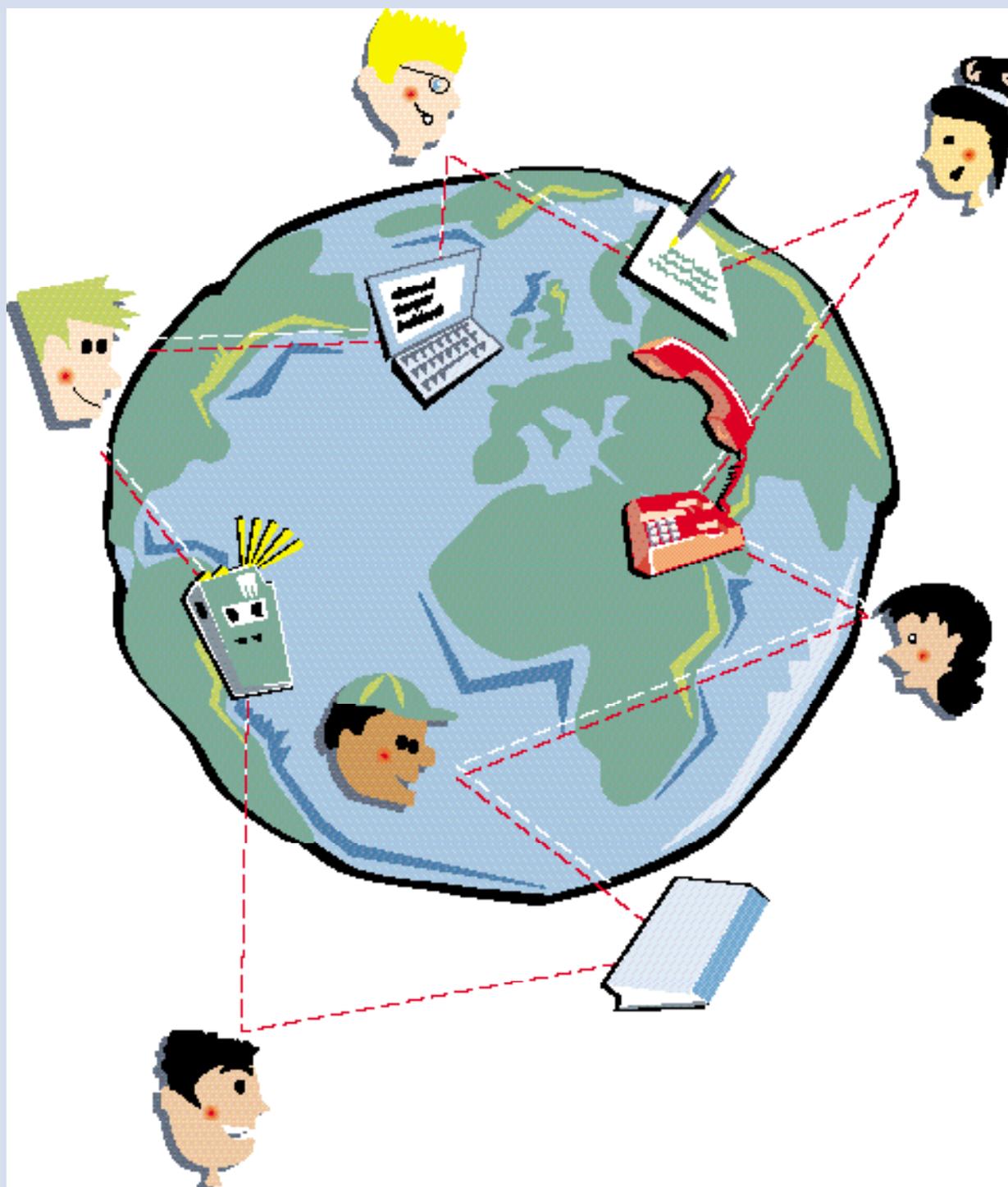


Citizens of a Multilingual World

Scottish Executive Response



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ACTION GROUP FOR LANGUAGES: RESPONSE



FOREWORD

I am grateful to John Mulgrew and the members of the Action Group for the hard work and commitment they have shown in producing their report. Their open and consultative approach ensured that everyone with an interest in this important subject had an opportunity to contribute. This is reflected in the thoughtful and considered recommendations which were made in the report.

Today's school children will live in a world where they will encounter different nationalities, different cultures and different languages, often in their daily lives. That brings richness and diversity, but it also brings challenges.

Scotland should be a multi-lingual, culturally aware country capable of communicating in this ever-shrinking world. This vision can be more effectively achieved if language skills and abilities are improved.

I am convinced that language skills are a positive advantage in every walk of life and I recognise the value and importance of language learning in securing the future of our young people. Being able to converse and communicate with others will not only raise our self-esteem as individuals, it can raise the profile and success of Scotland across the world.

Language skills are central in our curriculum, embracing English and other languages. Learning another language enhances children's ability to communicate, it helps them understand how language works – as important in English language as in other languages – and it develops their interpersonal skills. Communication is a vital skill, be it by oral, written or "virtual" means. Being able to communicate globally enhances opportunity for life.

The report and recommendations produced by the Action Group for Languages provided the route to the way ahead. I intend to pursue their proposals and provide local authorities and schools with the opportunity to improve language learning in all schools.

There remains much to do. I hope that everyone with a role to play in improving language education will find this document helpful in identifying how they can fulfil that responsibility.

It is appropriate that this process of improvement should begin in this European Year of Languages. Together we can develop an effective system of language education for our children which will ensure that they can indeed become "*citizens of a multilingual world*".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack McConnell'.

JACK McCONNELL MSP

Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs

INTRODUCTION

Action has already been taken with revised 5-14 curriculum guidelines having been prepared by Learning and Teaching Scotland. I am aware that there are elements of these guidelines which primary teachers will be unable to implement without further training. However, overall, teachers should find these guidelines helpful. Distribution will take place alongside this response document.

Similarly revised assessment arrangements for Standard Grade modern languages have been devised. The most notable of the revisions is the introduction of a compulsory writing component for all candidates. This is intended to ensure coherence and continuity with the revised 5-14 guidelines and the New National Qualifications in modern languages. These will be applicable from 2003.

Future support for, and development of, language education should also be set in the context of National Priorities in education. These priorities provide the direction for future education developments and identify the outcomes of an effective school education which will provide the foundation for our young people to participate fully in adult society.

Rationale

For the first time, a Rationale for language learning has been produced for Scotland which addresses a comprehensive range of issues relating to language learning and use. The Group is to be congratulated on providing an excellent document which will strengthen the case for the learning of languages and raise awareness of the use to which language skills can be put.

As well as being an integral part of the report, from which the various recommendations flow, the Rationale has been produced as a stand-alone document and I have arranged for it to be widely distributed within education and industry. The Rationale can be used by teachers, parents, guidance teachers, further and higher education and employers. This addresses the first recommendation of the Group which related to the availability of up-to-date information on languages to schools and the wider community. Further developments in raising awareness of the benefits of language education are related in a later chapter of this response.

Entitlement

The Group recommends a package of entitlement to language learning which should be made available to all pupils. It outlines a broad range of issues and provides a rationale for the recommendation, as well as suggestions on how it might be implemented, and underpins the other recommendations made in the report.

I was very pleased to see this recommendation, and consider it the right way ahead for schools. It is important however, this is seen as a full “package” of entitlements which would not benefit from separation of the individual elements.

Accepting the entitlement “package” as set out by the Action Group builds on the current policy of “Languages for All”, and in many ways addresses the recommendations made by HM Inspectors of Schools in the report, *Standards and Quality in Primary and Secondary Schools 1994-1998: Modern Languages*. Using this entitlement package for language education strengthens current provision by offering a flexible approach to language learning which can be adapted to suit local circumstances and individual needs. It puts pupils’ needs at the centre of languages policy by outlining clearly what they can expect to see made available in their school. For the first time, pupils have a benchmark against which they can define their own needs in a realistic context.

The Standards in Scotland Schools Act 2000 makes provision for pupils to be involved in the school development planning. If pupils are to play a real part in this process they need to be aware of what they should expect from schools and relate this knowledge to the development planning process. Therefore, I intend to produce promotional material which draws on the Rationale and outlines the detail of the entitlement “package”. This will be aimed at and distributed to pupils and parents to raise awareness of the content of this key Action Group recommendation and the value of language learning for educational and personal development.

One of the key issues of interest is the inspection process and how schools respond to it. It may be helpful if I clarify at this point the inspection policy of HM Inspectors of Education as it would apply in respect to modern language provision.

HMIE has set some very clear criteria for looking at innovation and flexibility, centring upon the notion of educational gain for individuals. It is generally understood that HMIE will normally expect the principles of breadth and balance as set out in the secondary curriculum guidelines to be evident. This implies a general expectation that a progressive and coherent experience of a modern foreign language would feature in the programmes of almost all pupils, some exceptions always being required if individual pupils had specific learning difficulties. However, HMIE have made it clear that they would judge on their merits all instances of curricular variation from national guidelines, including modern foreign languages. The criteria HMIE will apply are: that the variations have been widely consulted on with all stakeholders, including parents and pupils; plans are carefully drawn up; effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements are in place; and, above all, there is clear educational gain for the individual pupils affected. These arrangements are also outlined in Circular 3/2001.

National Priorities

As a result of the Standards in Scottish Schools Act 2000, Ministers gave strategic direction to the education system by publishing National Priorities for education in Scotland. Local authorities will publish annual statements of local improvement objectives which show how these National Priorities will be implemented locally and will also be required to report each year on their success. Schools will also be required to produce annual development plans, taking account of the authorities' Improvement Plan objectives.

The National Priorities identify the fundamentally important outcomes of school education that will prepare all our young people for their future. Ministers will publish guidance in autumn 2001, setting out performance measures and quality indicators which will be used to measure progress on delivering the National Priorities and indicating core issues which should be covered by all authorities in their Improvement Plans. Authorities and schools will implement these in line with their own local circumstances, taking control themselves of how to deliver improvement in standards and performance, and they will also have considerable flexibility to introduce their own, local priorities.

This approach responds to comments made in the consultation that priorities should be few in number and focused on key outcomes. It also achieves three important objectives: it allows for and encourages local flexibility, avoids over-prescription and sets a direction which is realistic and achievable.

Modern languages have a role in delivering several of the priorities, perhaps most obviously on attainment, inclusion and citizenship. The Executive does not intend to burden schools and authorities with new measures of the quality of modern languages provision within the Improvement Framework. We want to see authorities and schools take account of the recommendations of the Modern Languages Action Group in delivering against National Priorities in a way which recognises their local circumstances and the needs of their individual pupils. We will, however, have data on 5-14 and national qualifications attainment, and evidence from HMIE inspection, available for Modern Languages as in other subjects, and we expect to see continuous improvement in outcomes achieved. We will be monitoring this improvement carefully.

Future funding arrangements

Current arrangements for funding and supporting language education in Scottish schools focus mainly on training for primary teachers which allows for the inclusion of language learning in P6 and P7 classes. Funding is allocated to local authorities by SEED based on the total number of teachers nominated for training. There has been little facility for funding innovative approaches to language learning and teaching.

Although these arrangements have worked well over the past 8 years, and have provided a skills base of primary teachers able to teach a modern foreign language in the classroom, I have reviewed them in the light of new directions in education, primarily as a result of the Standards in Scottish Schools Act 2000 and the National Priorities improvement framework.

Therefore, I plan to discontinue the centralised approach to funding primary school language education training and its delivery in primary schools and establish a new system of assisting local authorities to make language education provision which responds to the Action Group recommendations while meeting local needs.

From the end of the eighth phase of teacher training, in October 2001, funding usually allocated for modern languages in the primary school teacher training will be distributed directly to local authorities. Funding will be based on the development of improvement strategies which support the spirit of the report, *Citizens of a Multilingual World*, and which specifically address recommendations 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. The funding will be ring-fenced and local authority strategies for the effective use of the funding will be included in the structure of HMI inspections of schools and local authorities which will evaluate the successful implementation of improvement strategies and report these back to me.

These revised arrangements will allow local authorities to meet the recommendations to reflect available resources and the individual needs of their pupils and teachers. It will allow some financial flexibility to direct resources to areas most in need and the freedom to maximise the potential of innovative solutions. This particular funding package will be reviewed after 3 years.

Although not entitled an Innovation and Training Fund, the arrangements outlined above meet recommendation 4 by allowing local authorities to make measured improvements in their language education provision without adding burdensome bureaucracy.

In addition, this funding will not be restricted to only supporting modern foreign language learning. I am aware that modern language education has been provided with significant financial support over the last 8 years. While the Action Group rightly focuses on modern foreign languages, in line with its remit, I recognise that local authorities face a growing need to make provision in other languages in line with the stated needs of their local population and to reflect the growing cultural diversity of Scotland. The Action Group also made reference to these additional languages in the body of its report. Local authorities might therefore wish to draw on this financial support to enhance the learning and teaching of all foreign languages apart from English, as well the more customary modern European languages.

More detailed information on this new scheme will be distributed to local authorities in the near future.

Initial Teacher Education

A review of Initial Teacher Education is currently underway. In July we published the report of the first stage, which can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/tefs-00.asp>. We have consulted on this and are constructing an action plan for implementation. Although this stage does not deal directly with modern languages, it makes important recommendations to improve all teaching. The second stage, due to commence in the new year, will thoroughly examine ITE for language teachers, and also language training for primary teachers.

Continuing Professional Development

The framework for Continuing Professional Development of teachers is being taken forward by the Committee which I chair. Provision of support for language teachers is very much a part of the plans which are at an early stage.

Meanwhile CD ROMS have been produced which offer support for teachers who have undergone the 27-day training programme. Materials in French and German have been finalised and Spanish and Italian underway.

Lifelong language learning and opportunities for language use

I am aware that some local audits of needs of, and opportunities for, use of language skills have been undertaken. I will consult with the Languages National Training Organisation on how a national audit might be undertaken. The results of such an audit will be disseminated widely within education and business and to cultural institutions.

The establishment of *learndirect scotland* offers the ideal means of promoting lifelong language learning. Early discussions have taken place with representatives of *learndirect scotland* and work is now underway to promote language learning opportunities by that means.

Recommendations and action points

Recommendation	Action
<p>1. Up to date information on languages should be made available both in schools and in the wider society so that proficiency in languages is perceived as being achievable, relevant and useful.</p>	<p>The Rationale published as a separate document.</p> <p>Further information to be developed aimed specifically at parents and pupils.</p>
<p>2. All students should be entitled to experience of learning a modern language.</p>	<p>Local authorities will be provided with financial support to help them ensure that this entitlement is available in schools in their area.</p>
<p>3. Modern languages should be declared a priority area for innovation and training.</p>	<p>Direct funding should enable local authorities to set their own priorities and develop ways in which they can be met.</p>
<p>4. A special Languages and Innovation Training Funding (LITF) should be established, allowing local authorities and other organisations to bid for national funding in support of local innovation and specialised training for teachers.</p>	<p>Revised funding arrangements will be set in place following consultation with Association of Directors of Education.</p>
<p>5. At the national level, a variety of languages rather than French alone, and including heritage or community languages such as Scottish Gaelic and Urdu, should be taught as a first modern language.</p>	<p>As recommendation 3/4.</p>

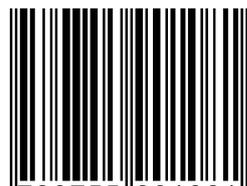
<p>6. Local authorities should generally be responsible for ensuring a diversified provision of first modern language within the authority if not the school.</p>	<p>As recommendation 3/4.</p>
<p>7. Information and Communications Technology should have a central role in supporting language learning and use from P6 onwards.</p>	<p>As part of the National Grid for Learning, Learning and Teaching Scotland and Channel 4 have developed a website for language learners and teachers on http://dev.scet.com/channel4/</p>
<p>8. Opportunities should be greatly increased for pupils to put their languages to real use in contact with native speakers, including foreign language assistants.</p>	<p>As recommendation 3/4.</p>
<p>9. The place of languages should be made more central and secure in the curriculum and examinations arrangements for the upper secondary school.</p>	<p>As recommendation 3/4.</p>
<p>10. All Initial Teacher Education courses for primary school teaching should include a core modern language component that is coherent, progressive and minimally equal to the current 27-day programme for teachers in post.</p>	<p>This will be considered as part of the review process currently being developed.</p>

<p>11. All Initial Teacher Education courses for languages for primary teachers and secondary teachers should provide students with knowledge of children's first and second language development, substantial training in ICT for languages and strategies for promoting the benefits of language learning.</p>	<p>As recommendation 10.</p>
<p>12. In order to deliver the pupils' entitlement to languages through high-quality courses, all those teaching languages in primary and secondary schools should in turn be entitled to receive substantial and continuing material and Continuing Professional Development support from national and other bodies.</p>	<p>This will be considered as part of the ongoing work to develop CPD.</p> <p>CD roms already developed in French and German. Spanish and Italian to follow.</p>
<p>13. Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and local enterprise bodies should audit and publicise the country's needs and opportunities for languages in respect of employment, training and career.</p>	<p>Will consult with Languages National Training Organisation on ways in which this can be implemented.</p>
<p>14. There should be widespread promotion of lifelong language learning in formal and informal education, leisure and work, building on the full entitlement that will have been delivered during the compulsory period of education in school.</p>	<p><i>learndirect scotland</i> in an ideal position to promote lifelong language learning.</p>

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