

Press release: Hinds visits Arsenal's League leading language project

Damian Hinds visits Arsenal's Double Club to see how it is helping pupils learn languages



Education Secretary Damian Hinds with Sheffield Park Academy pupils at the Emirates Stadium

Education Secretary Damian Hinds saw how Premier League football club Arsenal FC is helping school children learn and engage with modern foreign languages through its Double Club.

The Double Club is a pioneering initiative set up by the North London side and uses football to illustrate how learning a language can be fun, useful and engaging. The scheme culminates with pupils getting a guided tour of Arsenal's Emirates Stadium.

On Thursday, 13 June, the Arsenal-supporting Secretary of State joined pupils from Sheffield Park Academy in Sheffield to see the stadium and meet Dan Lane, Gunners manager Unai Emery's interpreter, to understand just how useful languages can be.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

The Double Club is a fantastic initiative that really brings to life how fun and useful learning a language can be by harnessing the diversity and popularity of football.

Being an interpreter at one of the greatest footballs club in the world would be a dream job for so many but for people like me who don't speak another language well it's out of reach.

We're making good progress in encouraging more pupils to take languages, with the proportion taking a language at GCSE rising

from 40% to 46% since 2010, but there is still more to do to persuade more young people to choose languages.

Dan Lane, interpreter for Arsenal manager Unai Emery, said:

I have been fortunate to enjoy great experience after great experience in my role – from travelling around Europe and the world to games, to being in the tunnel after memorable wins.

This has all been made possible due to my ability to speak Spanish, so I would certainly encourage as many young people as possible to take on the challenge of learning a new language.

By volunteering on Arsenal's Double Club I hope to encourage more young people and educate them about the endless opportunities that can come from learning a second language.

Premier League and Football League teams all over the country carry out a wide range of activities in their communities but Arsenal's programme is understood to be the only one focused on increasing the uptake of languages in schools.