

Evaluation of International Activity 2022

Activity title : French partner school/Celebrations and Special Times

Activity Lead: Kath Fitzgerald

SDG links: 4

Activity Summary

We have had a range of French partner schools through “epals” for the last 5 years and now have a well-established partnership with Ecole Saint Gabriel, a Catholic primary school in a small village in western France. This is aimed at our year 3 and 4 pupils, helping to bring languages to life as they begin more formal French teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. As in previous years, these children have really enjoyed having their own named penpal to correspond with throughout the year. We have exchanged a range of correspondence from introductory letters and photos, pictures of our schools and classrooms, Christmas cards, Easter cards and information about our families and pets. A display in our Key Stage 2 hall showcases our exchange and our latest correspondence.

We have compared curriculum maps and school websites to find out about similarities and differences in education between our two schools. Our “Lion” class were delighted with their partner class “Harry Potter” theme, also a favourite in the UK. They were surprised to learn that their History and Geography curriculum focused solely on France, whereas ours is much more global and wide-ranging. Other key differences included the French music curriculum revolving around classical music and composers and the quantity of English learning covered. As our partner school is a Catholic one and ours is non-denominational, we could also see differences in our learning about faith.

Another area of exploration was around Sport and PE, linking with our “Gender Equality through Sport” ISA activity. Children exchanged letters comparing their favourite sports and hobbies and Lion class were thrilled to receive a class postcard from our partner school’s ski and snowboard trip. They were fascinated to see pictures of their penpals’ contrasting PE lessons including table tennis, step and roller skating.

This year, we have also extended our exchange to a wider exploration of celebrations and special times in both countries. This enabled younger children in our school to send photographs and information about key events here such as Bonfire Night and Remembrance Day too. Our French penpals enjoyed finding out about celebrations that don’t exist in France such as Bonfire Night and Boxing Day. Lion class brainstormed a list of questions they would like to ask about Christmas, Easter, birthdays and other special times in France and sent these to our partner class. Their favourite finding was that French children leave out biscuits and carrots in their shoes on Christmas Eve for Pere Noel and the reindeer. Our older Key Stage 2 classes were able to learn about French traditions such as “Le bleuets de France” and “La Galette des Rois” through specific French cultural lessons. We are currently looking forward to

