ASMCF-funded: Schools event organised by French at Stirling

Dr Fiona Barclay and her colleagues at the University of Stirling organised an event for pupils in the local area to discover what studying French at university is like and the careers it can lead to. Meanwhile, their teachers attended two CPD sessions on approaches to teaching and assessing cultural materials and culture topics.

Schools were contacted via local Council Education Officers, the SCILT (Scotland’s National Centre for Languages) and SALT (Scottish Association for Language Teaching) networks and existing school contacts. The response to the day was enthusiastic and feedback after the event was extremely positive. The places for the single day originally planned were filled within two days of publicising the event, and when a second day was added, a reserve list quickly grew. With further promotion, it is likely that we could have filled four similar days, as discussion threads on a MFL Facebook page indicated that many teachers hadn’t been aware of the event and would have liked to attend.

**THE EVENT**

The aims of the event were as follow:

1. To give pupils an insight into the format and content of studying French at university
2. To persuade attendees that studying French is relevant and contributes to an understanding of the contemporary world
3. To assist teachers in building skills and confidence in approaches to the study and assessment of literary and cinematic texts.

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|  | Pupils | Teachers |
| 10.30 | Mini-lecture on contemporary French society | |
| 11.15 | French language activities (small groups) | Approaches to teaching film |
| 12.15 | LUNCH | |
| 1.15 | Reading & speaking activities based on extracts from *auto-portraits* written by pupils from Clichy-sous-Bois (small groups) | Approaches to assessment and feedback of culture-based essays |
| 2.15 | Presentations and Q&A:  · final year students on their year abroad  · the Employability team about the benefits of languages for employability  · alumni on where French had taken them |

**FEEDBACK**

Many pupils commented that they now understood much more about the component parts of language study (such as literature and culture), and that they would now consider French as a potential subject choice.

From teachers, the feedback was all positive, calling the day ‘excellent’, ‘really enjoyable’, and ‘a genuine pleasure’, and saying that ‘the lecture was inspiring and helpful’.

‘I enjoyed the trip overall and would now consider doing French at uni’ (a pupil from a

deprived area who received a travel grant from the ASMCF)

‘I enjoyed seeing how studying at university works and how they teach their subject to

you’ (a pupil from a deprived area who received a travel grant from the ASMCF)

‘It felt like a good representation of what it would be like to study French at

University.’ (pupil)

‘I liked getting a taste of everything that I would do at uni.’ (pupil)

‘I’m mainly interested in Biology, but I would now like to study a language because

I would like to work abroad’. (pupil)