacher for final correction
 - Read the draft aloud to the class
- Dual-language texts become more elaborate
- Class diary

Making butter in many languages



Dual language
identity text

Ako nang tawa ko
I am eight years old.

Ako ay isinilang sa Ireland
I was born in Ireland.

Ang pamilya nala sa pilipinas.
My family is from the Philippines.

Ang ating nanay at tatay ay filipino
My mom and dad is filipino.

Ako ay matutong mag salita nang tatlong wika
I speak three languages they are English
Irish and filipino.

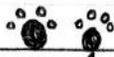
Third Class: age 8 - 9

Fourth Class: age 9 - 10

- Some children start to write in three languages
- Children from English-speaking homes show an interest in writing in three languages
- *The clue is in the word*

A pupil from a Filipino family wrote her dog Oliver's diary in Irish

6.2.2015

Oliver 

Oliver
<)

Bhí Oliver sa pháirc.
Bhí an cat sa pháirc, freisin.
Thosaigh Oliver agus an cat ag
sugraadh, agus tith Oliver sa
ghrill.
“Déan deifir!” arsa Oliver.
“Ag teacht!” arsa an cat.
Tar éis tamaill, chonaic an
cat an feist ar an talamh.
“Mama tá ortas am” arsa an
cat.
Bhí Oliver foin gearr, agus chonaic
se iora nua, agus chonaic an iora nua
Oliver, Thosaigh Oliver ag tith.
“Stop, stop!” arsa an cat.
Fein an iora nua ar an gearr.
Thosaigh Oliver ag tairn.
Tar éis tamaill bhí tuisle ar
Oliver agus an cat, agus bhí siad
ina coddáta.

Fifth Class: age 10 - 11
Sixth Class: age 11 - 12

- Pupils begin to learn French: another language in which to express curriculum content
- Pupils draw on all the languages at their disposal to translate a Latin Christmas carol

ridere

Dormi Jesu

Dormi Jesu! Mater ridet

dolci

Quae tam dulcem somnum videt,

Dormi Jesu blandule!

Si non dormis, Mater plorat

Inter fila cantans orat

Blande, veni, somnule

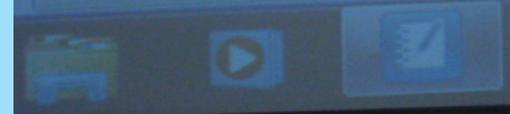
dormitory

dormir

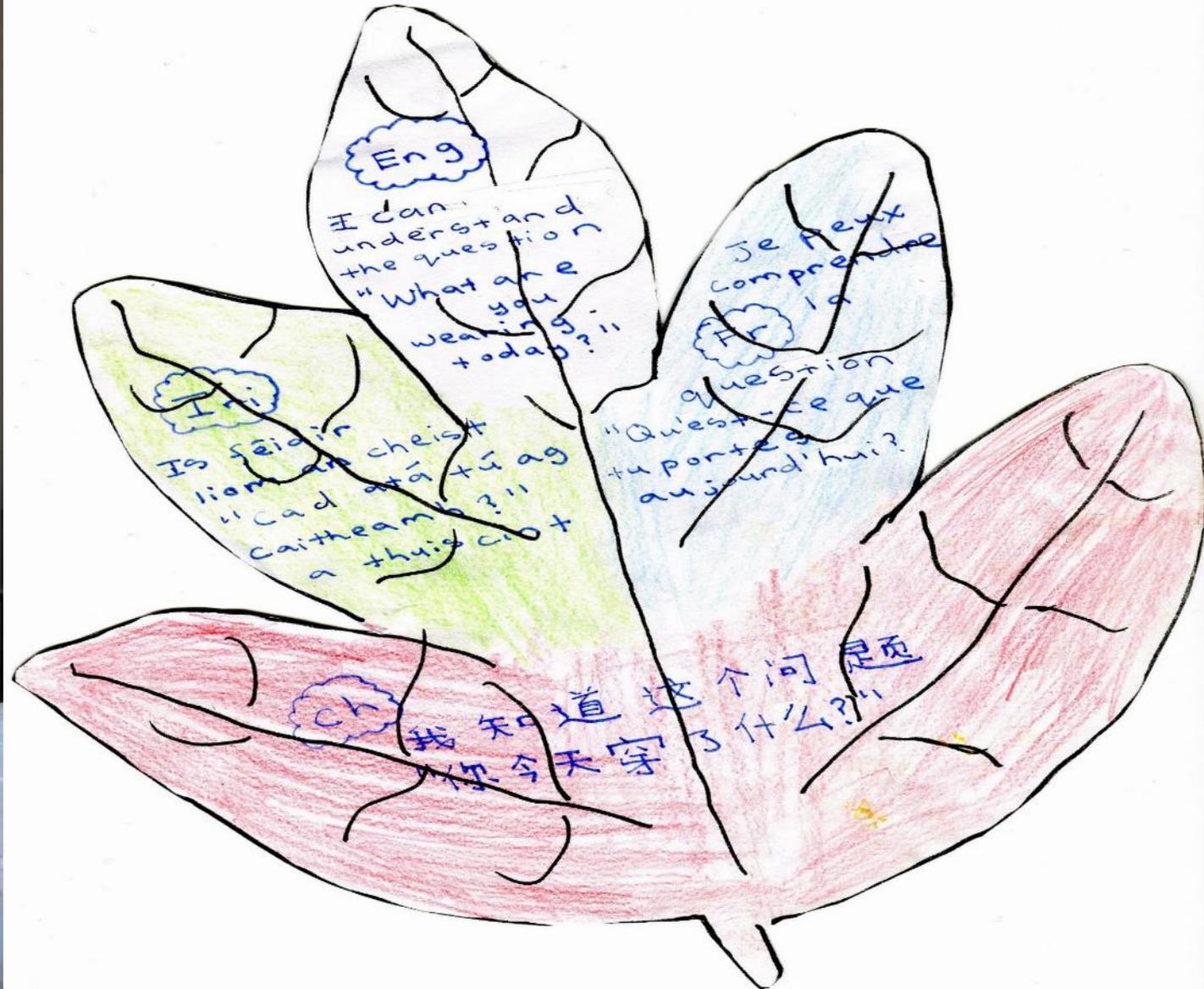
Mater Misericordiae

Maternity

санта
chanter



Self-assessment is introduced

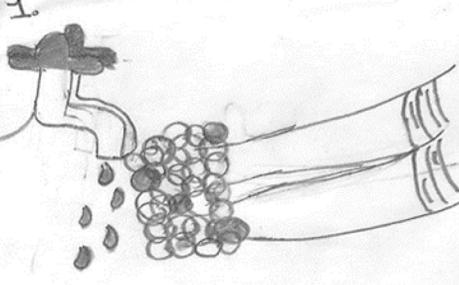
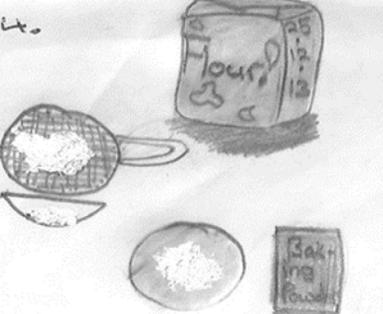
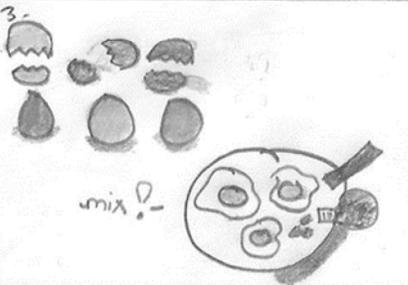
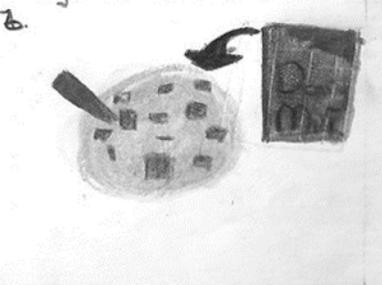
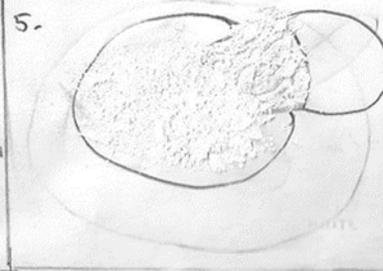
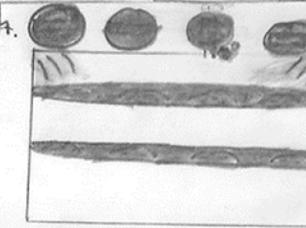
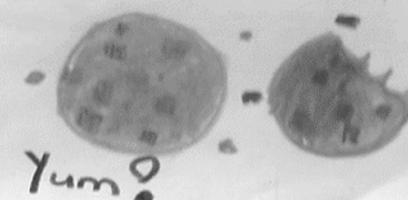


Fifth and Sixth Class

- Pupils begin to teach themselves new languages
- Pupils improvise dramas to show how similarities between some languages allow speakers of those languages to understand one another
- Pupils use their plurilingual skills to write multilingual letters, recipes, diaries for fun or to respond to linguistic challenges like writing a story in English using as many French words as possible

The same recipe in four languages

English
Irish
French
Benin

<p>1.</p> 	<p>1 Wash Your Hands! Mí do lámha! Lavez vos mains! Kpobo ue!</p>	<p>4.</p> 	<p>4. Sieve the flour, add the baking powder. Críathraigh an plúr an píobar. Passer au tamis la farine et la poudre. Umue flour ye ahen, umue baking powder. Bae.</p>	
<p>3. Add the eggs and the vanilla. Mix! Cuir isteach na huibheacha agus an fanaile. Measc suas iad. Ajoutez les œufs et la vanille. Mélangez. Umue eggs ube vanilla bae.</p>	<p>3.</p>  <p>mix!</p>	<p>6. Add the chocolate chips and mix again. Cuir isteach an seadán. Ajoutez le chocolat. Umue chocolate chips, ufuenkukugbe.</p>	<p>6.</p> 	
<p>2.</p> 	<p>2. Chop the butter; mix the butter + sugar. Gearr an t-íom, measc an t-íom agus an siúcra. Coupez le beurre et mélangez le beurre et le sucre.</p>	<p>5.</p> 	<p>5. Fold the flour into the mixture. Fill an plúr. Mélangez la farine. Uubue flour mus bae mix re.</p>	
<p>Languages: English Irish French Benin</p>	<p>7.</p> 	<p>7. Bake at 170° degrees for 12-15 mins. Cuir isteach san oighean é ar 170° ar feadh 12-15 mínead. Maitheog d'ang le four. Four 12-15 minutes.</p>	<p>ENJOY!</p>  <p>Yum!</p>	

Sixth Class (11½+): *Cuairt ar an Meánscoil (A visit to the post-primary school*

Chuaigh mé agus mo chlann go dtí Pobal Scoil Mhín. Talagang yumao sa gabi. Nous avons vu beaucoup filles e garcons. Thosaigh an phríomhoide ag caint. The whole room started to quiet down. We were told that all the sixth class children were to make their way to the door. Ensuite, une fille a amenée nous dans la piece. Thosaigh said ag scoilt ar na páistí. Si Rabia, si Duska, at si Ana at ako nag paghati-hatiin sa isang grupo. We went into one of the English Classes and we did a Volcano Quiz. Une femme a demandé une question difficile et facile apropos de volcan sur le tableau. We also saw a bit of Romeo and Juliet. Four of my neighbours were part of the play.

(Irish, Tagalog, English, French)

A Story in English Using French Words!

A Story in English Using French Words!

Madame and her **fiancé** went to the **café**. **Madame** ordered **café au lait** and a **baguette**. Her **fiancé** got **creme du lait** and a **croissant**. **Madame** said, "Bon Appetit!"

After that, another woman gave a **brochure** about the new **manicure** shop across the road. **Madame** was so excited but her **fiancé** wasn't! So he decided to buy her a **bouquet** of flowers while **Madame** was getting her nails done.

When they were both finished, they met at a **restaurant**. **Madame** was very happy. She then decided to open her very own **boutique**. It was called **Madame's Boutique**. Her store was **unique**. She gave strangers **brochures** of her **boutique** and it was successful. **Madame** and her **fiancé** were very happy.

Every Monday **Madame** went to **ballet** lessons in a studio. There was a **cuisine** next to her **boutique**. The **chef** was called **Alexandre**. He was very strict chef.

My name is Marceline. I am 15 years old. I am in Holly Star High. I am not that girly. I do alot of sports.

English

My favorite
many trophies
like the colour
you think is
my friends!
with them
with them!
of my story

Is mise Marceline. Tá mé cúig bliain deag d'aois. Tá mé a Holly Star High. Níl fíor coiliom spóirt. Is aoibhne Bhuaigh mé a lán trophí. Is aoibhinn liom na daicé acu. Is aoibhinn liom mé igronaí siopadóirí agus ag scatail le mo

Je m'appelle Marceline. J'ai 15 ans. Je vais à l'école "Holly Star High". J'aime le sport. J'adore le basket. J'ai gagné beaucoup de trophées. J'adore les couleurs bleu et aqua. J'adore mes amis - je fais le magasin tous les jours. Je vais avec mon ami

Amusez-

Irish

Bain taitneamh astu!

French

Mandarin

我的名字是 Marceline. 我今年 15 岁. 我在 "Holly Star High" 上学. 我不是一个 girly girl. 我很喜欢运动. 我最喜欢的是篮球! 我 ying 了很多的 jiang 杯. 我很喜欢蓝色和水蓝色. 真的很漂亮! 我非常喜欢我的同学和朋友! 我经常和我的同学出去玩. 有的时候和他们 huan ban.

Enjoy!

What the teachers think

- *...Children are responding very positively to the open language policy – even their body language, demeanour within class; the speed and accuracy with which they answer questions when their own language is involved; regardless of subject, their interest increases if it is something to do with home or their own language or their own experience; therefore when they respond it is with much more developed thought... equally in writing (BD: June 2014).*
- *When you bring in the home language the lights come on (SOC: October 2013)*

What the parents think

- *... finding the similarities between your own home native language and English and Irish... and French.... it definitely speeds up the learning of English. (Italian L1)*
- *[happy about] the school's interest in our language. Before, my daughter was ashamed to hear us speaking it. Now she wants to read and write in it. (Malayalam L1)*
- *... when my child came home and told me that the teacher asked her to say something in Yoruba I sat down and cried because I thought 'someone wants to know about our language' (Yoruba L1).*

Pupils' reflections: without home language

*closed; not fair; terrible; not able to speak; empty;
wouldn't understand; pretending; rejecting;
devastated; without an arm or a leg; sad;
very shocking*

Pupils' reflections: without home language

- *[A new pupil] told me that in her former school you were not allowed to speak your own language. I found that very shocking (L1 German)*
- *It's so, so sad because it's like blocking a huge doorway...it's like taking away an advantage of exploring (L1 Kurdish)*
- *...don't hide away from your own language because it's what makes you **you** and it's special and it's, you can't, it's like having an arm or a leg, you can't take it away from you (L1 German)*

Pupils' reflections: with home language

*possibilities; advantage; exploring; yes!;
personal; friendship; knowledge; expanding;
closer; warm; spark; point of view;
perspective; together; help; learn; supports;
great; speak out; be courageous*

- *[it allows us] get personal into each other's cultures and languages; it's very useful for friendship, for knowledge, so in many ways we're all expanding... it makes you feel closer because you have a perspective on that person's point of view. (Kurdish L1)*
- *Sometimes it's, like, when we learn a language it's easier to learn other ones; sometimes it's not really about which language you're learning it's, like, how to learn a language. (English L1)*
- *It's like when two people speak the same language there's a kind of bond between both of them (Yoruba L1)*

Thank you
Go raibh maith agaibh

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