

FRENCH IN PRIMARY SCHOOL ABOLISHED....

....PLEASE CAMPAIGN TO HAVE THIS OVERTURNED.

Dear Parents,

As part of this week's budget it was announced that the Modern Language Initiative in Primary Schools is to be abolished, effective immediately.

This is hugely disappointing for our school where French has been warmly embraced since we joined the Initiative three years ago. Currently all pupils in 5th and 6th class learn French for one hour per week. They have taken to it with enthusiasm and genuine interest. It has been a very positive addition to the learning experience we offer in Caragh School. Pupils who have gone on to secondary school have reported back that they were at a great advantage over their peers who hadn't had the opportunity to study a European language in primary school.

French has become part and parcel of life in our school. We have build up a wide variety of resources; children from all classes, not just 5th and 6th can be heard saying 'Bonjour' or 'Au revoir' as they pass by on the corridor; we have forged links with a French teacher-training college in Nantes and have enjoyed welcoming students from there each year to work with our pupils on the cultural differences between life for a child in France and in Ireland; we've put up all of our signs around the school in English, Irish and French; we celebrate Mardi Gras every year, with 5th and 6th class pupils making (and eating!) a *lot* of crêpes!; 6th class host a French Breakfast (le petit déjeuner Français) for 4th class every June at which they 'pass on their French' before they leave; we also include French as well as Gaeilge in the school choir's repertoire. It is a great shame to think that all of this enriching and valuable work as well as all of the innovations and further development of the language we had planned, has to come to an end.

The National Coordinator of the MLPSI (Modern Language in Primary Schools Initiative) has asked that we harness the support of our pupils and parents and so we would be grateful if you could write to or email local politicians, the Ministers for Education and Finance and/or the Taoiseach in a bid to have this decision reversed. Some of the pupils have already written letters and their sense of disappointment and desire to continue learning French were expressed very eloquently. You can register your support for the MPSLI by simply signing an online petition on <http://tinyurl.com/mlpsi>

Other useful contacts are: taoiseach@taoiseach.gov.ie, anthony.lawlor@oireachtas.ie, michael.noonan@oireachtas.ie and ruairi.quinn@oireachtas.ie

We will keep you informed of any further developments via the school website.

Merci.