



January 2010

Dear Colleague

Foreign Language Assistants in the primary sector 2010-2011

I have pleasure in enclosing a leaflet which outlines the advantages of employing a Foreign Language Assistant to work in primary schools. Please forward this leaflet to all your primary schools in order to publicise the opportunity. I hope you will wish to work with primary schools in your area to encourage and support them in employing Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs) in 2010-2011. A copy of the leaflet is also being emailed to secondary FLA coordinators.

There will continue to be funding available through the Standards Fund Grant 1.7 to support the introduction or continuation of primary language learning provision across local authorities and schools during 2010-2011. Local authorities are expected by DCSF to devolve **at least two thirds** of their total allocations directly to schools.

We have had very positive feedback from schools and local authorities which have employed FLAs in the last five years. This year over 650 primary schools in England have employed an FLA. They are working closely with classroom teachers, developing language confidence and intercultural understanding. Many schools have also used them to work with Gifted and Talented pupils, and to improve the teachers' own language skills, particularly their pronunciation.

I should like to remind you that a Primary Starter Pack of teaching ideas and resources is available on our website and can also be posted to all FLAs and mentors. If FLAs in your area have not received this pack, please do urge them and their schools to request one from us at assistants@britishcouncil.org.

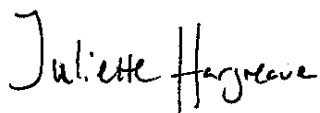
Procedures for applying for an FLA in 2010-2011

- A list of local authority coordinators, showing your name and email address will appear on the British Council website www.languageassistant.co.uk.
- Primary schools interested in applying for an FLA must receive head teacher approval first and then contact you as their local authority coordinator. Once you have collated all requests for primary school Assistants in the authority, please pass the information on to the secondary school coordinator in your authority (see list attached). The deadline for secondary coordinators to submit applications for an Assistant to the British Council is **5 March 2010**.
- **Please note that this year we cannot guarantee to satisfy all requests received after the deadline.**
- As you know, assistants must be employed for a minimum of 12 hours per week. The leaflet outlines possible ways in which the 12 hours can be shared. Extra hours can be negotiated, up to a recommended maximum of 18 hours per week.

- We hope that, as in 2009-2010, smaller primary schools will consider working together in clusters of two or three, and that you will be able to coordinate this.
- This may also be a good time to encourage a small secondary school to share their FLA with a local primary or for a larger school or Specialist Language College to appoint an extra FLA in order to share additional hours with primary partners.
- We can offer FLAs to teach the following languages: Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish.
- The **maximum permitted number of schools** sharing one FLA is **three**. It is important that the FLA, as a newcomer to the area, has the opportunity to spend sufficient time in each school to establish meaningful contacts.
- One school must be identified as the host/lead school, responsible for such things as arranging accommodation, liaising with the other schools and dealing with employment paperwork.
- Every school will need its own FLA mentor, who will be responsible for planning the FLA's timetable and dealing with any issues that may arise during the appointment.
- Schools should be reassured that the British Council is able to give clear guidelines on all administrative aspects of the appointment of FLAs. Please go to the 'UK schools and authorities' page on our website at www.languageassistant.co.uk.

I would like to thank you once again for agreeing to act as coordinator for primary school Foreign Language Assistants in your area. We are looking forward to working with you in the coming months. If there are any specific questions raised by your local schools, or if you have any points you wish to discuss, I will be very happy to help you.

Yours sincerely



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Attached: Secondary coordinators list
 Primary Language Assistants leaflet

“Every child should have the opportunity throughout Key Stage 2 to study a foreign language and develop their interest in the culture of other nations. They should have access to high quality teaching and learning opportunities, making use of native speakers ...

Languages for All: Languages for Life, A Strategy for England, DfES 2002

It (is) even more important that we give all children the chance to learn a language in order to gain insights into their own lives and those of others around the world.

The Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum: Interim Report, 2008

Open the door to language learning in your primary school ...



... employ a Foreign Language Assistant in 2010-2011

After only two months of working with our Foreign Language Assistant we can see progress in the children's listening skills throughout the school, helping to improve literacy across the curriculum.

Primary Deputy Headteacher, Salford

In the early stages children will spend much of their time listening, speaking and interacting orally and will be given regular and frequent opportunities to listen to a good model of pronunciation.

Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages

In 2009-2010 over 650 primary schools in England have employed Foreign Language Assistants

Foreign Language Assistants can ...

- work alongside class teachers to teach a foreign language
- bring an international dimension to the curriculum
- update teachers' knowledge of target language and culture
- inform discussion on citizenship.

A Foreign Language Assistant can bring ...

- a fresh cultural perspective to language learning
- access to authentic teaching materials
- invaluable attention to pupils in small groups
- improved confidence in communication.



As our first ever German FLA, Veronika has set an incredibly high standard – she has worked hard, planning creative cross-curricular units of work, making resources and sharing ideas. She has worked with children aged from 4 to 11, motivating them and totally switching them onto language learning through exciting, relevant, interactive lessons, good use of assessment for learning and her own unique personality.

Primary Teaching and Learning Consultant, Rotherham



Foreign Language Assistants

- are young native speakers of Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish from 18 countries worldwide
- are usually between 20 and 30 years old
- are advanced students or intending teachers, with a strong command of English
- are selected by the British Council's partner organisations overseas
- often have experience of working with children
- can contribute to a wide range of curriculum areas including humanities, art, sport and music
- are typically shared by 2 or 3 local primary and/or secondary schools
- provide a model of accuracy and pronunciation for both pupils and teachers.



It has been wonderful to have Arlène in our school! All the Languages work in school has been bolstered by the presence of a French Assistant.

Arlène is from the Mayenne Region and she is acting as an intermediary between our school and primary schools in that region, so that our visit to France in February, and future visits, will see our children share activities with their French partners.

We have just heard that our application for the Intermediate level of the International School Award (Developing Internationalism) has been successful. Not only that, but the panel felt that we should apply for the full International School Award for this academic year. Thank you for this opportunity.

Primary Headteacher, Redcar and Cleveland



Bonjour!
¡Hola!

Children listen to the teacher, to songs and rhymes, to each other and to native speakers ...

Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages

In 2010-2011, a Foreign Language Assistant could support language teaching in your primary school

with songs ...

I teach the children to sing the song “Mein Hut, der hat drei Ecken” (there is an equivalent English song – “My hat, it has three corners”) with gestures. When they know the song well children skip one word and just do the gesture instead. The next time they skip another word as well, and so on. At the end they sing just a few words and mime most of the song. After that you could do it the other way round until they sing the complete song again. This is great fun for them!

Elisabeth, Primary German Language Assistant, Sunderland



I stick coloured sheets on the board, then teach the children the Spanish names for the colours. After that they sing the song. They all like it because we use the tune of a famous song in English and in the song they say the word “amarillo” as that also means yellow. This is the song:

*Blanco, negro, amarillo
Naranja, verde, amarillo
Azul, rojo, amarillo
Violeta, rosa, rosa*

The title of the original song is “Is this the way to Amarillo?”

Alba, Primary Spanish Language Assistant, St Helens

I teach the children a song to learn the days of the week (to the tune of Campdown Races)

*Lundi, mardi, mercredi, jeudi, vendredi
Lundi, mardi, mercredi, jeudi, vendredi
Samedi, dimanche
Samedi, dimanche
Lundi, mardi, mercredi, jeudi, vendredi*

Emeline, Primary French Language Assistant, Swindon

We love learning French because we do fun things like playing games and singing but we are still learning another language and we can write and say lots of things now.

KS1 pupils, Salford

... with games ...

The children are in groups. Each one throws the die and draws a part of the body following these instructions:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 – la tête (the head) | 4 – un bras (an arm) |
| 2 – le cou (the neck) | 5 – une jambe (a leg) |
| 3 – le corps (the body) | 6 – un pied (a foot) |

The first child who has a complete drawing of a man wins (1 head, 1 neck, 1 body, 2 arms, 2 legs, 2 feet).

Priscille, Primary French Language Assistant, Suffolk

In the class we play games. The assistant hides a number or a colour behind her back and we've got to guess what it is and she shows one person and they've got to say whether it's right. If you answer it in English, then it doesn't count: you've got to answer it in Mandarin.

KS2 pupil, Lincolnshire

... and stories ...

We read together a book about a dog which makes strange noises because he's eaten a duck, a cow, a pig and a cat. The story is a French story but children easily associate the French name of animals with the pictures thanks to the noise. I use flashcards with noises and words in French.

I have used this with children from the Nursery to Year 3. They like it!

Marina, Primary French Language Assistant, Stoke on Trent



The FLA initiative has worked well. All the children can now greet in French, ask and tell their name, count to 20 and name some colours. Class assemblies now include at least one item of French. French dominoes and other games are very popular.

Primary Headteacher, Essex

... providing extra challenge

- In schools that already have well developed language teaching, Foreign Language Assistants can re-energise the language programme and provide extra challenge and stimulus for all pupils, ensuring progress is maintained. Gifted and Talented clubs are one way to use FLAs to stretch the most able pupils.

Seeing one of our FLAs work with a group of Gifted and Talented learners was inspirational. They were able to ask and answer questions and were completely at ease chatting in the target language.

Primary Languages Consultant, Medway

Intercultural understanding

Language competence and intercultural understanding are an essential part of being a citizen. Children develop a greater understanding of their own lives in the context of exploring the lives of others.

Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages

The children in primary school have also learned about other Spanish-speaking countries and different ways of travelling there ... they had the opportunity to think of an imaginary trip and write an e-mail to ask for information about a ticket.

Laura, Spanish FLA, Stoke-on-Trent

Promoting languages in the classroom

... to pupils

What I do to develop their interest in Spanish culture is to put a question in one section of my Spanish display. They have a week to find out the answer to the question. They can use the internet, and ask their parents, friends etc, and they give me the answer in the following lesson. They learn Spanish culture without being really aware of it and while having fun (it's a challenge for them).

Examples of questions:

What is the name of the King of Spain?

Who is Cervantes?

What is "El Quijote"?

Who is Fernando Alonso?

What is the colour of the Spanish football team?

María Angeles, Primary Spanish Language Assistant, Salford



With Years 3 to 5 I have based some work around the song "Sur le Pont d'Avignon". First I taught them the vocabulary with flashcards – sur le pont, les beaux messieurs, petits lapins etc. Then we talked about Avignon. Where is it? When was the bridge built? What is it made of? Finally I played the tape and we made up a dance with different movements to represent the characters. We all held hands and danced together in a big circle. They really, really enjoyed it.

Nadège, Primary French Language Assistant, Hampshire

Our FLA has helped us to refresh the curriculum and to introduce a new cultural dimension to our school.

Primary Headteacher, Trafford

... to teachers

I observed a lesson on 'body parts' planned jointly by the FLA and the teacher. The FLA did the initial flashcard presentation and both the teacher and pupils joined in the repetition phase. The FLA then worked with a small group on an activity connected with the language she had just presented and the teacher did something similar with the whole class. The teacher felt confident, having just revised the language herself, and the pupils had good pronunciation by the end of the lesson.

Inspector, South West

For the past two years we have benefited from the skills and resources of foreign language assistants. Both have been very competent and confident students who can hold the attention of the children using role play, discussions and fun activities. Both assistants work closely with class teachers, planning and delivering a highly active and motivating lesson. By working in this manner

the skills and confidence of class teachers are greatly enhanced, so much so that staff feel confident in delivering their own lessons prior to the FLA's arrival in October and after her departure in June.

Headteacher, Surrey

... and beyond

After school I have a discussion group with teachers from my host school. We just speak French. They choose their favourite subjects, we talk about our lives. They just want to practise if they know some French. If they don't know any French they want to know how to pronounce French words to use in the classroom. It's a great idea! After Christmas I will also give lessons to parents for one hour per week.

Magali, Primary French Language Assistant, Staffordshire



In my school we are going to start a Spanish school on Saturday mornings. The idea is that the whole family come together, children and parents, and learn the language together. It is going to be hard for me because there are going to be different levels and ages but I think that it's a very good idea.

Marta, Primary Spanish Language Assistant, Essex

Making the most of your Primary Foreign Language Assistant

Foreign Language Assistants can make a difference in just a few hours ...

I teach children during the morning (4 classes, 30 minutes each class) and then I do a Language Club after school for other children who want to learn Italian – I now have about 15 children. Then, from 4.15 until 5 p.m. I teach the teachers. There are about six teachers and they want to learn Italian both for themselves and to be able to teach it to the children when I am not there.

Nora, Primary Italian Language Assistant, Birmingham

... and their impact continues throughout the week

I can really see the difference when teachers keep on practising the things I have been doing with the children during the week. Children pick up things so much more easily.

Vanessa, Primary French Language Assistant, Salford

The FLAs have really helped our children to develop a love for languages from an early age. They have made language learning more purposeful and have developed the confidence of many children through improving their speaking and listening skills in a fun way. The FLAs have helped to make the world seem a smaller and more accessible place for many children who may not have had the opportunity to travel, and have shown them the importance of being able to communicate with a wide range of people.

What better start to language learning could young children possibly have?

Primary Languages AST, Salford



The British Council

- matches applicant profiles with your requirements. Schools can request an FLA from a specific region, to support a link project, or with a particular skill, such as music, sport or art
- produces guidelines to help you and your assistant with all related administration
- provides a starter pack of resources and support materials and a virtual mentor with online lessons and a wide range of ideas for the classroom.

Costs

Foreign Language Assistants currently cost £6,872* for 12 hours a week for 8 months from 1 October to 31 May (or longer by mutual agreement).

You can share a Foreign Language Assistant with up to two other local schools.

Local Authorities will be receiving DCSF funding for Languages through the Standards Fund in 2010-11. If you are interested in employing a Foreign Language Assistant, you may wish to contact your languages adviser in the first instance to see whether any funding is available.



Possible options

1. Your assistant works for two hours a week in your school and 10 hours in a local secondary school. This would cost your school £1,145.30*
2. You share an assistant with two other local primary schools e.g. 4 hours + 4 hours + 4 hours (cost per school £2,290.70*)
3. You employ an assistant for 12 hours a week in your school (cost £6,872*)
4. Any other combination of primary and/or secondary schools, as long as the assistant works in no more than 3 schools and works the full 12 hours per week.

*plus National Insurance contributions and, if appropriate, London weighting

"The use of a Foreign Language Assistant provides good value for money as the costs of the project enable the FLA to work throughout KS2 delivering a one hour lesson alongside the class teacher."

Headteacher, Surrey

"Mrs Wang was one of the top investments I have ever made."

Headteacher, Junior School, North Lincolnshire



If you would like to employ a Foreign Language Assistant in 2010-11, or discuss opportunities for sharing with other primary or secondary schools, please contact your local coordinator. Contact details can be found on the enclosed sheet or on the British Council Language Assistants website
www.languageassistant.co.uk

For information on more international education opportunities visit the Global Gateway
www.globalgateway.org

Language Assistants - Local Authority Secondary Co-ordinators

Local Authority	Co-ordinator	E-mail address
Barking & Dagenham	Jenny Carpenter	jenny.carpenter@lbbd.gov.uk
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