

Governor's report- Spring 2022

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- Azbuka has a carefully designed syllabus taught through Russian and English, and based on both the English National curriculum and Russian educational and cultural traditions
- Russian and English teachers plan together to develop an integrated curriculum and ensure that content taught in each language is complementary; children are supported in developing their bilingual capabilities and identities
- children are very open and curious about making connections across languages and cultures; they are encouraged to become active and independent learners and critical thinkers
- teachers use differentiation and adapt their teaching according to different ability groups which reinforces individual attention to each child's academic and socio-emotional needs
- classes are small and this favours a more child-centred approach to teaching
- Azbuka has a strong culture of safeguarding; teachers use an experiential approach to introduce and discuss topics for PSHE and students engage in active citizenship, for instance, through the Student Council
- the core values of the school, an ethos of charity, community and environment underpin the life and work of school
- a school culture of respect and care permeates children's and adults' behaviour
- the school provides a warm and welcoming environment; it has been very pro-active, opening its doors to refugee children and their families as a result of the war in Ukraine

This report has been drafted based on my two-day visit to Azbuka on May 4-5, 2022. I observed a range of classes from nursery to Year 6 on core (maths, English, Russian, The World Around Us) and non-core curricular subjects (PHSE, ICT, Spanish, dance), I saw samples of children's work across years and collected photographs of their work. I also observed a meeting of the Student Council. I had informal discussions with the headteacher, the deputy head teacher, the curriculum lead for the Russian programme, the nursery and primary school teachers.

Azbuka has developed a carefully planned syllabus which is taught through both languages, and is based on both the English National curriculum and Russian educational and cultural traditions. In nursery 90% of the curriculum is taught in Russian; in Reception children have additional sessions on language and numeracy twice a day; these are in Russian for three days a week, and English for two. From Year 1 onwards, children learn 50% of the time through English and 50% through Russian for the core curriculum. Spanish is introduced as third language in the curriculum, enhancing the languages provision of the school.

Russian and English teachers plan together to develop an integrated curriculum and ensure that content taught in each language is complementary. The integrated curriculum consists of the UK national curriculum and Russian maths curriculum (complemented with some elements from the UK national curriculum for maths). The maths curriculum has been devised by the Russian educationalist Ludmila Peterson with the aim of building their independence and logical thinking. For curriculum planning teachers collaborate in pairs

across two years: Y1-Y2, Y3-Y4, Y5-Y6. In the mornings the children work on developing English and Russian literacy and mathematics and in the afternoon, curriculum subjects include The World Around Us, Spanish, ICT, music, art, PE (dance and circus skills), and PSHE, including British values. Class teaching is enriched by project-based learning, such as the annual bilingual project.

1. Safeguarding

Azbuka has a strong culture of safeguarding which is articulated in a comprehensive Recruitment and Employment Policy. During my visit, I was shown the school's electronic Single Central Register where all employment checks are recorded, regularly reviewed, and updated.

PSHE forms an integral part of safeguarding, and it is clearly aligned with the core values of the school, an ethos of charity, community and environment in the life and work of school. The school values are prominently displayed in the main hall in two large collages which demonstrate the children's understanding of these values (**images 1, 2**). Moreover, I was able to observe two PSHE classes, focusing specifically on Relationship and Health education. PSHE classes are conducted bilingually, through team-teaching by the Russian and English teachers. I was also able to observe a School Council meeting.

PSHE – Year 3 and Year 4

The topic of the lesson I observed for PSHE Year3 and Year 4 had to do with relationships and setting boundaries. The teachers used an experiential approach to introduce and discuss the topic. The children were divided into two groups and played a bilingual board game that consisted of situations about relationships and setting boundaries (**image 3**). For instance, 'I always borrow things from my friend's pencil case without asking, she won't mind! She's my friend'. One group was facilitated by the English teacher and the other group by the Russian teacher. The children discussed each situation among themselves. They felt comfortable to share examples from their everyday lives and to respond to teachers' requests for further elaboration. The teachers were supportive and listened attentively to the children's arguments and examples.

PSHE – Year 5 and Year 6

In the Year 5 and Year 6 PHSE class, the children discussed puberty and the importance of personal hygiene. The children were divided into two groups, each facilitated by a teacher. The children brainstormed about how to take care of their bodies and collaboratively created a mind map (**image 4**). After completing the mind maps, each group had to reach an agreement about which action was the most important one and present their argument to the other group. The children then watched an animation about personal hygiene in English with Russian subtitles. They were asked to pay attention to what recommendations for teenage personal hygiene were made and check their mind maps that they had included all the points made in the film. The children discussed their ideas with confidence. Careful planning was put in place to bridge content across the two languages, through teacher and pupil-initiated translations and in the animation.

Meeting with Student Council

The Student Council aims to involve children in decision making in the school, promoting active citizenship. It is comprised by one representative from Year 3 to Year 6. The children put themselves forward for the Student Council and they are elected by their peers. Meetings are facilitated by one of the English-speaking teachers. The children had an agenda with items for discussion.

The first item was the implementation of hygiene measures in the students' toilettes. This issue had been raised in the previous meeting and the children assessed how effective the measures put in place by the school were. The children agreed that the toilettes were now cleaner, but they argued that the school could add some air fresheners.

The second item was children's seating during lunchtime. They suggested having free seating and a quiet corner where children who didn't want to socialise with their peers could sit, read, and relax. They persuasively argued that 'sometimes kids want to be alone, not with their year'. They suggested possible places where the quiet corner might be, for instance in one of the classrooms there wasn't space in the main hall.

The third item had to do with behavioural issues, especially incidents of younger kids (Year 1 and 2) running around in the hall during the break. The children observed that this behaviour had now been reduced. The teacher asked if the reward system they had implemented was working and if they would like to make suggestions about possible rewards.

The last item was the organisation of an end-of-year cultural event. One child suggested a pyjama party, where children could come to school in their pyjamas and have 'a relax day'. The teacher thought it was a great idea. The children also brainstormed ideas about organising a cultural event with food, songs, and crafts to show case 'all the different cultures in the school, not just Russian' as they commented.

The teacher recommended to use the Idea Box and get some feedback from their peers about the cultural event. She reminded them that the Idea Box was an effective tool for communication and that in the past children had suggested new tables for lunchtime and a new white board in one of the classrooms and the school leader team had taken note.

Overall, the children were articulate with a wealth of ideas and suggestions, supporting and complementing each other's contributions. The teacher took notes on the action points to pass on the school's leadership team.

2. Behaviour

There are clear guidelines for behaviour, with school values displayed in both languages in the school hall. Class rules are on the wall in individual classrooms. The children are polite and respectful towards their peers and teachers. I did not observe any behavioural issues during my visit. I would like to share three vignettes that I think capture well the ethos of respect and care that permeates children's behaviour in the school. The school provides a warm and welcoming environment which has a positive influence in building strong peer relations and close school-family ties. The war in Ukraine and the hostile environment towards Russia in the UK have created a new challenge for Azbuka as many families are concerned about their children's emotional wellbeing. The school has been very pro-active, opening its doors to refugee children and already welcoming four children to the school. I

was present in the Year 6 classroom when one of the older children joined the class for the first day.

Snack time at the school hall

The children assembled in the main hall for snack time. Some children were sitting at the tables eating. Others were in small groups chatting or playing a game. The children were speaking to each other in Russian. Three Y6 children (two boys and one girl) came up to me and introduced themselves. I asked them how long they had been in the school and what they liked about the school. One of them giggled, 'breaktime' 😊. The girl took the floor and informed me proudly that she would be doing an assessment for a new school and that she was very excited about it. I wished her best of luck and then I asked the other children about their future plans, which school they would be going to after primary. The girl turned to one of the boys and said: 'you are going to one of the top 5 schools.' The boy elaborated on the school, that it's a local selective Catholic school. The children were polite, they waited for their turn to speak, supplementing each other's contributions. They were such confident, articulate, and mature interlocutors.

Breaktime in the adjacent field

It's a glorious day and the children were taken out to the adjacent field to play games. I noticed a group of children collecting dried cut grass and carefully placing it around the foot of a massive tree. I asked the children what they were doing. They explained that the previous day they had found a baby bird on the foot of the tree and that they had created a nest to protect it while waiting for a wildlife protection service they had called to come and collect the bird. They were now placing dried grass on the foot of the tree in case another baby bird would fall out of its nest to land softly.

Welcoming a new student in Year 6

A new refugee child from the Ukraine joined the Year 6 class today. He is from Kiev and speaks Ukrainian, Russian, some English and German. The teacher informed the children that they would be taking a break from SAT exam preparation this morning. He had organised two icebreaking activities inspired by the PSHE curriculum to ease the new child into the Year 6 cohort. First, the children went around introducing themselves. For the first activity, the children, the teacher, and myself worked in pairs. We were given a question to think about and discuss with our partner. The teacher asked one of the students to translate the instructions in Russian for the new child. I was paired with the new child. Our question was 'would you rather go back in time or into the future?'. We shared our thoughts: I said that I would like to go into the future to see my children and grandchildren. The child said that he would like to go back in past, to about a year ago when he went to a summer camp in Ukraine. The child was able to express himself clearly and confidently in English. For the second activity, the children were given pieces of paper with scenarios of bad behaviour: 'pushing someone over so that he hurts themselves', 'calling a teacher a bad name'. They were asked to discuss and rank these scenarios along a continuum of bad behaviour (what would be worse) and explain why. All the children, including the new child, felt comfortable to contribute their views. During snack time it was very reassuring to see the new child already chatting in Russian with his Year 6 peers, sitting at the same table with them and having a snack. He seemed to be adjusting quickly to a new language and culture (English) and successfully integrating to the new school environment.

3. Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in Azbuka is driven by a culture rich curriculum and the use of experiential and interdisciplinary approaches. The children are immersed in a print and digitally rich environment with many opportunities to bridge their curricular knowledge and understanding across the two languages and cultures, Russian and English. The children are motivated to learn and are very open and curious about making connections across languages and cultures. They are encouraged to become active and independent learners and critical thinkers and take ownership of their work. Teachers employ a variety of teaching methods, use and have created a wide range of displays, materials and resources to support children's subject knowledge development, provide opportunities for linguistic and cultural bridging through the use of translation (both teacher and student-led) and the development of children's metalinguistic awareness and cross-cultural understanding. Classes are small and this favours a more child-centred approach to teaching. Teachers use differentiation and adapt their teaching according to different ability groups. They work individually with children, making sure they understand new concepts and can apply them in new contexts. Feedback is targeted and supportive, tailored to each child's strengths and needs. During my visit I observed very high quality of teaching, expertly combining teacher-led and student-led teaching.

Nursery

The nursery has 5 teachers and about 24 children. The nursery is a mixed age group from 2 to 5 years old. They follow the national Early Years curriculum which they have adapted in Russian. The emphasis is on Russian, the societal minority language. During my visit, I observed a free play session which stimulated children's imagination and supported their experiential learning through the senses (visually, kinetically, through sound and touch). The children had chosen to play at different stations, including a dinosaur habitat where children were engaged in imaginative play with miniature dinosaurs (**image 5**), a large water basin, and a sand pit. Some children were sitting at a table colouring while others were engaged in an early literacy activity which consisted of tracing the letters on activity cards in Russian with black erasable markers (**image 6**). Other children were sitting on the large carpet playing together with toys and building blocks. Two children were playing in the dress up area by the miniature kitchen. Children were absorbed in their self-directed play in their respective stations and teachers facilitated their play.

Reception – Russian and English early literacy

The Reception class is integrated in the nursery. I observed one of the additional sessions on language and early literacy development in English and in Russian respectively. The children were sitting around the table. The topic was dinosaurs which they share with the nursery class. The teacher showed the children some images of dinosaurs on the computer and asked children describe them (**image 7**). In one image there was a volcano, the teacher said 'volcano' in English pointing to the image then repeated in Russian 'vulcan'. The teacher then used cards with images of different dinosaurs accompanied by information for each dinosaur. The teacher guided the children in describing the distinct features of each dinosaur (for instance a T-rex has huge claws, drawing the children's attention to the claws in the image). She continued to repeat key words in Russian, facilitating cross-linguistic links for

the children. The children were very engaged, one child said that they had book with dinosaurs. The teacher responded: ‘You can bring it for “show and tell” next week’.

Then, they read the book ‘Katy and the Dinosaurs’. On one page there was an image with the skeleton of a dinosaur. One child added that they have seen a skeleton at the museum. They focused on identifying and naming the different parts of the skeleton, first in English and then in Russian. The directionality of linguistic transfer was two-way, and children seemed very much at ease with moving between the two languages in both directions to engage with curricular content. This two-way process aims to build and consolidate new vocabulary in both languages. The teacher informed me that the children would read the same book in Russian the following afternoon with their Russian teacher.

The following afternoon I joined the Reception class again to observe the reading of the book in Russian. The teacher read the book with a vivid voice. The children listened and followed the reading carefully focusing on the images and the teacher’s gestures (**image 8**). The children responded to the teacher’s questions enthusiastically. She asked them to identify and name the different dinosaurs in the book and then search for the equivalent miniature dinosaur in the dinosaur habitat. Each child took turns and promptly identified the right dinosaur placing it in the middle of the table (**image 9**). In both sessions, teachers purposefully used both languages, as well as gestures, objects, digital and print resources to enrich children’s early language and literacy learning in both languages.

Year 1 – Russian maths

In Year 1, the children the children were learning the concepts of meter, centimeter and millimetre. The key maths words were written on the whiteboard with their English translations alongside other words and images juxtaposed in both languages on the whiteboard. The lesson involved learning these concepts experientially, through measuring objects in their classroom environment. The children searched for and measured different objects with their rulers (such as books, bottles) and orally shared their measurements with the teacher and their peers. Then, they took off their shoes to measure their feet. The teacher listed the different sizes on the whiteboard next to each child’s name (**image 10**). Afterwards, the children read and copied the information on their maths sheet (**image 11**). The teacher drew their attention to the spelling of their classmates’ names, for instance, Emmaline double mm. This well-planned lesson combined maths with oral language and literacy work.

Y2 – English The World Around Us

The Y2 class explored the topic of the food chain as part of their science learning. The aim of the lesson was to develop children’s scientific reasoning and consolidate science vocabulary in English as well as make connections with science learning in Russian. The lesson started with an activity where the children had to put together food chains using a stack of cards with animals. The teacher modelled an example of a food chain on the white board using cards depicting some grass, a cow and a child and arrows to indicate the direction of who eats what/whom. She explained the word ‘arrow’ by directing the children’s attention to a printed chart illustrating an example of a food chain in Russian on the classroom wall. She then took two printed charts in Russian with examples of food chains and stuck them prominently on the white board, juxtaposing the two sets of food chains in the two languages. The teacher introduced, repeated and elicited several times key science vocabulary, such as ‘producers’, ‘herbivore’, ‘carnivore’, which she also wrote on the whiteboard (**image 12**).

The children worked in pairs, shuffling the pictures to create their own food chains. Each pair presented their food chain to the group, gave, and received feedback. The children were engaged, active learners. When a child hesitated to name the animal in the picture, the teacher suggested, 'Do you want to tell me the Russian name?', seamlessly integrating Russian in the science lesson. Then, the teacher showed them an example of a food chain on YouTube. The children drew and annotated their food chain in their notebooks, making sure they were using the appropriate science vocabulary (**image 13**). The teacher checked each student's work giving individualised feedback.

Year 3 – English literacy

In Year 3 English the children worked on developing their writing skills, learning to write a specific genre (persuasive letters) for a specific audience using a specific structure, stylistic features and persuasive vocabulary. I joined the class during their last session when the children were finalising their letters. The letter writing activity was linked to the book 'The Iron Man' by Ted Hughes they had been reading in class. The writing activity consisted of drafting a letter to persuade the men in the village to trap the Iron Man. The children were guided and supported by a wide range of materials in their writing they had developed during the writing process, and they consulted. Each child had spread in front of them: (1) a handwritten check list with the stylistic features of a persuasive text (punctuation, rhetorical questions, structure of letter in four parts; (2) a printed sheet with the main features of persuasive writing and key words; (3) a printed sheet with persuasive phrases (the children had crossed out phrases/words they had already used, and circled others they were planning on integrating in their letters); (4) a printed sheet with the structure of the letter containing the following elements: main idea/title, introduction, argument 1, argument 2, argument 3/solution, conclusion, to document their ideas and keep track of their writing (**image 14**). In previous lessons, the children had brainstormed ideas, and the teacher had written them down on pieces of paper which the children had put together (like a puzzle) into a coherent text (**image 15**).

Added to this, the teacher cross-referred to information on the literacy board to help children further develop their arguments, select key persuasive vocabulary, and structure their letters. The children actively used these supporting materials to scaffold their writing. The teacher sat next to each child and went through their letter, commenting positively when they had used recommended textual features, and drawing the child's attention to elements in their writing they could improve. The children came across as confident and enthusiastic writers. When they finished their letters, they read them out loud, practicing their oral presentation skills. The audience, including myself, were invited to rate each letter and comment on its strengths.

Year 4 – Russian literacy

In Year 4 Russian the children practiced reading comprehension and writing. The text genre was descriptive texts. The children read a descriptive text about squirrels living in cities and underlined descriptive words. Then, the teacher gave the children cut out sentences written out on pieces of paper with the purpose of putting the sentences in the right order and creating their own descriptive texts about foxes living in cities. The children discussed the order of the sentences and suggested their own descriptive words which they wrote down on blank pieces of paper (**image 16**). The teacher drew the children's attention to the use of

punctuation marks and how to construct complex sentences in Russian. The teacher made comparison of grammar features and sentence structure between Russian and English, enhancing children's metalinguistic awareness. The children were keen to explain to me what they were doing when I asked them.

Year 5 – Russian maths

In maths, the children were learning the concept of estimation, i.e., to calculate the value of a number along a range from lowest to highest. The teacher read out the maths problem, and the children worked on it on their own, at their own pace. The teacher selected one of the children to come to the whiteboard to demonstrate how he had solved the problem. Each child got at least two turns to come to the whiteboard. One child made an error, the teacher took him through the error, encouraging him to try again. The child identified the error and was able to correct it on his own. The children were confident mathematicians and very articulate in explaining to me in English the concept of estimation.

Year 3 and Year 4 – Spanish

Spanish is the third language introduced in the curriculum. Year 3 and Year 4 have an hour of Spanish together every week. This is their first year of Spanish. The Spanish lesson was animated, with children being initiated to Spanish in playful and engaging ways. The children were learning the colours. The lesson started with a colouring task from their activity books where children took turns to read out the name of the colour and coloured in the corresponding box with a marker. Then, they played a game that required them to move around the classroom. The teacher asked everyone to stand up. She said out loud the name of the colour and children searched around the classroom and touched an object of that colour. The teacher modelled the game: 'rojo' (red). Children moved swiftly around the classroom competing to identify different red objects in the most unlikely places!

Once all the children have taken their turn they all sat down and moved on to another activity. The teacher reminded the children of the different shapes. She drew different shapes on the whiteboard and said their name in Spanish: 'un círculo' (a circle), 'un triángulo' (a triangle), 'una línea' (a line). One child commented, 'In Russian it's the same (liniya)'. The teacher projected a painting by Miró on the whiteboard. The children practiced describing the shapes and colours they could see in the painting, using the phrase: 'Hay un/a shape, colour.....' (There is a shape ... , colour ...). The children took turns formulating their sentences. If they were unsure about a word, they felt comfortable to ask a classmate in English or Russian or the teacher for help. They used gestures pointing to the colour or shape in the painting they wanted to describe. The teacher also suggested they consult the bilingual glossary with the colours in Spanish and English.

Year 5 and Year 6 – Spanish

When I joined Year 5 and Year 6, the children were watching an episode of the animation 'Paw Patrol' in Spanish. The teacher stopped the animation in intervals to introduce new vocabulary items. She pointed out words that sounded similar in Spanish and English and asked listening comprehension questions which she wrote on the white board in Spanish: '¿El problema?' (the problem?), '¿Ayuda?' (help?) '¿Qué vamos a hacer?' (what are we going to do?) The questions focused on understanding the gist of the plot. The teacher commented,

‘it’s not important to understand everything in the film’. The children were keen to make their guesses in English.

After watching the animation, the teacher asked the children to describe the appearance of the different characters using adjectives she wrote on the white board. Each child created a sentence and shared their description in Spanish. Most children self-selected and participated actively in the lesson; I noticed that a few students were struggling to express themselves orally, but they did not give up. The teacher was very encouraging, and their classmates were very supportive supplying them with descriptive words and assisting them with pronunciation and sentence structure. This is their second year learning Spanish and they are learning very fast. According to the teacher, ‘the children are motivated and well-behaved, and teachers can do more with them, not just stick to the textbook’. Echoing the teacher’s words, the children in both classes were already drawing on English and Russian to support Spanish language learning, making connections across the three languages, and further honing their metalinguistic understanding.

Year 3 and Year 4 – ICT

This term Year 3 and Year 4 were introduced to basic coding. In the previous term they learned how to programme robots. The children were given iPads. The teacher instructed them to open ‘Space Cadets’. This course uses simple code blocks to introduce computational thinking to create algorithms that solve problems. The children chose their avatar and started at Level 1. Some children progressed very quickly onto the next levels. The teacher supported children who needed more time to familiarise themselves with applying coding concepts. All the children seem very comfortable with using iPads and several mentioned that they are gamers. Those children who showed greater familiarity with coding helped their peers who needed some support.

Year 1 and Year 2 – Dance

Year 1 and Year 2 children are taught dance as part of their PE lesson by a professional Russian ballet dancer. Dance and ballet in particular have a long tradition in Russian and they are an important part of the country’s cultural heritage.

4. Bilingual and bicultural learning

The school places emphasis on children developing their language and literacy skills in both languages, Russian and English. Children enter the school with different abilities in the school’s languages of instruction and may often speak an additional language(s) in the home (such as Chinese). The aim of the school is to foster children’s bilingual/multilingual capabilities and identities. Russian and English teachers meet regularly to work together in pairs across two years and plan how to deliver the school’s integrated curriculum across the two languages and cultures. The deputy head teacher holds regular informal discussions with teachers focusing on implementing these curricular objectives. The headteacher also holds information sessions for parents about how they can support their children’s bilingual and bicultural development.

As I documented in the previous section, children are expertly supported to develop their oral and written abilities in the designated language. At the same time, they are encouraged to draw on their other language and help each other through translation. Both languages are

valued and constructed as important resources for children's language and literacy learning and identity development. To this end, children are encouraged to think and express themselves in both languages and translating between the languages (for instance, in PHSE which is planned and team-taught across two classes by the Russian and English teachers). The high value accorded to languages in the school and the flexible approach to language use encourages positive attitudes towards Spanish language learning as well and an openness towards other languages and cultures more generally. Children use predominantly Russian in the break, which may be reflective of the fact that many children have very strong Russian language abilities. Teachers plan for linguistic and cultural bridging in the curriculum to fully support bilingual learning, for instance, they share the same topic.

Led by the head of the Russian section, the school has invested resources to build the curriculum for Russian from Reception to Year 6 and align it with the National curriculum in England. For Russian language and literacy development, the school follows the primary school national curriculum in Russia, which is supported by different sets of textbooks for different subjects, mostly approved by the Russian Ministry of Education. In Azbuka, teachers select and combine textbooks from different series. Because Russian is a well-resourced language, teachers have sourced materials online, they have adapted them or created their own. Over the years, teachers have developed a resource bank with folders for each Year which are reviewed and updated every year.

The school's bilingual curriculum broadens understanding of both cultures. Class lessons and children's work displayed on the walls demonstrated rich and varied cultural content. I was impressed by the wide range of literary genres and the linguistic and aesthetic complexity of the texts the children had created. For instance, the Year 4 notice boards included creative writing 'A monologue of autumn leaves' and Russian fables with a funny twist in Russian and explanatory texts 'How to trap a monster' in English accompanied by the children's illustrations (**images 17-19**). Children have additional opportunities to immerse themselves in Russian culture, the societal minority culture, through dance and circus skills which are integrated in the school curriculum as well as through extra-curricular activities such as the chess club.

5. Progress and achievement

Children's progress is meticulously documented. In nursery, teachers keep a journal for each child with carefully pasted photographs and detailed accompanying texts illustrating children's linguistic, socio-emotional, and physical development. In primary school, workbooks are kept showing children's progress. The literacy work in the children's workbooks illustrates an impressive standard of work, showing progression over the years. Children's progress in literacy in English and Russian can also be observed on notice boards outside classrooms displaying the variety and depth of literacy work children have accomplished throughout the school year. For instance, the children's bilingual texts on the climate crisis showed the use of complex language, illustrated by diagrams, photographs and drawings, putting the final products on the main hall wall for parents to see.

6. Assessment and bilingual assessment

Teachers use both formative and summative assessment, and assessment targets and levels are translated into Russian, together with regular reports on progress, enabling all parents to understand and support their children's learning. Each child is assessed termly in Russian,

English, Maths, Science and World Around Us. I was given access to the termly assessment analysis highlights for spring 2022 where academic progress was charted and steps to support students were outlined. For instance, high ability children who were exceeding expectations in maths were given more challenging, supplementary material to work on. Students received extra language support in English or maths. The school has a dedicated teaching assistant who supports children's specific learning needs.

In English, the school is using SATs as an internal assessment instrument for the first time. Although SATs results were not required by the secondary schools that children applied and have been offered places to, the school is using SATs as an instrument to measure children's language, literacy and numeracy development compared to national average. Year 6 is the school's first graduating cohort. All children appeared well prepared to transition into an English-medium only curriculum with some students having been offered places to selective local schools.

The school has introduced bilingual assessment for the second year. This year's topic was climate change which encouraged children to think and act as citizens of the world. This was a topic chosen by the children themselves. They worked on producing specific outputs (posters, information booklets) which have been put up in a big display in the main hall. Children in Year 5 and Year 6 researched and delivered presentations on their chosen topics. The children were able to use both Russian and English effectively to research and produce their outputs.

Conclusion

Azbuka is developing a pioneering bilingual pedagogy and curriculum with the following features:

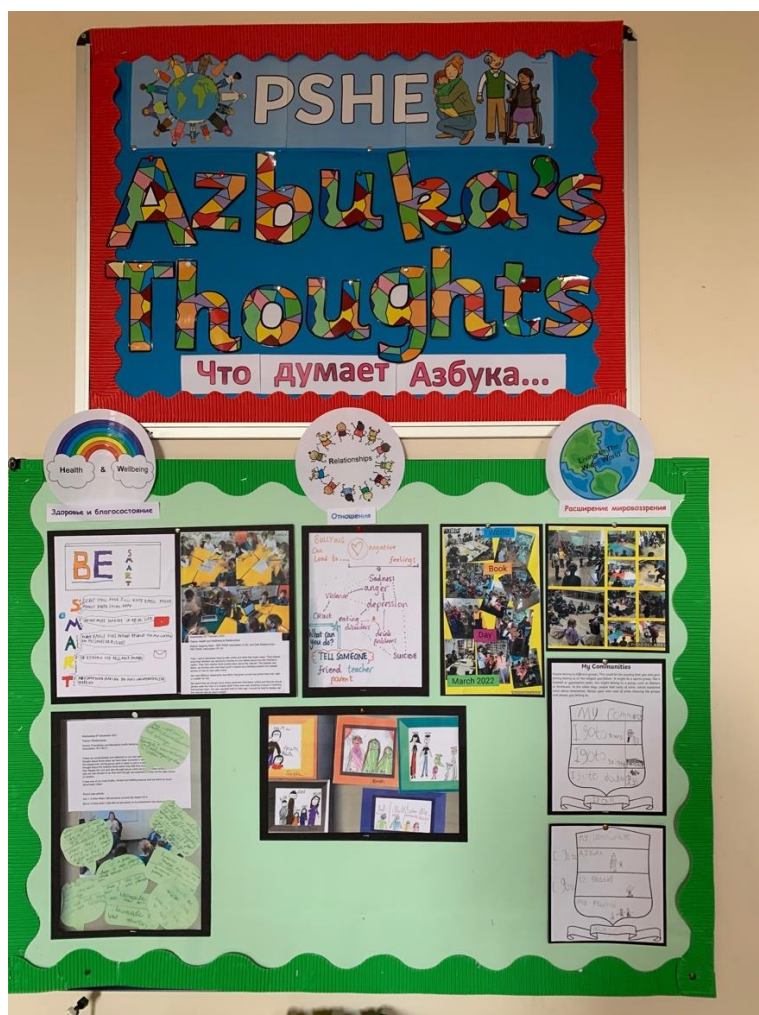
- Purposeful bridging of the curriculum through shared topics across year groups, literacy activities that build upon and complement knowledge and skills developed in both languages
- Developing understanding of ideas and concepts in both languages
- Extensive use of translation (teacher-initiated, student-initiated)
- Wide use of a variety of print and digital resources in both languages as stimuli for learning (books, posters, videos, etc.)
- Strengthening metalinguistic awareness and metalinguistic skills (comparing vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation between the two languages)
- Developing linguistic creativity
- Becoming linguists and reinforcing pride in children's bilingual and bicultural identities

Beyond the classroom walls, Azbuka can provide a blueprint for actively developing an inclusive, whole-school bilingual and bicultural ethos, supporting children's language and culture learning at home and in the broader community and building ties with community and other organisations.

Vally Lytra
June 2nd 2022



(Image 1)



(Image 2)



(Image 5)



(Image 6)



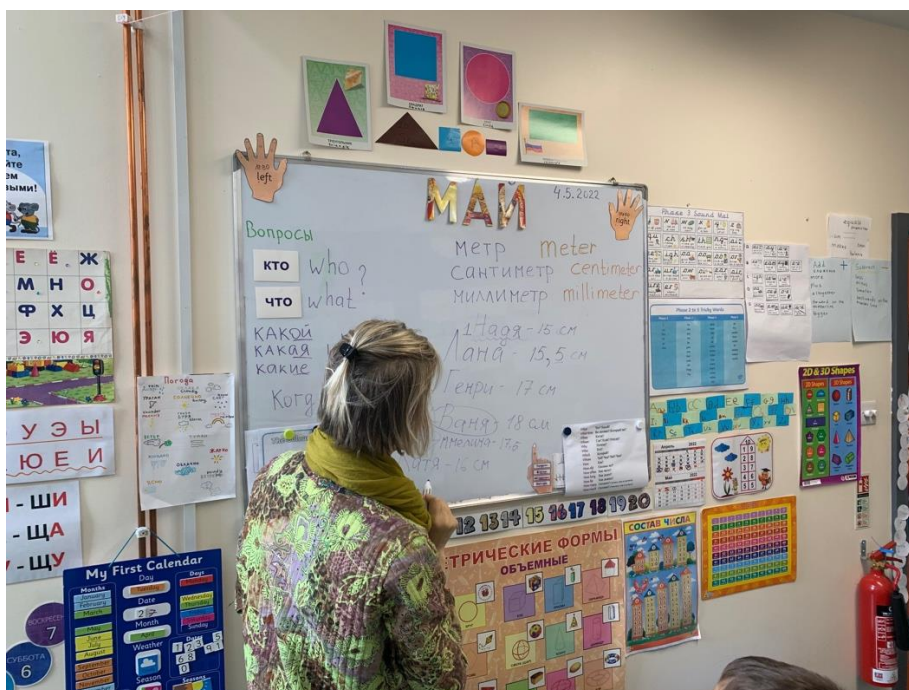
(Image 7)



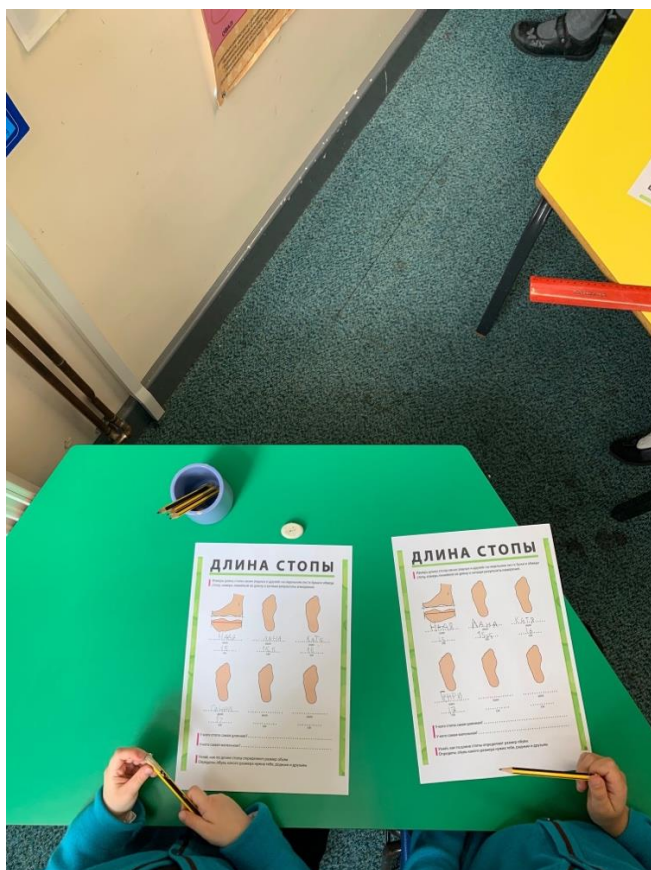
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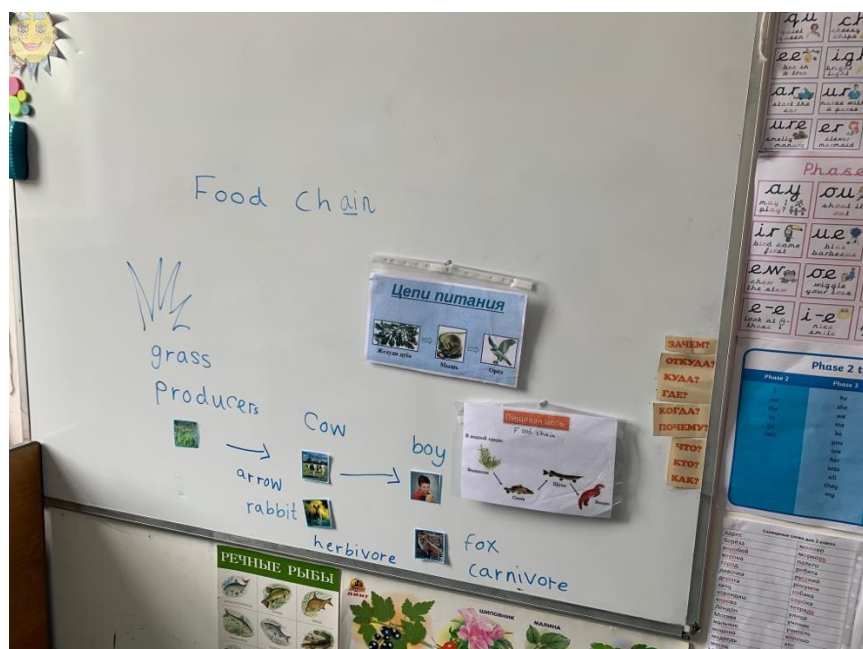
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(Image 10)



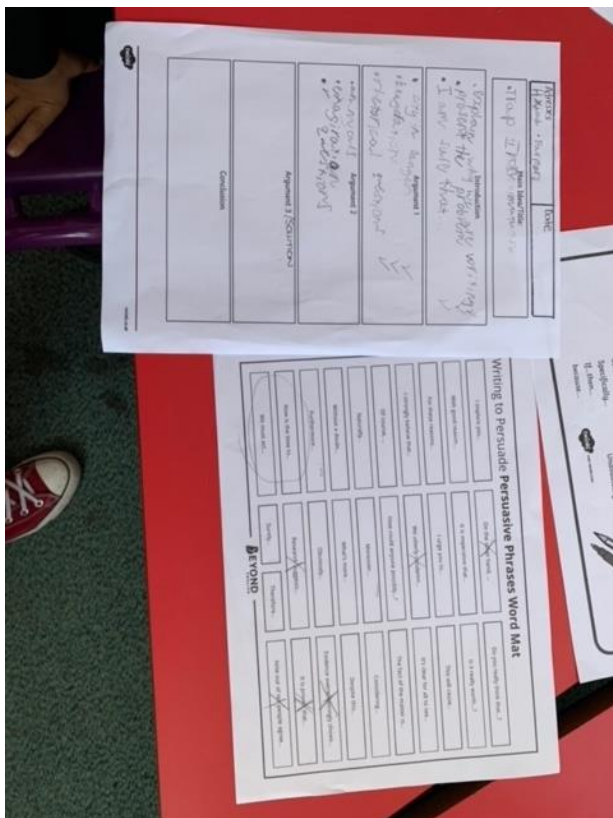
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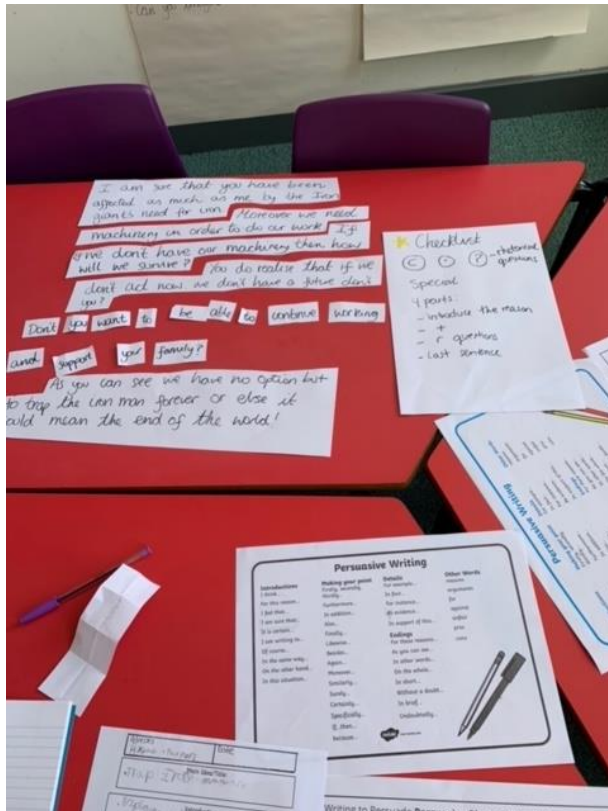
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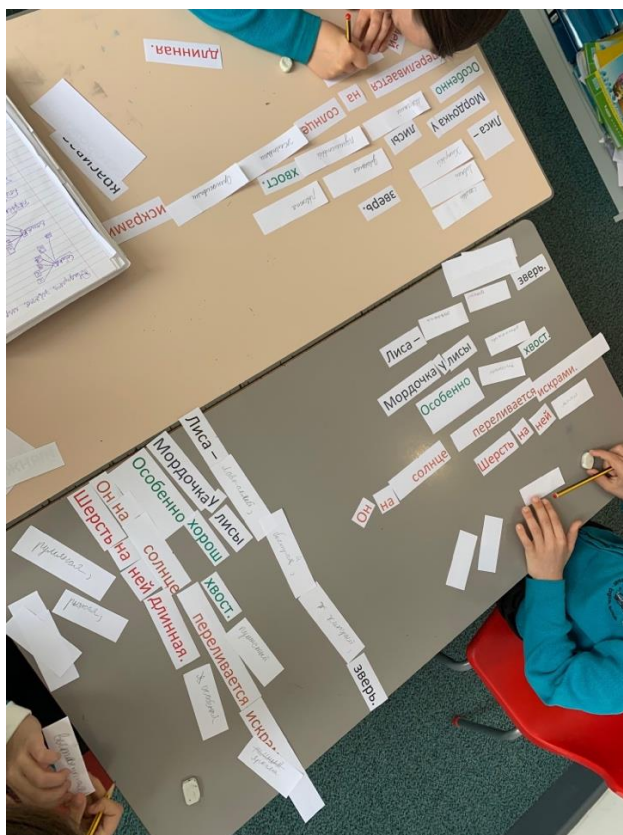
(Image 13)



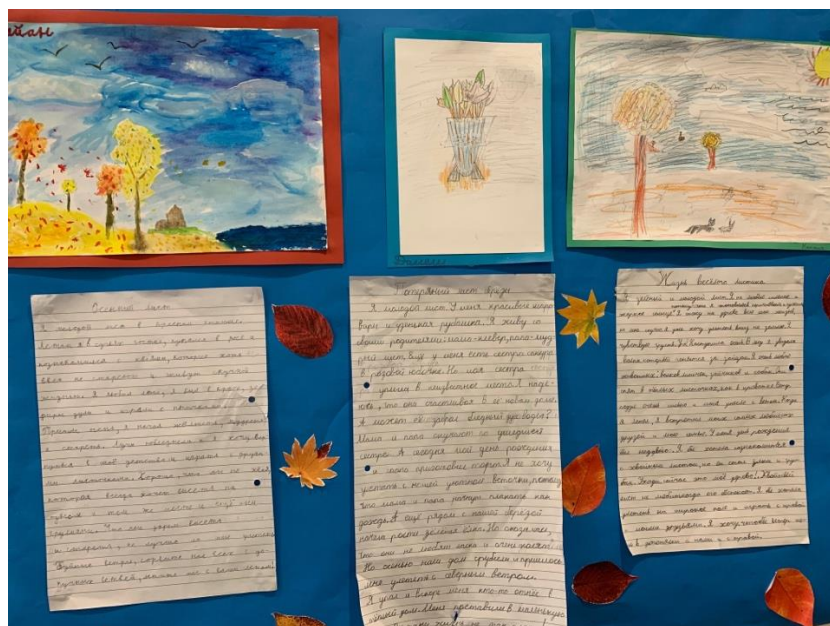
(Image 14)



(Image 15)



(Image 16)



(Image 19)