



PRESS RELEASE

Languages buddy scheme wins two awards

A scheme that links school pupils and undergraduate students on a year abroad has been awarded a prestigious European Language Label.

Last week, Europe celebrated the European Day of Languages and to mark the occasion, language projects from across the UK were recognised at the European Language Label prize-giving ceremony. Amongst the winners were Routes into Languages Cymru for their Adopt a Class scheme.

Adopt a Class is a scheme that links school pupils in Wales with an undergraduate student on a year abroad. The pupils have the opportunity to meet their buddy student before they go abroad. The following year, they keep in touch. The student sends information about the country in which they are living. The pupils share the experience of discovering a new city in another country from the comfort of their classroom. Adopt a Class aims to enthuse the pupils about learning languages and also introduce them to the possibility of spending time abroad with student mobility schemes such as Erasmus.

The project started in Wales in 2010 with students from Cardiff and Swansea Universities piloting the idea with schools in their local areas. Adopt a Class is now entering the third year of linking and has expanded to include Bangor and Aberystwyth Universities.

Following a visit from an official judge in May, Adopt a Class was awarded the European Language Label having proved it was innovative, effective and replicable. The team was invited to the prize-giving in the European Commission in London and was also asked to present the project.

Llinos Evans, Head of Modern Foreign Languages at Barry Comprehensive School, Tom and Harry, pupils at the school and their buddy student from Cardiff University, Siôn Hupfield, travelled to London with the Routes Cymru team to present the project and receive the award on behalf of all of the schools and students taking part across Wales.

The team received a very pleasant surprise when Adopt a Class was awarded an additional prize from the Italian Cultural Institute for its work supporting the Italian language. Claudia Toffolo from the Italian Cultural Institute presented this prize which included a selection of Italian resources.

This year, Adopt a Class has linked 19 students from four universities with 14 classes across Wales.



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Press enquiries to: Ellie Jones, Routes Cymru Project Manager, email: ellie.jones@ciltcymru.org.uk, tel: 029 2026 5410

Interviews with Ceri James, Director of Routes Cymru are available on request from Ellie Jones.

Routes into Languages Cymru website: www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/cymru

Notes for editors:

1. For more information about Adopt a Class, contact Ellie Jones
2. For more information about the European Language Label and the winners in 2012, visit the following website: http://cilt.org.uk/home/valuing_languages/european_language_label1.aspx
3. The Routes into Languages programme was developed by three organisations working in partnership: the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML), the HE Academy Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS) and CILT, the National Centre for Languages. The Routes into Languages programme is coordinated by a team at the University of Southampton, directed by Professor Michael Kelly. <http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/>
4. The Routes into Languages Cymru project is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).
5. Led by CILT Cymru in partnership with 11 universities across Wales, the specific aim of the Routes into Languages Cymru project is to increase the take up of languages from school to university. It encourages young people to have a positive attitude towards their language learning and promotes languages as an essential skill.
6. CILT Cymru is funded by the Welsh Government and is managed by WJEC.