

Harvey Nichols and Trinity Academy, Edinburgh



SCILT's Business Language Champions programme helps schools and businesses to build exciting and sustainable partnerships that equip young people with the international communication and employability skills they need for their future careers.

Background

Trinity Academy is a six year comprehensive school situated in the north of Edinburgh which serves the communities of Trinity, Wardie and Newhaven. The school roll currently stands at approximately 900 pupils.

At Trinity Academy, learners study French and Spanish throughout the broad general education. Learners can then choose to continue their study of one or both languages into the senior phase at National 3, 4, 5 and Higher. The school has a number of pupils who speak languages other than English. For more information about the school, visit the [Trinity Academy website](#).

Aims

The project with Harvey Nichols gives the young people in S3 a real and engaging context for their learning and provides them with an insight into the world of work. It shows them how the learning of a language can enhance their career prospects as well as developing their skills for learning, life and work. It highlights how important languages can be in the retail industry, and the employment opportunities within this industry.

Partners

SCILT and the Modern Languages Department at Trinity Academy worked in partnership with the staff at Harvey Nichols in Edinburgh city centre.

Harvey Nichols

Harvey Nichols, founded in 1831, is a British department store chain with a flagship store in Knightsbridge, London. It sells fashion collections for men and women, fashion accessories, beauty products, wine and food. The company attracts tourists from various countries and they do not always speak English well. Linking with the company showed that languages are necessary in the retail sector.



Project

The partners worked together to devise a project that would enhance the learning and teaching of languages in the S3 curriculum. The focus of the project was to consider how an ability to communicate in different languages is a key employability skill for those considering a career in the retail industry.

The Learning and Development Partner from Harvey Nichols invited the school to visit the store and spoke to the young people about the value of learning languages in the world of retail. She emphasised that not only do languages help communication with people from other countries, but the skills developed when learning a language can be used in a wide range of jobs and industries. She discussed the importance of having the right attitude towards work by being positive, resilient and willing to learn. She highlighted that the company places great emphasis on excellent customer service and that communicating in the client's native language makes the shopping experience more personal. As a result, clients are much more likely to return to the store.

The young people were given an insight into the company and the wide range of employment opportunities available. They were introduced to employees from various departments who use languages on a daily basis before being shown around the store. The pupils responded very positively and were extremely enthusiastic about the visit:

“I learnt what a key role languages play in the working world. I didn't realise how important languages were.” (S3 pupil, Trinity Academy)



Information Brochure

To conclude the project, the young people created a language phrase book for sales assistants, not only in French and Spanish, but also in German, Danish, Slovak, Italian, Russian, Bulgarian, Spanish, Maltese, Polish, Basque, Turkish and Ukrainian. This reflects the multi-cultural background of the pupils in the school and gave pupils real scope to use their language skills.

Ukrainian



Are you looking for something in particular? – ви шукаєте щось конкретне?

Is it for yourself? – це для вас?

Is it a gift? – це подарунок?

How would you like to pay? – Як ви бажаєте оплатити?

Would you like that gift wrapped? – Вам цей дар обгорнути?

Basque



Hello Sir/Madame. – Kaixo Jauna/Anderea.

Welcome to the store. – Ongi etorria gure dendara.

How are you today? – Zer moduz zaude gaur?

Do you need some help? – Laguntzarik behar duzu?

Impact

Learners enjoyed the experience. They were engaged in the different activities, including visiting the department store and creating the phrase book. The project made their language learning experience much more engaging and relevant:

“The talks were definitely the highlight and offered an insight into how languages can be an important skill.” (S3 pupil, Trinity Academy)

Staff thought the project was a great opportunity for learners to see the relevance of learning languages in the centre of Edinburgh, and agreed that it had been very worthwhile:

“The pupils were delighted to have the opportunity to see how languages could be used in the workplace. Several of our pupils are keen to investigate further work experience with the company.”

The Learning and Development Partner from Harvey Nichols described the positive outcomes from the project, saying that the booklets the pupils produced would be shared with the wider team and may be used by shop floor staff. She stated that the team really enjoyed getting involved in the project and speaking to the pupils about how languages help them in their daily work, adding that it was a great development opportunity for them.

Next steps

The staff at Trinity Academy were able to see that learners were really connecting the fact that knowing a language can be valuable in a professional context and they would like to continue to use this partnership to promote languages to learners in this way.

Staff at Harvey Nichols also benefited from the project. They are keen to continue working with the school and would be happy to build on this sustainable model of partnership working.