



RECOGNISING AND VALUING HOME LANGUAGES IN OUR SCHOOL

Our School

Woodbrook College is a co-educational DEIS post-primary in Bray, Co. Wicklow with a student population of ca. 550.

Our Vision: Learning Together for a Better Future

The unforeseen arrival of Ukrainian students in March 2022 led us to reflect on the cultural and linguistic diversity within our school.

Diversity in our School

15 newly arrived Ukrainian students

32% + of 6th students spoke a language other than English at home



Leave no one behind

Intercultural Awareness is linked to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Goal 3 - good health and wellbeing
Goal 4 - quality education
Goal 10 - reduced inequalities.

It means being aware of inclusion and equality of opportunity.

Ways to support students:

Be welcoming

- Get to know your students- where are they from, what languages do they speak at home, and how to say their name

Be inclusive

- A sense of belonging to the group can affect a students' self-esteem, their identity and wellbeing.

Support the development of students' abilities in the language(s) of schooling

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The Language of Schooling

We want to ensure that every learner, regardless of English language proficiency, feels a sense of belonging, can access the curriculum content and experiences success.

The Role of the Teacher

All teachers should:

- ▶ play an active role in promoting linguistic integration
- ▶ further their students' proficiency in the language of schooling
- ▶ help them to access the language of their curriculum subject



The Language of Schooling

- ▶ Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS)
- ▶ Cognitive Academic Linguistic Proficiency (CALP)

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

- ▶ social, conversational language
- ▶ fluency in approx. 2 years
- ▶ non-verbal behaviour
- ▶ observing others' reactions
- ▶ voice cues such as phrasing, intonations, stress
- ▶ contextual cues
- ▶ allows for statements to be repeated, and/or clarified.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

- ▶ academic language
- ▶ fluency takes 5- 7 years
- ▶ non-verbal cues are absent
- ▶ there is less face-to-face interaction
- ▶ academic language is often abstract
- ▶ literacy demands are high
- ▶ cultural/linguistic knowledge is often needed to comprehend fully.

Why is the language of schooling important?

- ▶ Student's ability can be underestimated
- ▶ Disparity between our expectations and the reality

How does this affect our students

- ▶ Students are **not** succeeding
- ▶ Misconceptions about the competence of the student
- ▶ Misconceptions about the motivation levels of the student
- ▶ SEN
- ▶ Need support



What did we do?

Actions

- Discussion with management in April 2022
- Contact with the PPLI in May 2022
- Presentation to staff in late May 2022
- Presentation to staff in September 2022 and agreement to role out the ILAOS toolkit
- ILAOS survey to teachers in September 2022
- ILAOS survey to students in October 2022
- ILAOS survey to parents in November 2022
- ILAOS survey to management and other school staff in December 2022
- Presentation to staff in January 2023 with survey results
- Whole School Language Survey in March 2023
- Presentation to staff in June 2023 with next steps



Intercultural Look at our School

- ▶ To help our school community reflect upon the role of languages and culture in our school, we used a school self-evaluation toolkit prepared by Post-Primary Languages Ireland and DDLETB.
- ▶ All members of the school community were invited to complete an anonymous survey including teaching staff, parents, the Board of Management, non-teaching staff, and students.

Whole School Language Survey

2. Is English your first language?

More Details

- Yes 254
- No 74



Outcomes

Teachers are asked to directly support their EAL/ multilingual students

1. Know the Cultural and Linguistic Profile of your Classes
2. Recognise being multilingual is an asset and value all the languages of the learners in your classes equally
3. Encourage home language use for learning
4. Be mindful of the linguistic difficulties some parents face when engaging with our school.

Our school now has an insight into the languages spoken at home and requests this information from incoming students.

What other languages can you speak?

Arabic	4	Lithuanian	4
Afrikaans	6	Malayalam	8
Chinese	9	Polish	22
Croatian	1	Portuguese	1
Czech	1	Romanian	11
Estonian	2	Russian	17
Greek	2	Slovak	0
Hindi	9	Slovenian	1
Hungarian	0	Tagalog	11
Italian	6	Turkish	2
Latvian	1	Ukrainian	9
		Other	28

Our school now has detailed information from the ILAOS surveys and has implemented ILAOS recommendations

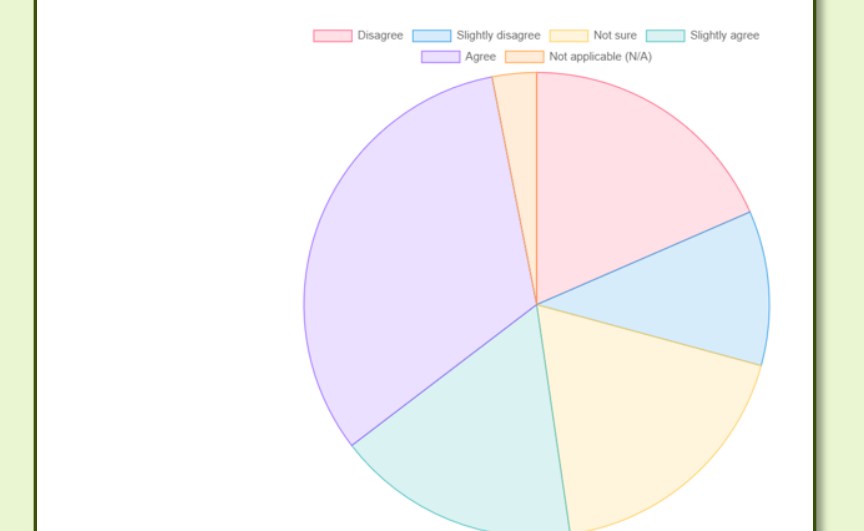
Some examples of good practice

Make room for students' home languages as part of the learning process.

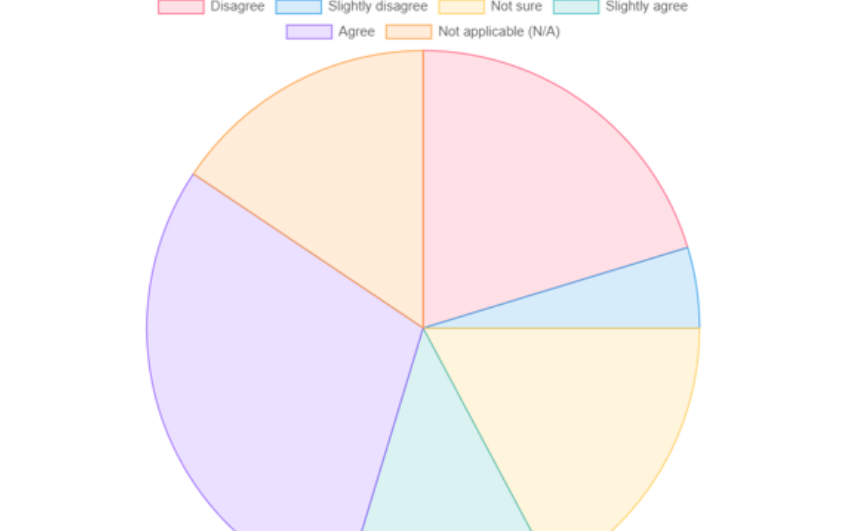
Encourage learners to

- ▶ Read materials in their home language to build background, increase reading skills or clarify concepts
- ▶ Make notes in their home language
- ▶ Draft work in their home language and translate it to English
- ▶ Research a topic in their home language and present it in English
- ▶ Read a task in English and answer in their home language
- ▶ Annotate in their home language and present in English

In my school, my linguistic and cultural background is valued and celebrated.



My teachers encourage and support me to use the languages I know to understand what I am learning.

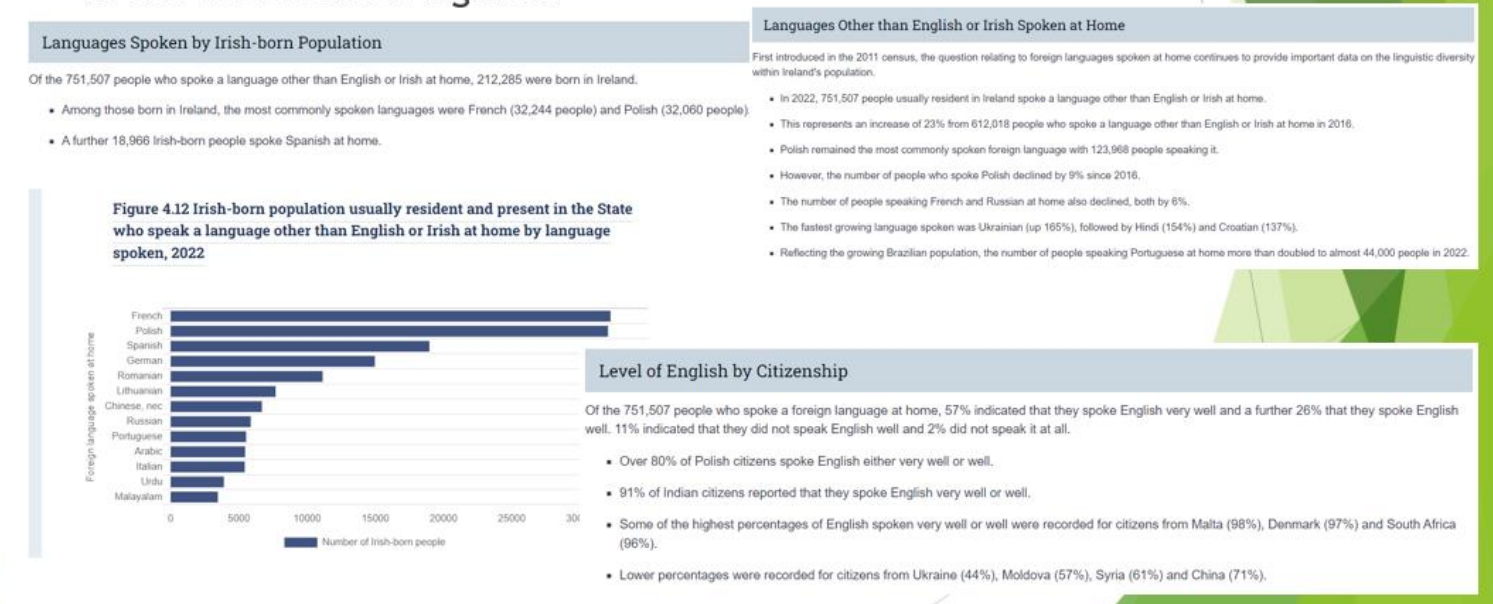


Practical changes

- Teachers are teaching with live subtitles in Powerpoint
- Home Language classroom buddies
- Drop Everything and Read in Home languages
- Google doc and Word translation being used
- House exams translated into Heritage languages
- School Website translated into different languages
- Offline translators allowed during lessons and exams
- Heritage languages are included in Think Languages and Languages week
- Heritage Languages are included in the Friday Assembly
- Heritage Language Support Classes for 5th and 6th years.

2022 Census

Our experience ties in with the national situation as seen in the 2022 Census figures.



My teachers take into account what I have learned before in my previous school or in the other country where I lived. They ask me what I have already learned and what I know.

