French Film Festival UK

Learning Programme Report 2023

Thanks to the support of the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland the Learning programme goes from strength to strength, with more than 13,000 pupils from over 100 schools participating in this edition. Teachers warmly welcomed the programme, with the words of one echoing the response of many, saying:

> Thank you for a super festival, the pupils have really enjoyed the films and gained so much from watching and listening in French.



Oyne Primary School

Key factors in the take-up are that the programme is free of charge, available for screenings within schools and adaptable to school timetables – and that the films are relevant and engaging.

An additional benefit is the mainstream nature of the titles, produced commercially for audiences in France and other French-speaking countries thus giving an authentic glimpse into other stories, values and lives.

The 2023 Learning selection of four films, all in French with English subtitles, was curated for different age groups from nursery to end of secondary schooling. Each was accompanied by Learning Programme specially created resources to enrich and consolidate language acquisition.



Pupils at Merchiston School watched *Yakari*

Chien Pourri (*Stinky Dog*) regaled younger primary children with the adventures of an alley dog and his friends in the streets of Paris; for older primary little Sioux *Yakari* ventures through wild and treacherous landscapes with wayward mustang *Little Thunder*, said to be untameable; *Felicità* for early secondary saw a girl desperate not to be late on the first day at her middle school but having to contend with the breezy attitude of her parents, while *Rookies* documents the struggles

and ultimate success – through a programme of Hip Hop – of a group of older teens disaffected with school.

Scottish student film review prizes, awarded by the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland, were won by a secondary school in the Outer Hebrides and a primary school in south-east Scotland.

Enthusiastic teachers have reported that for over 80% of students the learning programme “enormously” or “moderately” impacted their positive engagement with language learning.



SCHOOLS AND CINEMAS

A new and growing trend is interest in transferring screenings from classroom to cinema confirming our conviction that watching French language films as part of a language curriculum not only encourages

engagement with the language but is also becoming a springboard for attracting younger cinema audiences under 18 years old. Both schools and cinemas have noted this interest and fostering such partnerships will be part of future editions. This year French class pupils watched learning programme films in The Fraser Centre in Tranent and Bo'ness Hippodrome. Others such as the Tower in Helensburgh are keen to participate in the future.

In another new development, we are currently in talks with Moray House to include information about the Learning Programme in resources available to new entrants to the teaching profession.

SOCIAL MEDIA

As well as in the dedicated space on the French Film Festival UK website the Learning Programme featured in posts on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter). We plan to use the latter much more widely in future to engage more directly with language teachers.

TEACHER FEEDBACK

Teachers overwhelmingly welcomed the programme as an enhancement language learning, with 84% reporting a decisive impact on pupils' engagement with language learning and eager to book again.
Responses included such comments as:

> We are a secondary school in a very deprived area – this opportunity is great for our students as each movie sends a message of resilience, excellence and visionary *(sic)*

They also appreciate the continuity, with one primary teacher saying:

> Pupils …. love the Film Festival, and often talk about films they have seen. My P7 pupils have now seen films 4 years running. They still remember the films and some of the vocabulary from the films. …. This is a really worthwhile programme.

In a nutshell:

> This is a really worthwhile programme. Thank you to French Film Festival.

The Festival is grateful for the generous support of the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland who sponsor the Learning Programme and kindly provide the prizes for the student film reviews.
We are also most appreciative of TotalEnergies' support for and active engagement in the Programme through their direct communications on

the subject with schools in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and members of their own staff.
We are also grateful for the assistance of SCILT in reaching the language teaching profession in Scotland. The Festival is pleased to be able to offer the programme in the light of some reduction in modern language teaching in Scotland.

Additionally, we salute the partnership created with the worldwide IFCinéma-Institut français who warmly congratulated FFF UK for enabling such a high number of school students (one of the highest among their partner organisations) to enrich their language learning through the Festival learning programme.



THE LEARNING PROGRAMME IN FIGURES

The 2023 edition in figures: over 13,000 participants from more than 100 schools with an almost equal number of primary and secondary, particularly in Scotland. The overall number for Scotland was slightly down with teachers often citing timetable restraints as the reason.

Total screenings numbered 236 almost evenly split between age groups but with early secondary slightly to the fore.

The figures for Scotland in more detail –

- Over 9,000 pupils
- 72 schools
    - 34 secondary
    - 35 primary
    - 1 nursery
    - 5 all ages

Scottish schools from 25 of the 32 local area authorities took part; this included participations from 7 of the 9 SIMD (*Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)* designated areas.

Scottish Local Authorities Represented	
Aberdeen City	Falkirk
Aberdeenshire	Fife
Angus	Glasgow, City of *
Argyll & Bute	Highland
West Dunbartonshire *	Midlothian
Dumfries & Galloway	Moray
Dundee City *	North Ayrshire *
East Ayrshire *	North Lanarkshire *
East Dunbartonshire	Perth & Kinross
East Lothian	Renfrewshire *
East Renfrewshire	South Lanarkshire
Edinburgh, City of	Stirling
Eilean Siar	**SIMD areas*

As the benefits to French language learning through the use of film brought by the Festival Learning Programme become more widely known, an increasing number of schools in other parts of the UK are taking part: in 2023, this was 28 schools (England 24, Wales 3, Northern Ireland 1).

Enthusiastic support ranged from tiny rural schools – with the smallest noting, “We are a tiny school with 68 pupils, I only have two higher pupils but they are quite keen!” – to very large urban establishments, running to 240 senior students.