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**Authority:** Glasgow City Council  
**Case Study Focus:** 1 +2 Approach  
**Establishments:** Westercraigs Nursery  
**Learners' stage/s:** Early Years (3 – 5 years)

## About the educational establishment and the learners

Westercraigs Nursery School is located in the suburb of Dennistoun and serves a multicultural community in the Whitehills Learning Community within Glasgow. The nursery is part of the Whitehill Campus, along with Golfhill Primary School and Whitehills Secondary school. The school moved into the main building in 2009.

The nursery's catchment area covers all areas of Dennistoun, Wellpark, Milnbank, Reidvale and Haghill.

The Nursery School is led by Lesley Morrison, Head Teacher, who is supported by a committed team of Child Development Officers (CDOs). During the year, five CDOs work a two shift pattern (shift one 8am – 4pm, shift two 10am – 6pm) and during term time, five additional CDOs work 8.30am – 4.30pm.

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### Progressing towards the "1+ 2 Approach"

Historically, due to the location of the nursery in the East End of Glasgow, close by Glasgow Royal Infirmary as well as both Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities, the area has attracted many international students and so the nursery has established close links with families from many countries. There are currently a range of different languages spoken by the children, including Arabic, Polish, Turkish, Mandarin and Urdu.

Of the children attending this nursery school, many are learning English as an additional language and some of their parents also speak little English. There is access to specialist language support and translation services within the nursery for **all** EAL children irrespective of their knowledge of English. The main aim of the nursery staff is to make all children feel valued, irrespective of the language they speak. Additionally the nursery strives to encourage the children and their families to become

more aware of the benefits of language learning and become increasingly involved in nursery life and their children's learning. Indeed, by recognising and valuing all home languages within the nursery environment, the staff improve the children's sense of wellbeing and self-esteem, and give them the confidence to develop their early literacy skills in English and in their home languages.

*"When they begin to learn another language, children and young people need to make connections with the skills and knowledge they have already developed in their own language. To help this, teachers can make use of the diversity of languages which children and young people may bring to school."*

*Building the Curriculum 1*

**View this video to hear the Head Teacher explain the readiness of the nursery to embrace the 1+2 Approach - <http://vimeo.com/61089352>**

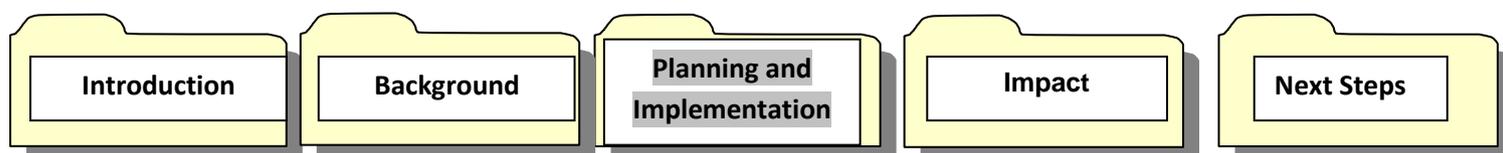
Over a number of years, the nursery has promoted the importance and value of learning languages through the learning and teaching of French and through making links with international schools. Staff at Westercraigs have set up a partnership with a nursery school in Marseille and, with the children, send resources and activities to help the French children experience some English words and phrases. With their key-workers, the Westercraigs children make a Big Book as a record of the materials that they have sent to their French friends. For example, a tartan bear with changes of clothes and a booklet with children's photos and simple words in English were sent recently. The nursery in Marseille reciprocates with simple booklets in French. This experience provides the children with a means of communicating directly with people from another country and enhances children's understanding and enjoyment of other cultures and of their own.

### **Aims of language learning approach**

The Head Teacher holds the belief that all staff members are leaders in learning. She encourages her staff at all times to focus on and promote their own areas of expertise and to share their learning with other staff within and out with the nursery.

She has put this into practice, capitalising on the skills and expertise of two of the Key Workers within the nursery who are now offering both Italian and Gaelic to the children on a daily basis, this experience is adding to and enhancing the children's language learning.

**View this film clip to hear the Head Teacher explain how, by capitalising on the skills of her staff, the languages experience has been enhanced - <http://vimeo.com/61089354>**



## **Planning**

In order to foster an interest in languages, the nursery staff members plan learning experiences in Gaelic and Italian for all children that focus on raising awareness of other cultures. In this way, the nursery provides real and relevant language learning experiences that the pupils find fun and enjoyable. Through exposing the children to Gaelic, the responsible staff members strive to enhance

the children's understanding of their home languages and encourage them to learn more about Scotland's history and place in the world.

**View this film clip to hear the Key Worker with responsibility for teaching Gaelic explain how the staff plan to ensure that the language learning experiences are meaningful - <http://vimeo.com/61019703>**

The staff members promote "Responsive Planning" to allow the children to make choices about their learning based on their needs and learning styles. This model also leads to the natural embedding of the language learning experience, allowing staff to make explicit links to important areas such as literacy and numeracy.

*"Planning should encourage participation by, as well as being responsive to, the learner, who can and should influence and contribute to the process." (BtC 3)*

**View this film clip to hear the Key Worker with responsibility for teaching Gaelic explain how the staff plan responsively for relevant language learning experiences - <http://vimeo.com/61019704>**

The Head Teacher provides staff with time and opportunities for **collaborative** planning in order to ensure both continuity and progression in the language experience offered to all children in the nursery.

The staff also involve parents in the language learning experience by regularly sharing the children's learning with them.

## **Implementation**

The Early Years approach to languages learning builds on children's natural curiosity for sounds and words, and their strong desire to communicate. Language activities in this nursery involve the children in playing games, singing songs and carrying out simple instructions.

**View this film clip to see the Key Worker, with responsibility for teaching Gaelic, engage the children in learning body parts in Gaelic through song and gesture - <http://vimeo.com/61019701>**

Another of the key aims of modern languages teaching is to develop children's 'communicative competence' so that they are able to use and enjoy languages effectively in real situations and for a range of relevant purposes throughout their life.

The staff in Westercraig Nursery engage and challenge the children's thinking by affording them many real life learning experiences. Language learning is greatly enhanced where it is linked to or embedded in the wider curriculum, allowing children to enjoy exploring and using language in meaningful contexts. Opportunities are regularly provided to engage with and involve the local community. Children are often taken outdoors for learning and regularly visit the local supermarket where they are encouraged to apply their learning by identifying and locating foods which they have learned about such as pasta and mozzarella. Children, on return to the nursery, are then involved in making and tasting foods from other countries. They are also taken to local restaurants where they are encouraged to communicate where possible with native speakers. Every opportunity is taken to revisit the target language in a very natural manner.

This way of working encourages all children not only to become more confident in communicating with the wider community, but also highlights a real purpose for learning other languages. It also clearly exemplifies the overall principles and philosophy of Curriculum for Excellence.



## Impact

View this film clip to hear the Key Worker with responsibility for teaching Italian explain the impact that language learning has on the children - <http://vimeo.com/61020833>

The children are now more confident in their approach to learning across the curriculum. As their home languages are valued and recognised in the nursery, children's self-esteem has increased and this has led them to further develop their early literacy and numeracy skills. The learning of other languages also impacts on the children's literacy and numeracy skills by revisiting language and number concepts in another context.

View this film clip to view the children learn their numbers in Italian through song - <http://vimeo.com/61089350>

Natural exchanges of information about historical, geographical and cultural aspects of the countries of the target languages being taught enable the children to become **responsible citizens**. Children develop a growing awareness of life in another society and of the issues facing citizens in the countries where their new language is spoken.

View this film clip to view the children sharing their knowledge about Italy - <http://vimeo.com/61020836>

## Lifelong language learners

The model of the learning and teaching of languages is one that Westercraigs takes pride in promoting. Both members of staff returned to learning languages later in life for their own interests and purposes. They were so encouraged by the success they experienced that they decided to capitalise on this and share their enthusiasm with other staff and the children.

View these film clips to hear the Key Workers explain the impact that language learning has had on both of them and their enthusiasm to learn more - <http://vimeo.com/61019705> and <http://vimeo.com/61019707>

## Partnership Working

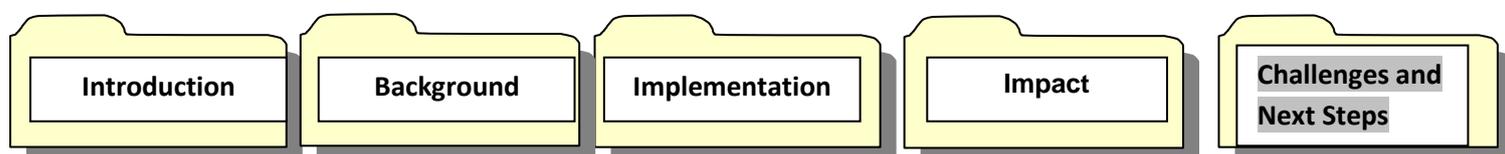
The active approach taken to the learning and teaching of languages by the nursery staff has established true partnership working between the nursery staff, parents and the community. Many parents have shown real interest and want to become more fully involved in their child's learning. Parents are also invited to share their own language skills with staff and children and this has resulted in Arabic now also been taught to the children by one of the parents.

The enthusiasm shown by both children and parents to learn more Gaelic has led to partnerships being built up with the Glasgow Gaelic School. Indeed, plans are already in place to introduce, with the Gaelic School's support, Gaelic conversational classes for children and parents on Saturday mornings.

View this film clip to hear the Head Teacher explain how the languages experience has enhanced partnerships between nursery staff, parents and the community at large - <http://vimeo.com/61089351>

## Parental Feedback

On speaking to parents and carers about the effectiveness of the learning and teaching of Gaelic and Italian within the nursery, feedback has been very positive. All parents and carers surveyed by the nursery found the language learning experience to be very worthwhile and inspirational. They also felt well informed by the regular information shared by the nursery and they saw themselves as active partners in their children's language learning experiences.



## Challenges and Next Steps

### Challenges

Some challenges have arisen in taking this approach to language learning. The Head of Centre highlighted two main challenges. Firstly, there is the question of access to appropriate training and CPD for staff in order to develop a whole school approach to language learning. Secondly, there is a need for more opportunities for all staff to have meaningful professional dialogue about how to take forward the 1+2 agenda.

### Next Steps

Self-evaluation is one of the next steps identified by the staff. They intend to map **current provision** for language learning against **key recommendations** from 1+2 Report and evaluate on how they might progress and who might support them.

More information on SCILT's audit tool - [www.scilt.org.uk/A12ApproachtoLanguageLearning/Audittool.aspx](http://www.scilt.org.uk/A12ApproachtoLanguageLearning/Audittool.aspx)

The staff members are also planning to consider how they might better assess the language learning in an on-going way.

Another important consideration for the nursery staff is how they might ease transition. They intend to work more closely in the future with their associated primary schools in order to improve the language learning experience for all.

View this film clip to hear the Head Teacher explain the next steps the staff at the nursery will take in order to further promote language learning and to embed the 1+2 approach - <http://youtu.be/Jw-lfM19XJU>