

Learning Village grew from a real classroom need and has been shaped through collaboration with schools, educators, advisers, developers and learners around the world.

How our story began

The story began in 2002, when Across Cultures founder Caroline Scott returned from teaching English in a secondary school in Thailand to teach in a primary school in Tower Hamlets, London.

Many learners in her class were newly arrived and spoke little English. Although Caroline had experience in English-language teaching, she had limited time to provide the structured support they needed while also teaching the rest of the class.

With funding from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Caroline developed an induction-to-English programme to help schools provide focused language support for newly arrived learners. She subsequently trained schools in Tower Hamlets and beyond to use the approach.

Caroline continued developing the methodology while working in international education and school leadership. Further research and classroom experience led to three published books:

- *Teaching Children English as an Additional Language: A Programme for 7–11 Year Olds*
- *Teaching English as an Additional Language 5–11: A Whole School Resource*
- *An English as an Additional Language Programme: Learning Through Images for 7–14 Year Olds*

These publications developed a structured approach to language and literacy, assessment, language-learning strategies, curriculum access and classroom differentiation.

From published methodology to Learning Village

Books could provide guidance and teaching materials, but technology offered greater flexibility. It could give learners opportunities to practise independently while enabling teachers to assess starting points, select learning pathways, provide targeted teaching and monitor progress.

In 2013, Caroline began working with programmer Simon Lobo Morrell to turn the methodology into an online programme. Caroline designed the original wireframe and learning approach, and Simon built the first Learning Village platform.

Development and testing took approximately two years. Early versions were piloted in schools in the UK and internationally, with educators providing detailed feedback about learner engagement, progression, assessment and classroom implementation.



Acknowledgements

Learning Village launched for primary schools in 2015. Since then, the original programme has developed into a wider family of connected teaching and assessment programmes:

- 2015: Learning Village launched for primary learners
- 2019: Learning Village New Zealand and Islands for secondary learners launched
- 2023: Community Village launched for post-16 and adult ESOL learners
- 2024: AssessEP launched for English-proficiency assessment

Today, Across Cultures combines teaching programmes, assessment and professional learning to help educators identify learners' needs, provide structured language and literacy development and monitor progress.

Our founding pilot schools

We gratefully acknowledge the schools that contributed to the original development and piloting of Learning Village:

- St John's C of E Primary School, Tower Hamlets, London, UK
- Wood End Academy, Ealing, London, UK
- Bradford Girls' Grammar School, Bradford, UK
- Heidelberg International School, Germany
- International School of Milan, Italy
- Yew Chung International Primary School, Hong Kong
- Académie Ste-Cécile International School, Canada
- Aston University Engineering Academy, Birmingham, UK
- Parsonage Farm Primary School, Havering, UK
- Kelvin Grove Primary School, Gateshead, UK

Their staff tested early content, observed learners using the programme and helped us refine its language and literacy pathways, assessments, teaching resources and approach to implementation.

Our early hub schools

Particular thanks go to the pilot schools that subsequently became early Learning Village hub schools:

- Lea Forest Academy, Birmingham, UK
- Hylands Primary School, Havering, UK
- St Mark's Primary School, Mitcham, London, UK

These schools shared their experience and effective practice, helping other educators understand how Learning Village could be implemented in different contexts.





Acknowledgements

Educators and school leaders

We extend our sincere thanks to the educators and school leaders who contributed their time, expertise and practical feedback:

- **International School of Milan:** Laura Haines, EAL Coordinator; Sally Flannagan, Mother Tongue Coordinator; and Terry Haywood, Headmaster
- **Yew Chung International Primary School:** Vicki Wilson, EAL Team Leader; and Norm Dean, Deputy Director
- **Bradford Girls' Grammar School:** Rachel Parsons, EAL/SEN Teacher; Sharmila Shah, EAL; and Rebecca Richardson, School Leader
- **Académie Ste-Cécile International School:** Amy Tilson, Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT)
- **Heidelberg International School:** Nick Parkes, English Support Teacher
- **London Borough of Havering:** Michelle Wain, Ethnic Minority Achievement Adviser
- **Tower Hamlets Ethnic Minority Achievement Service:** Sue Crane, Local Authority Consultant
- **Wood End Academy:** Ann Cobden, Deputy Head; Anne Hayes, Headteacher; and Jasminder Manku, EAL Teaching Assistant
- **St John's C of E Primary School:** Terry Bennett, Headteacher; and Angela Vasey, Inclusion Coordinator
- **Lea Forest Academy:** Hilary Thompson, Headteacher; and Sarah Jones, EAL Coordinator

Their contributions helped ensure that Learning Village reflected the realities of multilingual classrooms and could support independent learning, targeted teaching and wider classroom provision.

Educational, creative and technical contributors

We are also grateful to those who contributed educational, technical, creative and business expertise during the programme's early development:

- Simon Lobo Morrell, original Learning Village programmer
- Sarah Brown, Head of International Primary Curriculum
- Coreen Seers, independent EAL consultant and author
- John Regan and Alexis Teye, Teacher Horizons
- Tom George, Happy Hour
- Owen White, EdTech Futures
- Adam Sefton, Reading Room
- Kim Dolman, The Business Incubator

We also recognise the important contribution of long-serving Across Cultures colleagues, including Beverley Roby and Heidi Brunner, who have helped Learning Village develop and supported its growing community of schools and educators.



Illustration and images

Learning through images has been central to the programme from the beginning. Particular thanks go to illustrator **Sara Marchetto**, whose work has helped bring the Learning Village environments, characters and learning content to life.

We also acknowledge the photographers, designers and image contributors whose work has supported the programme's extensive image-based content over the years.

With our thanks

Learning Village has always been a collaborative undertaking. We remain deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to its original development and to the schools, educators and learners who continue to provide feedback and help us improve.

Their experience has helped Learning Village develop into a research-informed language, literacy and assessment programme that supports learners from any language background and at any literacy level.