

# **‘AGISSONS CONTRE LE BULLYING’ ETWINNING PROJECT CASE STUDY**

**UNLOCKING STUDENTS’ FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
POTENTIAL THROUGH ETWINNING**



Image © Ashton Park School and Collège Paulette Billa

**“I am absolutely convinced that my students need to be involved in this kind of project. It makes learning another language more realistic and enables them to develop a better understanding of each other’s cultures”.** Laurence Laminie, French teacher, Ashton Park School, Bristol.

*“Two years ago, when I was 15 years old, I was uncomfortable with myself. I had no friends and I was bad at school. In order to be comfortable with myself, I decided to make a poor girl feel uncomfortable too. In my class there was a girl who was nice with everyone. I can't say her name here. I did too much harm to her.”*

This is the opening paragraph from one of the stories written by students from Ashton Park School in Bristol, United Kingdom and Collège Paulette Billa in Reims, France. It is a piece of work from part of the [eTwinning](#) project ‘Agissons contre le bullying’ (‘Let’s take action against bullying’). Students were encouraged to put their foreign language skills into practice by sharing views and producing collaborative short stories on the topic of bullying. The beginnings of the stories were written in English by the Collège Paulette Billa students, and completed in French by their UK counterparts.

### **Boosting confidence and strengthening language skills**

As part of the activity evaluation, UK teacher, Laurence Laminie, commented that the eTwinning activities had helped to demystify the art of language learning for her students:

**“My key aim for the project was for students to understand that you don’t have to be fluent to be able to communicate with other people, but you do need to try and do your best.”**

The majority of the story writing and collaboration took place on the eTwinning secure online space for students known as the [TwinSpace](#). The project’s digital platform allowed students to chat, publish photos and share their stories with one another in written and audio form.

Over the course of the project, students from both schools gradually realised that communicating in a foreign language was not rocket science, and that making mistakes was the only way they would ever

learn and improve. As Laurence noted, “It made them realise that they knew a little bit more than they thought. At first they were quite anxious, but then their confidence just started growing”.

Their confidence got an extra boost when they realised that the French students, despite being a year older, also made mistakes. “What my students found interesting”, Laurence explained, “was listening to the French students talking in English and realising that their accents weren’t perfect. After that they felt more comfortable with the idea that they sound quite English when speaking French– it’s reassuring to see people make the same mistakes as you!”

The project framework helped students to strengthen their skills in **key parts of the curriculum**:

“Students developed their listening skills by watching videos in French on the topic of bullying and listening to the audiobook created through the project”, said Laurence. “They developed their reading skills and we worked on building a bank of new vocabulary linked to the topic and revised grammar points. We also worked a lot on pronunciation and intonation.”

On the whole, students felt that their French improved as a result of the project: “I feel much more confident when speaking in French”, one student said, “I also feel that my French has improved because we learned lots of different vocabulary, especially when we were writing our personal profiles on the TwinSpace!”

## Transforming the curriculum

The focus on the topic of bullying also gave Laurence the opportunity to innovate her classroom practice.

With support from her school’s personal, social and health education (PSHE) department, she was able to transform aspects of the French curriculum, which made the classes more engaging for students:

“Each activity has allowed me to improve on my teaching methods. My students were able to create, innovate, take risks and complete each task while respecting deadlines, as well as learn how to manage tasks to deliver a joint project. It allowed students to be active in their own learning and pushed them to analyse their work and to develop their views against bullying in school.”

The project also gave students the chance to explore bullying in its many manifestations. The focus on cyber bullying in particular allowed students to, in the words of one Ashton Park student, see “what can happen on social media so that you’re aware of what information you put on there and what you say to people online.”

## Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration

The level of teamwork between partner schools was strong throughout the project, and all students were involved in the writing, illustrating and recording of stories for the project’s final [bilingual eBook](#) and [audiobook](#).

Laurence explained that “the activities allowed students to work away from didactic teaching, which allowed them to grow in confidence over the course of the year and to learn with pleasure; this complemented what the teaching and learning environment should be in our school – aligned with **OFSTED** requirements.”

The teachers worked closely together throughout the project to ensure activities were delivered in a parallel manner, which helped to build a greater feeling of connectedness amongst students.

As all collaboration took place via the project [TwinSpace](#), this also gave students the chance to put their digital skills into practice, such as by creating and uploading audio recordings, PowerPoint presentations and quizzes to get to know one another. Students also enjoyed being able to use the platform outside of school, which helped make the collaboration feel more real and relevant to their everyday lives.