

**Trustee Profile:
Mathilde Robert**



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Strengthening Warwickshire

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Vice Chair of Trustees, Warwickshire French Complementary School, Leamington Spa

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Mathilde became a trustee at Warwickshire French Complementary School in 2015. The charity runs a Saturday morning French complementary school in Leamington, which aims to deliver classes to about 100 bilingual children. It also organises cultural, social and gastronomical events for its 75 family members.

Mathilde moved from France in 2014 and settled down to have a family in Warwick. It was during a playdate with other French parents that a friend suggested that they needed a school to teach their children how to speak their mother tongue. Mathilde wanted to use and share her professional project management skills during her career break, and this project gave her the opportunity to do that.

Because Mathilde helped to set up the charity from scratch, she got involved in a wide range of activities. These included dealing with the Charity Commission, recruiting teachers, processing DBS checks, renting school premises, setting up a web site, drafting newsletters, invoicing and payments, managing the budget and applying for grants. She set up the learning objectives, planned the curriculum and coached the teachers to help them achieve the objectives of the school. Many of these activities keep her busy on an ongoing basis.

Said Mathilde: “I enjoyed seeing the result of all this work when my 5 year old little boy very proudly read his first book in French to me”. As well as enjoying the wide range of activities and responsibilities she carries out, Mathilde loves the community aspect of her role, saying:

“It is also a lot about cultivating positive relationships with the children, the parents, the teachers and the trustees. It is about creating a community life and ‘culture bubble’ around our library, book swaps, bread club and food and wine parties. We also actively seek to get people involved in the project to make it sustainable as a charity organisation in which only the teachers are paid. It is a big commitment but I would definitely recommend it. It is all about human relationships. It is about people willing to achieve something bigger than themselves, together.”

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