

Report from the 2017 Outreach Events, University of Stirling

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On 13 and 14 June 2017, the University of Stirling hosted two days of events. It had three aims

1. To give pupils an insight into the format and content of studying French at university
2. To persuade attendees that studying French is relevant and contributes to an understanding of the contemporary world
3. To assist teachers in building skills and confidence in approaches to the study and assessment of literary and cinematic texts.

With £350 support from the ASMCF a further aim was added, of promoting the Association to teachers.

A total of 200 pupils and 29 teachers from 20 schools attended the two days, travelling from as far as 1.5 hours away. A couple of teachers came alone, without pupils, to attend the CPD sessions. All Stirling teaching staff were involved in the day, which offered pupils a 40 minute lecture, language seminar, and literature seminar (all focused on contemporary France and postcolonial immigration), session with final year students talking about their experiences especially of Study Abroad, and session with students who had graduated up to 5 years previously. Teachers were offered two CPD sessions, on teaching literary and cinematic texts, and on assessing culture essays. Coffee was provided for the teachers and alumni (thanks to the ASMCF support), and cold drinks for the pupils (this was partially subsidized by the ASMCF). No lunch was provided. Nine pupils from a deprived area were able to attend thanks to the ASMCF support, which paid for their public transport, and copies of the text used in seminars were also purchased with the Outreach funding.

Promotion of the ASMCF: marketing materials were provided by T&F (postcards and copies of the journal), introduced in the seminars and taken by teachers, and leaflets containing copy by the Outreach Officer were printed and distributed. Programmes featured the ASMCF logo.

The response to the day was enthusiastic. The places for the single day originally planned were filled within 2 days of publicizing the event, and when a second day was added, a reserve list quickly grew. In the end, the projected numbers of pupils provided by many schools varied (both up and down) and it was possible to provide places for many of the schools on the reserve list, some of whom had only a small number of pupils. With further promotion, it is likely that we could have filled 4 similar days, as discussion threads on a MFL Facebook page indicated that many teachers hadn't been aware of the event and would have liked to attend.

Feedback on two days was extremely positive. The day ended in an informal way with discussion between pupils and students over drinks so no formal questionnaire was issued. However, teachers were encouraged to seek feedback from their pupils, and an online survey was created and circulated. The responses were almost entirely positive, with many pupils commenting that they

now understood much more about the component parts of language study (such as literature and culture), and that they would now consider French as a potential subject choice.

'I enjoyed the trip overall and would now consider doing French at uni' (a pupil from a deprived area who received a travel grant from the ASMCF)

'I enjoyed seeing how studying at university works and how they teach their subject to you' (a pupil from a deprived area who received a travel grant from the ASMCF)

'It felt like a good representation of what it would be like to study French at University.' (pupil)

'I liked getting a taste of everything that I would do at uni.' (pupil)

'I'm mainly interested in Biology, but I would now like to study a language because I would like to work abroad'. (pupil)

From teachers, the feedback was all positive, calling the day 'excellent', 'really enjoyable', and 'a genuine pleasure', and saying that 'the lecture was inspiring and helpful'.