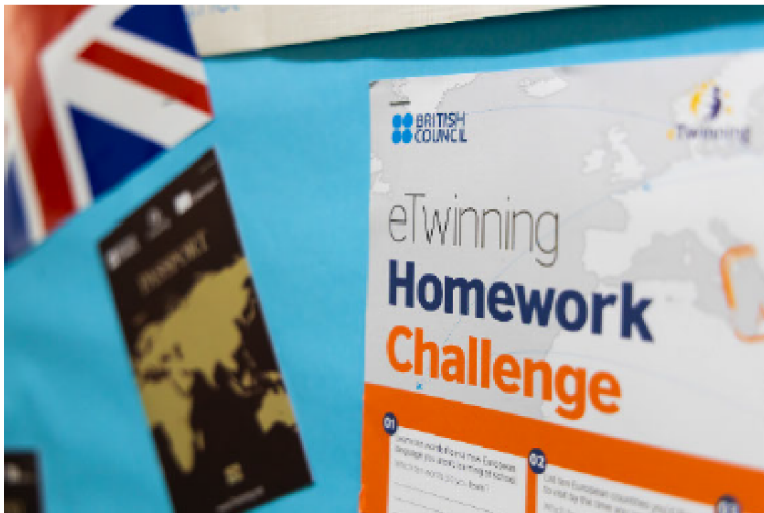


# How international work helped one teacher's professional development

*We are always talking, to each other. We share experiences and support each other to bring the benefits of international education to all of our students*



Sarah Gower is a deputy head teacher at the Observatory School in the Wirral. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties in the North West of England.



She set out on her international journey through eTwinning courses and conferences which allowed her to exchange ideas and approaches to teaching with her peers from schools across Europe. As well as providing opportunities for her students to explore the world outside their own classroom, the work has also been vital to her own professional development.



'E-twinning is the best development I've had. Even just learning how to collaborate using ICT. You get to meet a lot of teachers who are very enthusiastic about what they do. So it's the opportunity swap ideas with people from outside the area.

'The amount of dedicated teachers that you meet – so many teachers that really really love teaching. And it's great to be able to talk about what we do here and the challenges we face here

We are always talking to each other. We share experiences and support each other to bring the benefits of international education to all of our students'.

As well as professional development opportunities for herself and other teachers, Sarah has also taken pupils on overseas trips to partner schools in Finland, France and Spain. There are plans for a further trip to Italy.



The students have learned about people in other countries and been exposed to positive experiences they wouldn't otherwise have. Their confidence has been boosted and they have a wider view of the world, an appreciation of difference – but also of what we have in common with people in other countries.

Expanding the horizons of the Observatory School pupils in this way earned it the prestigious accolade of International School of the Year at the TES School Awards 2019.

With her experience and appreciation of the benefits of international work, Sarah now acts as a British Council ambassador, sharing her experience with other schools to encourage them to take advantage of the opportunities it offers.