



# BENEFITS OF LEARNING A LANGUAGE

Public education  
**A world of opportunities**



**Learning a new language is fun and exciting. It also has wonderful benefits for children at school and in life. According to research, the best time to start is early in life so, from 2018, it will be compulsory for all schools to teach a language to Year 3 students. By 2023, all students from Years 3 to 8 will learn a language.**

### **Enhances literacy skills**

Children develop a better understanding of English when they study a new language. They become more aware of grammar, conjugation and sentence structures. This helps them understand how English works, enhances their comprehension and accelerates their ability to read and write.

### **Improves memory and brain function**

Learning a language strengthens the area of the brain which is responsible for memory, speech and sensory perception. Bilingual people are better at retaining lists, sequences, names and directions. They are also more creative, perceptive and can concentrate for longer.

### **Helps develop critical thinking and problem solving skills**

Learning a language enables children to analyse information and solve problems better as they can select relevant information and ignore irrelevant or misleading information. They become more rational and objective decision makers.

### **Fosters respect and understanding of other cultures**

Learning a new language nurtures curiosity and openness in children. They become aware of new cultures, and develop a greater understanding and appreciation of other people and customs that are different to their own. As they develop their language fluency, they increase their ability to communicate across cultures and interact positively with people from other countries.

### **Improves overall performance at school**

Studies show that bilingual and multilingual children outperform other children who speak only one language. Academic results indicate this is especially true in reading, vocabulary and maths.

### **Creates employment and career opportunities**

More and more companies are seeking staff who can speak more than one language. Bilingual staff are valued for their ability to communicate in the languages of their business partners and to cross important cultural barriers.

### **Enhances travel experiences**

A person who is able to speak the language of the country they are visiting has more opportunities to enjoy the local culture. They are able to interact more with locals, interpret written information and travel with ease.

### **WHY START LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL?**

- Brain development is accelerated.
- Oral skills are developed easily.
- Sounds and rhythms of the new language are easier to pick up.
- Younger children won't speak the new language with an English accent.
- Younger children have the confidence to practise the language with other people.
- Children have more time to become proficient in the new language.