

Exploring Languages through Immersion Beyond the Classroom

Challenge

Operating as a Specialist Language College since 2003, Belle Vue Girls (BVG) sought a language-learning solution to support the curriculum requirement in the Modern Foreign Language programme for Year 7 to Year 13 students. The vision for language learning at BVG is for all students in all year groups to be learning a language. The academy looked for a solution that could extend classroom instruction to allow students to complement classroom teaching and develop skills in world languages through independent study. In addition, BVG needed a solution that could serve a growing English as an Additional Language (EAL) population, as many join the school with little or no understanding of English. The academy wanted a programme to complement English instruction, allowing students to build language skills quickly, reducing the time it takes for them to join the mainstream curriculum with their peers.

Implementation

The Modern Foreign Language faculty used the solution for Out of Lesson Learning (OOLL), assigning activities in Rosetta Course™ as homework. Students with access to computers outside of the academy would study at home. Those without computer access at home could work on campus in either the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) or a computer suite during their lunch break. Students were required to complete 30 minutes to one hour of study with the programme per week, depending on their year group. For the growing EAL population at BVG, the solution is used to offer English instruction outside the classroom. This helped to expedite the time it takes to mainstream EAL learners into the classroom with their peers. The administrative tool, Rosetta Stone® Manager™, was used to monitor and manage learner progress. The reporting enabled teachers not only to monitor progress but to link programme content to classroom activities.

Benefits

The following benefits have been realised since implementation in 2010:

- Made it possible for EAL students using the programme alongside classroom teaching to join the mainstream curriculum twice as fast as those who spend less time in the programme.
- Provided a cost-effective instructional technology to meet the needs of students.
- Supported increased student achievement results on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) testing of 5 A*-C grades from 15% to approximately 50% over the last 6 years, a 27% annual growth rate.



"We use Rosetta Stone to support our teaching of ALL languages, because the students love the feeling of independence the programme offers. Immersion means that students with a low level of English can access the learning equally as well as those who speak English fluently. It is all about learning the new language."

— Tess Wilkins,
Assistant Headteacher,
Belle Vue Girls
Languages Specialism

Bridging the Immersion Gap

Since the opening of BVG in 2003, an increasing number of students are entering the school with little or no English, having arrived in the UK from Slovakia, Libya, Pakistan, Iran, and other countries. With students needing to understand English to participate in classroom learning, the immersion divide between the incoming students' native language and their English skills is very wide. The Rosetta Stone® solution provides a great way for students to acquire English, mirroring the immersion environment they have entered into at the academy. As Tess Wilkins, Assistant Headteacher says, "Immersion means that students with a low level of English can access the learning equally as well as those who speak English fluently. It is all about learning the new language." BVG groups these students together for their first six weeks or so, and they use the Rosetta Course™ solution to learn English. They are assessed regularly, and over time they join the mainstream curriculum with their peers. The academy found that students using the course in their free time or at home had much better progress in developing language skills than those who used it only in formal classes. Following this strategy, EAL learners join the mainstream curriculum about twice as fast as those who spend less time in the programme. This promoted the inclusion of students within the community, allowing them to quickly integrate with other students and join in the culture of the academy.

Providing Real-life Authenticity

Implementing the Rosetta Stone solution has provided real-life contexts and situations as well as authentic voices for learners to learn language. Through instruction developed around real-life contexts, students have been able to connect and activate language learned to situations both inside and outside the classroom. The all-skills environment in the solution offered students the ability to develop the key language skills that bridge into their ability to work with authentic materials in their own environments. Whether reading a menu, listening to the television, or understanding instructions on an examination, students were able to apply language learned due to the authenticity of real world situations covered in the instructional design within the solution.

Providing Personalised Learning

BVG has had great success with the Rosetta Course solution due to the ability to personalise learning to the needs of students. Because the solution is available for online study, students are given the opportunity to study with the programme independent of classroom instruction to build language skills. Students are able to access the solution at home, in the Learning Resource Centre, or in a computer suite within the classroom. "We use Rosetta Stone to support our teaching of all languages, because the students love the feeling of independence the programme offers," explains Tess Wilkins. Working at their own pace, learners progress in the Rosetta Course solution at their level of individual mastery, driving the solution forward with their voice or their choice and receiving feedback with every interaction. Students are given the opportunity to repeat activities in the solution as many times as necessary to improve their scores. Through the proprietary speech-recognition technologies within the solution, students can work to fine tune pronunciation skills, building out the confidence to speak the language they are learning with others.

Realising Benefits

Since implementing the Rosetta Course solution in 2010, BVG has realised many benefits utilising the programme. First, the solution has provided cost effective English instruction for EAL learners. Complementing classroom instruction, students have been able to leverage online learning through independent study that has exponentially increased their skill set. Through complementing instruction, the average time that it takes for EAL students to participate in the mainstream curriculum decreased on average by 50%, from twelve weeks to six weeks, compared to students prior to implementation of the solution. For MFL instruction, the academy has seen the increase in GCSE test performance and has been able to sustain this higher level of achievement for the past three years. The Rosetta Stone solution has supported increased student achievement results on GCSE testing of 5 A*-C grades from 15% to approximately 50% of Year 11 students over the last 6 years, a 27% annual growth rate. This has significantly increased job opportunities and university study options for students as well as made the academy more competitive with other schools.

About Belle Vue Girls

Belle Vue Girls is a girls' 11-18 secondary school with academy status in Bradford, West Yorkshire, England. The school is also a specialist Languages and Science College. The school was founded in 1877 as The Girls' Higher Grade School, on Manningham Lane. In 2008 Belle Vue Girls Academy became a Specialist in Language, Science with Maths College.

The school has just under 1,200 students, all girls, and the vast majority are from families of Pakistani Muslim origin. Most students' first language is not English, and many speak a mixture of Punjabi, Pashto, Urdu, and Bengali at home. There is a large and growing Sixth Form, in which students study for AS and A2 levels, or for vocational courses such as Level 2 Health & Social Care, or Childcare.

bellevuegirls.wix.com/bvgsweb

About Rosetta Stone

Rosetta Stone is a global leader in technology-based language learning. We offer our clients scalable solutions for a variety of needs, from individual learners to single classrooms to entire organisations.

Our solutions have been implemented in over 20,000 schools and in more than 17,000 private and public sector organisations, and they are used by millions of learners in over 150 countries throughout the world.

Rosetta Stone  | **Education**