



# Newsletter

April 2024

Welcome to our April Newsletter! In this edition we are pleased to update everyone on the latest news from Grand Union Language Hub, led by Tudor Grange Academy Solihull, working with key stakeholders across MFL in partner and network schools. We'll also share useful links to promote CPD opportunities for teacher development and student engagement.

Our partnership journey in person started in February as we welcomed MFL subject leaders and teachers from Hub partner and network schools to Tudor Grange Academy Solihull for our official launch event. The Grand Union team, plus representatives from partner schools and language specialists came together to network, share initial ideas and look more closely at key changes in the new MFL GCSE specification.

Our virtual guest speaker, Helen Myers, introduced some of those key changes across the four GCSE papers with various pause points to discuss practical implications and to share ideas.

The event was also an opportunity to meet virtually the other Midlands Language Hubs - Trent and Tame, Swanswell and Derwent - and to share questions and answers with the wider delegate body using Nearpod.

## Our partner schools

Initial visits to our seven partner schools are now complete and we loved meeting MFL colleagues, various senior school leaders and students across the key stages.

Our Grand Union Languages Hub partner schools are:

**Alderbrook School**

**Bishop Challoner Catholic College**

**Grace Academy**

**Highfields School**

**Shipston High School**

**St Thomas More Catholic College**

**Woodrush School**



## Meet the Grand Union Language Hub team!

We have three Specialist Teachers (SpTs) working in our Hub team.



### Georgina Jackson

**Languages:** German, Spanish and French

**Current role:** Curriculum Leader for MFL; Trust Assessment and Disciplined Innovation Lead for MFL

**Experience:** Georgina started her professional career at Tudor Grange Academy Solihull as an NQT and has been involved in a variety of successful language-based projects and roles. Initially, this included leading on extra-curricular provision across the department, but her role and remit became increasingly centered on driving departmental improvement both within TGAS and across the Tudor Grange Academies Trust. Appointed as Curriculum Leader for MFL in 2018, Georgina has worked tirelessly to promote the status of languages and to support colleagues across the Trust in doing the same. Georgina is a passionate advocate of research-informed practice and ensures she leads by example with her approaches to teaching and learning with her own classes. Skilled at departmental support, monitoring and evaluation, her attention to detail is informed by her considerate approach to developing those around her and her proficient use of data to ensure the student experience, as well as outcomes, are at the forefront of everything that she and colleagues do. She is looking forward to learning more about your journey of development, hearing your goals and helping you to achieve them.



### Christine McCaffrey

**Languages:** French, Italian, Spanish and KS3 German

**Current role:** Teacher of MFL (French and Latin)

**Experience:** Christine has taught MFL for twenty years in the state and private sectors. Her most recent role was Head of Department at her previous school where she led a successful bid to secure a place on the European Union's Erasmus Project. This led to the establishment of successful partnerships with schools in France and Spain with teaching and learning professional development initiatives; immersive language and cultural trips abroad for students and teachers; and the creation of an outreach MFL programme to KS2 pupils in feeder primary schools to bridge the gap between Y6 and Y7 foreign language learning. As a passionate advocate of languages, Christine introduced a Mandarin language beginners' course and GCSE Latin. She is always looking for new ways to increase students opting for A level MFL courses, to improve GCSE outcomes and to inspire KS3 learners. Christine is a firm believer in research-based practice and a collaborative approach between teachers and teachers and students. She believes effective MFL teaching and learning develops transferable skills across the curriculum and gives students a competitive edge in higher education and the future workplace. She is looking forward to working with you to further enhance languages teaching and learning.



## Esther Woodburn

**Languages:** Spanish and Italian

**Current role:** Teacher of MFL (Spanish) and SCITT Lead Mentor for MFL

**Experience:** Esther started her career at Arthur Terry School and Sixth Form (now part of the Trent and Tame Language Hub) in 2018 as Teacher of Spanish progressing to SCITT Mentor with the John Taylor Teaching School and Acting Second in Department. During this time, Esther created online resources for Oak National Academy in lockdown in conjunction with Rachel Hawkes. Esther joined Tudor Grange Academy Solihull in 2022 as Teacher of Spanish, progressing to Lead Mentor via Teach First and the Tudor Grange Teaching School Hub. Esther has also contributed to the interview process for Research School status

## Our hub priorities

Following the inaugural Grand Union Language Hub working party meeting at the end of March, we are able to confirm our hub priorities are:

- explicit teaching of the three pillars (phonics, vocabulary and grammar)
- effective formative and summative assessment techniques
- exploring culture through the curricula of the taught languages

## Recent events at Grand Union Language Hub

The spring term has been a busy one for the Grand Union Language Hub with attendance at the ALL Language World annual conference; a German immersion day for Year 8 students at the University of Warwick; and a visit for Year 8 and 9 students to the Goethe Institut in London. We also hosted Onatti theatre visits and target language performances for Year 9 MFL students and the Francophonie Roadshow, courtesy of the Institut français.

## ALL Languages World attendance

### It's ALL about Language!

One of our Hub Specialist Teachers, Christine McCaffrey and SLT link, Jenny Fitzroy thoroughly enjoyed networking with teaching professionals at the recent ALL Languages Conference. Held over 2 days at Chesworth Grange Hotel in Kenilworth, the event was an opportunity beyond the classroom where colleagues shared passion for languages, advice, ideas and inspiration. They also attended workshops on the latest in language learning resources and support.





## Onatti Theatre visits for students of French, German and Spanish

Our Year 9 students thoroughly enjoyed the Onatti visits in the Spring term. These short comedies, with ample opportunity for audience participation, brought the language to life for our learners in a fun and engaging way.



## German visits to Warwick University and the Goethe Institut

Last half term our KS3 Germanists were fortunate to have two opportunities to engage with German outside the classroom. First up was a day trip to the University of Warwick for a German immersion day. Our Year 8 students engaged in a range of activities based on the *Karneval*, (whilst dressed as compound nouns – *natürlich!*) and we were delighted that they were crowned winners of competition at the end of the day! Our second outing was down to the Goethe Institut in London. Students took part in a language workshop about graffiti and the Berlin Wall, carried out an information hunt in the stunning library and watched a film in the Institut's very own cinema!



## “Francophonie On The Road”

Students in Year 7 and Year 8 had an inspiring Francophonie immersion day thanks to the ‘Francophonie on the Road’ roadshow which rolled into Solihull in March. Students of French from Tudor Grange Academy Solihull and Highfields School, Wolverhampton, took part in a range of diverse workshops: a short film screening; Olympic-themed activities to preview the Paris Olympics and Paralympics in summer 2024; and modelling clay gargoyles following a historic trip back in time with the aid of VR headsets to the construction of Notre Dame Cathedral. The headsets also gave students a glimpse of the era of the French Revolution and the chance to cruise over Paris in a hot air balloon.

The workshops were organised by the Institut français in a bid to promote the French language and Francophone cultures of the world. The event took place on the week of the Journée Internationale de la Francophonie – as part of a series of school visits the length and breadth of England.



## A visit from NCLE

Grand Union Language Hub welcomed Caroline Conlon from NCLE, where Tudor Grange Academy Solihull showcased its MFL department. Caroline Conlon observed lessons in different Key Stages in French, Spanish and German. A panel of students recounted their own experiences of language learning to her, articulating some of their favourite learning methods and how they might use languages in the future.

We’re looking forward to our second NCLE visit by Bernadette Holmes, MBE, this May.

# Save the Date

We have some exciting events coming up in the summer term and would love to see you there:

## Regional Events:

- Helen Myers will deliver part two of her presentation on the new GCSE specification and exams, ‘**Exploring assessment mechanisms for the new GCSE. What does this mean for classroom practice?**’ - on **Monday 24 June 9.00 – 11.30** – an in-person event

## Grand Union CPD webinars:

We are delighted to be offering our first three webinars in the summer term. Led by our Specialist Teachers, these research-informed online CPD sessions will run from **3.30-4.30** and are free to attend.

- ‘**Assessment for Learning in the MFL Classroom**’ on **Tuesday 21 May**
- ‘**Teaching Listening over Testing Listening**’ on **Wednesday 5 June**
- ‘**Culture in the Curriculum**’ on **Tuesday 18 June**

To register your interest for any of the events above, please sign up via the CPD page on our [website](#).

# Offers from cultural partners



## The British Council

Nothing brings learning to life like working with schools in other countries. [The British Council](#) offers a range of resources, guidance and learning opportunities, whether you’re looking for a partner or want to take an existing partnership to the next level.



## Institut Français du Royaume-Uni’s 2024

The [Institut français](#) offers language upskilling online courses for primary school teachers and cultural reinforcement workshops for secondary school teachers. There is also an offer of screenings and workshops for the classroom.



## Consejería de educación

The Spanish Embassy offers grants for language and methodology upskilling in Spain. It is currently offering immersion courses in Salamanca in Spain June in and July 2024. The [Consejería](#) offers a range of resources and free films from its digital library.

## Goethe Institut



## German Expert Mentors (GEMs)

The Goethe Institute has appointed a network of [German Expert Mentors](#) (GEMs) to support German departments. GEMs will coach and mentor language- teaching professionals, supply updated teaching resources and materials, and re-energise language learning with free-of-charge, bespoke offers that can be tailored to individual needs.



## The GIMAGINE Award

The [GIMAGINE Award](#) is an innovative, digital self-learning platform for German learners, aimed at young learners aged 14 to 18 in the UK!