

Over a third of all primary schools *Say Yes to Languages!*

Over 1,200 schools nationwide will *Say Yes to Languages* during the 2023/24 school year, representing more than a third of primary schools in Ireland. Due to its success over the past two years, *Say Yes to Languages* was extended for a third year, seeing an increase of 500 schools applying for the module.

Say Yes to Languages aims to facilitate schools in introducing a modern foreign language (MFL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL). Preparing the ground towards the future inclusion of additional languages as part of the redeveloped *Primary Curriculum Framework*, the targeted groups are third to sixth class pupils. Over 80,000 pupils are expected to learn a language other than English or Irish in 2023-2024.

Languages and teachers

The language choice is based on school context and demographics with this year including Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Irish Sign Language, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish and Ukrainian. The tutors teaching the module can be primary or secondary school teachers, members of the wider community or parents. Many primary teachers have signed up to teach the module, with nearly 100 schools availing of the expertise among their own staff. In addition, Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI) is providing teaching resources and training to those who will be teaching the module in their schools.

A positive experience for pupils

Say Yes to Languages is an excellent opportunity for pupils to learn, have fun, while also opening doors to the various languages and cultures of their classmates, with pupils from last year describing the module as “fun, interactive, interesting” and “out of the ordinary” according to research undertaken by PPLI.

Parental involvement is key

Research conducted among parents highlighted that communication



between schools and home was vital to the module’s success. Parents can provide added support to achieve the aims of *Say Yes to Languages* beyond the classroom, and those who have competence in other languages are enthusiastic about getting involved in the classroom, providing support and in some cases, becoming tutors! There is a clear sense of pride in both children and parents of multilingual families given the opportunity to share their languages and cultures.

Support

PPLI in facilitating the implementation of *Say Yes to Languages* offers support directly to schools, provides training and information sessions for teachers, hosting teachers and school management representatives. On the Languages Connect website a multitude of resources and information for *Say Yes to Languages* includes a list of participating schools, support tools, frequently asked questions

and testimonials from schools who have been involved over the two years.

Further information regarding *Say Yes to Languages* can be found within *Circular 0021/2023* and languagesconnect.ie/primary

Experiences from schools across the country that have benefited from *Say Yes to Languages* will be featured in future issues of *InTouch*.

Languages Connect promotes the personal, social, professional and economic benefits of foreign language skills to principals, teachers, guidance counsellors, parents and students. Funded by the Department of Education and facilitated by Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI), this is a key objective of Languages Connect; Ireland’s Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education, 2017-26. For more information about *Say Yes to Languages*, email primary@ppli.ie or visit www.languagesconnect.ie.



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