

**Celebrating Bilingual Children**  
in your School with a  
**Mother Language day Project**

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# Why celebrate Mother Language Day?

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There are many reasons why we should know about one another's languages, including:

- To give bilingual children the opportunity to demonstrate the language skills they bring to school.
- To enhance the status of bilingual children.
- To broaden the horizons of monolingual English speakers.
- To show respect for other languages and cultures.
- To give parents an opportunity to be actively involved in their children's learning.

*Joe Debono, Newbury Park Primary School.\**

International Mother Language day is celebrated every year on 21st February.

The purpose of this day is to raise awareness of language, cultural diversity and multilingualism around the world.



40% of people in the world do not have access to education in a language that they speak or understand.

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## Safeguarding Linguistic Diversity

Languages, with their complex implications for identity, communication, social integration, education and development, are of strategic importance for people and planet. Yet, due to globalization processes, they are increasingly under threat, or disappearing altogether. **When languages fade, so does the world's rich tapestry of cultural diversity.** Opportunities, traditions, memory, unique modes of thinking and expression — valuable resources for ensuring a better future — are also lost. **Every two weeks a language disappears** taking with it an entire cultural and intellectual heritage. **At least 43% of the estimated 6000 languages spoken in the world are endangered**

# How is it different to European Day of Languages?

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European Day of Languages is about promoting the importance of language learning and it seeks to increase **plurilingualism** and **intercultural understanding**. "It celebrates the **rich linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe** and aims to encourage **lifelong language learning** in and out of school".\*

It has lots of crossovers with Mother Language Day in terms of promoting diversity of languages but the focus is on European Languages.

# **It is really important for children to see that we value ALL languages and not just European Languages.**

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- Over the last few years, we have moved away from celebrating European Day of Languages on 26th September at my school in favour of a more inclusive "Languages Day".
- This has been a conscious decision to better reflect the diverse population of our school and all the languages that are spoken by our families.
- #representationmatters



# Links to UN Global goals

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**unicef**  
UNITED KINGDOM



**RIGHTS  
RESPECTING  
SCHOOLS**

## Article 2

Every child has the same rights regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, politics, nationality, social class, place of birth or disability.

## Article 30

Every child has the right to practice their own culture, language and religion.

# Why celebrate either/both?

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It is important for children to see that we value all languages!

We enjoy celebrating both in our school as it means we get two big events showcasing languages in the school year, but realistically schools can mark either or both days and **choose to celebrate children's home languages as well as languages that they are learning in and outside school.**

# Practical considerations

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- September 26th can be a rush to prepare for at the beginning of the new school year. Some of the preparation needs to happen in the previous summer term.
- February 21st often falls during half term.
- Why not pick a more convenient date on your school calendar to celebrate 'Mother Language Day' and/or 'Languages Day'?

# British Council Connecting Classrooms

<https://connecting-classrooms.britishcouncil.org/>

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- 2 years ago, we linked with a partner school in Bangladesh for a World Speech Day project
- We discovered that Mother Language Day originated there...

**Our partner school in Bangladesh...**

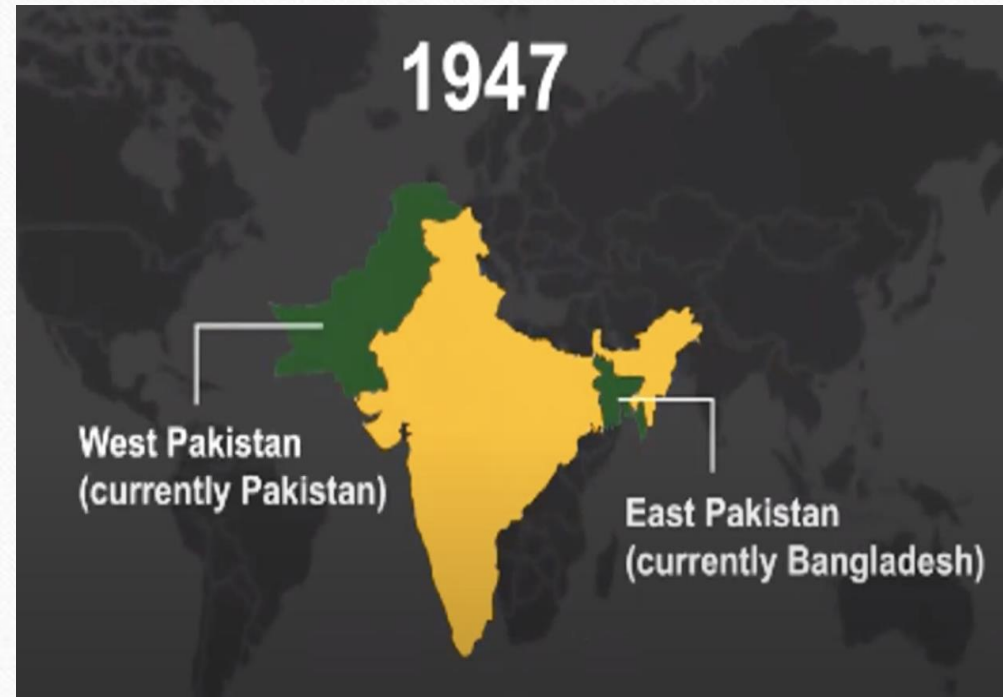


Our partner school sent us photographs to explain the significance of Mother Language Day in Bangladesh



The reason it falls on 21st February is that on this day in 1952 four young students were killed in Bangladesh during protests about the right to be able to speak their own language.

- When Pakistan was created in 1947 it had two parts: East Pakistan (now known as Bangladesh) was separated from West Pakistan by India in between. In 1948 Pakistan declared that Urdu would be the sole national official language of Pakistan, even though Bangla was spoken by the majority of people in Pakistan at the time. There were widespread protests in East Pakistan, demanding that Bangla be at least one of the national languages in addition to Urdu. During protests police opened fire on protesters and 4 students were killed.
- This day became known as Eekushey February in Bangladesh, a day to mourn those who died to protect their Mother language.
- Bangla was finally recognized as one of the state languages of Pakistan in 1954.



- In the year 2000 the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) decided to make International Mother Language Day an annual event, celebrated around the world.

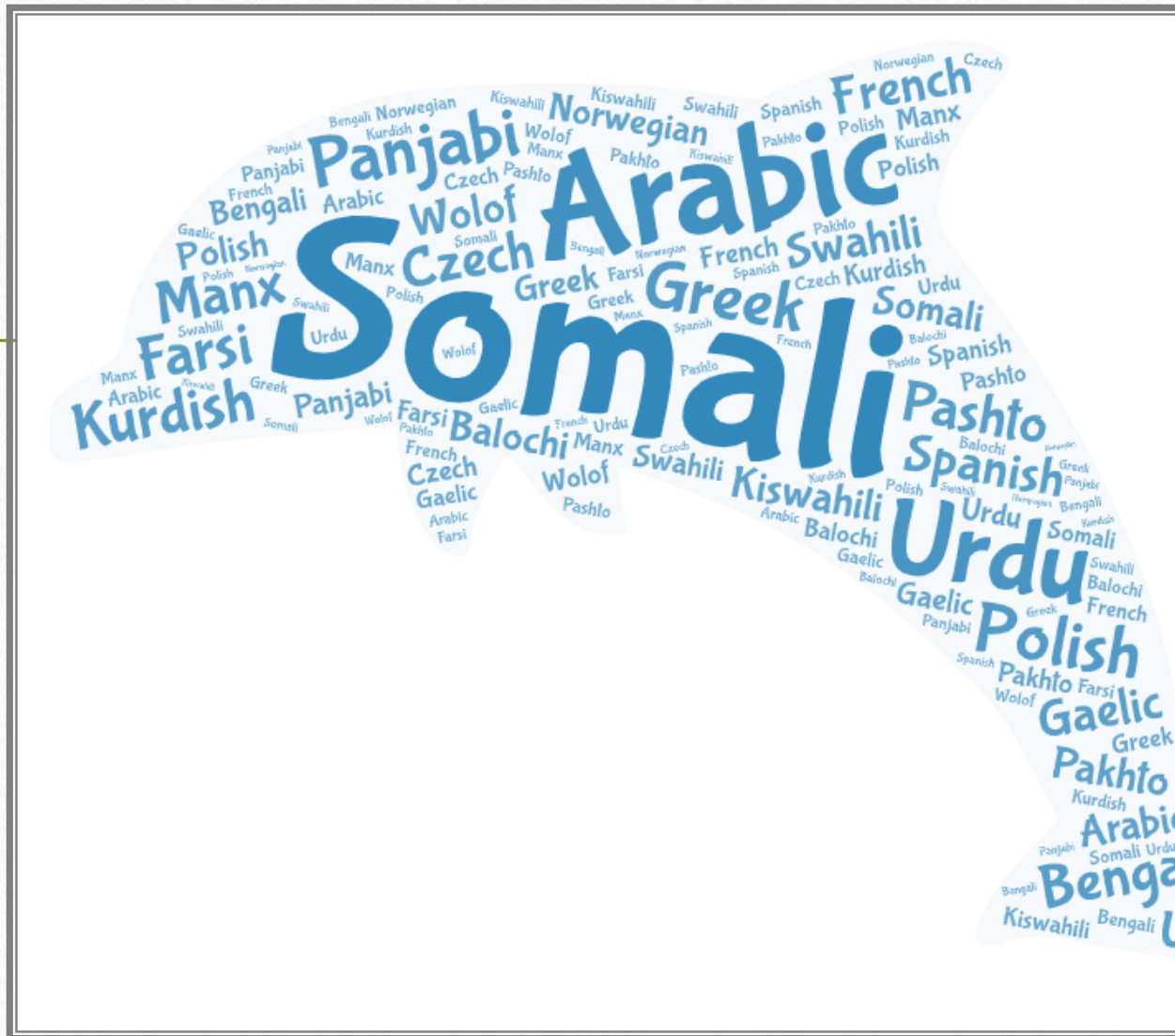


# Our Mother language Day Project

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The Dolphin School  
Bristol

<u>language</u>	<u>number of children at TDS</u>
Somali	45
Arabic	41
Urdu	15
Panjabi	11
Bengali	5
Polish	4
Spanish	4
Greek	3
Kurdish	3
Norwegian	3
Swahili/Kiswahili	2
Czech	1
Manx Gaelic	1
Pashto/Pakhto	1
Persian/Farsi	1
Russian	1
Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian	1



Do you speak another language at home? We want to hear from you!!!



Record a video of yourself speaking a sentence in your mother language. Start with "My mother language is ..."



**\*\*remember to speak in your mother language!**

Film it in portrait mode if you can.

Upload your video to ClassDojo before Monday 22nd to be included in our assembly!



**International Mother Language Day is a day to celebrate languages!**

Its aim is to raise awareness of language, cultural diversity and multilingualism around the world.

Children and their families were invited to send in a clip for our school assembly.

# The Dolphin School Mother Language Day



▶ ▶▶ 🔊 0:02 / 2:08



# We got a great response during 'Lockdown'



Low response in the past from asking teachers to record and sending messages to parents via school coms or newsletter.

Language ambassadors and Lunchtime club both work well.

**Family support worker: inviting and encouraging during coffee morning made a big difference!**

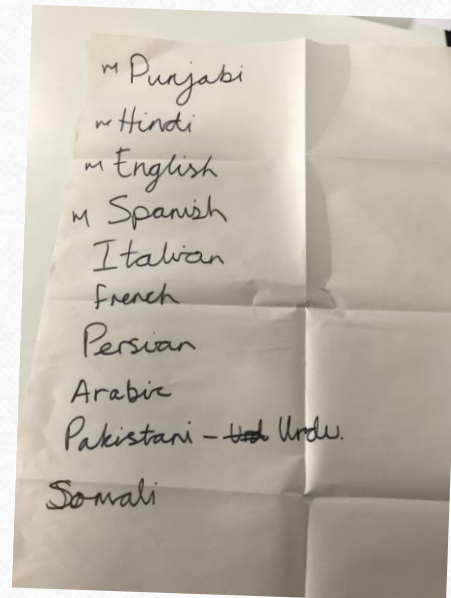


# We had a whole school assembly to explain the importance of celebrating home languages

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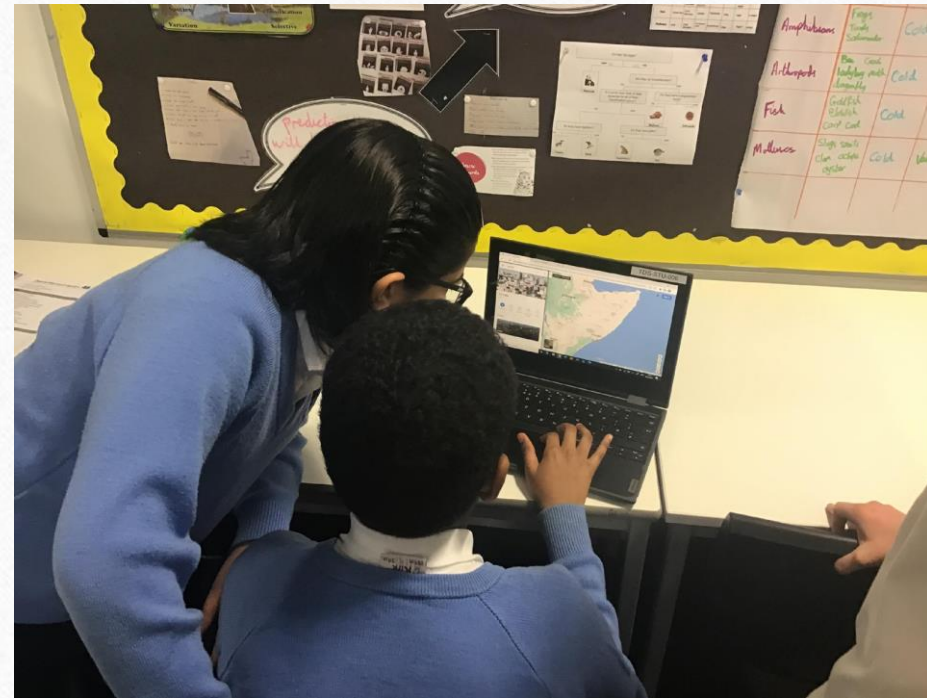
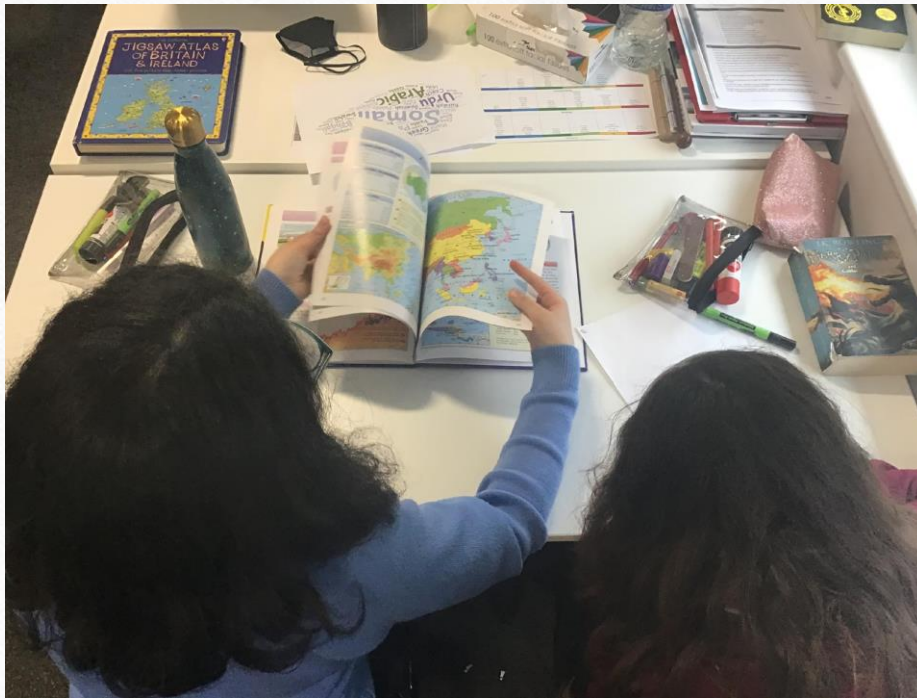
- “Some children who had been reluctant to record themselves the week before were animated and excited to talk about their home language after watching the school assembly”
- “There was a real sense of pride in their languages”

Class discussion to find out about home languages *and* languages they are learning.



- “Our class really enjoyed researching the home languages of our classmates and even native speakers discovered new facts about their home languages and about where they are spoken in the world today”

# Language Research



# Map of our class languages

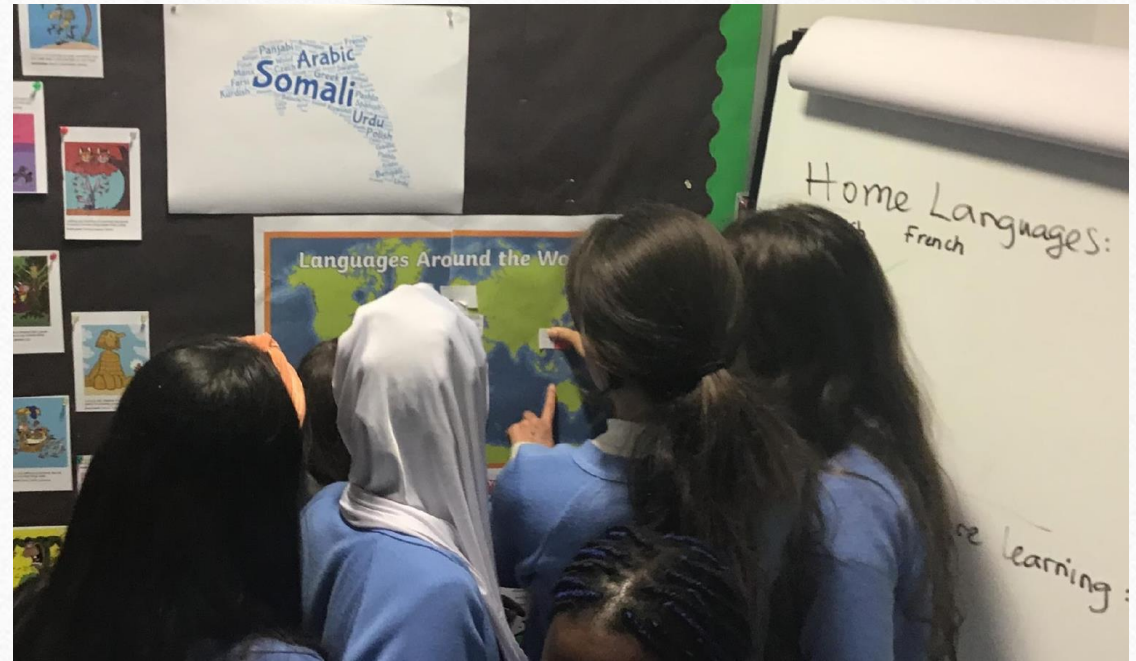


- Year 5&6 made maps of the languages in their classes



# Cross-curricular links with Geography

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- ~ Punjabi
- ~ Hindi
- ~ English
- ~ Spanish
- Italian
- French
- Persian
- Arabic
- Pakistani - ~~and~~ Urdu.
- Somali



We are all learning to speak  
**French**  
Some of us are also learning



We made a large window display with flags representing lots of the countries where our children's home languages come from.



I downloaded flags from twinkl.com and chose the ones that were linked to our cohort to represent their mother languages.



# World Book Day takes place the following week - another way to celebrate languages!

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- Our World Book day eTwinning project that is still running this year against the odds: children record themselves reading a story in another language and we share this with pupils in our partner schools within the project.



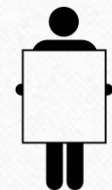
# Ready-made resources for ease!



# Mother Language Day 2021

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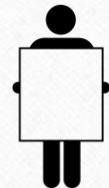
- Language Video of the children speaking in their mother languages
- Whole school assembly
- Class discussions to gather a lists of languages spoken at home as well as languages the children are learning
- Language research, fact files, Class maps
- Posters on classroom doors to say what languages are spoken in each class.



# The benefits of the project:

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- Gave bilingual children the opportunity to demonstrate the language skills they bring to school.
- Enhanced the status of bilingual children in our school community.
- Broadened the horizons of all our children.
- Actively showed and encouraged respect for other languages and cultures.
- Gave parents an opportunity to actively engage in their children's learning.



# Where next?

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- Next year we will invite parents in to read a story or share a song in their mother language with their child's class.
- We will invite children to deliver a mini lesson on their language to the class – in person or by video.



# Interactive Language display

We plan to make an interactive display of our school languages for the school entrance next. Ideas suggested from the twitter community were to use Thinglink, QR codes or ..... to do this. We will have a world map with links to the places where our staff and pupils' languages are from.



# Mother Tongue Other Tongue:

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For pupils in Year 4 - Year 13, this is a **multilingual poetry competition** that celebrates **cultural diversity** and the **many languages spoken in schools** in the UK.

<https://www.mmu.ac.uk/mothertongueothertongue/>



## About the Competition

There are two separate parts to the poetry competition. Children from Year 4 to Year 13 can enter one or both parts of the competition.

# Regional competitions & events take place throughout the year.

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Open both to poetry written in pupil's Mother Tongue (home language) and their Other Tongue (foreign language being taught at school).

Children can enter one or both parts of the competition.

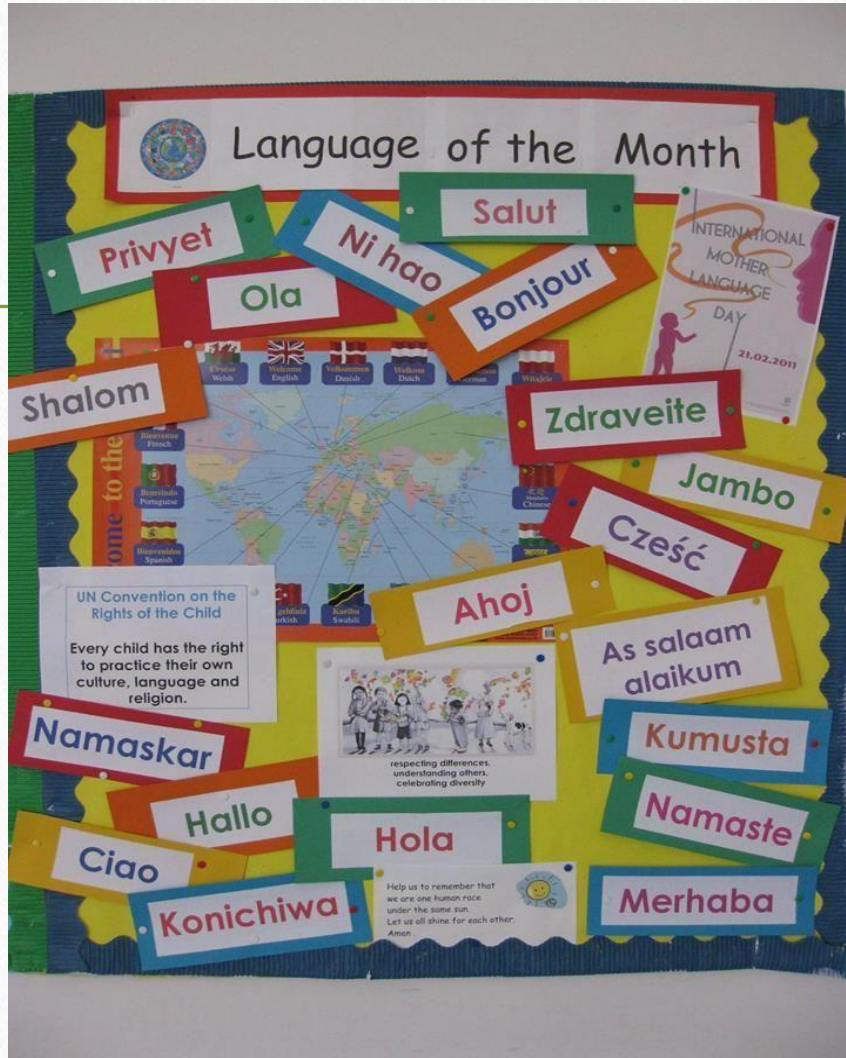
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W4D\\_CYcYIE&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W4D_CYcYIE&t=1s)

The competition is co-ordinated by Routes into Languages. <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/mothertongueothertongue/>  
Last year it ran in **East of England, London, Scotland, North West England, and West Midlands**. Do plan ahead if you want to do this next year: each region has its own deadline for registration and submissions, ranging from November to July. <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/mothertongueothertongue/how-to-enter/>

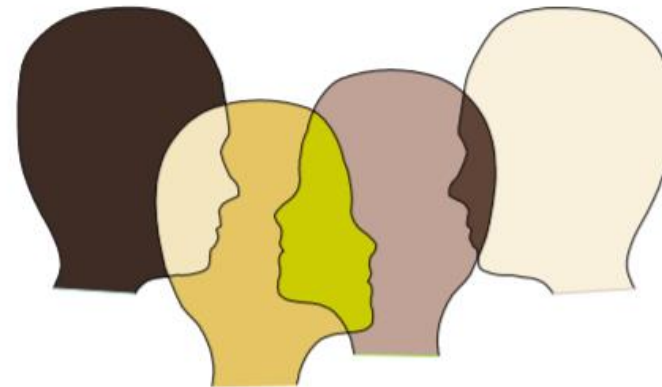
# Newbury Park School website is a great resource!



# Language of the Month



## Language of the Month Activities



Hannah White

**@MadameWhite2017**



Hannah.White@dolphinschoolbristol.org

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## Useful links and further reading:

- <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/resources/primary-resources/international-mother-language-day/>
- <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/motherlanguageday>
- <https://www.un.org/en/observances/mother-language-day>
- <https://languageshowlive.co.uk/talks/>
- <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-tp-24-international-mother-language-day-resource-pack>
- <https://edl.ecml.at/Home/Whatisit/tabid/1760/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>
- <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/mothertongueothertongue/>
- <https://connecting-classrooms.britishcouncil.org/>
- <https://www.niesr.ac.uk/blog/migrant-pupils-lead-way-promoting-foreign-languages-schools>
- <https://dev.scilt.org.uk/Portals/24/Library/slr/issues/31/31-05%20deBritos.pdf>



The  
Language Show  
13th-15th  
November 2020  
Virtual Event  
brought to you virtually and entirely free of charge through the support of  
BRITISH COUNCIL IELTS

Webinars are still  
available online to  
watch!

Here are a few relevant talks  
that I recommend:

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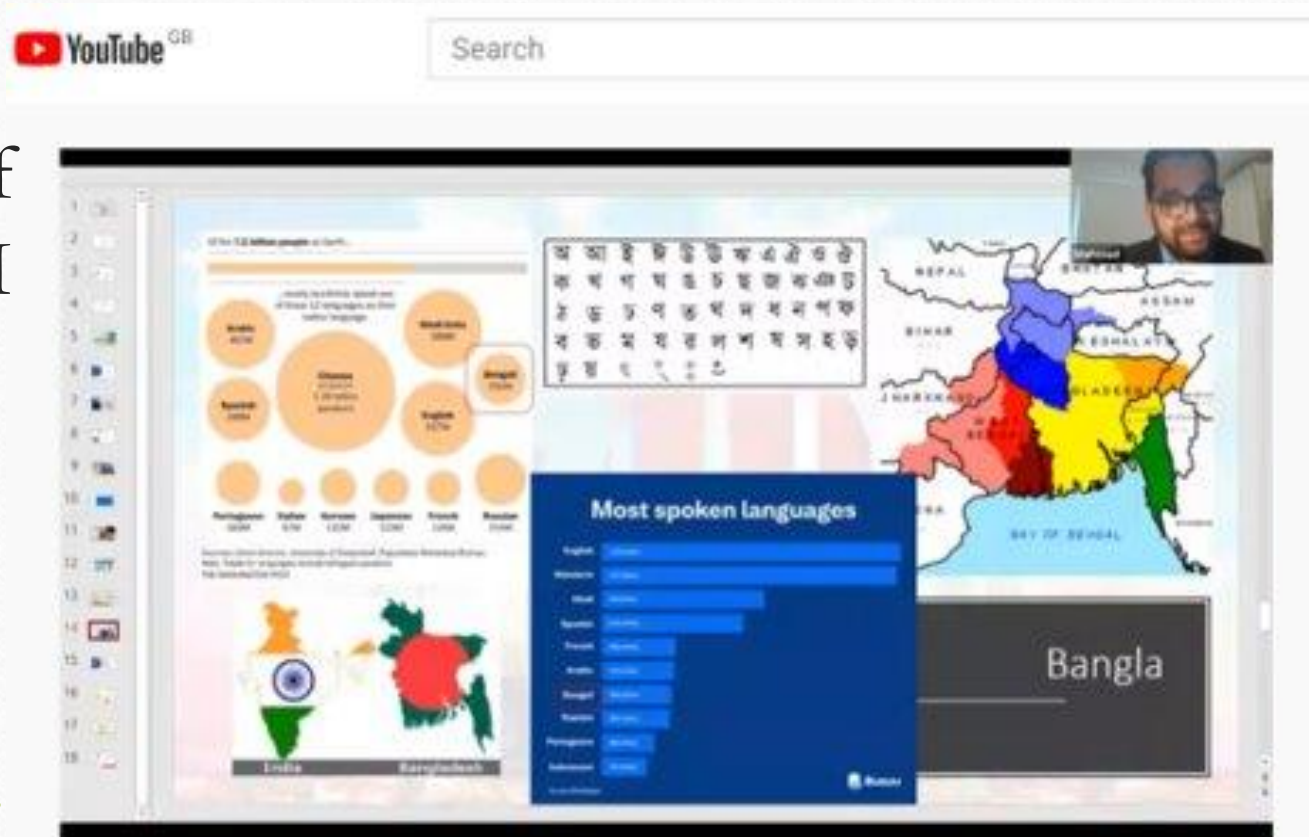
Inspiring case study: Friday 14.00-14.45:  
Embracing cultural identity in educational  
contexts - Helena Ground

Historical explanation: Saturday 11.30-  
12.15: The true spirit of Amar Ekushey,  
Bangla language & Intl Mother Language  
Day

Sunday 14.30-15.15: "We Are  
Multilingual": Linda Fisher and Karen  
Forbes

For a detailed history of Mother Language Day I recommend watching Shehzaad Sham's presentation:

Historical explanation: Saturday 11.30-12.15: The true spirit of Amar Ekushey, Bangla language & Intl Mother Language Day



Watchable by [dolphinschoolbristol.org](http://dolphinschoolbristol.org).

Saturday 11.30-12.15: The true spirit of Amar Ekushey, Bangla language & Intl Mother Language Day

# An inspiring talk about a project to promote inclusivity of migrant Roma pupils

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- A presentation on how cultural differences are celebrated at a school and how its unique model of EAL teaching embraces cultural identity and promotes multiculturalism whilst raising students' aspirations and engaging with Peterborough's diverse communities. It will include a flavour of the successful projects involving the school's Roma students and the wider community. Presented by Helena Ground and Juan Echepares-Riera, who both teach at Peterborough's Queen Katharine Academy.
- [WATCH VIDEO](#)

“This assembly is an opportunity for children who speak another language to share it with others.”

FREE DOWNLOAD

## 6. MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY



Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. ©Unicef



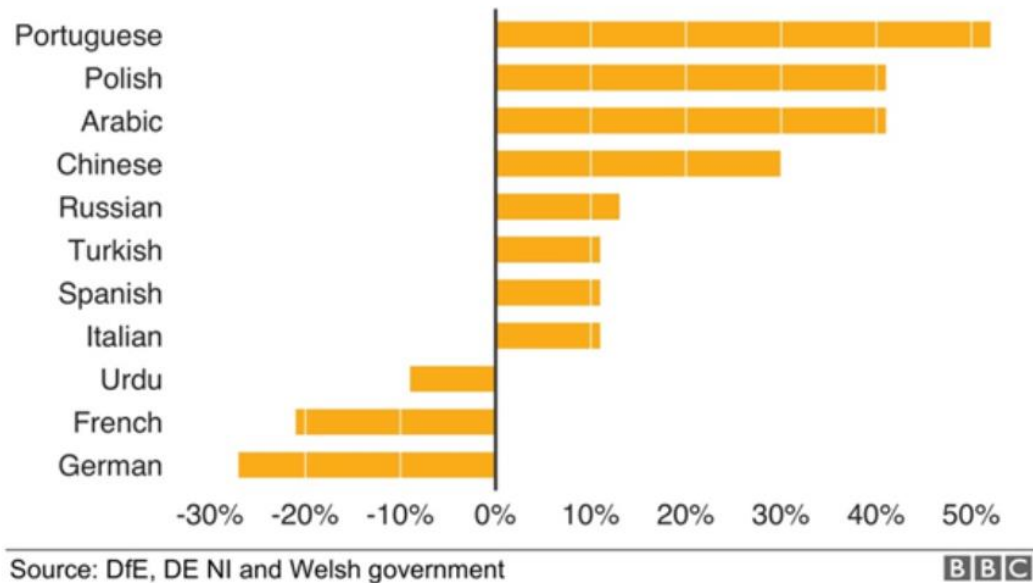
## PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

TWENTY ASSEMBLIES FOR  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS



### Languages rising and falling

Change from 2013 by GCSE subject in England, Wales and N Ireland



**‘migrant’ languages such as Polish, Portuguese and Arabic are on the increase, to the benefit of everyone.**

“...while we should worry that UK born pupils are turning down opportunities to gain valuable skills for post-Brexit Britain, we should also celebrate the skills and abilities of multi-lingual children and young people from migrant backgrounds. They are just, if not more, important to the UK’s future as those who choose to study French or German”.

# Bullock Report (1975)

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No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold, nor to live and act as though school and home represent two totally separate and different cultures which have to be kept firmly apart.

The curriculum should reflect many elements of that part of his life, which a child lives outside school.