

Class One News from Class Teacher Kate Martin

Class One are pictured below in a French class with Cathy Lebrun. The song they are singing in French is a folk song about the characters travelling across the bridge of the river in Avignon, the Baker, the Cobbler, the Knight and in this scene it is 'Le Boulanger' the Baker. The children sing and clap along to the song with great enthusiasm hoping that they will have the next turn up the front. It is wonderful to stand back as a class teacher and marvel at the enthusiasm and willingness of the children to participate in a foreign language class - the children are transported to another place through the artistic approach of the language teachers, Cathy with French and Jasminka Ward-Matievic with German in the years 1-6.

They introduce foreign language through various folk songs, poems, verses, puppets, blackboard drawings, baking and all the while the children are imitating the teacher in chorus and individually. In this way they start to form the sounds intrinsic to that language in an unconscious way - through being 'immersed' in this way they also pick up the essence of another culture.

Rudolf Steiner indicated that the benefits of learning foreign languages were several. Firstly, it enables the child to develop an inner soul quality particular to each language. For instance if you consider the sound and tone qualities expressed when German, French, English or Chinese are spoken each one is imbued with a very different feeling quality - each having a unique effect upon the human soul. So too by learning French and German does it allow for these soul qualities to live and express themselves in the children.

Secondly, this offers the children a chance to understand the differences that exist in other cultures, and to have empathy for others. I also think it allows for a mystery to be revealed over the course of a long period of time. This unfolding lends itself to a tendency in the child towards developing flexibility within the soul and to want to understand 'the other,' often with a sense of curiosity and love. And 'the other,' can be a metaphor for all aspects of one's development. 'The other person that I don't understand.' 'The maths problem,' etc.

Thank you to Language Teachers Cathy and Jasminka for bringing these enriching cultural experiences to the children in our classes.

