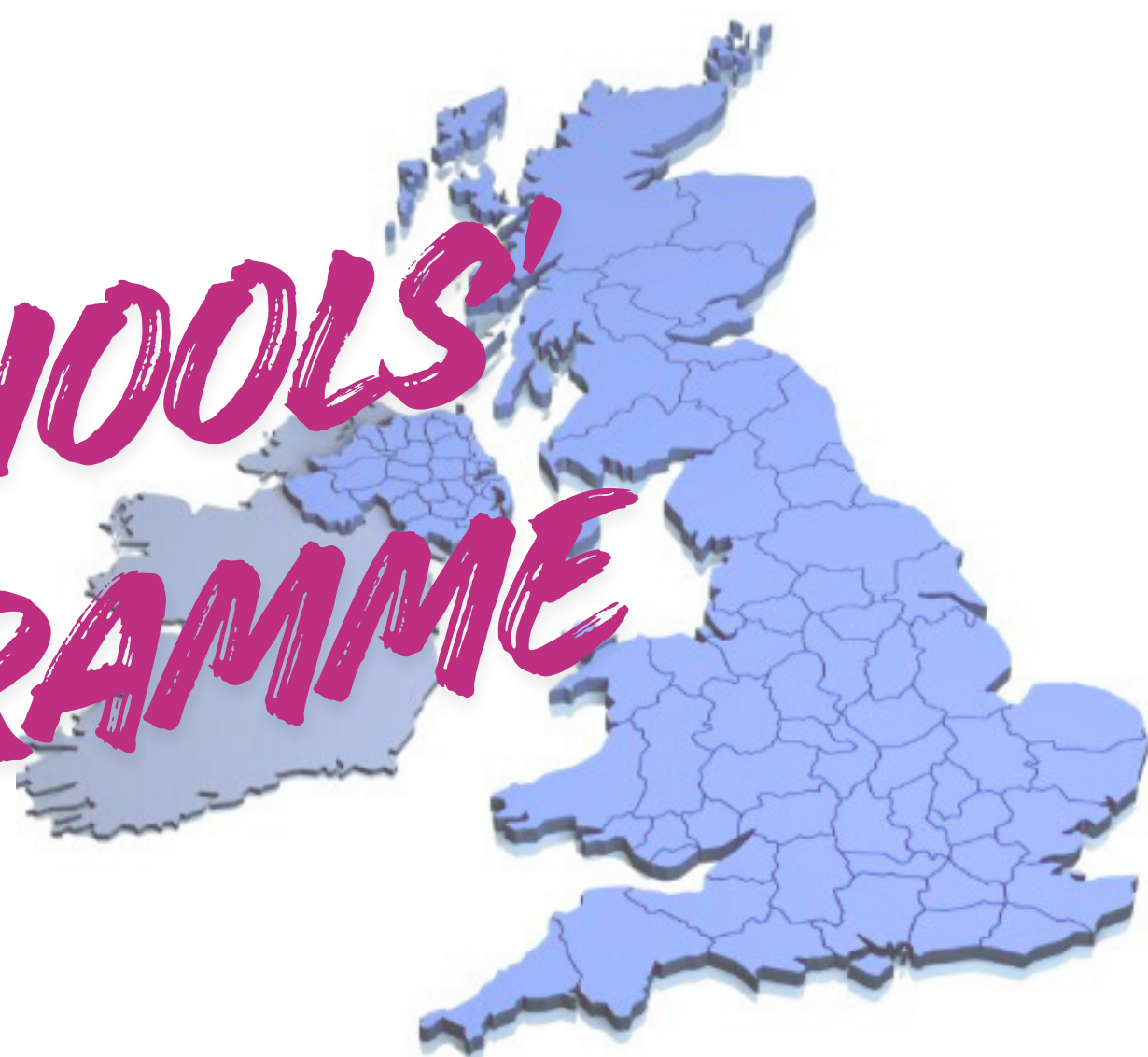




North East Festival of Languages

6 January to 31 March 2026

UK SCHOOLS' PROGRAMME



Create your own Festival programme!

Pick and mix from FREE events, classroom activities and competitions to build skills and celebrate diverse languages, cultures and global connections

Event for teachers

- [Becoming a European Parliament Ambassador School](#) Webinar for UK secondary and college teachers: 3.30-4.30pm on 29 January

Classroom activities (6 January-31 March)

- [Ursa Lingua's Castle Quest](#) Escape Room Adventure (KS2)
- [Multilingual Me KS2 lesson](#): Exploring and celebrating languages
- [Stories from around the world: Food on Film](#) activities (ages KS1-3)
- [6 Primary French lessons: World Cup 2026](#) (Y5-6, Y7)
- [Exploring and celebrating indigenous African languages](#) (KS1-4)
- [Afro-Ecuadorian Fairytales](#) resources (English/Spanish) (KS2-5)
- [Fun with Japanese](#) interactive activities (KS1-2)
- [Multilingual digital stories](#) - 5 films made by children (KS2-4)
- [Fun with Felix and Franz](#) primary German lessons (KS1-2)
- [Spanish Cinema in the Classroom](#) (KS4-5) films with resources

Languages and Careers events and resources

- [Modern Languages in the Working World webinar](#) (Y8-9) 2 March
- [Spanish language and careers webinar](#) (Y8-9) 3 March
- [Languages at Work webinar & language challenge](#) (Y8-9) 5 March
- [Futbol Lingo languages and careers webinar](#) (KS3-5) 6 March
- [Where can languages take me? Webinar](#) (Y8-9) 26 March
- [How Languages Changed my Life](#) stories

Live languages and cultures events (March)

- [Lingua Cub's French Fun! 4 online sessions](#) (ages 3-7) on Wednesdays 4, 11, 18 and 25 March
- [Lingua Cub's Super Spanish! 4 online sessions](#) (ages 3-7) on Fridays 6, 13, 20 and 27 March
- [Wuschel online German sessions](#) (KS1-2) 9 and 16 March
- [#LetAfghanGirlsLearn! Webinar](#) (KS4-5) 10 March
- [Bilingual poetry online French/English](#) (KS4-5) 12 March
- [Ursa Lingua's French Feast KS2 live lesson online](#) 17 March
- [Ursa Lingua's Spanish Surprise live lesson online](#) 19 March

Keep up to date with all the Festival news



Competitions and celebrations

- [Karneval Mask Competition NE/UK](#) (KS2-4) 6 January-6 March
- [German Week 19-24 January](#) UK primary and secondary schools
- [JaLaChamp](#) (Japanese) primary and secondary, November-March
- [World Children's Haiku Contest](#) (U15s) submissions by 28 Feb
- [French Pop Video Competition](#), register by February, submit May
- [Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators](#), open until 27 March
- [Joutes oratoires lycéennes](#) French debating competition for 6th forms, regional heats to February, final in March
- [Multilingual Verses](#) Open competition, various deadlines to 2027
- [Celebrate Speaking!](#) Festival of speaking languages, 1-28 Feb

Resources and support

- [ENACT Around the World Club packs](#) (North East, UK, Worldwide)
- [Around the World Education Packs](#) from British Council
- [British Council languages support](#) for schools
- [Association for Language Learning](#) and ALL North East
- [National Consortium for Languages Education](#)
- [European Centre for Modern Languages](#)

Festival participation supports:



Applications for British Council's [International School Award](#) levels: Foundation Certificate, Intermediate, Accreditation to help embed internationalism across the curriculum and school community.



[Schools of Sanctuary](#): Schools can get involved in a range of activities and events to embrace the languages, cultures and traditions of all pupils and the school community.

[Click here](#) for UK schools programme online

The Festival is part-funded by the North East Combined Authority



Kim McGuinness
North East
Mayor

FESTIVAL PROGRAMME BY ACTIVITY

Click on the images for the activity webpages and registration details

Classroom activities with teaching resources (ages 3-16): Available 6 January to 31 March

Enjoy activities in the classroom which can be delivered at any time during the Festival



For KS2 7-11 years in North East and UK schools: Help polar bear, Ursa Lingua, escape the castle using the power of languages and the magic of teamwork! With interactive resources.



For UK primary schools (KS2): Lesson and materials to help pupils explore languages, celebrate linguistic diversity and learn about multilingualism and migration in their classroom and community context.



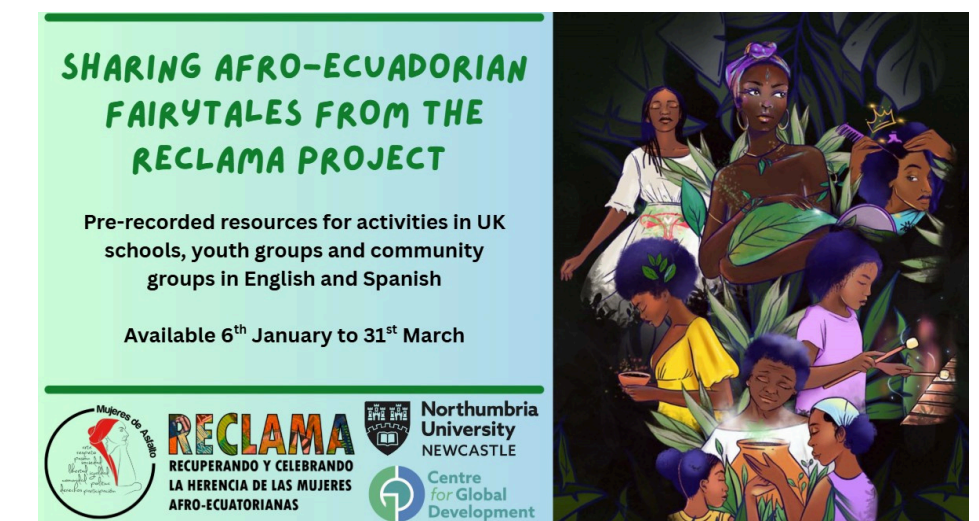
NE and UK schools (ages 5-15): Access three short films, revealing different cultures, communities and languages. Explore underlying themes that unite us through the language of food. With teaching guide.



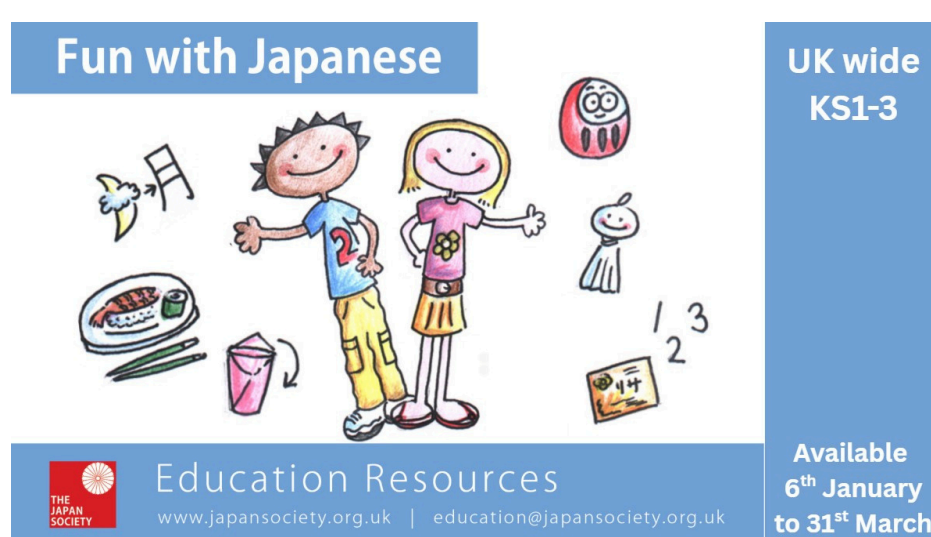
For NE and UK schools (Y5-6) and KS2-3 transition: Enthuse pupils with six creative lessons around the men's 2026 World Cup. Includes lesson plans, pre-recorded videos and a powerpoint presentation.



For UK schools and groups (5-16 years): Teaching resources and activities to run in a classroom, youth group or community. Introducing 4 indigenous African languages: Yoruba, Swahili, Tamazight, Xhosa



For UK schools, youth and community groups: Resources in English and Spanish bringing Afro-Ecuadorian fairy tales to life, learning about the importance of traditions, knowledge and culture.



For children UK-wide (KS1-3): A simple and fun introduction to Japanese for pupils and community groups or families with children aged 5-11. A series of short videos online plus a calligraphy workshop.



For UK schools and groups (KS2-4): Share short multilingual digital stories created by children and young people aged 7-16 in a range of languages, with English subtitles. Teacher guide provided.



UK schools (KS1-2): Join puppets Felix and Franzi in singing songs, completing challenges and playing games in German. With teaching resources and lessons. No knowledge of German needed.



For KS4-5 UK schools: Access Spanish films for classroom screenings. English subtitles and teaching guides provided to enhance pupils' Spanish learning through this engaging activity.

Event for teachers (secondary and college)



Webinar for UK secondary and college teachers: Learn about becoming a European Parliament Ambassador School with free accreditation and access to free resources and trips from the European Parliament Liaison Office in the UK, plus links to their EU and UK schools' network.

Languages and careers events and resources

Online events are open to North East and UK schools. In person events are open to North East schools.



NE & UK schools Y8-Y9: Join David Binns for an inspirational careers talk for students, stressing the importance of a second language skill in any chosen career and encouraging GCSE take-up.



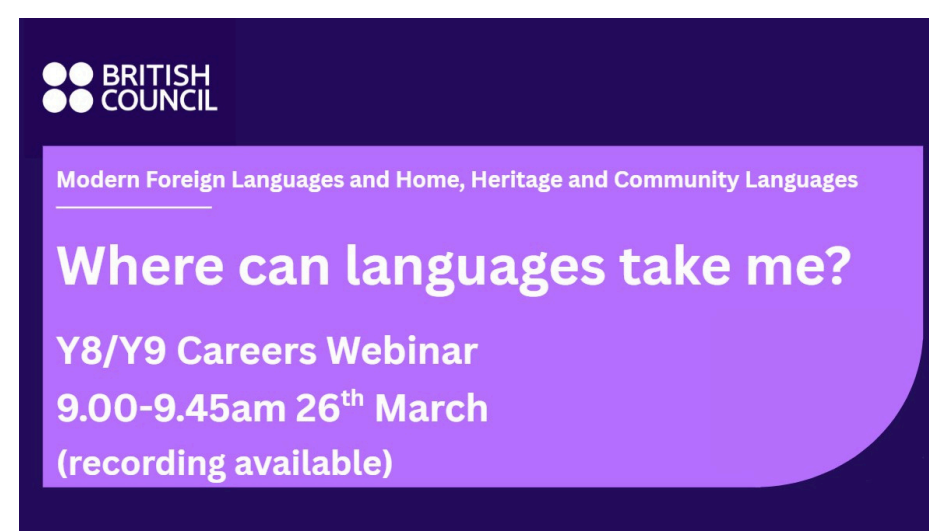
NE & UK secondary schools/6th forms: Inspire pupils to progress with Spanish and find out about the benefits of learning languages and the future opportunities learning Spanish brings. (Recording)



NE and UK schools (KS3 Y8-Y9): Motivational session with professional linguists. Sharing career insights and running live language challenges in French, German and Spanish.



NE & UK schools (KS3-5): Join Futbol Lingo's motivational webinar, using football to inspire a generation of future linguists and open perspectives on the range of careers in football.



NE & UK schools Year 8-9: Inspire pupils to choose languages at GCSE with professionals sharing their language learning journeys, skills and how they use languages in their work. (Recording available)



North East and UK: Discover inspiring stories of people connected to the North East. Explore how learning and speaking other languages shaped their education and careers and enriched their lives.

Live languages and cultures events - in person and online

Online events are open to North East and UK schools. In person events are open to North East schools.



For UK schools (ages 3-7): Join four fun-filled online French sessions with Lingua Cub's playful activities, songs and games. Activity pack provided. Set of recordings available (end March)



For UK schools (ages 3-7): Join Lingua Cub for four lively online Spanish sessions. Discover Spanish with fun games, songs and interactive activities. Activity pack and recordings available.



For UK schools KS1-2: Join Wuschel the friendly alien for fun-filled live sessions, with catchy songs, challenges and games, linked to 'Wuschel auf der Erde', illustrated by Axel Scheffler.



For 14-18 year olds (UK wide): Share the experiences of Afghan girls, their fight for education and what pupils in the UK can do to support them. Education pack provided.



For UK schools KS4-5 French learners: Join Michaël for a stimulating, interactive bilingual poetry session in French and English. Teaching resources provided and recording available.



For UK schools KS2: Join Ursa Lingua the language bear for a fun-filled online French lesson with games, challenges and feast-themed activities. With activity pack. Recording available.



For UK schools KS2: Join Ursa Lingua the language bear for a fun-filled online Spanish lesson with games, challenges and feast-themed activities. With activity pack. Recording available.

UK competitions and celebrations

Get involved in national celebrations and competitions to enthuse children and young people about languages



For NE and UK schools (KS2-4): Pupils will celebrate Germany's most colourful and joyful festival and design their own Karneval mask. With teaching and learning resources. NE/UK Key Stage winners.



UK schools register to access creative translation teaching resources in French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish. Competition tasks released 2 Feb, deadline 27 Mar.



UK 6th forms: French debating competition around current topics, building confidence and critical thinking. Regional heats to February and Final in London on 24th March with prizes.



UK schools can take part in a week long celebration of German language and culture. Age-appropriate resources, events and activities available to registered primary and secondary schools.



Open to UK schools with three age categories (7-11, 12-15, 16-18). Schools register Feb/March and submit videos of original songs in French by May, with Award Ceremony in London in June.



UK schools: Share your children's multilingual texts, verses and nursery rhymes and encourage family involvement and intergenerational learning. Ongoing deadlines to 2027. Entries and resources are shared.



For under 15 year-olds: Compose your own haiku with accompanying artwork by 28th February for a chance to win prizes. Both individual and school entries are welcomed.



UK schools: Practice and celebrate a language your students learn or use in their community and take part in the virtual festival of speaking in by sharing performances online.



For UK primary and secondary learners of Japanese. The 2026 theme is 'My favourite sandwiches'. Speech and video categories. Finals on 20th June in London. Guidance and downloads.

Language and cultural resources and support available anytime

Find a wide range of resources freely available to explore languages and cultures



UK and worldwide schools can set up their own Clubs with free resources, Children and young people can learn about different languages and cultures, while doing hands-on activities.



Explore a selection of British Council's Education Packs with specially designed lessons and resources for schools linked to different countries and cultures across the world.



Access a range of language resources designed to help introduce and support language learning and teaching, as well as support for international links and the International School Award.



Discover how ALL represents and supports NE and UK language teachers and aids professional development and the development of policy.



National programme supporting language education in England: LEO professional learning platform, language networks and CPD webinars.



Classroom resources and publications in multiple languages available to support teachers from this Council of Europe supported website.

ABOUT OUR FESTIVAL

Find out more about the development and impact of the Festival and the partnership supporting it



The Festival started during the pandemic, as a means to provide language opportunities for learners giving children and young people stimulating activities to enthuse them and encourage their language learning journey.

The Festival has grown year on year. From 2021 to 2025, over 183,000 children and young people (ages 3 to 18) have enjoyed immersing themselves in diverse languages and cultures through our Festival activities.

All Festival programmes have been open to North East schools and the Festival has offered activities for both UK and international schools.⁷

[Click here](#) to read the 2025 Festival Evaluation Summary Report to read more about the Festival’s reach and impact and see some key outcomes and learning from the evaluation below.

Festival 2025 - key achievements



Record-breaking participation

93,798 children and young people took part (target 15,000), 428 schools (target 150) and over 1,200 teachers were engaged (target 300). In 2025, the festival engaged more children and young people than all four previous annual festivals combined



Creative, inclusive, flexible programme

A diverse ‘pick and mix’ programme (in-person, online and pre-recorded) for pupils from Early Years to Key Stage 5 including: world languages and cultures events and resources; multilingual creative projects; competitions; careers-related activities



High quality delivery

Feedback from teachers demonstrated the high quality of the programme: people delivering activities (71% excellent, 26% good), content (68% excellent, 29% good), materials (67% excellent, 29% good) and access (67% excellent, 30% good)



Creative products and Festival legacy

Tangible outputs from creative multilingual projects: three digital anthologies of children’s writing, Festival song video of performances and the Friendship Trees public installation of children’s artwork. plus five Festival case study films

Festival 2025 - core strengths



Strategic Partnerships

Festival success was underpinned by long-standing and new collaborations with regional, national and international partners, including local authorities, universities, cultural and community organisations and language specialists



Efficient delivery model

The long lead in time (six months), clear timeline, advance bookings from November and centralised coordination enabled streamlined organisation and delivery of the Festival and effective monitoring across Festival activities, with delivery partners and schools



Outstanding value for money

Total cost: £124,169. With 66% in-kind contributions, core funding (£38,400 - North East Combined Authority) and event funding (£3,355 - QFI), the Festival leveraged substantial resources, enabling broad access and rich content



Professional PR and outreach

43 media features reached 6.3 million people; 45 web articles and 1,000 social media posts drove awareness; the website had 47,945 page views and 16,410 new users; five Festival filmed case studies; Communications with schools via networks were impactful

Since 2021, our Festival has been igniting a love for languages and cultures by offering exciting, free opportunities for children and young people in schools, community schools and groups.

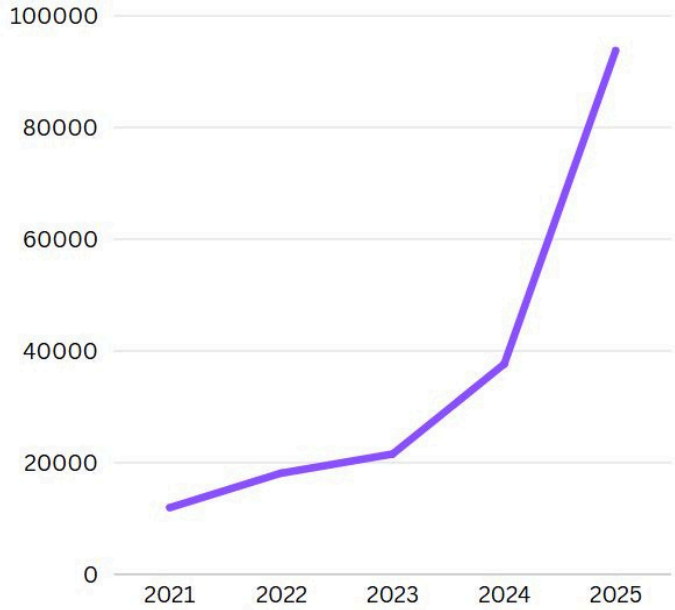
Enjoying fresh, creative ways to engage with diverse cultures helps inspire the next generation to embrace multilingualism and discover the world, right here in the North East!

At the heart of the Festival is a commitment to expanding young people’s horizons. We aim to spark curiosity, build skills and confidence and foster intercultural awareness.

We want to help prepare children and young people for an increasingly interconnected world and support their future education and career choices and opportunities.

Festival evolution 2021-2025

Number of children and young people (aged 3-18) taking part



Festival 2025 - Impact on children and young people

By empowering children and young people with language skills, intercultural competence and access to opportunities, the Festival helps break down barriers, unlock potential and create pathways to brighter futures.



Promoting literacy and oracy

Widening access to diverse linguistic resources and immersive experiences helped to empower pupils to develop strong literacy and oracy skills, essential for academic success and lifelong learning



Promoting language learning

Having fun with languages and enabling pupils to enjoy learning, see the opportunities available and develop their interest in continuing their language learning journeys



Providing accessible learning opportunities

Offering different age groups many ways to engage (in-person, online, live, pre-recorded, through projects and competitions) widened accessibility to pupils in schools and community schools



Expanding Cultural Capital

Celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity exposed pupils to new ideas, perspectives and traditions, broadening cultural horizons, developing cross-cultural competencies and their sense of belonging



Inspiration and Empowerment

Showcasing role models, language enthusiasts and success stories, helped inspire and empower children and young people to explore their linguistic potential, pursue their passion for languages and embrace multiculturalism as a source of strength and enrichment



Promoting multilingualism

Celebrating linguistic diversity empowered children and young people from diverse backgrounds to have pride in their identity, embrace their home languages and be inspired to learn more



Widening perspectives on career pathways

Offering a range of languages and careers webinars, in-person events and resources helped widen perspectives about the wide range of career opportunities available to young people who develop language and intercultural skills

Festival partners

The Festival relies on contributions from around local, regional, UK and international partners providing expertise, time and resources free of charge to benefit children and young people. We are grateful to all those who have helped arrange or are delivering events and activities, as well as sharing online resources as part of this festival. The Festival is hosted and coordinated annually by International Newcastle and supported by a dedicated Steering Group of teachers and partners.

