

Kicking the conversation around with Blues' French stars!

Small Heath School working with Birmingham City Football Club and Birmingham Nature Centre



Small Heath School was established in 1983, as the result of an amalgamation, and has since earned Technology College status as well as opening its own Sixth Form Centre. The school places a considerable emphasis on the importance of understanding and being respectful of other cultures and offers French, Urdu, Arabic and Bengali to pupils.

As part of the school's work related learning programme, which is designed to help pupils experience conversation with people other than teachers and fellow students, Small Heath's Year 10 pupils spent an afternoon in conversation with two French footballers.

Radhi Jaidi and Bruno N'Gotty, from Birmingham City Football Club, were welcomed by Head of Languages, Gaelle Launay and introduced to the children, who eagerly awaited their chance to put the questions they had prepared to the footballers.

The entire afternoon's activities were conducted in French, with pupils holding a question and answer session as well as giving a guided tour of the school.

One of the students gave a vote of thanks, again in French, and the players then posed for photographs and signed autographs.

This was a fantastic way to allow pupils to practice their French conversational skills and as one pupil summed up:

"It's a great way to learn the language practically, rather than learning vocabulary out of a book!"

Both players enjoyed their time at the school and said how glad they were to be invited to participate. They were also impressed with the standard of spoken French shown by the pupils. This feedback came from the football club, as well as the players themselves.

Another group of Year 10 pupils have been working with Birmingham Nature Centre, to produce a brochure and develop a website, both in French. All pupils involved have gained so much from the activities, that they now perceive the development of skills in French as important for the future. Some of the comments from pupils, regarding the Nature Centre project, were very encouraging:

“It improved my French and also my presentation skills.”

“It was good. It helped me improve my French and IT skills.”

“It was cool! We should do it again sometime.”

The impact of these activities has been noted in pupils’ attitudes towards language learning, as Richard Riley, Senior Tutor at Small Heath School, states:

“Pupils have been totally enthused by the work they’ve been involved in. They now see the use of French in a different light and realise the importance of their studies, citing learning French as ‘cool’ and ‘fun’!”

The feedback from these projects, together with their success, has inspired the school to continue with similar projects. They currently have a group of pupils on work experience in France, who will be setting up a link with a school in the south of France whilst they are there. It is envisaged that they will communicate via e-mail and video conference, supporting each other’s work.



An afternoon in conversation: Blues players Radhi Jaidi and Bruno N’Gotty with pupils from Small Heath School.

Contact details:

Small Heath School

Muntz Street
Small Heath
Birmingham
B10 9RX

T: 0121 464 7997

E: mail@smallheathschool.org.uk

W: www.smallheathschool.org.uk

Birmingham City Football Club plc

St. Andrew's Stadium
Birmingham
B9 4NH

T: 0871 226 1875

E: reception@bfc.com

W: www.blues.premiumtv.co.uk

Birmingham Nature Centre

Pershore Road

Birmingham

B5 7RL

T: 0121 472 7775

E: nature.centre@birmingham.gov.uk

W: www.birmingham.gov.uk/naturecentre