Objectives of the project:

To explore and develop three themes relating to the primary classroom and the learner’s perspective on language learning and other cultures.

1. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). This concerns the delivery of a curriculum area (e.g. science, history, etc.) through the medium of the foreign language. The approach makes explicit the relevance of the foreign language, and supports the embedding of language learning within the primary curriculum.

2. Pupil Voice. This focuses on using learners’ opinions and their reflections on their experiences, to inform future planning and improvement in learning, school policies, and the school environment.

3. Intercultural understanding. Our focus has been to go beyond superficiality and cultural stereotypes, to look into ways of providing children with real insights into their own and each other’s cultures, and exploit school and class links.

Main results and conclusions:

Participants from Birmingham have been impressed by, and learned from, the CLIL approach that has been developed in Barcelona’s schools, and its impact on children’s learning of subject and language. Participants from Barcelona have witnessed a range of pupil voice activities, relating to reflecting on learning and on administrative and strategic matters. Pupils are reflecting upon their experiences of language learning and this project.

Children have exchanged information about their daily lives, pastimes, schooling etc., and this has provided opportunities for them to reflect upon their own cultures – and the differences within their own communities!

At the same time, teachers have gained tremendously in their understanding of the partner institutions, and reflected not only on the different cultures generally, but specifically in different pedagogies and educational philosophies.

Impact and use:

Major impact on enthusiasm for language learning and teaching, mutual understanding, and curiosity about and openness towards ‘otherness’.

By the end of the Project we hope to have materials relating to the three focuses, and usable activities which will be of interest to people involved with primary languages teaching. This will include an evaluation of the project using pupil voice, to look at it from the learners’ perspective.

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