

learning together

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the
European Union

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This year marks the 50th anniversary of the European Union, and offers us a chance to think about what the Europe of tomorrow will need to offer its future citizens. The enthusiasm to learn is already there – it is often young people themselves who raise questions about international issues, such as environmental protection and tackling poverty in the developing world. Information and communication technology has made the world seem a smaller place, with young people being leading users of the internet.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for Education and Skills and the British Council are launching a year-long project called **Learning Together**, which aims to increase partnerships between the UK and other European schools, through programmes such as Comenius and eTwinning.

Experience has shown that teachers themselves are the best people to advise their colleagues on what works best in the classroom. That is why the project will establish a network of Learning Together Ambassadors – teachers and heads already involved in school partnerships who will share their experience with other schools interested in making the most of opportunities to carry out joint learning projects with schools in other countries.



Schools and colleges across the UK are reaping the benefits of collaborating with schools in the rest of the EU. In this, the 50th anniversary year of the signing of the Treaties of Rome, there has never been a better time to look towards partners in Europe to motivate and enthuse pupils and refresh teaching and learning through professional development.

‘The project has been a really extraordinary opportunity for all of us. We have gained so much from the research, but most of all from the relationships we have built up.’
Comenius participant

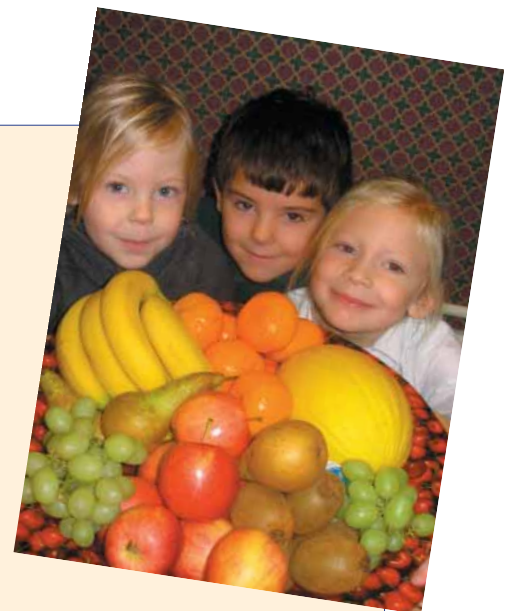
- working with partners in the rest of Europe provides a rich resource to invigorate teaching and learning
- through working with education professionals from across the EU, you can learn about different curriculum or management approaches and reflect on your own practice
- schemes are available to support and fund your school to work with other European partners.

UK school **Cauldeen Primary School, Inverness** ■ age of pupils **4-5**
partner country **Malta** ■ title **Chocolate and Chips**
scheme **eTwinning**

This cross-curricular partnership covered the early science curriculum, focusing on healthy diet, lifestyle and enjoyable exercise. The pupils exchanged digital photographs and video clips which recorded their leisure and sport activities. They also took part in language lessons to enable the children to speak with one other. The pupils developed and used their ICT skills to create fun PowerPoint presentations, to scan pictures and to e-mail each other. Children enjoyed the activities which covered the cultural heritage of both European partners. The pupils tasted and smelt local food produce and shared their experiences with children in the partner school.

outcomes and benefits

- a strong focus on professional development and exchange of best practice - staff jointly developed lesson plans and delivered and evaluated the outcomes
- the project provided motivation for pupils in their science studies and through sending and receiving materials from their partners
- enhanced communication and ICT skills amongst young learners.



UK school **Ounsdale High School, Staffordshire**
age of pupils **11-17** ■ partner countries **Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia** ■ title **One World**
scheme **Comenius**

This cross-curricular partnership aimed to highlight how everyone can help shape Europe and the world. Pupils celebrated diversity and common ground between their respective cultures.

The partnership covered many curriculum areas and activities, including: Science – a comparative study of acid rain; Music – a survey of young people's musical tastes and a Song for Europe competition; and English – a study of the TV viewing habits of pupils; monitoring of TV advertising and exchanging videos of pupils' favourite programmes.

outcomes and benefits

- a wealth of joint curriculum materials and displays produced and exchanged within the partnership
- opportunity for staff to work jointly on planning and delivering the partnership
- chance for pupils to travel to partner schools to take part in the evaluation of the partnership, often resulting in enhanced behaviour and motivation.



UK school **Durham Trinity School, Durham** ■ age of pupils **3-19** ■ partner countries **Finland, Hungary, Portugal** ■ title **The Compass Project** ■ scheme **Comenius**

The Compass Project explored European citizenship amongst pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils in each partner country exchanged e-mails, sampled each other's local foods and collaborated on the production of a Compass booklet which was distributed in local schools and libraries.

They also planted seeds of each other's local produce and produced food based on local and national traditional recipes. The partnership engaged pupils with profound and multiple disabilities, autism and communication problems and also enabled them to learn some new languages.

outcomes and benefits

- whole school curriculum was adapted to include a European perspective
- sharing of good practice across Europe resulted in improved teaching methods
- development of evaluation tools which led to the introduction of a Quality Assurance management strategy in all the partner schools
- pupils explored European identity whilst developing key skills in communication and ICT.





EU Member States
 Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom

Other countries participating in EU education programmes
 Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey

Want to get involved?

- Get the free European Parliament teaching resource pack for 11-16 year-olds, including a map of Europe, an interactive CD-ROM, DVD and lesson plans, from: ep london@europarl.europa.eu or T 020 7227 4300
- Visit the DfES Global Gateway for lesson plans incorporating a European dimension: www.globalgateway.org
- Use ready-made European eTwinning project kits: www.etwinning.net and access partnership resources at www.britishcouncil.org/comenius
- Information on the UK in the EU is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk

Learning Together Ambassadors will be organising information events across the UK to raise awareness of the Comenius and eTwinning programmes and to help schools make the most of the partnership opportunities that are available. Register your interest in these events by e-mailing learningtogether@britishcouncil.org

A number of EU education programmes can support you if you are interested in working with partner schools elsewhere in Europe.

Comenius funds bilateral and multilateral partnerships with other European countries. You can get start-up funding to enable you to visit your partners before you apply for a partnership. Partnerships can focus on the curriculum or on development and management issues. In addition, Comenius can fund staff to take part in European CPD activities, including courses and jobshadowing; projects focusing on teacher training; and Comenius Assistants who can support the European dimension across the curriculum and help teach their own language.

www.britishcouncil.org/comenius

eTwinning lets you work with other European schools through ICT. Through the eTwinning portal you can register your interest in a project, search for partners and access a shared TwinSpace, a private, secure project workspace which lets you collaborate and communicate with your partner schools. Professional development workshops take place across Europe to support teachers who are involved.

www.britishcouncil.org/etwinning

The **British Council** manages a range of schemes to support UK schools working internationally. These include the DfES Global Gateway, an international education resource website, and the DfES International School Award, which accredits international work in schools. For further information, go to www.globalgateway.org



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