

Grand Union Language Network Newsletter

November 2025

Catching up on the latest evidence snack from Peps McCREA over half-term, we were struck by this:

"In the end, professional development isn't just about knowing more... it's about doing differently. Real change happens when knowledge becomes habit, and when small, consistent tweaks compound over time."

This month, join us at one of our CPD sessions to help you make small and consistent tweaks to your practice, impacting positively on your student's language learning experience.

CPD available in November

Embedding Phonics Webinar

Thursday 13th November 2025

Time: 15.30pm – 16.30pm
Online

We will explore:

- Your progress with introducing the explicit teaching of phonics into your schemes of learning.
- What purposeful phonics practice should / could look like in lessons.
- How you can work towards mastery supporting learners to use their knowledge to decode new words and pronounce them successfully.

Register now: [Microsoft Virtual Events
Powered by Teams](#)

Missed our Exploring Spontaneous Talk Teach Meet?

Join Tracy Williams from the Trent and Tame Language Network and colleagues from across the region on

Tuesday 18th November 2025.

Time: 1.00pm – 16.00pm
At the Arthur Terry School. B74 4RZ

Register now: [TTLH CPD - Trent and Tame Language Hub](#)

Date doesn't work? [Swanswell Language Network is offering a similar session in Coventry on Wednesday 3rd December.](#)

Actions from this bulletin:

1. Consider attending one of the West Midlands Regional Language Network or NCLE's [CPD opportunities available in November](#).
2. Consider how you can build on your European Day of Languages activities during [International Education Week](#) between the 17th and 21st November.
3. Explore the [GCHQ National Language Competition](#) resources.
4. Find out more about newly released content on LEO on [Page 3](#).
5. Explore the offer from NCLE's cultural partners on [Page 4](#).



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International Education Week 17th November – 21st November 2025

Now is the perfect time to build on the work you did on European Day of Languages to develop your learner's international mindset. The Languages Programme of Study urges us to "foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world."

[The British Council](#) is on hand with a range of ideas, webinars, and opportunities.



Classroom resources

Search through our resources that have been designed to enhance the international learning experience of students.



Stories from the classroom

Read these Stories from the classroom and be inspired by your fellow teachers



International School Award

There is now an extended qualifying period for this year's accreditations to two years to allow you more time to prepare. Find out more about how to apply.

GCHQ National Languages Competition (Year 8 and 9)

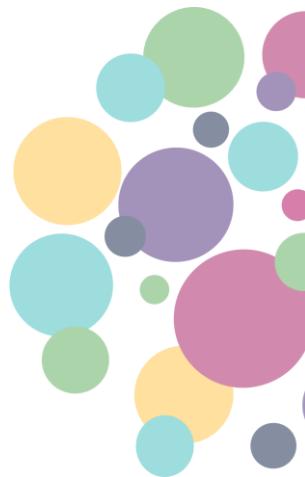
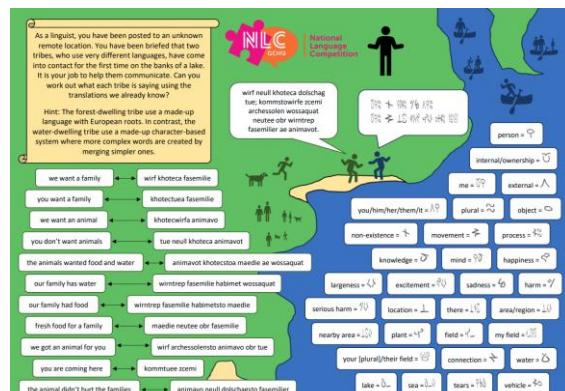


As part of International Education Week why not take part in [GCHQ's National Languages Competition](#) which encourages students to discover their aptitude for learning languages. The 2025 competition will take place from Monday, 17th November to Friday, 21st November 2025.

This virtual competition is open to teams of 13-14 year olds from around the UK who compete against each other to solve language-based challenges and score points. The overall winners of the National Language Competition are then invited to GCHQ's headquarters in Cheltenham to receive their trophy.

This could be a great opportunity for your language ambassadors or for your year 8 and year 9 students to see how learning one language can help them to learn another, building their narrative about why we learn languages and how language learning enriches lives now and in the future. Email nlc@gchq.gov.uk to register.

[Sample challenges and FAQs](#)
are available on the GCHQ website.



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Have you registered for Language Educators Online?

NCLE has developed a free, on-demand professional learning platform for Language teachers and leaders called Language Teachers Online. Or LEO for short! The platform provides:

- The latest research into Language Teaching and Learning
- An opportunity to see what this might look like in the classroom with recently recorded footage from French, Spanish and German classrooms across the country.
- Flexible learning pathways, with bite-sized chunks of content.
- It's completely free!

**Click to register
for your free
LEO account**

**Click to access
takeaways from
LEO's Launch
Event**

What's new on LEO?



Tracy Williams

"I've really enjoyed exploring the [Languages Leadership module](#) on LEO, especially the content in the [Elaborate tile](#). In my role, I often wonder what Languages provision looks like in other settings. I've particularly enjoyed hearing from Jody Gee, headteacher of the Anglo European School, a non-selective comprehensive school in Essex as she talks about the school's languages for all policy and what this looks like in practice.



[Jody Gee talking about Anglo European's Languages for all Policy on LEO.](#)

There are also clips from [Anna Ford at Sidney Stringer Academy in Coventry](#) and [Caroline Spalding, deputy headteacher at Littleover Community School in Derby](#) sharing how they ensure all languages within their school communities are valued.

**To access this content,
sign into your LEO
account and click on the
relevant link.**

Feeling inspired after watching the clips? [The ASCL / NCLE toolkit](#) provides a series of questions and possible solutions to some of the trickier problems facing MFL teachers and leaders.

Recommendations	Actions	Actors
Create a positive narrative about languages by building momentum to support languages in school and across the wider school community.	Deploy your Governors, Senior and Middle Leaders, and the wider community	School Leadership
How can your senior team and middle leaders work within school to develop a shared vision for languages?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use your Headteacher governors' reports to ensure governors are fully aware of successes and challenges of language department/faculty. 	Subject leaders
How can you work with other senior and subject leaders to strengthen the profile and status of languages in your MAT, across your networks, or partnership of schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit your governors to see if any can support with languages - business/industry with language connections, personal experiences with languages that could be shared in assemblies or careers talks. 	Wider school community
How can parents and carers become involved in promoting the value of languages?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite Subject Leaders of languages to present at a curriculum governors' meeting to ensure governors are supportive of challenges e.g. low numbers post-14, post-16, and celebrate achievements, such as increases in uptake, involvement in language festivals/competitions/community events. 	
How can your governors contribute to developing a positive narrative about languages and cultural learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve all members of your senior leadership team in promoting the importance of language learning. Ensure they speak a few words of the language when entering a language learning environment. Other staff can contribute to this culture through their links to languages and cultures in the curriculum and through international activities. 	
How active is your communications strategy to promote languages and cultures across your school, your networks, your trust, your wider community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve the Parent Teachers Association and community leaders in school and community events, including festivals, careers fairs, and city of languages events. Develop a communications strategy to promote languages making sure languages feature in school newsletters and local media coverage. 	

Collaboration across the Language Community



The Association for Language Learning's Annual Conference is taking place

in the Midlands on **Friday 13th and Saturday 14th March 2026**.

This year's theme is Collaboration at the Heart of Languages Education. Full details of the programme will be released towards the end of the year. Save the date in your diary and visit [the conference website](#) for more information.



Click here to view events and sign up for newsletter

The [West Midlands Routes into Languages annual Christmas Card Competition](#) is taking place between the **21st November and the 10th December**. Maybe this could form part of your International Education Week activities?



Are you looking for ways to raise the profile of German in your school?

[The Goethe Institut's programme of events](#) includes taster German days, days exploring German culture and society as well as days exploring Careers with German. The event schedule runs throughout the academic year, so there's still plenty of time to get trips approved and organised!



Are you looking for ways to improve your Spanish? [The Instituto Cervantes](#) might have the answer. For more information about their Spanish language courses in 2026 e-mail cursos.verano@cervantes.es

Swanswell Language Network. Supporting schools with all aspects of Community Languages.



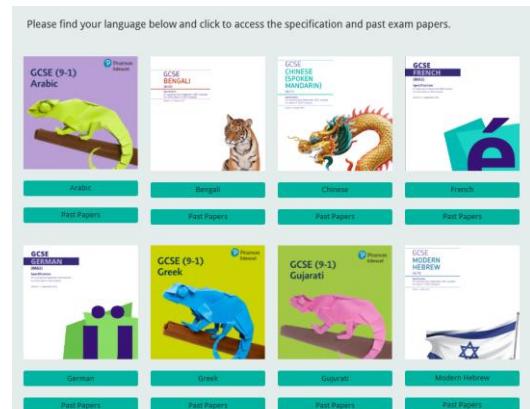
Steph Azarpey

Steph Azarpey, Swanswell Language Network's lead tells us "This half-term we are launching a cultural sharing space at Sidney Stringer Academy for students of Gypsy Roma

heritage, called the Roma Room. We look forward to learning from our students about their culture and heritage and debunking some of the myths and stereotypes surrounding this particular demographic. We are also getting ready to celebrate Arabic Language Day on December 15th so keep an eye on our socials for ideas to use in your schools!"

As part of their NPP work, Swanswell is also building a new Community Languages web space to offer a home for HHCL content online. This site, aimed at students, parents, teachers and exams officers, is designed to support schools to navigate exam administration, raise the profile of Community Languages and to celebrate the diversity in their schools.

Direct your HHCL candidates to [Community Languages – GCSE](#) for links to the specifications and past papers for all the GCSE and A-Level HHCL qualifications on offer. There's also links to news in each language and quizlet practice pages.



Event Schedule for 2025-2026

Grand Union Webinar	Thursday 13th November 15:30-16:30	Embedding Phonics Click to register
Trent and Tame Teachmeet	Tuesday 18th November 13:00-16:00 Register at Arthur Terry School	Spontaneous Speech and the new GCSE speaking exam In person Teach Meet During the session we'll consider how we can develop genuine spontaneous speech, with examples and emerging success stories shared by schools across the region. We'll also consider how to prepare students and staff for the upcoming mock speaking exams and engage in some moderation of sample speaking scripts. This face-to-face event will be run three times in different locations. Click on the school name where you want to attend the session (on the left) to sign up .
Swanswell Teachmeet	Wednesday 3 rd December 13:00-16:00 Register at Sidney Stringer Academy	
NCLE Webinar	Wednesday 26 th November 16:00-17:00	Curriculum and Assessment Review: Languages education fit for purpose? Hear from stakeholders from the languages community discussing the recommendations from the Curriculum and Assessment Review. Click to register
Swanswell Webinar	Wednesday 14th January 15:30-16:30	Supporting Home Language Qualifications at GCSE and Beyond https://Click to register
NCLE webinar	Wednesday 21st January 16:00-17:00	Languages for All – a social justice issue. In this webinar, we'll be exploring different curriculum models and pedagogical approaches which offer appropriate cognitive, cultural and linguistic challenge. Register here
Trent and Tame Webinar	Thursday 29 th January 15:30-16:30	Using AI for spontaneous speaking development Click to register
NCLE webinar	Wednesday 11 th February 16:00-17:00	Talking Classrooms: practical ideas for promoting use of the target language. Using the target language as the medium of instruction as well as the object of study has always been contentious. With inspiration from practising teachers discover how interaction in the target language is not only accessible but makes a central contribution to progress in language learning. Register here
Grand Union Webinar	Wednesday 4th March 15:30-16:30	Exploring different Curriculum models Click to register