

Growing for success

Following the success of *Say Yes to Languages* in 2021/22, we were thrilled to hear that we had been accepted for 2022/23. The immense benefits of the programme were recognised throughout the school and as a result, we were keen to expand to more classes and languages.

This year, we are delighted to be able to provide this opportunity to four classes, offering Spanish and French as our language options. Whilst this means over half the school will now be involved, the guidance and resources provided by *Languages Connect*, including detailed webinars, ensure everyone is comfortable with the process and feels fully prepared for a successful rollout.

Bigger and better

The feedback from pupils and parents has been extremely positive and we are excited to build on the great work done so far. Commenting on the programme, our Principal, Maeve McCarthy noted "A key benefit of the programme for us is that the children see the language of the home used and valued at school. The initiative also builds on the overall interest in languages we are developing in Rathfarnham ETNS. We have adopted the Gaelbhratach programme and this year we have expanded the *Say Yes to Languages* programme to introduce French in our senior classes. Our teachers feel well-supported by *Languages Connect* and we are happy to continue to be part of the programme."

In order to take our language learning to the next level we have some aims and objectives for year two;

- We would like to host a celebration at the end of the programme to highlight all that we learnt during the module;
- Invite native French and Spanish speakers to our school to read a story;
- Exploring music and dance culture in other languages;
- Promote more multilingual signage across the school community;
- Have paired and collaborative language activities across grade levels;
- Continue to showcase our language learning on the school website and social media.

A peek into the future

Say Yes to Languages has provided us with a great opportunity to look into the future and experience what it could be like to teach modern foreign languages (MFL) at primary level. It was amazing to see the pupils make connections between English, Gaelige and their new languages.



This gave them a further understanding of how languages are linked together and provided them with an appreciation for the value of learning languages, exemplifying the value of the programme.

We are very excited about developing the programme further this year. I would encourage any school interested in the module to consider applying, and to any school that is just embarking on their language journey, enjoy where the experience takes you and your pupils!

2022/23 programme

This school year, over 700 schools and 50,000 pupils nationwide are taking part in *Say Yes to Languages*.

The programme, from *Languages Connect*, introduces pupils to a modern foreign language (MFL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL), while also raising awareness among pupils of the diversity of languages being used by their peers in their schools and community.

It is taught over an eight-week period

during the normal school timetable.

RONAN BARRETT is a teacher in Rathfarnham ETNS, Dublin. For more information about *Say Yes to Languages*, email primary@ppli.ie or visit www.languagesconnect.ie.

Languages Connect promotes the personal, social, and economic benefits of foreign language skills to principals, teachers, guidance counsellors, parents and students. Funded by the Department of Education (DE) and facilitated by Post Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI), this is a key objective of *Languages Connect*; *Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017–2026*.

