

Introduction

Authority:	Fife Council
Case Study Focus:	An integrated approach to language learning across the curriculum
Establishments:	Queen Anne High School
Learners' stage/s:	P6– S3



About the educational establishment and the learners

Queen Anne High School is one of Scotland's largest secondary schools with around 1,800 pupils between the ages of 12 and 18. The school is three miles inland across the Firth of Forth from Edinburgh, on the northern edge of Dunfermline, and serves the northern part of the town as well as a number of smaller outlying settlements.

In a very recent HMI report, it was found that young people's performance in S4 to S6 in national examinations is significantly above the national average. Young people perform consistently better than those in schools serving young people with similar needs and backgrounds. Of those who experience difficulty with their learning, most achieve well and leave school with a range of qualifications. The school is very successful in achieving positive destinations for young people.

Inspectors found very positive examples of Curriculum for Excellence implementation at Queen Anne High School, Dunfermline and in its learning community.

[Press release from Education Scotland](#)

Background

Progressing towards the “1+ 2 Approach”

The importance of language learning is fully recognised and supported by the leadership team at Queen Anne High School.

In a recent profile in the *Times Education Supplement Scotland* (3rd May 2013 issue), the headteacher was asked about the biggest challenge ahead for Scottish secondary schools:

“I would like to see us improve in languages. I’m just back from China; the majority of young people on the streets of Beijing could converse with me.”

In regard to the 1+2 policy, he added:

“It’s ambitious, but I’m happy with that. There are some nurseries in China where nothing is spoken but English - that was maybe going a bit far. But the more ambitious we are, the further we’ll go.”

The modern languages faculty, led by a principal teacher, comprises nine members of staff who are registered to teach a range of European languages. Fife Council is keen to support the teaching of Chinese language and culture and in order to ensure sustainability, a Mandarin teacher was employed to support Queen Anne High School and the cluster primaries. The school is the Confucius Hub for Fife. The school and cluster have also benefitted from the input given by the teacher from Tianjin allocated to each hub. Mandarin has, therefore, become the second modern language taught in the primary cluster and more capacity to do this has been created by the teacher in Queen Anne offering Mandarin lessons to primary colleagues. As a result of this on-going professional learning, primary colleagues are beginning to develop the skills necessary to introduce a significant amount of language into their lessons on Chinese culture.

Meanwhile, at S3, the school is currently introducing the Modern Languages for Life and Work Award which can be undertaken in two modern languages. It is hoped that this will support and encourage a group of pupils to continue with language learning. The department also plans to introduce this award into the senior phase to allow pupils to further expand the number of languages they are able to study.

[Languages for Life and Work Award](#)

Curriculum

Aims of language learning approach

“Learning other languages enables children and young people to make connections with different people and their cultures and to play a fuller part as global citizens.” (Curriculum for Excellence)

In line with Curriculum for Excellence and the 1+2 policy, the aims of language learning at Queen Anne High School are:

- to broaden the number of languages and courses which pupils can study
- to develop global ambassadors amongst their pupils
- to develop international education through the context of China and Chinese across the curriculum

Planning

The learning and teaching of Mandarin is fully embedded in the work of the modern languages faculty. It is also at the heart of the international education agenda and therefore figures highly on the school improvement plan and all faculty improvement plans across the school.

Careful consideration has been given to provision for all modern languages, particularly in terms of the structure of the curriculum. The curriculum has been carefully designed to afford learners the opportunity to choose from a range of languages throughout their school career, while providing breadth, depth and progression in learning.

Both Mandarin and French are taught in all schools in the primary cluster and S1 pupils can choose to continue either Mandarin or French. In S2 and S3, electives are offered to all learners in a range of languages. Learners, therefore, continue with their chosen S1 language throughout the broad general education (BGE) and have the opportunity to begin another language in S2 and S3. In this way, all learners receive their full entitlement until the end of S3, while still being offered the opportunity to explore a variety of languages. All learners have the opportunity to continue with their language learning in the senior phase. The modern languages faculty offers a range of languages at all levels and a large number of pupils are presented for national qualifications.

Additionally, ESOL was recently introduced by the department to meet the needs of those learners for whom English is not their mother tongue.

To date, a number of learners have achieved success in the HSK 1 and 2 examinations. This is an internationally recognised examination in Chinese language which learners are given the opportunity to sit every year.

Implementation: a whole school approach

Principal teachers in several faculties at Queen Anne High School quickly recognised the interdisciplinary (IDL) opportunities offered by studying Chinese language and culture. Since then, the school has gradually built up an interesting IDL programme with China as its context. This has influenced the learning and teaching that takes place in several departments from the BGE to the end of the senior phase.

By working collegiately, the school has developed meaningful links across the curriculum to create relevant learning experiences for young people which offer breadth and depth, challenge and enjoyment. The recent HMI report praised the school's strong links with China as a means of developing a range of skills associated with global citizenship.

"...young people find their views and values challenged and develop a better understanding of different cultures. Other young people have benefitted from this work through developing a wider understanding of global issues."

Instrumental to this whole school approach to developing global citizenship has been the modern languages faculty's commitment to offering a variety of languages in order to give the young people as broad an outlook on the world as possible.

The school has made effective use of Chinese culture as a context for learning across the curriculum. For example, in the art department, teachers have consulted pupils about what aspect of Chinese culture they want to explore and this has resulted in a successful transition project for P7/S1 focusing on the work of Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. This work was showcased at the Lighthouse in Glasgow.

[China Art](#)

The Home Economics department focused on Chinese cookery and diet, and the music department worked extensively on introducing traditional Chinese instruments into their curriculum.

In a similar way, the PE department has focused on table tennis and has successfully introduced Jianzi as an engaging way building of building co-ordination skills.



In social studies, the focus on China as a context for learning is particularly evident. The geography department has been actively involved in links with China through the interactive website ChinaClub HQ. and learners study the physical geography of China. The first project was linked to a SCEN global classroom event at Edinburgh Zoo based on animals of Scotland and China. S2 Pupils from the geography department did a presentation called *Pandas and Puffins* following a linked project with Changshu Xiaoyou High School in Changshu.

The PT of Modern Studies has also introduced China to the National 4 and 5 courses.

Additionally, senior pupils have also taken part in a World Challenge expedition to China that developed them as global citizens and enhanced their leadership skills.

Partnerships

In September 2011, Queen Anne High took part in the *Plants in China and Scotland* project held at The Royal Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh. Beforehand, there was an exchange of information between Queen Anne and Changshu Xiaoyou High School. S2 pupils were supported by the senior Eco team to deliver presentations on plant diversity and conservation.

The school has established strong partnerships with a number of organisations including SCEN, the Scotland China Education Network, and the music department worked in conjunction with the Tapestry Partnership & Confucius Institute for Scotland in the *The Silk Road to Scotland* music project.

Impact

Lifelong language learners

Some of the pupils who have studied Mandarin have become Ambassadors for the Scotland China Education Network (SCEN) and have worked as part of the SCEN Youth Committee to help organize events that promote the learning of Mandarin and Chinese culture.



Some learners have decided to continue studying Mandarin to degree level.

“Young people’s exemplary attitudes to learning and their developing skills and attributes which prepare them well for life beyond school” was one of the four key strengths of the school as noted in the recent HMI report.

Parental Feedback

Overall, parents appreciate that the school is in regular contact with them and they are aware of developments across the curriculum. The range of courses on offer and engagement with outside partnerships as a means of ensuring a rich education for all is recognised.

Next Steps

- Continue to develop partnerships with parents, local and international communities for all languages
- Continue to embed Chinese language and culture across the school community
- Continue to support primary schools to engage with Chinese language and culture
- Further develop links with our partner schools in China
- Continue to send pupils and staff on the summer immersion course

- Continue to grow and develop links with SCEN
- Further develop links with CISS and other Hubs across Scotland