**Improving uptake in modern languages in the senior phase – 2 - Transcript**

**Lady with short blonde hair:** Shona what steps have you taken to redesign courses to include more motivational experiences for learners during the broad general education leading to positive uptake in the senior phase?

**Shona:** Well one of the things we’ve been able to do over the last 10-14 years is that because we have a languages specialist who is a former PT in Dunbar Grammar School teaching in cluster primaries we’ve been able to create a coherent course from P.6 all the way through to S4 and beyond and we’ve actually been able to stop teaching the first two topics that we used to have in S1 basic introduction to language then on to family and pets and all that kind of stuff, that’s now been moved down to the primary school so the topic that we start with at the beginning of S1 is school which is relevant to them because they’re moving into the secondary school, it’s their first opportunity, it’s their first topic. They hit the ground running and they’re taken quite deeply into the language straightaway. They’re almost challenged from the very beginning, they’re not doing colours and that kind of thing so we can push them quite far by the time they get to the end of S3 they feel like they’ve had a really good shot at the language and they feel quite confident in their ability that they’re more likely to take it up in S4. We’ve also been able to introduce things with the BGE things like research into a town in another country like a French or German speaking country and just broaden the topics out a little bit and put in a bit more complexity in there as well. I think they’ve really responded well to that, definitely. We also used to teach, we would have five topics from S1 to S2 and then we would have the same five topics again in S3 and S4 at Standard Grade but we’ve now changed that so we don’t repeat topics with greater complexity later on. We actually start out with a topic and we take them really quite deeply into that straightaway. We do revisit the things that we’ve covered in S1-S3 when we get back to S4 but not in any great depth, it’s just touching on and reminding them about it so that’s our experience.

**Lady with short blonde hair:** Do you have any placing requests, you know pupils that maybe come and they haven’t had that experience at primary from out with the catchment area?

**Shona:** So any student that comes to us who has come with the other language that we teach because we alternate our languages. We have a little package in place for them so we can as fast track them through the primary stuff to catch them up and we usually find by the time they get to S3 they’re kind of back on track with everybody else. So what learning opportunities do you have out with the normal classroom environment in your department?

**Lady with short blonde hair:** We seek opportunities wherever we can find them really. We have native speakers, French and a German and from time to time a Spanish lady that comes in and we target the senior pupils actually but I think the younger pupils are aware of the native speakers in the department and so on. We’re in the middle of a project just now with SILT and British Council where a student on project trust is going to do a year in Chile and he will liaise with the Spanish class while he’s there, talking about customs and try and fit that in with topics and themes that the class are doing. We have pupils sort of teaching each other, not just in their own classroom but maybe a small group from my class will go and teach a grammar point or something to another class so just taking it outside the four walls I think is sometimes effective. Occasionally we’ll have pupils when they’re practising for speaking interviewing teachers but not necessarily modern languages teachers you know teachers that are willing to show off their language. So I think it makes it interesting. We have a very successful French exchange which has been going for over 20 years and it itself is very successful but I think that one of the most successful aspects is that after their visits the pupils keep in touch and then we have individual pupils coming over in their October week. That’s quite good, we also had a successful Comenius trip as well and although there was only senior pupils involved in that they spoke at assemblies and so on about their experiences in different countries. I think again coming back to target language, although that happens in the classroom when we see pupils outside the classroom we try to take opportunities to speak to them. I think that’s quite successful. Any other steps you’ve taken which have impacted on uptake post S4 in languages?

**Lady with long blonde hair:** Well three years ago we decided to introduce Spanish from first year. Up until that point we only had French in the core and it was quite pioneering at the time and it’s taken quite a lot of organisation and perseverance but we saw it through to the present third years taking their option choices and we think it’s had quite a big impact on the choices because 2/3 of the year group has opted to take Spanish as a national qualification. For the first time we are no longer part of the core in S4 and 79 pupils out of 150 have opted to take a language whether it was French or Spanish. The way we worked it was, it was quite difficult in terms of organising the time and timetable because we weren’t given any more allocation than three periods a week which we always had so half the year group did two French and one Spanish and the other half did two Spanish one French in first .In second year they swapped and in third year they’re now opting for their preferred subjects. I think if we hadn’t introduced the Spanish, I don’t think the numbers would be as healthy in this current uptake. We’ll see how it goes further on, we’ll progress with this module but so far so good, and I think it’s been very very popular. Spanish is not something we do in the Primary and I think the novelty of it and the fact they can identify with the Spanish has really helped it increase the uptake so we’ll just keep monitoring it.