Pembroke College launched the London Centre for Languages and Cultures in 2013, in partnership with The Open University, William Morris Sixth Form and the London Schools Excellence Fund. As part of Pembroke’s ongoing Access strategy, both teacher and student-focused events have already taken place over the 2013-14 academic year, including: an A Level Study Day for pupils and teachers held at Pembroke College; a series of language- and pedagogy-based teacher seminars led by academics; an Easter Study School for pupils, delivered by Oxford undergraduates; and a three-day residential Summer School held at Pembroke College for pupils and teachers of modern and oriental languages.

We work with teachers from as many schools in the area as possible to foster partnerships that assist them in their teaching strategies and which also encourage young people to consider modern and oriental languages at degree level.”

Dr Peter Claus, Access Fellow, Pembroke College Oxford

The Open University is keen to promote the benefits of studying languages at school and university, answering a growing need to reconsider the importance of languages in the UK.

Using the expertise of the Department of Languages at the OU, LCLC has launched a website for teachers, providing open access to relevant learning materials. It is populated with open educational resources (OERs) for languages, gathered by specialists from The Open University and Oxford. The website also includes language-specific teacher forums which aim at facilitating online communication and the exchange of ideas between teachers within their schools as well as beyond.

With a strong reputation for teaching excellence, The Open University also provides the Centre with a wide range of language-focused seminars and workshops, as well as sessions focusing on linguistics and the pedagogy of language teaching, spreading and embedding languages and linguistics in their relationship to cultures. Another aspect of the OU involvement in the activities of the Centre concerns research into languages and the way languages can contribute positively to widening participation in higher education, making university an option for everyone.

Xavière Hassan, Lecturer in French, The Open University
Part of Pembroke College’s ongoing access programme, LCLC is the fourth subject centre to be established, following the launch of a Classics Centre in East London, a Science Centre in South Cheshire, and a Theology Centre in Greater Manchester, all of which involve close collaborations with other Oxford and Cambridge colleges, universities and higher education institutions across the UK, plus other local and nationwide organisations.

Underpinning this model is the belief that intensive academic engagement is one of the best ways to raise pupils’ aspirations; to foster enthusiasm for their subject and a “love of learning”; and to broaden their academic horizons. These are precisely the qualities that the most competitive universities are looking for in their prospective applicants, whichever subjects they wish to study.

LCLC is also the first of the subject centres to focus explicitly on working with teachers as well as with students, and a core principle of the Centre is that engagement with teachers and schools is vital if we are to achieve long-term improvements in rates of success in university applications.

What is the Language Centre?

The London Centre for Languages and Cultures (LCLC) was launched in November 2013, jointly by Pembroke College Oxford, The Open University, and William Morris Sixth Form. With funding from the London Schools Excellence Fund (supported by the Mayor of London and Department for Education), the Centre seeks to:

- enhance the subject knowledge of language teachers and students;
- raise students’ academic aspirations and cultural knowledge;
- encourage and promote the study of languages at university level, which are traditionally less popular choices for applicants from the state sector;
- raise the profile of Modern Foreign Languages, an invaluable cultural and economic skill which we believe is undervalued in the UK.

The Centre works with state schools across three West London boroughs: Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, and the City of Westminster. Nine languages are covered by the Centre’s programme: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Persian, Portuguese, and Spanish, in addition to a focus on Linguistics.

We work closely with academics from both The Open University and the University of Oxford, as well as from other partner institutions, to provide a programme of events for language teachers and students, including a study day, seminars, and Easter and Summer Schools. We have also created a network of subject and pedagogical resources for teachers, compiled and hosted by The Open University.

“It has taught me how choosing a language can lead to many job opportunities and I am now considering taking a language at university”

Study Day attendee
The LCLC’s academic programme comprises a number of different events, designed to enhance the linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical knowledge of language teachers and students, and to expose students to university styles of learning, which we believe will benefit them both in their immediate and future studies.

**Study Days**

Study Days are intended to complement and support students’ work at A Level, whilst also encouraging students to think more broadly and creatively, beyond their school curricula, about the study of languages and their associated cultures. A combination of plenary, cross-language lectures and smaller, language-specific sessions focusing on particular aspects of A Level syllabi aim to give students both a broad and a more focused insight into their linguistic studies.

The first LCLC A Level Study Day was held at Pembroke College on 20th January 2014, with around 40 students and teachers from four different West London schools in attendance. Language-specific sessions in five different languages were led by students and academics from Pembroke College and The Open University. Throughout the day, students and teachers were also addressed by Dr Tim Farrant on the intersection of literature and culture, Professor Theo van Lint on the Armenian language (which it is safe to say very few of the audience knew anything about!), and Dr Linda Flores on Japanese literature and the stereotypes and realities of Japanese culture that this can illuminate.

In addition, students had the opportunity to meet current language undergraduates, enabling them to gain an insight into life as a languages student at university, whilst teachers attended a dedicated session on listening skills, led by Felicity Harper of The Open University.

The next A Level Study Day will take place on Wednesday 28th January 2015 at Pembroke College.

**Seminars**

At the core of the Centre’s activities is increasing the subject knowledge of language teachers and students, both within and beyond the curriculum. Teacher seminars held throughout the year aspire to do just that: complement teachers’ knowledge of their language and its associated cultures, whilst at the same time encouraging discussion between teachers about the application of this knowledge to their GCSE and A Level syllabi.

During the 2013-14 academic year, seminars led by academics and postgraduate students from Oxford and The Open University were run in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Persian, Portuguese, and Spanish, covering topics ranging from Italian Futurism to the Sudanese novel *Season of Migration to the North*. Several of these seminars were held jointly with pupils and teachers, thereby allowing A Level students to take advantage directly of the linguistic and cultural topics being presented.

In addition, occasional teacher-specific seminars on teaching and pedagogy are held: in 2014, sessions on topics including Listening Skills and Dyslexia & Language Learning were held with Open University academics.

For the 2014-15 academic year, seminar afternoons will be taking place on Thursday 11th December 2014, and Thursday 5th March 2015. These afternoons, which are open to teachers and their students, will cover a range of languages and topics. They will encompass a mixture of linguistic, cultural, practical, and pedagogical content, in addition to information for students about the study of languages at university, and the applications of a language degree in the worlds of employment and academia.

“The seminar helped to remind me of the diversity of the Francophone world and of the importance of awakening pupils’ interest in this area of the specification”

Teacher Seminar attendee
For more information on these events, contact:
mgarraghan@wmsf.ac.uk

### Launch Seminar Afternoon
See page 7

### A Level Study Day
See page 6

In unavoidable circumstances, dates are subject to change. Participating schools will be informed of date changes well in advance. Further events may also be added to the calendar over the course of the year.

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### Easter School
See page 10

### Summer School
See page 11

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### Calendar 2014 – 2015

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Easter School

An annual Easter Study School aims to equip students with various language study skills necessary for their exams, such as writing, grammar and translation skills, but also to introduce students to new topics, themes and vocabulary in their chosen language, through investigation into particular cultural, social or historical topics.

The LCLC’s first Easter Study School took place on 16th & 17th April 2014, with sessions led by Oxford undergraduates and recent language graduates. The School culminated in presentations on a variety of topics, ranging from immigration and conflict in the French banlieues, to notorious Colombian criminal Pablo Escobar, and nostalgia and identity in a post-Cold War Germany. The students also had the opportunity to broaden their linguistic and cultural horizons further as they learnt about a completely unfamiliar language, thanks to an illuminating talk on ‘Tibetan Magical Realism’ by Katia Tzarkova Piseztsky from the School of Oriental and African Studies.

The 2015 Easter School will be held on Friday 10th and Saturday 11th April 2015.

Summer School

The LCLC’s year ends with a three-day residential Summer School held at Pembroke College in Oxford, a more intensive experience for a smaller number of participants, giving sixth formers the chance to experience what it is like to study languages at university. Students are set essays by postgraduate students in their chosen language, which they complete with access to Pembroke College’s extensive resources, and with the assistance of undergraduate mentors. The Summer School culminates in a traditional Oxford tutorial, in which the students are expected to discuss and defend their essay with their postgraduate tutor. This challenging but highly rewarding experience gives students an unrivalled opportunity to speak directly with an expert on their work, and gives them a taste of a unique element of the Oxford academic experience. The Summer School also gives the sixth formers the chance to meet and converse with current language students at Oxford, giving them an invaluable insight into life as an undergraduate.

In addition, a parallel Summer School runs for teachers, bringing together teachers of several different languages from a variety of schools. The programme focuses on enhancing language teachers’ pedagogical and subject knowledge, both through introduction to the LCLC’s dedicated resources, and engagement with Open University specialists. The Summer School also gives teachers the ability to utilize the huge resources of the University of Oxford. Given access to the University’s world-class Bodleian, Taylorian and Oriental Institute Libraries, teachers are able to explore their own academic interests and take some of Oxford’s learning back to the classroom.

The 2014 Summer School brought 25 students and teachers of Arabic, French, German, and Spanish to Pembroke to study topics ranging from Baudelaire’s Les fleurs du mal to the Arab Spring, whilst teachers worked closely with Open University academics and with one another on their teaching practice and resources. Prizes were awarded to two student ‘exhibitioners’ and one ‘scholar’ for their performance in their essays and tutorials.

The 2015 LCLC Summer School will take place from Monday 29th June to Wednesday 1st July, and will be open to students and teachers from across all of the LCLC’s partner schools.
Partnerships

The Bridge AP Academy

The LCLC has formed a close working partnership with another local MFL project based at the Bridge AP Academy in Fulham, part of the Tri-Borough Alternative Provision (TBAP). This programme aims to teach languages to staff and teachers across TBAP’s schools, with a view to incorporating languages more fully into the school curriculum. The LCLC has worked closely with this project, the collaboration culminating in a two-day residential Summer School at Pembroke College in July 2014, attended by six teachers and support staff who had been part of the TBAP programme. Over the course of the two days, the teachers were introduced to language teaching skills, particularly within the context of alternative provision. The teachers were also able to have the opportunity to improve their own language skills using the resources of Oxford University’s own dedicated Language Centre. For more information about this project, please contact Anu Jain at ajain@tbap.org.uk.

University of Westminster

The LCLC is working with a further London Schools Excellence Fund languages project run by Network for Languages London, based at the University of Westminster. The project, called “Professional Language Networks”, allows language teachers to share ideas and approaches to teaching and provides them with the opportunity to update their professional skills as well as their subject knowledge in languages, linguistics and language teaching methodology. The LCLC and University of Westminster are planning a joint event in the Summer Term of 2015 around the theme of transition from primary to secondary language education – an area of particular importance given that teaching a language is now compulsory in primary schools. More information about this event will follow later in the year.

Furthermore, Network for Languages’ Primary and Secondary MFL Conference is taking place on Saturday 15th November 2014, and teachers from all schools participating in the LCLC are eligible to attend free of charge. For more information about this event and the Network for Languages project, please contact Domini Stone at d.a.stone@westminster.ac.uk.

Oxford Brookes University

In our second year, the LCLC is partnering with Oxford Brookes University to provide expertise in the field of Applied Languages, particularly within a business context, to demonstrate to students the huge range of possibilities open to language graduates – one of the degrees most highly-valued by employers in the UK. Promoting the study of languages as an extremely useful as well as enjoyable skill is one of the fundamental aims of the Centre. A Careers in Languages event with Oxford Brookes University and Pembroke College will take place in March 2015.

Website & Resources

A specially-created resource website has been developed by The Open University, providing access to free online language resources. The website also offers language teachers the possibility to communicate with each other, across different schools, using dedicated forums in which they can discuss and exchange ideas.
Fifteen years ago 1.9% of the lowest social quintile went to an elite university such as Oxford, now it is just 2%. Students from the highest social class groups in the UK are three times more likely to enter university compared to those from the lowest. ‘Most able, least likely’ students often apply to the most competitive subjects: 14% of A grade state school students choose subjects that Oxbridge does not do; 41% apply to oversubscribed subjects.

Pembroke College Access Programme

In response, Pembroke offers something quite different from recent widening participation strategies. The objective is an academic approach that ensures that young people are prepared for intensive learning in competitive universities more generally and encouraged to go beyond the school curriculum. Students are made aware of niche subjects by actually studying those subjects in the regions where Pembroke has responsibility as Oxford’s link College: parts of London and the North West.

Operating out of hub partner schools or colleges, Pembroke Subject Centres deliver academic activities in subjects perceived to be non-vocational, including seminars, lectures and summer schools. All attract university and industry experts and reach students and teachers from wider geographical areas.

These centres reach a large number of students in each region, as well as teachers and the wider community – which, it is hoped, in turn contributes to a change in mindset and perception of a broader constituency in the local area.

The Pembroke subject centres are:
- The East End Classics Centre based at BSix, Hackney (with partners including Wadham College Oxford)
- The North West Science Centre at South Cheshire College (with Corpus Christi College Oxford)
- The North West Theology Centre at Ashton Sixth Form College
- The London Centre for Languages and Cultures (with the Open University) at William Morris Sixth Form in Hammersmith.

Contact

Matt Garraghan
Raising Aspirations Coordinator
William Morris School
Tel: 020 8748 6969 (ext 119)
mgarraghan@wmsf.ac.uk

Partners:
William Morris Sixth Form

LCLC is based in a ‘hub’ school, William Morris Sixth Form in Hammersmith, out of which Centre activities across the three target boroughs are coordinated. Founded in 1994 as the country’s first 16-19 school, and fully comprehensive, William Morris has supported LCLC since its inception in 2013. The school has a particularly strong provision of modern foreign languages, with eight different languages currently taught, and several other “heritage languages” supported.

The Open University

The Open University is a distance learning and research university founded by Royal Charter. The Department of Languages is part of the Faculty of Education and Language Studies, which encompasses four programme areas: Language Studies; Childhood, Youth and Education; Arts and Humanities; and Psychology. In 2009/10 there were almost 29,000 registered students, covering ten degrees, including four Foundation Degrees. Around half of these were studying languages, linguistics and English language, with the most popular areas for study in French, Spanish and Children’s Literature. The OU is also the foremost provider of distance teacher education in the UK and has built on this expertise to pursue a mission in the developing world with projects such as the Queen’s Anniversary prize-winning Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.

London Schools Excellence Fund

The Mayor’s £24 million London Schools Excellence Fund supports teaching excellence in London to deliver a world class education in a world class city. It helps students achieve better results through expert teaching, improved subject knowledge, and subject specific learning methods. The fund is part of the Mayor’s Education Programme and alongside the London Schools Gold Club and London Curriculum aims to boost standards in the capital’s schools. It was set up with £20 million from the Department for Education and £4.25 million from the Greater London Authority. The fund is currently supporting 100 projects, working with almost 800 schools across London on literacy, numeracy, STEM subjects and languages.

www.london.gov.uk/londonschoolsexcellencefund
www.londoned.org.uk

“It has helped me to develop more my passion for languages”

Study Day attendee