



THE LANGUAGE OF SUCCESS

The Grove School together with Optima Training Ltd

2009 - 2011

The Grove/Optima Language project has been running for three years with the support of local business people, Newark Beacon and Business Language Champions. This is a prime example of a successful ongoing partnership between a school and a business, in this case Optima Training (UK) Ltd championed by their Education Director, Jo Small. The relationship was started through the support of Business Language Champions and has gone from strength to strength. Jo has worked as a Business Advisor for the Grove School and has helped the staff to develop a 'Dragon's Den' style project to inspire the pupils to learn languages. This year's project was bigger and better in that it saw the start of a relationship with Newark Twinning Association. Members of Newark Twinning Association gave up their time to launch the project and provided engraved plaques for each of the winners.

Each year a group of approximately 60 pupils from Year 8 at The Grove School take up the challenge to demonstrate why it's so important to learn a language. Their task is to develop and deliver a five minute presentation to a panel of judges from the local business community. Teams of 4 or 5 pupils are tasked with convincing their target market (either primary school children, the general public or business) of the importance of learning a language. Teams also develop posters, leaflets and business cards to support their pitch. They work over a number of weeks, which gives them the opportunity of doing some primary research. The beauty of this whole project is that whilst the students work on the benefits for a target market, they also manage to convince themselves of the importance of language learning in the process!



This project is really important as it encourages school students to learn languages and has produced outstanding results. The school has reported an increase in pupils swapping their GCSE choices for languages. In 2009 the German GCSE group increased from 16 to 29, the French numbers increased so that the school was able to run two groups (rather than the previous one group in 2008) and the Spanish group, previously in danger of being closed, turned into a thriving group of 16.



Next year's project aims to be cross curricular, involving input from other subject areas and helping the students to develop further their presentation and communication skills. Watch this space!

Carly Williams teaches languages at the Grove School and has been a keen supporter of the Language Project as she is working hard to increase the uptake of foreign

languages. She attributes much of the recent interest in languages to the buzz and excitement caused by the success of the last two projects. The Grove Language Project could not happen without Carly's enthusiastic support, as she has developed a creative scheme of work to help the kids develop employability skills, such as communication and team working, as part of the project.

The third Grove/Optima Language Project final took place on Friday 4th November 2011 at Newark Beacon Innovation Centre. The students had worked hard to produce presentations aiming to sell the importance of learning a language. The panel of judges, including Paul Hughes and Gerry Cepelak from the RAF, were impressed by the work that some of the teams had done in such a short space of time (the teams only had four weeks to develop their presentations).

There were some nerves and a few incidents of forgotten lines but Flight Sergeant Paul Hughes and Navigator Gerry Cepelak put everyone at ease with their humorous but stark stories about how they have used their language skills to full effect during their careers.

The 2011 overall winner was Two Translations: Rebecca Beeching; Beth Walls; Jade Leo; and Rhoda Roberts. The team had obviously put a lot of effort into their project, creating a brand, mission statement and a T-Shirt. They focused on the importance of learning Polish due to Newark's twinning connection of Sandomierz in Poland.



Two Translations were presented with plaques from Newark Twining Association and were given the opportunity to present their winning presentation to over 100 local business people at Newark Business Club on Friday 9th December 2011. This simple inexpensive prize was highly sought after by the students as an opportunity to showcase themselves in the run up to finding work experience placements.

The project recently led to Jo Small winning the Highly Commended Award for Business Language Champions Ambassador – this was awarded by the National Centre for Languages (CILT).

We would like to thank the following for their generous time and support:

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