



For Your Eyes Only.....

A day with GCHQ

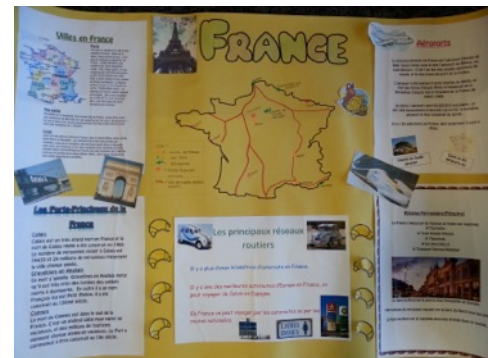
Tuesday 21st April 2015 at Joseph Whitaker School, Mansfield

We were delighted to be teaming up with GCHQ for this exciting day, allowing students a peek behind the scenes at one of the UK's intelligence services. This event was aimed at gifted and talented Year 9 linguists. We wanted to appeal to students with particular interest in developing their **language and employability skills** and finding out how they can be used in a fascinating career.



GCHQ plays a part in the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking, and other forms of serious crime, as well as providing support to military operations across the world. Working with the UK's international partners, they help inform UK policy on a range of security topics. They employ a large team of language analysts covering a wide range of languages to help them.

This event proved very popular with schools, and in the end we had teams from Stamford Welland Academy, Trinity Catholic School in Nottingham, Manor High School and Gartree High School, both from Oadby in Leicester, Catmose College in Oakham as well as Oakham School, Sir Robert Pattinson Academy from Lincoln, St. George's Academy from Sleaford as well as two teams from the host school, Joseph Whitaker. To prepare themselves for the day, the teams were asked to research the transport links in their chosen country (either France, Spain or Russia) and create a poster.



After an ice breaker, we listened to a keynote talk from GCHQ on their work and their history which set the scene. We took as our theme for the day GCHQ's area of work in fighting drug trafficking. The teams had to work through a series of clues to track down an international drug courier. They first had to acquaint themselves with some new languages so that they could tackle some of the challenges and each team sent delegates to learn some basics in either Korean, Arabic or Mandarin. To make everything

more authentic, we operated on a first name basis only (standard procedure at GCHQ) and each team was given a Section Number.

Then it was down to working their way through the various tasks, which needed them to break codes, work out clues to the courier's identity, and pose as the drug contact, all in their target European language. They were also required to use logic and their research on the transport links in their chosen country. The tasks were designed to use all four foreign language skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

As is usual for most of our events, we asked each team to present its findings to a judging panel, which they again had to do in the language they were learning. Whilst this was going on, we gave the teams a fun activity of developing a board game to reflect the work of GCHQ. We were amazed at the creativity of the students, who produced some excellent work in a very short space of time.



The winners, by a significant margin, were the team from Gartree High School (Section Number 007 – was this a coincidence?). They won, courtesy of GCHQ, a trophy cup and also a fascinating day out at Bletchley Park, home of the World War Two codebreakers, and forerunners to GCHQ. The runners-up place was more hotly contested, but won by Manor High School.



Student comments included:

"I really enjoyed all aspects of the day."

"It has made me rethink my future career."

"I liked how it was not easy but not too hard."

What did they enjoy/find useful:

"Balance of activities – challenging but achievable."

"Seeing language in context."

"Decoding because it was different and helped us develop our skills in another way."

"Working as a team."

Teacher comments included:

"Really enjoyable. Pitched at the right level. Paced well throughout the day."

"Overall a really enjoyable day. Fantastic to see languages in real-life situations."

"Really enjoyed it thanks. Good to see the pupils getting involved and being competitive about it."

"I have come across so few good quality, single day, language based activities and this event really opened my eyes to the possibilities. It has done wonders for the reputation and the status of the languages department that we were the winners".

What teachers believe that students will have gained from the day:

"Confirmation that languages are useful for a purpose. Gave them insight into using a language in the world of work."

"Confidence at 'having a go' and insight into how a language can be useful."

"Working as a team and seeing that languages really do matter after school!"

We would like to thank the following Business Language Champions for supporting this event:

- Paul Hughes – PH Interim
- Jo Lord – Student from the University of Nottingham

Most of all we would like to thank Joseph Whitaker School for hosting this event and the Outreach Department of GCHQ and the 4 linguists from GCHQ for their dedication, hard work and making this possible!

Contact

Sally Fagan
Business Language Champions
01949 860167 / 07967 699614