Lifelong learning skills

What contribution does learning languages make to the generic development of the learner? This could be highlighted in terms of individual skills particularly focused on in your scheme of work; a whole school learning to learn programme; an identified thinking skills scheme; the new secondary curriculum PLTS (personal learning and thinking skills) or the whole curriculum dimensions (identity and cultural diversity; healthy lifestyles; community participation; enterprise; global dimension and sustainable development; technology and the media; creativity and critical thinking.)

Our KS3 languages curriculum begins in Year 7 with an explicit focus on 6 key skills. We work on these during the whole of the year and make progress measurable through ‘can do’ statements. Tasks and activities are designed to promote development in these skills.

The whole of the new secondary curriculum is statutory, from the 3 core aims (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens) to individual subject PoS, and including also the PLTS: independent enquirers; creative thinkers; reflective learners; team workers; self-managers and effective participants.

Many schools have a learning to learn programme designed to help learners to develop generic skills that help them to achieve their potential across the whole curriculum. Pinpointing specific areas where language learning contributes to these programmes helps to raise the profile and status of languages within the whole school context.

The 7 whole curriculum dimensions are included within the overall ‘big picture’ of the new secondary curriculum. They are an obvious source of inspiration to link languages to the rest of the curriculum. Any subject that takes a lead on one of these and works with other subjects to create meaningful learning experiences raises the profile of their own discipline.