



Languages Review



Consultation
Report:

December 2006

The Languages Review

Consultation Report

Policies, Comment & Pedagogy: Chapters 1-5

Proposals: Chapters 6-8

Work Ahead: Chapter 9

December 2006

Right Hon Alan Johnson, MP
Secretary of State for Education & Skills
5 December 06

You appointed us on 5th October to advise you on what action should be taken about the severe fall in the numbers continuing with the study of modern foreign languages (referred to in the enclosed report on languages) at Key Stage 4 in secondary schools.

You asked us to make an interim report in December and a final report in February 2007. In undertaking this task you asked us to look into the following issues:

- With secondary schools to support them in making available a wider range of more flexible language courses, with accreditation, so that more young people keep up language learning even if they are not doing a full GCSE course;
- Further ways of strengthening the incentives for schools and young people themselves to continue with languages after 14;
- With representatives of FE and HE, to look at what more might be done to widen access to and increase interest in language learning among the student population;
- With employer organisations, to consider what more they can do to promote the value of language skills for business and to give stronger market signals to young people about language skills and employability; and
- What broader communication effort is needed to get across the importance of language skills to all sections of the population.

Although we are only at the half way stage of our work, in order to stimulate comment and so inform our recommendations to you in February, we make provisional proposals for action for both the short term and long term in this interim report.

We did however make two recommendations to you for immediate action in November. We refer to these in the Report, and we proceeded with them as agreed with you.

At this stage we have not costed our provisional proposals. This will be done before our report in February, which will provide an assessment of how best to achieve value for money and the timetable for implementation of any recommendations.

Subject to any further guidance from you and the responses to this interim report, we will make our final report in February, as you requested.

Ron Dearing

Lid King

To the Reader,

Our consultations will continue in January and we invite comment on this interim report and its provisional proposals. We are due to make our full report in February. Comments should be sent to The Language Review, the Department for Education and Skills, Room 4.86 Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT or by email to KS4language.review@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

You can respond on-line at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/.

Ron Dearing

Lid King

Introduction

1. The impetus for commissioning this Report is the need to redress the severe fall in the study of languages after the age of fourteen. A response to that is needed now.
2. There are, however, two major policies that will be progressively unfolding over the next few years which bear on the right kind of response.
3. The first is that, as proposed in the National Languages Strategy, there will be provision for learning a language in all primary schools by 2010. This will progressively impact on the language skills of entrants to secondary schools, and our national capability in languages. But the full benefit will not be felt by fourteen year olds for another six to seven years.
4. The second is the plan from 2008 progressively to give pupils from the age of 14 an opportunity to study for the award of a specialised diploma, equivalent in weight to between four and six GCSEs. With other curriculum requirements this will limit the scope for substantial study of a language by many of these pupils unless languages are studied as part of the diplomas. We heard views that a substantial proportion of pupils will choose that option. But that too is a development whose full effects lie some years ahead.
5. In responding to our remit we have therefore had in mind, in addressing the immediate issue of the big drop in language studies, the need to take into account the growing implications of the Diplomas for language studies from 2008, and the need to see that the language studies in primary schools benefit secondary studies to best effect. From our consultations we have also had in mind the immediate and long term need

to make the study of a language more meaningful and more engaging, in part, for example, by recognising its different purposes for pupils after the age of fourteen; by widening the range of languages available for study; by investing in the continuing professional development of language teachers; by increasing contact between young people here and overseas; and, in all of these, taking full advantage of the continually expanding support for teaching and learning offered by information technology.

6. We have also been mindful of the effect of achievement and attainment tables on management decisions in schools and reviewed the administrative and legal framework for languages.

Conduct of the Review

7. We held six consultation conferences, the first for bodies with a particular role in language studies, and five mainly for teachers, and head teachers, but also including representatives from universities and local authorities. We held numerous meetings with interested bodies, including overseas embassies and employer organisations. We thank all who helped us in this way.

The Views of Pupils

8. We asked those attending from schools to take away a pack of thirty short questionnaires in which pupils who had decided to continue with a language after Key stage 3, and those who had decided not to do so, were asked to give their reasons. These responses are still being received.

Terms used

9. In the report, for brevity we refer to modern foreign languages, simply as languages. Similarly, for brevity we refer to our provisional

proposals for consideration and revision in the light of our continuing work, as “proposals”.

Next Steps

10. Our consultations will continue in January, and we invite comments on this interim report; its provisional proposals and options for action to support a renaissance of languages in Key Stage 4. We are due to give our final report in February and we would welcome any comment by the end of January, to the Languages Review, the Department for Education and Skills, Room 4.86, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT or by e-mail to

KS4language.review@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

CHAPTER 1

The National Languages Strategy for England

- 1.1 The National Languages Strategy – “Languages for All: Languages for Life” was published in December 2002. Its stated aim was to transform the country’s capability in languages, setting out an “agenda for the next decade”.
- 1.2 The three overarching objectives of the strategy were and remain –
- To improve the teaching and learning of languages, including delivering an entitlement to language learning for pupils at Key Stage 2, making the most of e-learning and ensuring that the opportunity to learn languages has a key place in the transformed secondary school of the future.
 - To introduce a recognition system to complement existing qualification frameworks and give people credit for their language skills.
 - To increase the number of people studying languages in further and higher education and in work-based training by stimulating demand for language learning, developing Virtual Language Communities and encouraging employers to play their part in supporting language learning.
- 1.3 To meet these objectives a number of specific actions were proposed –
- 1.3.1 For primary languages – introducing an entitlement for language learning for all pupils in Key Stage 2 (KS2) by 2010. This involved –
- Funding for Pathfinder authorities to develop primary languages
 - The development of a flexible workforce model, including support from secondary schools, training for new teachers and continuing professional development (CPD) for existing teachers and teaching assistants
 - The development of good practice guidance
 - Support for transition from primary to secondary.
- 1.3.2 In the secondary sector – improving standards and introducing a languages entitlement in a more flexible post 14 curriculum. This meant
- Providing more professional development for teachers in Key Stage 3 (KS3)
 - Further developing the KS3 Framework for languages
 - Supporting pilots to develop a more varied curriculum (Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Vocational)
 - Increasing the numbers and impact of Specialist Language Colleges
 - Expanding the ways that schools use ICT and e-learning
 - Increasing the range of courses and accreditation in Key Stage 4 (KS4)
 - Developing partnerships with schools in other countries and opportunities for international activities.
- 1.3.3 Beyond school – to encourage greater take-up of languages and collaboration between institutions of further and higher education and schools.

6 The Languages Review Consultation Report

- 1.3.4 In employment – to encourage employers to value and support language skills in their own workforce and to engage with schools in making the case for language competence.
- 1.3.5 For all language learners to support and celebrate their learning with a new recognition system – the “Languages Ladder (Asset Languages)” linked to the national qualifications framework and the Common European Framework.
- 1.3.6 In support of these actions – to make available appropriate levels of funding, to appoint a National Director for Languages, to establish CILT as the National Centre for Languages and to mobilise the support of key partners, Local Authorities and Schools.
- 1.4 In substantial part the National Strategy responded to the key recommendations from the Nuffield Languages Inquiry (2000). In particular –
- The development of a national strategy
 - The appointment of a national director for languages
 - The encouragement of business-education partnerships
 - The primary languages entitlement for all children from age 7
 - The introduction of a graded recognition scheme for languages
 - Increased use of new technologies
- 1.5 Other proposals made by Nuffield and the Languages National Steering Group, set up to advise the Government on a languages strategy, were not reflected in the Strategy itself. These included proposals for a more flexible assessment system in secondary education, and increased opportunities post 16 and in Further and Higher Education. The Nuffield Inquiry also made ambitious proposals on “bilingual” teaching in both primary and secondary education. Finally, the decision to make languages an entitlement in Key Stage 4 rather than part of the mandatory curriculum also ran counter to the thrust of the Nuffield Inquiry and the thinking of the Steering Group.
- 1.6 Since 2003, a great deal has been accomplished to meet the objectives of the strategy. In some cases much more has been done than was originally envisaged, while in some areas, in particular outside the school system, progress has been less rapid. The main achievements are as follows –
- 1.6.1 In Primary, a research project established the baseline of provision in 2003/4; 19 “Pathfinder” authorities were funded to develop language programmes and these were positively evaluated; a flexible workforce model was developed and significant funding was made available to Local Authorities, schools and Specialist Language Colleges in support of primary developments. By 2005 over 2000 new primary teachers with a languages specialism had been trained and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was available in all Local Authorities, supported by a training trainers programme run by CILT, the National Centre for Languages. An innovative KS2 Framework for Languages was published in 2005 in print and on line, and supporting materials, including a Primary Languages Zone are currently in production. New networks have been established, including 75 Regional Support Groups for languages. The NACELL (National Advisory Centre for Early Language Learning) information service has been enhanced and developed and work is proceeding on the production of national schemes of work in French, German and Spanish. Most Local Authorities are now on course to meet the end of decade commitment and 71% of primary schools are offering or planning to offer languages to some of their children.

1.6.2 In Secondary Education, CILT has been funded to offer more CPD and advice for teachers. There are now 296 Language Colleges supporting innovation and networking with other schools: some of these are specifically funded to support post 14 developments. In 2006, funding was made available for a national CPD programme coordinated by the Secondary Strategy and supported by CILT which is targeting all secondary language teachers. The DfES has also supported and promoted innovative curricular developments for example – languages integrated with other subjects, intensive learning with ICT, vocational language programmes. A number of these are highlighted in Chapter 5. Specifically for Key Stage 4 there has been funding for promotion (“Languages Work”), for the development of new curricular models, and networks coordinated by CILT and joint work with a range of key partners.



1.6.3 Beyond school both the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) have made specific commitments to supporting language capability. Quite extensive research has been carried out to determine both needs and provision and a number of funded projects will be supported in 2007. A “Business Language Champions” programme and Education

Business partnerships have also been funded on a regional basis.

1.6.4 The recognition scheme was launched as the Languages Ladder in 2004 and a year later the related assessment and qualifications system – Asset languages – was launched initially for 8 languages, and has increased in 2006/7 to 21. By the summer of 2006 over 10,000 candidates had taken Asset qualifications and interest is rising significantly.

1.6.5 To support these developments, the National Director for Languages was appointed in September 2003. An implementation infrastructure has been established and funding of £125 million has been made available for languages between 2003 and 2008. The great bulk of this has been to support developments in primary schools.

1.7 Much progress has been made towards the ambitious objectives of the Strategy. But in two major respects it has not delivered. The first is the failure to attract more pupils to continue with a language up to A Level, where the 28,000 taking a full A Level in 2006 compares with 38,000 ten years ago. The second is the severe fall to 50 percent in the proportion of pupils taking a language in Key Stage 4. It is that fall that led to this Review. While our remit is specific to the take up of languages in Key Stage 4, we concluded that this had to be considered in the context of what is happening in the earlier stages and our recommendations extend to those years.

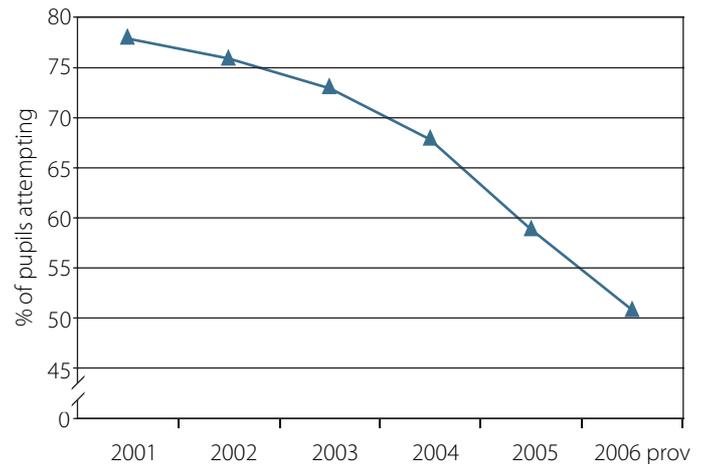
CHAPTER TWO

The decision: the reasons for it and what has happened

- 2.1 In September 2004, learning a language in maintained schools ceased to be a mandatory part of the curriculum for pupils in the final two years of their compulsory education, usually referred to as Key Stage 4. Instead it became an entitlement for all students who chose to continue with languages after their three years mandatory study in Key Stage 3.
- 2.2 A proposal to reduce the mandatory curriculum had been canvassed in the Green Paper '14-19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards', published in February 2002. Two subjects were identified as potential candidates for becoming entitlements rather than mandatory requirements: languages and design and technology.
- 2.3 In the consultation that followed the responses showed broad support for the proposals: although there were expressions of concern about introducing the changes as soon as 2004.
- 2.4 In the light of the consultation, Ministers signalled their intention to go ahead with the changes.
- 2.5 In evaluating what followed, it is relevant to note that although languages had been compulsory in Key Stage 4 between 1996 and 2004, over recent years only 80 percent had got

as far as sitting the GCSE, and the take up had begun to drift down from the year 2000.

Chart 1: Percent of cohort entered for at least 1 MFL

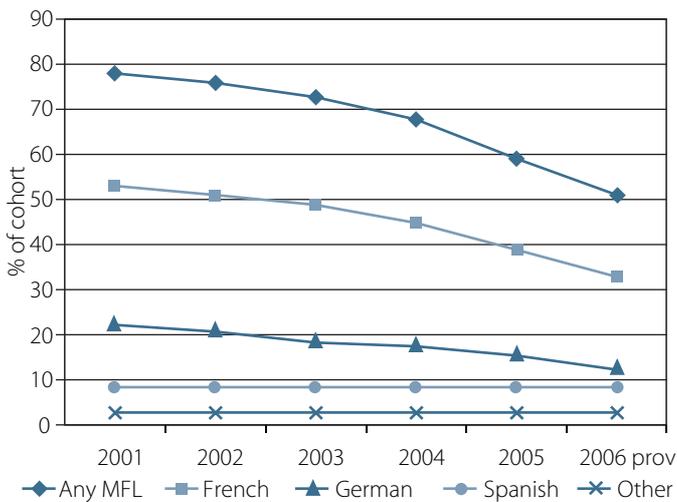


Note: From 2005 onwards, figures refer to pupils at the end of KS4 rather than at age 15.

- 2.6 As chart 1 shows, many schools acted in anticipation of the change. The proportion taking the GCSE had fallen to 68 percent by the time the change came into effect in 2004. In 2006 it was down to 51 percent. A recent survey (November 2006) by CILT, the National Centre for Languages shows that for those in the last two years of statutory schooling, the proportion taking a language is continuing to fall. This means we are heading for some further reductions in GCSE numbers for two more years.
- 2.7 While the GCSE is not the only qualification, the indications are that the numbers pursuing a language, for example as a module in a vocational course, are comparatively small.
- 2.8 As a side light on what has happened in languages, design and technology has had a similar experience, with numbers falling by 17 percentage points between 2004 and 2006. In 2004, 70% of the cohort attempted a GCSE in design and technology compared to 53% in 2006.

2.9 French and German, as the two main languages offered by maintained schools, have felt the full effect of the fall. But Spanish substantially held its ground, as did the much smaller numbers taking other languages, for example Italian.

Chart 2: Percent of cohort taking a Language



Why the Government made languages and design and technology optional

2.10 The fundamental reason for the policy change on languages was to offer a curriculum that would engage more pupils in effective learning, for example, in vocationally oriented programmes, and thus motivate them to stay on in education after sixteen. With the United Kingdom towards the bottom (24th out of 29) of a league table of developed nations¹ for young people staying on in education after seventeen, this was rightly a major objective of policy.

2.11 With that objective in mind, the criterion the Government adopted in deciding which of the hitherto mandatory subjects should no longer be compulsory in Key Stage 4, was whether they were 'essential for progression or for personal development'. This reduced the list of

mandatory subjects in which all students are normally examined at sixteen to English, Mathematics, ICT and Science.

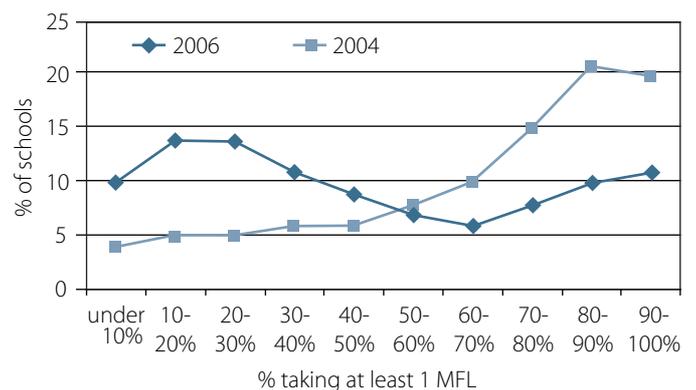
Action at Primary Level

2.12 At the same time as the changes at secondary level, the Government launched a programme to provide an opportunity for all Key Stage 2 pupils, as a part of a package of measures, to learn a language by 2010.

2.13 The objective was to introduce languages at a time when learning them is easiest, and by giving pupils a much better start for languages at secondary level, improve achievement and motivation to continue languages through to sixteen and beyond, and in the medium term, markedly to improve language skills in this country.

Review of what has happened at Secondary Level

Chart 3: Language entries in maintained mainstream schools



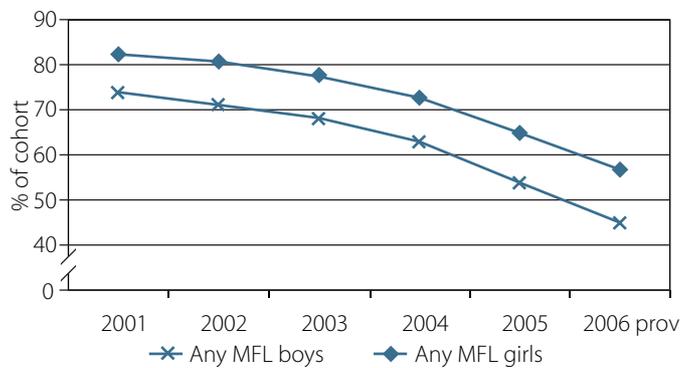
2.14 A striking feature of the changes at secondary level in mainstream maintained schools has been the differential way schools and their pupils have responded. At the bottom end of the spectrum, there has been a big rise in the number of schools where no more than a third of the pupils are taking a language. In 2006 there were over 40 schools where no pupils

¹ OECD, EAG2006, Table C1.3

were taking a language. At the other end of the spectrum, there has been a sharp drop in the number of maintained schools where at least 80 percent of the pupils take a language.

2.15 The fall in numbers has been greater for boys than girls, with only 45 percent of boys attempting the GCSE in a foreign language in 2006 compared to 57 percent of girls.

Chart 4: Percent taking languages (boys v girls)

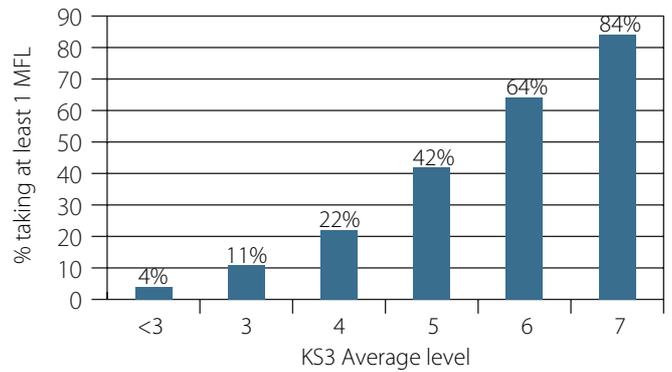


Figs for 2005 and 2006 are end KS4.
Figures for earlier years are for 15 year olds.

2.16 The take up of languages is closely linked to overall academic attainment at Key Stage Three, and as would be expected, GCSE results in languages again reflect overall academic achievement.

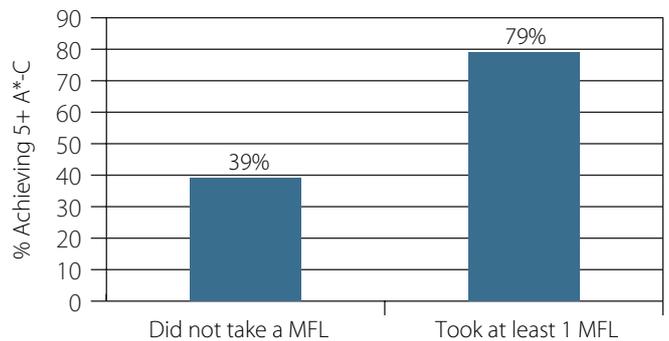


Chart 5: Relationship between KS3 attainment and language take up at GCSE.



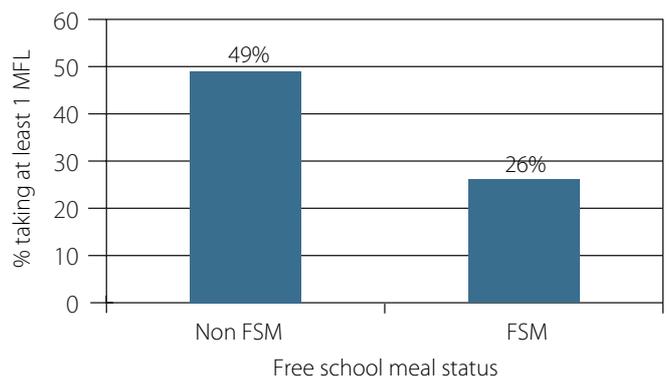
Note: MFL includes only French, German and Spanish

Chart 6: Language take up linked to GCSE attainment



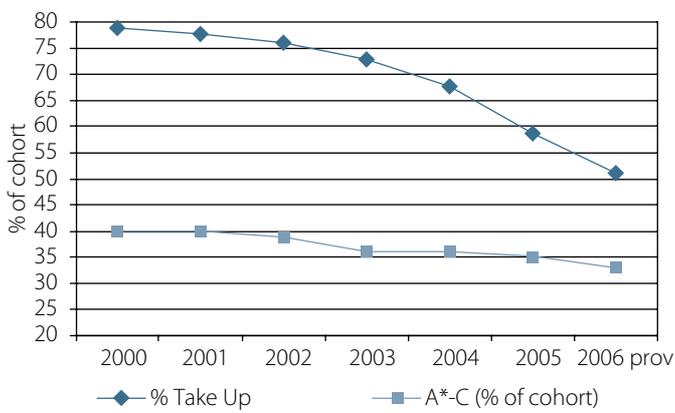
2.17 It is also closely associated with socio economic class, as indicated by free school meals.

Chart 7: Language take up and free school meal status



2.18 As would be expected, with the reduction in the less academically able students taking languages, the proportion of good A* to C grade passes has risen from 50 percent five years ago, to 64 percent in 2006.

Chart 8: MFL take up and % of cohort achieving A*-C in MFL



Note: From 2005 onwards, figures relate to pupils at the end of KS4 rather than at age 15.

2.19 This means that the number of good passes has fallen much less than the numbers taking a language. Against a 30 percentage point fall in overall numbers taking the GCSE, the fall in A* to C grade passes has been one of only 7 percentage points. That is a significant factor in evaluating the implications of the overall fall.

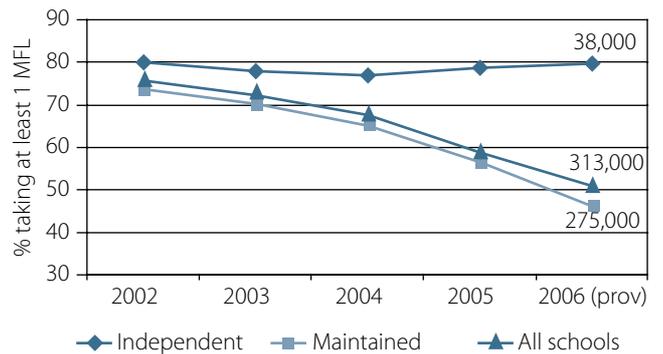
2.20 Within the maintained sector, the 296 language specialist schools and the grammar schools have sustained very high levels of take up, with figures typically around 85 percent for the specialist schools and 95 percent for grammar schools.

2.21 In the independent sector, in terms of entries to the GCSE, as Chart 9 shows, up to 2006 the proportion of pupils taking a language held at around 80 percent. However, the recent survey by CILT points to a substantial reduction in the number of independent schools where at least one language is normally taken by all pupils through to GCSE. The survey suggests this had

fallen to 61 percent for pupils entering Year 10 of statutory schooling in 2006. If so, this points to the probability of a decline in GCSE numbers in the years ahead, but it does not follow that it will be on the same scale as the fall in the proportion of schools where a language is normally taken by all pupils.

2.22 Summing up for all schools, in terms of those taking the GCSE up to the year 2006, the picture in the three main languages has developed as shown in Chart 9.

Chart 9: Percent of cohort taking at least 1 language in French, German or Spanish



MFL refers to French, German and Spanish only. Figs for 2005 and 2006 are end KS4. Figures for earlier years are for 15 year olds.

2.23 It is relevant to note those subjects that have shown increased take up in the last five years. Chart 10 shows the large rise in pupils taking vGCSEs as well as GNVQs. There have also been much smaller rises in other subjects.

Chart 10: Subjects showing increased take up

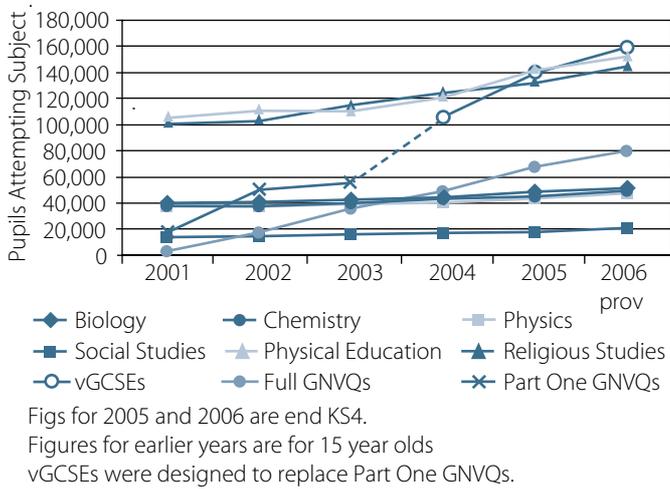
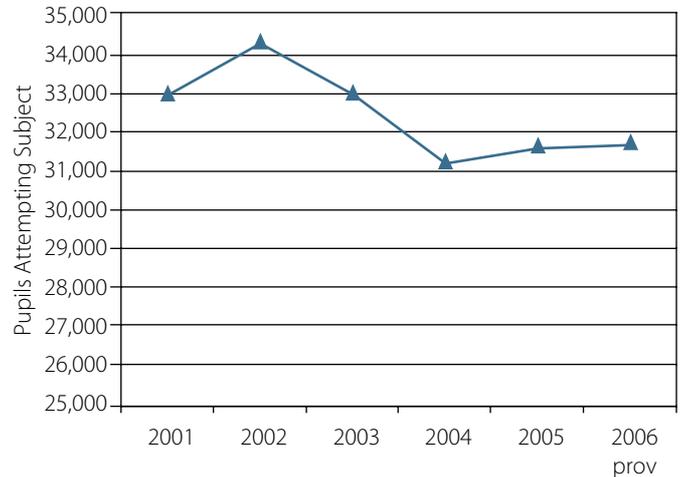


Chart 12: AS level entries

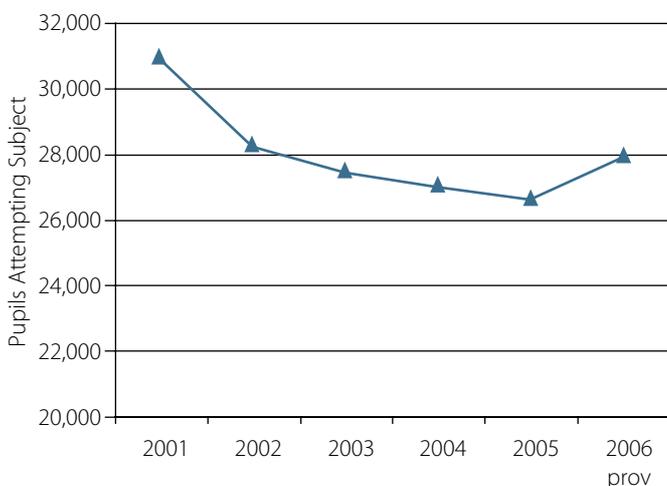


This is, however, against the background of a much higher take up of languages at A level in the nineteen nineties, for example, 38,000 entries in 1996, compared with 28,000 entries in 2006 for the full A level.

The Knock on Effect of the Fall in Numbers

2.24 Because the fall in good passes has been much smaller than the overall fall in numbers taking the GCSE, the knock on effect on numbers carrying on with a language for the AS and A levels has been comparatively small. Indeed after a drop in numbers, there has now been some recovery in numbers.

Chart 11: A level entries

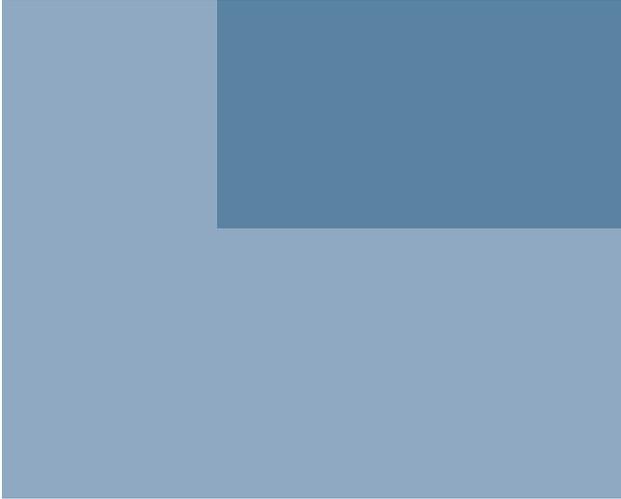


Adult Learning

2.25 It is interesting to note that the choices of language by adult learners on Local Authority courses is distinctly different from that in schools and suggests it is much influenced by holidays. In schools, French is studied more than German, which in turn is more popular than Spanish. But for adults, Spanish is the most studied language, followed by French and then Italian – German is a distant fourth.

Summary

2.26 Since it became apparent that the Government was moving to make languages an entitlement rather than a requirement after Key Stage 3, the number continuing to take the GCSE has fallen from 80 percent to 50 percent. Those dropping languages have been mainly those with below average academic achievement across the whole field of learning. There is also a correlation with free school meals.



2.27 The fall in the percentage of those achieving a Grade A* to C at GCSE has been much less, at around 7 percentage points, and the knock on effect on those carrying on to an AS or A level has been correspondingly low.

2.28 The national effect has been a big drop in basic language competence, but a much less severe drop amongst those achieving a good standard at 16, and amongst numbers progressing to A levels, where we are seeing the early signs of a recovery in 2006.

2.29 In the adult community there is a healthy interest in languages.

2.30 In the light of the current review of skills in the UK by Lord Leitch² about the serious gap between the UK and other major economies, the rapid expansion in the take up of vocational qualifications by Key Stage 4 pupils, outlined in this chapter, is of itself a highly desirable development, and especially so if it produces a higher motivation to learn and to stay in learning by many who were not succeeding in the standard curriculum.

2.31 But, the way the fall of 134,000 in the number of GCSEs in languages since 2002 has occurred at the same time the rise of 188,000 in the number of vocationally oriented GCSE level qualifications, suggests the changes may be related. In any event, such a rapid decline in languages itself raises issues of the national interest and the long term interests of the pupils themselves. In particular, it brings into focus the need to consider the place of languages in the fourteen specialised diplomas whose introduction begins in 2008, each of which will be the equivalent of four to six GCSEs, and the need to supplement the present standard arrangements for recognition of progress in languages through the GCSE.

² Final report published in December 2006

CHAPTER 3

Languages in the 21st century

- 3.1 As a basis for evaluating the changes in post 14 provision set out in Chapter One and for considering future policy, this chapter looks at the broad context for the study of languages.

The Question of English

- 3.2 One inescapable fact in considering a policy for languages in the 21st century is the position of English as a very widely used international language. English has become the world language of trade and technology (and to large extent diplomacy).
- 3.3 But there are limits to the domain of English. Even now around half of European adults do not speak English with any fluency, but more importantly the growing dominance of English as a world language actually increases the need for multilingual competence in the UK:
- “Paradoxically the more English becomes used as the world language, the more the British will need skills in other languages”³
- 3.4 As English becomes a mass commodity, it loses its uniqueness. The more educated and skilled people of all nationalities can operate in English, the less the advantage of being a native speaker, and especially a monolingual one.
- 3.5 Important as languages are for individuals and nations in the business of earning a living,

language is much more than a way of transacting business. It is a fundamental indicator of identity and a major determinant of our world view. In an age of increasing complexity and accelerating change, society needs a people who are both confident in themselves and who are willing and able to engage with others on their own terms, and with an understanding of their actions, their values and what matters to them. Learning a language is the gateway to this.

- 3.6 The challenge now is to ensure that such opportunities are open to all of our children and young people, not just to an elite, and by doing so overcome the illusion that “English can be enough”. To have some facility in a language is a form of enfranchisement that should be open to all.

Language policy in the UK and in Europe

- 3.7 In response to such considerations, since the mid 1990s language policy – and the promotion of Multilingualism – has been a major element of public policy in Europe and in the UK.
- 3.8 Although language learning was a compulsory part of the 11-16 National Curriculum introduced in 1990 and fully implemented from 1996, there was considerable dissatisfaction with our performance in languages, with provision for it and with public attitudes. This was the impetus behind the Inquiry into languages funded by the Nuffield Foundation which reported in 2000 with its call for
- “a change of policy and practice to fit us for the new Millennium”
- 3.9 The Nuffield Inquiry made a large number of recommendations, many (but not all) of which were taken up in national strategies, first in Wales (“Languages Count” May 2002) and then in England (“Languages for All: Languages for Life”, December 2002). In Scotland there was no Strategy as such, but a major report –

³ Graddol, D. (1998). *Will English be enough? Where are we going with languages?*, The Consultative Report of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry.

“Citizens of a Multilingual World” produced by a Ministerial Action Group working at the same time as the Nuffield Inquiry. The latter was followed up by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education in Scotland who stated that they would expect all young people to have an exit qualification in a language, and today the vast majority of young people in Scotland are taking a qualification to the end of S4 (age 15).

- 3.10 Although specific policy decisions and proposals varied across the UK, a much heightened shared political awareness of and commitment to language competence emerged, both as an important functional skill, and for its broader educational and social importance. Certain key themes reoccurred. According to the Scottish report –

“We seek to associate the learning and use of languages with the major changes that are sweeping across Scottish and international society. This implies a significant ‘re-imaging’ of languages so that they are associated with key signposts of our contemporary society such as ‘mobility’, ‘information and knowledge’, ‘ICT’, ‘economic regeneration’, ‘quality of life’, ‘marketability’, ‘diversity’, ‘equity’, ‘inclusion’ and perhaps above all with ‘opportunity’.”

The English National Strategy presented a similar ‘vision’ for language learning:

“Languages are a lifelong skill – to be used in business and for pleasure, to open up avenues of communication and exploration, and to promote, encourage and instil a broader cultural understanding. In the knowledge society of the 21st century, language competence and intercultural understanding are not optional extras: they are an essential part of being a citizen.”

- 3.11 Such policy debates have long been central to thinking on post-war European unity. As Europeans sought to promote economic

growth and to create a community based on mutual respect, tolerance and democracy, language and cultural policies became important underpinning. Effective communication was seen as essential to ensure economic competitiveness and the mobility and employability of people. Multilingualism was seen as a condition for democratic citizenship, for the mutual respect of cultures and traditions, for social inclusion, and in the last analysis for peace.

- 3.12 For half a century this has been a major concern of the Council of Europe. Since the foundation of the then European Economic Community and in particular since the mid 90s and the publication of the White paper on Education and Training in 1995, language policy has also been central to the work of the European Union. Most recently a Commissioner has been appointed with specific responsibility for Multilingualism, and a Framework Strategy for Multilingualism (with associated Action Plan) was published in 2005. Among other things the Framework states the following:

“The ability to understand and communicate in more than one language – already a daily reality for the majority of people across the globe – is a desirable life-skill for all European citizens. It encourages us to become more open to other people’s cultures and outlooks, improves cognitive skills and strengthens learners’ mother tongue skills; it enables people to take advantage of the freedom to work or study in another Member State.”

Learning lessons from other countries

- 3.14 There has been a convergence of view within Europe about the importance of languages. Key themes such as “opportunity” (economic and social), “intercultural understanding”, “mutual respect”, “social inclusion” and “cognitive development” are widely accepted. Despite such general agreement there are also

differences arising in large part from the particular role of English. Not only is the motivation for learning English more powerful than for any other language, there are also differences in policy and provision:

- English is by a long way the main foreign language learned in European schools. According to Eurydice, English is being learned by over 90%, and still rising, of pupils in European secondary schools (compared to 27% learning French, 26% German and only 15% Spanish)
- Most countries allow more time over a longer period for language learning than is commonplace in England (or the UK in general). Although comparisons are difficult and provision across Europe varies enormously, in countries similar in size and GDP to the UK, provision is between 700 and 1100 hours over 8 years. There is no prescription in England but based on average provision patterns it seems unlikely that many schools will currently offer more than 450 hours over 5 years (730 hours if A2 is included).
- Most European countries also make language learning statutory, at least until 16, and in many cases until 19. In the Republic of Ireland there is no legal requirement to teach a foreign language. However the National University of Ireland's matriculation requirements include a school leaving qualification in Irish and a Foreign Language; Trinity College Dublin requires either a Foreign Language or Irish. It seems likely that this is a significant reason for higher take up of languages in upper secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland than in this country.
- Firstly, there is need for strong promotion of the case for learning languages in an English speaking country to win the commitment of young people and of engaging the support of wider society, employers, professional bodies and the media.
- Secondly, we need realistic policies about the level of provision and expectations of outcomes. Outcomes are affected significantly by the time available for learning: most comparable countries devote more time to language learning and start earlier than we do. This raises issues such as the future status of languages in primary and secondary schools, the possibilities of more intensive learning experiences and, in relation to the curriculum time provided, a more realistic expectation of outcomes for pupils with different learning priorities and aptitudes.
- Thirdly, we need to address the organisational and legal framework in which languages are to be developed. What kind of requirements should there be? What value is attached to language study by Universities? What is the role of the regulatory agencies?
- Finally – although this has not been a major theme of this chapter – we need to think about what have been called “process” issues – what actually happens in the classroom. We do have many excellent learners and teachers. Initial teacher training is of a high standard and there are many opportunities for continuing professional development for languages teachers. However there is evidence that many language teachers are demoralised, and of pupils not being engaged – there are challenges and a need to find responses to them in terms of teacher support, and the development of more engaging approaches to teaching and learning.

Implications for Language Policy post 14

3.15 We draw a number of conclusions from what has been outlined above.

3.18 These issues are addressed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

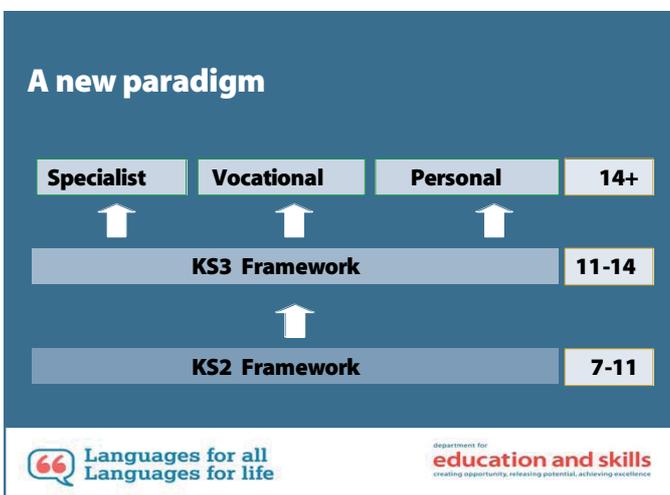
Languages for all: languages for life?

- 4.1 'Languages for All', is a consensual policy that has taken shape throughout the United Kingdom over a number of years, finding full expression for secondary schools in the National Curriculum. It became part of the title of the Government backed National Language Strategy of 2002 aimed at achieving a step change in the language skills of this country.
- 4.2 The concept expressed through 'Languages for All' is a coherent flow of learning from primary schools through to a restructured framework for the Key Stage 3 Curriculum, branching out in the final two years of statutory schooling in Key Stage 4, into pathways that reflect the interests and aspirations of teenage pupils.

- 4.3 The National Languages strategy thus provides a long term framework which is still in development at all three Key Stages based on a new rationale for language learning in an English speaking society.
- 4.4 It was part of that strategy to make languages an entitlement for all pupils rather than a mandatory requirement in Key Stage Four. Unhappily, the response in very many schools to that has been a sharp reduction in the proportion of pupils continuing with a language so that now, on average, only 50 percent do so. In over 40 schools it has been dropped entirely in Key Stage 4. The close association of that dropping of a language with social class and overall academic achievement firmly poses the question whether Languages for All now has the substance that was sought by the Government, and what should be done about it. It was far from the intention that learning a language, and gaining insights into the associated culture of a country, should become elitist and potentially divisive in terms of social class.

Some reasons for the decline at 14 – examinations and performance tables

- 4.5 In the course of consultation we have had the comment from pupils who have dropped languages that they are demanding ("difficult") and lacking in cognitive interest and challenge ("boring"). These were the main reasons. There was also comment that they could see no use for them. Another factor was the language they preferred to study was not available. This reaction by those pupils relating to the two main reasons has been confirmed by their teachers.
- 4.6 Many of these pupils would be the lower achievers, as is apparent from chart 8 in chapter 2, and from our reading of the responses we received from pupils on the reasons for



continuing or discontinuing the study of a language.

- 4.7 Such lack of motivation is not unique to this country. In evidence to us, a teacher of English in Japan told us of exactly the same perception there of learning English, reinforced by the comment, 'We will never need it and if we do we can learn it later.' With the perceived pervasiveness of English as the global language, and the experience of young holiday makers that English is widely spoken in popular holiday resorts, it would be surprising if the kind of comment made by the teacher of English in Japan did not have some resonance here.
- 4.8 There is also a widespread and strongly expressed view by the teachers that languages are half a grade harder than some of the other subjects in the GCSE, and because, like mathematics, they are a subject where achievement is cumulative, and the deficiencies of earlier years are not easily made up, once a pupil falls well behind there is a natural tendency to look elsewhere.
- 4.9 The first reason for what has happened since the removal of a mandatory requirement to study a language at KS4, has thus been a response by the pupils themselves, and most particularly those who found the going hard, to move to other options available to them.

- 4.10 A second reason, is the powerful influence on schools' management teams of the annual league tables showing the proportion of pupils in a school achieving five A* to C Grade GCSE passes. This has become a statement of the standing of a school for parents, and an element in the assessment of its performance with schools' inspectors. Because of the influence on parents, it bears very directly on a schools' ability to fill places. With the Government's understandable policy, in the interests of pupils, to facilitate the expansion of successful schools, this means that in areas of declining school rolls, a school's long term existence may be at stake. The achievements of a school also bear on its ability to attract the more academically able pupils and good staff.
- 4.11 In terms of performance table ranking, and the motivation of some pupils, it has made sense to the management teams in many schools and these pupils to switch out of languages to other studies, especially if their performance in Key Stage 3 has been indifferent, or perceived to be so. It was moreover in order to increase motivation and thereby improve actual performance by offering a more personalised programme that the Government decided on the freeing up of the curriculum in 2004.

Hindsight

- 4.12 The critics of the decision to remove compulsion and make languages an entitlement argued at the time that it would result in a major fall in student numbers. With the benefit of hindsight it might be argued that the Government should have waited until all the elements of the Languages for All policy were in place. But that would have meant forcing pupils to continue with studies that to some were demotivating and losing the opportunity to engage them in effective learning, to their own and the national good. There were good reasons for this decision.



4.13 But hindsight is easy and the need to give new opportunities to pupils who were failing to make good and effective use of their last two years of statutory schooling was strong: only by so doing is there a chance to keep them in learning through to eighteen and that was and remains an entirely valid objective. The issue now is to how to marry pupil motivation with a higher take up of languages than is the present position: if need be by statutory intervention. As a preliminary consideration of that, it is necessary to enter into a discussion of the individual and national interest in achieving a rise in the present take up of languages. Why do languages matter?

Why Languages Matter to the Individual

4.14 Languages matter because they are an enfranchisement. They make a reality of the opportunities offered by our global society. One of the major benefits of the European Community is the free movement of peoples, opening the door to inter-cultural understanding and the enrichment of life in all its aspects. This has in effect, created an unprecedented interaction of ideas and cultures, dynamic changes in people's personal lives and a huge and expanding jobs market. Our people need language skills to have the opportunity to be part of that interaction and personal development, and to benefit from that market place for jobs. Competence in speaking a language, even at a basic level, is now a major cultural, social and work enfranchisement.

4.15 The nature of this globalisation does, however, pose a continuing challenge in relation to the motivation of 13 and 14 year olds in this English-speaking country. For their French, German, Spanish or Bulgarian counterparts the motivation for learning a language – and specifically English – is simple and unquestionable. English gives access to the dominant world culture and is a condition for

mobility and employability in most fields. The same can not be said so uncategorically for any particular language learned by young English speakers. The reasons for language learning remain just as powerful, but they are more complex and less self-evident to all young people. This places a special responsibility on those entrusted with their education to guide choices in ways that are based on an appreciation of what is at stake over a lifetime. Young people are not the best judges of their potential long term needs.

For young people, these are the things languages offer:

I make new friends

I could go where I want

I could live where I want

I can have more fun abroad

There's a new world for me

A better job

A different job

A better life

I can understand other people better

I can get off the beaten track

I like to talk

4.16 Over the lifetime of today's young people there are likely to be major changes in the global centre of gravity for cultural and economic wellbeing. This means that schools must look beyond these shores, to other parts of Europe and beyond, in developing capability in languages.

4.17 It is not just functional language that will be needed. Young people also need an understanding of the culture of other peoples, both those they encounter in other countries and at home in the increasingly complex

cultures of our own society. Such understanding should be rooted in the language learning experience – from primary schools through to secondary schooling and beyond. It is also part of the answer to the charge by those who struggle to learn a language that it is boring. An understanding of a culture brings a language to life and gives it meaning.

The Example of Erasmus

Because they lack the language skills, too many British undergraduates are missing the opportunity to gain that enrichment offered by the Community funded Erasmus Programme, which provides funding for taking part of their study in another Community country. They have lost out in comparison with other Europeans. Disappointingly the numbers of British students participating in the programme fell from 12,000 in 1994/95 to 7,500 in 2003/04.

Financial considerations contributed to this fall in numbers, and the Government's decisions in 2004 to amend the student support regulations, so that Erasmus students have access to higher rates of student loans and pay no tuition fees for the year abroad, were much needed. However, the latest figures available show that numbers have continued to drop and are slightly lower in 2004/05 at 7,220.

4.18 Many commentators observe that young people's job prospects will be enhanced over the course of a working life time by ability to speak a foreign language. This is apparent to those aspiring to become members of the professions, as multinational partnerships become common place, and to those seeking to work in the City of London, where lack of facility in languages has become a serious disadvantage. To any company with large scale

overseas business, and particularly export business, applicants for a job who have a capability in a language should be at a long-term advantage. As the number of overseas owned companies and major multinationals increases, an ability to speak another language must become ever more important in the jobs market.

4.19 The British Council warned earlier this year:

'monoglot English graduates face a bleak economic future, as qualified youngsters from other countries are proving to have a competitive edge over their British counterparts in global companies and organisations'.

4.20 Increasingly however, it is not only language professionals such as interpreters, or graduates working in commerce, industry or law and politics for whom language ability is important. Many manual and skilled craftsmen would benefit from some competence in a foreign language and understanding of other cultures in their working lives. Working abroad is no longer the privilege of the few – it is estimated that many hundreds of thousands of British citizens live in France and Spain, and not all of them are retired or particularly wealthy. Many people travel abroad to work and many more encounter different languages and cultures at home. There is for example a growing need for language and intercultural skills in our indigenous building industry and in the health service.

4.21 Whether or not any individual needs a language in her/his working life, the other advantages of a capability in a foreign language outlined in this chapter still apply. Most are likely to travel, to meet other people and cultures, to encounter "otherness" at home and abroad. The fact is that none of us know how our lives will develop and, in a rapidly changing world, languages are becoming part of every young person's

necessary basic kit for life, a marker of their ability to function as a citizen of this century.

- 4.22 As the slogan of the European Year of Languages in 2001 reminded us, “Languages Open Doors”, to employment certainly, but also to a new and richer understanding of the world, to new opportunities for friendship and personal fulfilment and to a greater understanding of how to communicate, including in one’s own language. Knowledge of one foreign language and the understanding of how that language works make it easier to learn another, and reinforce literacy in English.
- 4.23 So to those, who like the Japanese students mentioned above, say they can learn a language later when a specific need arises, two comments can be made: first, the earlier a language is learnt the easier it is, and second, learning a foreign language is a part of a broader language education – learning to communicate.
- 4.24 Taking a lifetime view, especially for today’s young people, languages matter: they are an investment that can enrich their lives socially, culturally, and economically. They are a personal enfranchisement, an entitlement for all, and one that recognises the distinctive learning needs of every child.
- 4.25 Language is the emergent property of the human will to communicate.

Why languages matter to the Nation

- 4.26 Important as languages are for individual and social fulfilment and opportunities, they also matter to our nation’s future prosperity, stability and social well-being. Inter cultural awareness has never been more important than in Britain’s multicultural society and as it becomes evermore involved in, and dependent on, trading within the framework of a global economy and on the decisions taken by multinational companies. Understanding other

cultures is also critical to issues of peace and war in this volatile world.

- 4.27 Economically we need languages for successful trade. A survey by members of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) showed that some 60 per cent of members were dissatisfied with foreign language skills amongst the school leavers they recruit. At graduate level the dissatisfaction was rather lower, but at 48 per cent it was greater than for any other of the key skills employers need. There is clear awareness from this of the advantages of some facility in languages in building up personal relationships with overseas companies and of the dangers of complacency in Britain about our lack of skills in languages. This point was also eloquently made by the Chairman of the Institute of Export and by The Stock Exchange.

CBI Comment on Languages Review

‘This review is a welcome step. We need to raise our game in languages in schools if we are to compete in an increasingly globalised economy... it is vital that British firms do not lose out because of poor language skills’.

- 4.28 However, this concern was much less in evidence from surveys conducted by the British Chambers of Commerce and the Institute of Directors, and the Association of Graduate Recruiters summer survey in 2006 also reinforced a mixed message by reporting that, despite an emphasis on the global marketplace, ability in a second language was the only graduate skill deemed unimportant. The recently published Leitch Interim Report on Skills in the UK showed languages at the bottom of their skills gap as they are perceived by employers in 2004.
- 4.29 Looking at this from the perspective of overseas investment into the country, the Foreign Office advised that some existing investors from

Europe (Germany, France, Spain and the Benelux countries) have complained that they have had to source comparably qualified engineers from their home markets or beyond the UK, because UK engineers had insufficiently developed language skills relevant to these markets and more generally that a good grasp of the parent company's home language is an important capability/skill that they expect for employees holding technical or management skills .

4.30 It may be argued that the English language is our greatest economic asset because it has become the main international means of communication. It is for example a major asset in attracting tourists, and in the highly competitive global business of attracting overseas students to universities. Education exports contribute around £10 billion to the UK economy each year. Spending by overseas visitors to the UK was around £14 billion in 2005.⁴ But reciprocally, as we argue in Chapter 3, the more universally it is spoken, the less English becomes a distinctive advantage to the British economy, because so many others have it too. For example, because English is so widely spoken, universities in other countries frequently offer programmes in English, and other countries competing for tourists have the advantage that so many of their people and the tourists have English as a means of communication.

4.31 Language and intercultural competence also underpin our place in the world. International relations are helped by the existence of English as the lingua mundi, but they depend on multilingual exchanges on a daily basis. At the highest levels this involves the interpretation and translation services of international organisations and diplomatic negotiation.

In 2006 there is a growing skills gap in this area – we were told that on average 6 meetings per day are cancelled in Brussels through a lack of English speaking interpreters. But international politics are also affected at less expert levels – in trade offices and airlines and on joint peace keeping patrols. Without the ability to communicate at some level such international cooperation is impossible.

4.32 We also need languages if our own multicultural society is to function. The National Health Service, as the Nations' biggest employer, told us of their growing future need to be able to recruit staff domiciled in the UK who are proficient in the languages of immigrant communities. Other employers providing public services have a similar need.

4.33 More broadly we need languages for our national social wellbeing and inclusion. The issues of welcoming cultural and ethnic diversity, and yet achieving community cohesion have become matters of concern. So too have issues of disaffection amongst youths in areas of social and economic deprivation. Without language competence, and the related recognition and valuing of different languages and cultures it is inconceivable that we will be able to resolve these critical issues for contemporary society. Yet the way in which the study of languages,

⁴ source: ONS Transport Travel and Tourism 2006



as it has developed since it came to be seen as an option rather than an important entitlement, has unintentionally become a mark of social class, may make this more rather than less difficult. There is a significant danger that if some pupils – in particular low achievers – are restricted to a monolingual, monocultural education they will be increasingly unable to deal with the complex demands of our society. This too is a kind of exclusion.

Some Conclusions

- 4.34 In reviewing the experience of the last four years we concluded that both the vision of the Languages Strategy and the desire to create a more relevant post 14 curriculum were right. However – with the benefit of hindsight – the way in which languages was made an entitlement post 14 undermined some of our key educational aspirations.
- 4.35 In seeking to overcome these shortcomings we will need firstly to take account of the drivers (results and performance tables) which affect both learners and schools, and secondly to establish more clearly the reasons why languages are so important both for individuals and society.
- 4.36 On that basis we will now examine the positive developments within our schools and then set out a long term policy for languages post 14.

CHAPTER 5

Solutions in the schools

- 5.1 It became increasingly clear during the course of the review that a major objective of teaching in Key Stage 4 must be to engage pupils with “the meanings that matter” to them. It also became evident that much good practice already exists in our schools and that what needs to be done therefore is not so much to invent new approaches to language learning and teaching but to provide opportunities for teachers to share good practice, to learn from what works, to adapt it and make it their own.
- 5.2 In this Chapter we set out some of the issues which will need to be addressed if such an aspiration is to be successful.

Is there a “right way” of teaching?

- 5.3 The best way of teaching a language has been debated for decades and the debate continues. Teaching has become more demanding in terms of the need to win the engagement of the pupil than in previous generations, when more reliance could be placed on a pupil’s duty to listen and learn. This poses a particular challenge to teachers whose subject requires hard learning, and languages is one of these. As Professor Hawkins once famously said teaching a language is like gardening in a gale.
- 5.4 While the debate will doubtless continue, there is widely held consensus about language teaching, with which we concur, which claims that successful language learning takes place when –

- a Learners are exposed to **rich** input of the target language
 - b They have many opportunities to **interact** through the language
 - c They are **motivated** to learn
- 5.5 These principles can be incorporated into a wide range of practical applications depending on the interests, aspirations and learning styles of individual pupils, as well as the experience, personality and goals of particular teachers.
- 5.6 We have also understood that there are particular challenges facing the language teacher in her or his task. Learning a second language is concerned with forms as much as if not more than with meanings. Much of the meaning, in particular for beginners, is already known and this affects both the process of learning and pupils’ motivations. In addition oracy skills are far more important for language learning than for other areas of the curriculum. Listening and Speaking have equal weight with written skills in assessment schemes and the aural/oral mode is most common in classroom interaction. Teachers also face a particular challenge because of the perception that the model of performance should be the native speaker, whose mastery of the language no non-native teacher (let alone learner) is likely to equal.



- 5.7 Finally, the rest of the curriculum is not neutral to the acquisition of foreign language competence. It is known that the internalisation of a second language takes time and in a school (or any institutional) framework that learning is surrounded by a “gale” of English.
- 5.8 As a contribution to thinking in schools on teaching languages this chapter gives examples of existing practice of schools that have been notably successful. In referring to them we recognise that there will be others that are equally good, and we do make a recommendation elsewhere in this Report on the need for language teachers to have increased opportunities for professional development in which looking at successful practice will be a valuable element.

The curriculum and “meanings that matter”

- 5.9 We have referred to the issue of engagement in earlier chapters. If all or most pupils are to continue with the often-demanding task of learning a language, the subject matter must really engage them. The examination syllabuses have been criticised at our conferences because the topics chosen do not engage the interests of teenagers. We respond to that elsewhere, but the form of teaching adopted can make a lot of difference, and we have found excellent examples of that. We have not found only one way of achieving this end. In some cases it appears to be a matter of making better use of the immediate surroundings of the classroom. The conventional suspension of disbelief involving an “unreal journey” to MFL Land is dispensed with and replaced with the game, the intrinsic enjoyment of competition (in particular with the teacher), and an approach to language which enables pupils to say what they want to say. This can also be developed to offer access – even at a fairly basic level – to real meanings, and real cultural experiences.

Creative use of the target language – Cheam High School

Languages staff at Cheam High School in Sutton are committed to ensuring that all pupils enjoy a stimulating and rewarding language learning experience throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. There is a huge emphasis on consistent use of the target language by both teachers and pupils. Schemes of work and lesson plans are carefully constructed in order to address the whole range of learning styles and to allow pupils to achieve at the highest level possible. Visual and kinaesthetic activities provide excellent support for all learners but teachers expect the very highest standards of their pupils in all four skills. Drama, music and authentic materials are prevalent in lessons. And yet the department does not see any of this as being incompatible with high achievement at GCSE and preparing pupils to use their languages at home and abroad, now and in the future. Pupils are encouraged to say what they want to say in the target language, to use the language for real purposes and to express feelings and emotions in the target language. The department produces schemes of work that will allow learners to engage emotionally and conceptually with the vocabulary and structures of the language that they are learning. A year 9 module of work for example is based on the film “Au revoir les enfants” and pupils are able to talk with confidence and passion about the experiences of young people living under the fear of Nazism during the second world war in France.

- 5.10 In a number of schools we have also seen pupils engaging with language itself – showing interest in decoding meaning – almost for its own sake. Some elements of the primary literacy framework (and increasingly the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages) will encourage such approaches, as can the Key Stage 3 Framework and Strategy. Some schools have found very successful ways of encouraging such engagement almost entirely in the target language. In other cases a deliberate attempt is made to use cognates and to operate bilingually in the classroom.
- 5.11 Another characteristic of such engagement can be the links which are made to “real life” whether the immediate world of the teenager (making friends with others) or the more adult world of future work. One such example is the video-based ICT resource entitled “Flirt Spanish”, a learning soap opera about English and South American teenagers. There is also BBC Jam. Others involve more “vocational” approaches.



Vocational International Project – Sheffield (VIPS)

The Vocational International Project was developed by Sheffield Local Authority following a fall in the number of students studying languages in Key Stage 4 and a belief that a business language course or course with a vocational content would motivate students and benefit them in their future careers. VIPS provides as an alternative qualification pathway, based on the NVQ model, along which students continue their study of languages in Key Stage 4. VIPS promotes a vocational approach to European languages, teaching them in a business context. Students engage in active learning activities, with a strong focus on the spoken word and independent learning with ICT. There are also opportunities to visit local companies to meet employees using languages in their jobs, illustrating that a little language can make a big difference.

Students appreciate the usefulness of the course for their future employment opportunities, both in terms of content and skills learnt. Over 1,000 Key Stage 4 students have been involved over three years, meaning greater numbers opting to continue language learning post-14. Students achieve NVQ level 1 and/or 2.

- 5.12 Many schools and networks have developed languages courses linked to the demands of employability. As well as the “VIPS” project, the Black Country 14-19 pathfinder has majored on such “vocational” approaches. This is also a theme being developed in the South West through a series of seminars bringing together teachers and local businesses and entitled “Making Languages our Business”.

5.13 We have also seen inspiring examples of language being used as a vehicle to access real meaning across the curriculum and beyond. This might involve using language to organise an international football tournament as part of a school's aim to establish the importance of the international dimension and respect for other languages and cultures both in the school and within the local community. (Ashlyns SLC in Hertfordshire). In other schools, links have been made between languages and the performing arts, often involving pupil mentoring of younger pupils including those in local primary schools.

Languages and Drama at Notre Dame SLC Norwich

This lively project, which integrates language and drama, brings German to life through pantomime and provides creative preparation for AS level German while encouraging others to learn the language.

The performance of Aschenputtel ('Cinderella') requires the students to do more than learn their lines. They write and learn the script, organise costumes and props, sound and lighting; moreover, all rehearsals take place in German. In keeping with tradition, the panto, which has been performed for over 500 learners of all ages, allows the audience to interact with the characters on the stage.

Students from Notre Dame and neighbouring schools are more motivated to learn German as a result of the project, which has attracted attention from the University of East Anglia's international visitors. The resources are available to other schools interested in adopting the project via the website.

5.14 Such cross-curricular work is further developed by those schools that are able to link subjects in the curriculum through "Content and Language Integrated Learning" (CLIL).

CLIL at Tile Hill Wood School

Tile Hill Wood is an 11-18 all girls comprehensive school in Coventry, West Midlands with over 1,300 students on roll.

This CLIL project sees Year 7 pupils learning Geography, RE and PSHE through the medium of French with lessons delivered jointly by language and subject teachers. Pupil attainment in French has risen significantly with achievement in the other subject at least as good as the non-bilingual groups.

The immersion method is hugely popular – 93% of pupils have opted to continue with such learning in Year 8.

5.15 Many of these innovative and engaging approaches to language learning are effective with all children. Although not exclusive to Specialist Language Colleges, it is noteworthy that many such approaches do come from specialist schools. This is to be expected, but it also raises a challenge in relation to dissemination, resourcing and teacher training.

New approaches to assessment

5.16 Notwithstanding the criticisms of the current specification for the GCSE, these examples show that successful teaching is taking place at Key Stage 4. Credit must also be given to the Examination Boards for their contribution to the increase in language competence that has taken place over the last 15 years. An increasing number of schools are also using GCSE to fast track pupils as a basis for more advanced study or perhaps a new language in Year 10 or 11.

GCSE in Year 9 at Dereham Neatherd

Dereham Neatherd School is well known for its excellent fast-track GCSE results in Languages but as a Specialist Language College its aim is to raise achievement across the whole ability range for all its pupils – and at the same time meet its Language College targets. In order to do this the Head of Department broke the department's work down into five key areas – communal and classroom displays, pupil organisation, teacher organisation, teaching methodology and regular assessments in all four skills. Examples of this shared approach include

- all staff working from medium-term plans which have been written by the department with pupil achievement in mind and staff planning a unit of work, in advance of it being taught, from these plans.
- common mark grids that allow for comprehensive tracking of pupil achievement.
- departmental inset to ensure that teachers working in the same department have the same set of high expectations of pupils and are able to deliver effective language lessons.
- getting pupils to think for themselves, mind-map their ideas and work out rules and patterns with a partner. This forms a huge part of the teaching methodology.
- Fair and enjoyable assessments that encourage pupils to reflect upon their achievements in each skill area.

GCSE results have reached 70% A* – C and the department is happy to be able to make a difference to their children's GCSE grades and also to their enjoyment of language learning and their perception of how learning a language can help them in many other ways.

5.17 We nevertheless think teaching will benefit from changes in the current specifications, so that teaching can take place within a framework that engages the interests of teenagers. It is also right to recognise that the GCSE is not appropriate for all learners. For some pupils more applied approaches or the portfolio approach of NVQ may be a better solution. Others may be better served by the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages). Since 2005, an increasing number of schools have also been registering to use the Language Ladder tests through Asset Languages. The range of applications has been wide, demonstrating the flexibility of this new system; which can be used to assess progress at the end of Key Stage 3, on transition to secondary from primary for partial competences in a new language in Key Stage 4, or following an intensive experience of language learning.

Getting away from lockstep approaches

5.18 We should not assume that language learning works best when offered in small doses over a long period, and only in a class of 30 with a teacher. The flexible curriculum of the future will need a range of approaches, and some of these may actually be conducive to better language learning, in particular when time is at a premium. Indeed many experts believe that more intensive approaches are more effective, and this is certainly a feature of adult learning of languages.



Intensive and flexible – Junior CULP (Cambridge University Language Programme)

In July 2004, the Cambridge University Language Centre ran a one week intensive language course for 11 Year 9 students from Impington Village College, which incorporated face-to-face tuition and on-line work. As a result of the success of the pilot the Junior CULP project was established which provides a 120 hour, year long intensive language course for students from six local schools: Impington Village College and St Ivo, St Peter's School and Hinchinbrooke School in Huntingdon and Netherhall School and Comberton Village College in Cambridge. Students receive 70% of their language tuition at the University Language Centre, in blocks of intensive language study. They participate in Saturday sessions as well as three week-long sessions of tuition spread at intervals throughout the academic year. The impact on students is very positive with many participants continuing their language studies into Key Stage 4.

Initially set up to enable reluctant learners to have the chance to learn a language in an innovative way combining excellent classroom teaching in groups of about 20 with cutting edge, specially written, e-learning materials and methods which incorporate independent learning based upon the learner's preferred styles of learning, the project soon attracted many other groups of learners in Key Stage 3, including the gifted and talented, the highly motivated and the average learner who is committed. Schools typically report that the euphoria of involvement washes off into language classes back at school.

Using new technology

5.19 Another key feature of CULP is the use of technology to support both flexibility and greater learner autonomy. Such access to learning through technology is now becoming far more widespread in language learning from primary through to advanced studies. Many language colleges, for example Monkseaton and Shireland are playing a leading role in the use of technology to support and monitor the curriculum, often in cooperation with the Open University or other HEIs.

Engaging pupils through ICT, Rotherham

With the aim of engaging pupils more deeply in the learning process, Year 10 pupils at Brinsworth Comprehensive School were asked to create interactive exercises (games) for their peers using authoring software. Each group was free to research and develop their own ideas on a sub-topic of the theme of healthy living, while still working within a clear set of agreed objectives. A resource booklet containing essential vocabulary and grammar models and examples was issued to each pupil. The pupils used the Internet to identify suitable text and used their mobile phones to create video clips, along with other material, to incorporate into the activities. Pupils demonstrated their final products, which were peer-evaluated using criteria based on the linguistic, technical and pedagogic merits of the materials. All pupils then completed the carousel of activities, consolidating their knowledge of the topic.

5.20 As the example from Rotherham shows not only do such approaches increase independence they also directly affect pupil motivation as the project rather than the language becomes "the point".

5.21 As schools develop more and more links with schools abroad, the use of ICT also becomes a major support for communication between pupils (e-mail links), for joint curricular work (on line and video conferencing) and for the exchange of data. Much exciting joint curricular work has been going on, for example in Devon where St Peter's School has used technology to underpin real exchanges between pupils. Such links and exchanges are supported by the DfES-funded, British Council-administered Global Gateway website – www.globalgateway.org – or other portals such as E-Languages – www.elanguages.org or E-Twinning – www.etwinning.net. An example of this from east London is reported below.

Languages beyond the classroom

5.22 It is also important that pupils see that languages exist beyond the school room. This begins with the cultural and cross curricular work described above, but there are other examples of the outside world impacting on classroom learning.

5.23 Increasingly universities are linking with and supporting schools. There are many examples of mentoring and support from Universities and their students. The Subject Centre for Languages Linguistics and Area Studies based at Southampton has published a report on such initiatives.

Aston University: Languages for Life

Higher Education Outreach Programme for Schools

Aston University's Languages for Life project was set up in 2001, initially to research attitudes to European language learning amongst young Asian women, and to identify why these potential students were under-represented on language courses. As a result of the findings from the research, Aston University used funds from its "Widening Participation" budget to establish a programme of outreach visits to local schools. Undergraduates from the Schools of Languages and Social Sciences are recruited as ambassadors, and talk to pupils from Years 9 to 12 about their passion for languages and their reasons for making languages part of their university degree.

5.24 As well as universities, businesses can enrich the school curriculum through Education Business partnerships of various kinds. CILT has been coordinating a "Business Language Champions" programme on behalf of the Department and Goethe Institut has developed a Project Engage to bring the world of business into schools.

5.25 For many schools and communities languages are not "foreign". They are part of everyday experience. In addition to the increased facility for obtaining recognition for community languages, offered for example by the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) community languages can become part of a whole school experience which underlines the value of languages and the importance of intercultural understanding.



Community languages at Woodbridge High (a non selective mixed comprehensive)

Since 2000 the school has considerably expanded the provision of Community Languages classes in the school. 9 languages are taught including Urdu, Bengali, Panjabi, Turkish, Chinese, Arabic, Greek as well as Spanish and French. Community Languages teachers are recruited through the local press. As part of the school's promotion of internationalism the TAFAL (Teach a Friend a Language) project was set up aiming to raise the profile of home languages spoken by students. It was run as a competition in which native speakers teamed up with a friend who had no prior knowledge of the language and together they produced a short conversation which was presented to a judge. The project encouraged the young people involved to consider the importance of each other's home language.

A joint curricular project in Hackney

Year 11 GCSE French pupils from Our Lady's Convent High School, in the London Borough of Hackney, joined with their French partner school, Lycée Jean Macé in the eastern suburbs of Paris, to take part in a year-long Joint Curriculum Project entitled "Man and Nature in a Rural and Urban Environment". In a bid to extend cross-curriculum opportunities at Our Lady's, as well as increase the number of pupils opting for French at KS5, a working group of teachers from the Languages, Science, ICT and Geography departments came together to plan and oversee the various project activities.

Having introduced themselves to each other by e-mail and via video-conferencing in the target language, the pupils from both schools came together to take part in a joint field trip to the Jura mountains in France. The pupils worked in mixed teams to study at first hand some of the geographical features of the region, to explore aspects of local industry and how it had changed, and to consider environmental questions such as water resources, waste treatment and pollution in a rural setting.

In preparation for the return visit of the French group to London, both sets of pupils continued to correspond, particularly in order to design the itinerary for the visit. The focus was to be the regeneration of east London, the Thames barrier, and the changing role of the River Thames, themes which required a certain amount of self-reflection on the part of the UK pupils on the urban environment within which they live.

- 5.26 Languages are also intrinsic to the international dimension in schools, and the significant growth of links with schools abroad, supported by the British Council also offers a new dimension and purpose for language learning. By 2010 every school should have such a link. There can be little doubt of the benefits that such international collaboration can bring to our children and their learning.

Building on what exists

- 5.27 Our investigations tell us that solutions to the challenges of motivation and engagement already exist in our schools (and beyond!). The challenge is to make them more widely available. This will require both dissemination and support for teachers. We are in this respect fortunate since the organisations and mechanisms which will enable us to make relatively rapid progress already exist.
- 5.28 The Department's International Strategy calls for action to equip our children, young people and adults for life in a global society and work in a global economy. A key goal is that by 2010 every school in England is in partnership with a school/college elsewhere. The British Council provides support for schools to develop international partnerships and enables pupils and staff alike to engage positively with other cultures and languages. This includes support for Joint Curriculum Projects. Grants are available to schools to work for 2-3 terms on a collaborative project with a partner school in one of the following countries: China, France, Germany, Japan, Portugal, Russia, Spain.
- Teachers' Professional Development: Staff can apply to spend 1-2 weeks in a school in France, Germany, Portugal, Russia or Spain to explore a topic of personal and professional interest to them.
- Immersion Courses: Groups of students can embark on 1-2 week intensive language courses in French, Spanish, German, Russian, Japanese, Arabic and Chinese)
- Student Fellowships: Students aged 16-18 can carry out an individual research project at a school in France, Spain or Germany. Students are assigned a mentor teacher in the school and are hosted by a family for two weeks.
- 5.29 The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) has built up a support network for languages based on lead practitioners in the regions. They are described as "innovative and

outstanding teachers", who share their good practice with colleagues in other schools and contribute to Trust conferences and events. Their work includes building regional networks, authoring case studies, publications and resources, leading professional development workshops and supporting and mentoring. The Specialist Language Colleges themselves have been asked to support the National Languages Strategy and have received additional funding for this purpose. Although many of them are choosing to support local primary developments a number are addressing the issue of Key Stage 4.

Specialist Language Colleges supporting Key Stage 4 Provision: 3 examples

Hockerill Anglo European College has started masterclasses in French and German for local secondary schools and has heavily subsidised long-weekend study visits to France and Germany for participating students.

Aylesbury High School has helped to fund trips to the Europa centre for Year 9 students in partner schools to help encourage languages take-up in KS4. The school has employed a teacher to deliver twilight Italian lessons for pupils in own and partner schools.

Desborough School employ a Spanish Foreign Language Assistant to share with partner secondary schools. They are offering training to MFL staff on the use of languages in a vocational context and the introduction of alternative accreditation.

If more Language Colleges were able to offer such support this would begin to make a real difference.

- 5.30 Finally CLT – the National Centre for Languages and its national network of Comenius Centres, not only provides unique support services for language professionals. It has also in the last year established a series of 14-19 Learning Networks across the country. With each one concentrating on a particular strand of curriculum innovation, the networks aim to work together to provide appropriate and relevant language study for all in the more flexible, responsive 14-19 curriculum. All types of establishment are involved – specialist language colleges, schools with other specialisms, sixth form colleges, FE colleges, HEIs, local authorities and business partners – with different sectors taking on the role of lead institution. Networks are designed to have local, regional and national impact, providing a coherent structure for future development of language provision.
- 5.31 Themes represented include delivering languages through e-learning, intensive language provision, linking with business to promote language study, developing applied language courses (VIPS), bilingual or immersion teaching (CLIL), collaborative working ahead of the diplomas and using sport to enthuse language learners. The influence of the networks is already being felt through a number of successful events and courses.
- 5.32 In sum it is clear that for the development of a more coherent, relevant and engaging Key Stage 4 languages offer, many elements are already in place both in the practice of schools and universities and in the appropriate support organisations. The task then is one of building on what is good, focusing on effective implementation and providing the framework which will encourage positive progress.

CHAPTER 6

Making the case for language skills

The Potential Contribution of Employers Organisations

- 6.1 During the course of the Review, in pursuance of our terms of reference, we have had discussions with several major employer organisations to see what more they can do to promote the value of language skills for business, and to give stronger market signals to young people about language skills and employability. They have offered to seek the help of their members in this.
- 6.2 The Confederation of British Industry has been consistent public advocates in recent years of the case for languages and they immediately issued a press statement welcoming the present review when it was announced. They make clear that languages are a priority for business and will encourage businesses to build on existing good practice in reaching out to schools and young people. They see companies providing materials showing how languages are used in the work place, and are willing to highlight good practice on work experience and work placements on their website, and in other forms of communication. They have referred in discussion with us to the young ambassadors schemes operated by some companies to inspire young school students with an interest and desire to study science and engineering. They are willing to consider whether it would be

possible to encourage companies to extend that approach to languages.

- 6.3 The Institute of Directors (IoD) has told us it is keen to help where it can. For example, through existing schemes for promoting languages such as the Business Language Champions Programme, whose existence the Institute would be willing to publicise to its members through publications such as the IoD News, the Institute's monthly news letter sent to all of its 52,000 directors. By arrangement with the Editor, the Institute consider that it might also be possible in the Director magazine. Guidance on language learning and training could be distributed through the IoD's Information & Advisory Services. And we know that the IoD would be willing to consider support for initiatives that have emerged from the Review.



- 6.4 The British Chambers of Commerce, which represents 100,000 businesses through a network of 53 Accredited Chambers of Commerce, would be willing to ask their members to seek opportunities amongst appropriate members who are Governors of schools to put the case for languages as a means of improving the life chances of youngsters in a changing world. They are also willing, through their members, to represent to the Connexions Service that in the changing

world, and to foster exports, we need people who can speak foreign languages. They are also prepared to use their influence with the regional Learning & Skills Councils, to support language learning and in doing so, to underline that their interest is in people learning languages whether they are aiming for a formal qualification or not.

- 6.5 The Institute of Export is willing to ask its members, whether they are in junior or senior positions, to seek opportunities to talk to pupils and parents about their experience of the value of an ability to speak another language in their work, and more generally in their lives.
- 6.6 The National Health Service Employers Association have told us that they would bring the need for staff who have facility in the languages of large local immigrant communities, to the attention of their Careers Service.

The Potential Contribution of Major Multinational Companies

- 6.7 A number of companies have made an outstanding contribution to language learning. We **propose** that the Government, working with the Embassies in London, should encourage multinational companies as part of their corporate philanthropy, to sponsor programmes to promote intercultural awareness and the value of languages in this to schools in the areas where they have businesses, and in support of that, facilitate opportunities for work experience overseas for 14-16 years old pupils, and school to school exchanges between pupils in this country and overseas counties where they operate. Companies might also be asked to consider providing support for pupils in their localities, who have demonstrated an early ability in languages, to engage with a similarly talented pupils overseas, to work together on some project of common interest, for example, promoting inter-cultural awareness, a comparative study of the attitudes in their own
- countries to global warming, recycling or sport, and so on.

A Broader Communication Effort

- 6.8 We **propose** that the Department should develop a continuing programme to promote languages that could include the following possibilities:
- (a) The Beijing Olympics of 2008 and the run up to these games offer a particular opportunity to promote interest through the media in the culture of China and the take up of Mandarin in primary schools. This will be a major television event and in the run up to 2008 we suggest discussion with the BBC and other TV companies especially in the context of their programmes for children, both for education and entertainment. The Universities, as part of the ambassador programmes, might be encouraged to promote opportunities for the very large number of Chinese students to talk about life in China, Chinese arts and language.
 - (b) The 2012 Olympic Games present an even bigger opportunity, for example, to develop 2012 related language learning materials that will further interest young people to continue learning languages. We understand the Department is planning to work with partners to ensure that materials are appropriate and support learning outcomes. We welcome that.
 - (c) Other major international events such as the Rugby World Cup in France 2007 and the European Football Cup in 2008, with its final in Vienna, can also be used.
 - (d) Distinguished sports men and women, currently engaged in sport, who have found language skills matter to them, are amongst the people most likely to influence young people in any national publicity to promote languages as relevant to the lives of young people.

- (e) At local level, Local Authorities could be encouraged to promote interest in local schools in towns overseas with which they have twinning arrangements, and promote contact at school level through communication technology and exchange visits. This doubtless happens to some extent already, but in schools where the language is in the curriculum this might, with the support of language departments and head teachers, be promoted with especial enthusiasm.
- (f) Publishers, who as a trading community, have suffered from the decline in languages, might be seen as partners in promoting the take up of languages, as opportunities arise, for example when language modules for the specialised diplomas are launched, providing they have been properly involved in the early work, and can be assured of sufficient stability in the learning programmes, and sufficient common content to give the prospect of sustained and substantial sales. This will be relevant to both books and information technology based programmes.
- (g) The potential of senior politicians in promoting the value of languages should be evaluated, and opportunities taken by them to illustrate from their own experiences how some facility in a language has been valuable to them in building relationships.
- (h) The Department is engaging with the broadcast and the written media to help ensure that messages about the value of languages are in the minds of young people and their parents.



CHAPTER 7

What needs to be done

7.1 In this Chapter we consider long term policies for the provision of languages.

Languages in Primary Schools

7.2 Languages in primary schools is the necessary foundation for a National Languages Strategy. The success of this element of the strategy is central to the future of languages post 14, and that turns very much on the quality of the teaching provided. The Government has put in hand measures to train and support existing primary teachers and teaching assistants and to equip 6000 new primary teachers with a languages specialism. We **propose** that the provision for teacher support should be continued and where necessary extended at least until 2010.

7.3 Efforts must also be maintained to ensure that teachers have access to a wide range of appropriate and engaging materials. Through resources such as the National Advisory Centre on Early Language Learning (NACELL), teachers should receive guidance on what is available and their training should enable them to make effective use of such material in the classroom and to guide children in its use. We make a particular point in this context of the potential use of the new technologies which are very much part of the culture of the young; they are often adept at its use, and enjoy using it.

7.4 It is important to widen the range of languages that can be offered at primary level. We understand that so far it has been

predominantly French. We **propose** that attention is given to widening the opportunities, and what we have to say later in this section is relevant to that.

- 7.5 We **propose** that schools should also be encouraged to value and wherever possible make provision for some learning of the languages of their local communities and to reflect those languages and cultures in the curriculum. This can be a powerful way of involving parents in the educational process.
- 7.6 We note the widespread practice in primary schools of teaching through cross-curricular themes, a practice that is encouraged by the Key Stage 2 framework for languages. This seems a particularly appropriate vehicle for teaching part of a language curriculum because of the interest and context it gives to the learning. We think it could be motivating if progress by children in primary schools was recognised in small steps in the familiar setting of the classroom and at whatever level is appropriate for the individual child. The Languages Ladder and associated Asset Languages Scheme provides a basis for doing this. We were particularly encouraged by the fact that much of the assessment can be carried out by the classroom teacher. It seemed to us, in the interests of continuity between primary and secondary schools that the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) should be used in both phases. We therefore **propose** that an informal classroom assessment of the child's learning accredited by teachers in the school should be made near the end of Key Stage 2 by reference to the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) so that the Key Stage 3 teacher is well informed about the pupils learning standard and needs. A number of authorities have already adopted this practice to facilitate a successful transfer. None of this should be for any performance tables: its purpose is formative.

7.7 Finally, we **propose**, subject to consultation, that language learning should become embedded in the primary curriculum when it is next reviewed. In proposing this we recognise that it will have implications for other parts of the present curriculum. We also suggest that a careful study should be made of which elements in a language are best learnt at this stage and that is carefully articulated with the curriculum at Key Stage 3.

Languages in Key Stage 3 and Continuing Professional Development

7.8 If we are to make real progress in reversing the decline of take up in Key Stage 4, the language learning experience in Key Stage 3 is critically important. It is switching off many pupils in its later stages. The KS3 curriculum is currently being reviewed to allow greater flexibility and to be more interesting and relevant. It will be published for consultation in early 2007. We welcome that – it is much needed.

7.9 We have been encouraged by the way that teachers have responded to the challenges of their task in the often difficult contexts of school learning. In Chapter 5 we have referred to many examples of rich and rewarding practice in our schools, which engage pupils of all ages and abilities, enabling them to access the “meanings that matter” to them.

7.10 Such engagement, however, is by no means universal. There is a major problem, particularly in year 9 (the final year of KS3), in motivating pupils to learn. Teachers will have a range of pedagogic and linguistic needs – a better understanding of language learning progression, cross curricular approaches, the demands of the vocational language modules in the new diplomas to mention just three. They also need opportunities to refresh their skills. There is also a need to help teachers make the best use of ICT both in the classroom and in support of individual study. Secondary teachers also have a role to play in support of primary schools.

7.11 One of our major **proposals**, therefore, is that there should be a focus on continuing professional development for language teachers in which they are given opportunities to observe and practise new approaches and to reflect on the learning process. As part of a policy to secure a renaissance of languages at secondary schools and to nourish the learning of languages at primary level, a careful assessment should be made of how best, through increased provision for professional development, these needs can be met. It may be that we have something to learn from approaches to language teaching overseas.

7.12 Investment in teachers is a key to the future of languages.

The Retention of Language Teachers

7.13 To provide cover for teachers released for professional development, and to support the introduction of languages in primary schools, we propose that action should be taken, within defined cost limits, to reassign existing teachers in secondary schools who might otherwise be surplus to requirements. In saying this we recognise that some training would be needed for them to adapt to primary teaching. Apart from the intrinsic benefits of such action, if



languages are to recover, we need to retain teachers in the system.

The Curriculum and “Meanings that Matter”

7.14 In our consultations it was argued that the curriculum was in fact largely driven in Key Stage 4 by the requirements of the GCSE Examination Boards. According to one participant:

“in Key Stage 3 they are given the knowledge of the basic structure of the language to enable them to fly, but instead they are put in a cage”.

It is understandable that in a national examination, the boards should want to make their requirements very clear and for their assessments to be uniform across the country. But it was widely held in all our consultations that the present specification needs to be changed.

7.15 In particular, it was held that the cognitive level of the teaching as driven by the examination is not right for teenagers. It is said that languages would be more stimulating if they provided a framework for discussion, debate and writing about subjects that are of concern and interest to teenagers. It is argued that the present menu is not suitable for them. It was suggested to us that to facilitate teaching in contexts that are motivating to pupils that a range of options might be available from which the pupils might select a specified number. We **propose** this for consideration. This broad issue needs to be tackled in a reformulation of the GCSE and we understand the QCA is now planning such a review. We think that change is urgent and very much needed and that teachers should be closely involved in the process of deciding the extent and nature of the change.

7.16 It was also represented to us that students should have a greater opportunity to develop, and through the examination, show an understanding of the culture of the country whose language is being learnt. This would not only be of interest to students but important to them in their understanding of other peoples.

7.17 We therefore **propose** that the reformulation of the GCSE should take account of the issues of cognitive level and study of culture.

7.18 The experience of those schools referred to in Chapter 5 suggests that an important way of making language learning meaningful to learners is through linking it to other parts of the curriculum. The introduction of Primary Languages with its stress on a coherent learning experience at that level should make it a familiar approach for which secondary schools will see suitable opportunities.

7.19 In other schools a foreign language is used for part of the teaching of another subject (CLIL). This might seem particularly apt in some parts of the geography, history and citizenship curriculum. In one school that made contact with us it is being used in teaching science. A schools’ ability to do this of course depends on cooperation between departments and support from senior management. But where such possibilities exist we believe that it materially helps progress in the language without detracting from learning in the principal subject.

7.20 We suggest that the existing experience in this area should be gathered and disseminated for schools wishing to develop such cross curricular work.

The Organisation of language learning

- 7.21 We know from our consultations that some pupils would have wished to continue the study of languages if there had been greater choice. Local federations of schools provide opportunities for such choice, especially for minority languages.
- 7.22 We have also received many suggestions about the organisation of the languages curriculum in secondary schools. Already many schools are successfully fast tracking to GCSE at the end of Key Stage 3 providing a basis for more advanced study in Key Stage 4 or the learning of a second language. Various two-language options are also being proposed – for example the option of having more limited achievement in one language recognised at the end of Key Stage 3 (through the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) scheme) and then studying another language at Key Stage 4. Another proposal for longer-term consideration is the possibility of a double GCSE covering the language, literature and culture of a country that would be complementary and mutually reinforcing.
- 7.23 We were also very interested in the possibilities of intensive language learning supported by ICT in Key Stage 4 (the Cambridge Junior CULP model). We also heard similar ideas from the Open University, the BBC and others. This approach could have a number of applications such as the development of short immersion courses in a language for pupils who are in Key Stage 3 and want to raise their achievement before it is assessed through the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) scheme, summer schools for pupils in Key Stage 4 wishing to reengage with languages, or a more flexible offer and range of languages for Key Stage 4. Such provision could be offered by Universities, by FE and Sixth Form Colleges or by Specialist Language Colleges.

- 7.24 We **propose** that the DfES in collaboration with key providers should promote, develop and support such flexible ways of delivering the languages curriculum.

Assessment through the GCSE

- 7.25 We suggest that rethinking assessment could have a positive effect on language learning.
- 7.26 There is firstly the issue of perceived difficulty. Almost invariably the language teachers who came to our five conferences, and head teachers who were present, considered the demands in the GCSE for languages to be greater than for the great majority of subjects. Statistical analysis gives some support for that view in terms of the level of demand for the award of a grade. But to some extent the conclusions are qualified by recognition that factors like student interest and motivation affect achievement.
- 7.27 We do not think that the curriculum should be less demanding. The gap between the GCSE and the A Level is already regarded as a large one. But the concerns about the level of demand for the award of grades need to be settled. This is a matter for the QCA and we **propose** that it should be resolved as soon as possible.
- 7.28 We do, however, want to make one proposal now for changing the GCSE examination. The present arrangements for assessing speaking and listening skills is a very short and highly stressful, and not therefore a reliable way of assessing what all the candidates can do. They carry half the potential marks. We **propose** that these parts of the assessment should be over a period through moderated teacher assessment. We understand that one of the Boards has a foundation level award under development and we welcome that.

Alternative ways of recognising achievement

7.29 The Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) recognises achievement in the four elements of language skill, speaking, listening, reading and writing and provides an opportunity to recognise progress for learners of all ages from the earliest primary years through to the advanced stages. Much of the assessment is by accredited classroom teachers in the familiar environment of the classroom and can be at a level appropriate for the individual pupil and in any one or all of the four elements of learning. There is no reason why some pupils should not progress much faster in speaking and listening if that comes naturally to them. The special value of the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) is that it enables progress to be recognised separately in each skill. However, there is a problem in the current non-alignment of the level descriptors with the NC levels and the GCSE. This needs to be put right.

7.30 We **propose** that the use of the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) is promoted for general use by all schools. We further invite consideration of an entitlement for all pupils to have their skills assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, so that they have a certificated achievement that counts towards the school achievement and attainment tables.

The Specialised Diploma

7.31 The introduction of the Specialised Diplomas creates a special challenge for language learning.

7.32 We welcome the inclusion of a language option in the first group of diplomas but suggest further discussion with the Diploma Development Partnerships of making a language part of the requirement. We also suggest that any specification for a language

should provide an option for seeking an award at a lower and a higher level.

Which Language?

7.33 The question of which language to study will always be an issue in an English-speaking country. The current statutory framework is very flexible, with no specification of language for Key Stage 2 and a specification in Key Stage 3 that any language can be offered so long as one of the official EU languages is offered. There is an additional provision in Key Stage 4 that only courses which lead to accredited qualifications can be offered, and this rules out some EU languages.

7.34 Whatever the statutory position, as indicated in Chapter 2, French and German and to a lesser extent Spanish are predominantly the languages taught in schools. All three are major and important international languages, with Spanish being commonly used in South America, for example.

7.35 There is also growing demand and a perceived national need for Chinese and other Eastern languages and a resurgence of interest Russian. In our multilingual society there is also a very strong case for major "community" languages to have a more secure place within the curriculum.

7.36 Significantly there is evidence that a broader diet of available languages can engage learners, as well as providing a more relevant national pool of expertise.

7.37 Given the challenges for schools of providing access to less common languages and the associated needs for training and support we welcome the significant levels of cooperation from the embassies and cultural agencies of our European and global partners. We also see the need to create a clearer framework in support of a more diversified languages offer.

7.38 We therefore **propose** that current regulations on eligible languages are withdrawn and that schools should be able to offer one or more languages based on clear non-statutory guidance from the Department. This would allow schools considerable autonomy within a national framework and provide flexibility in response to changing national and regional needs. It would also inform forward planning for example in future ITT provision.

Information and Communications Technology

7.39 Young people's familiarity with ICT offers a great opportunity to language teachers. It seems to us that a determined commitment to use this world, which is so familiar to young people is a key to increasing the engagement of young people of all ages with languages. New technologies can facilitate real contacts with schools and young people in other countries. They can also provide stimulus for creative and interactive work. We are also struck by the potential for pupils to access language in their own time and without the pressure of peer observation. Technology can also provide access to a wider range of language than some schools can currently offer. We believe that there is a strong case for developing a more concerted national framework of open learning for schools and we invite consideration that support is made available for such a purpose.

7.40 Developments in ICT move so fast that there will be a continuing need for information, updating and training. To facilitate this process we suggest that the Department continues and increases its provision of information on languages and ICT – for example through CILT and BECTA – and finds ways to support and disseminate innovations in this area.

Making a Reality of the world of languages

7.41 Languages need to come to life as realities for young people. They need to experience their use with real people from other countries. Information technology provides one means of so doing, although there are limitations resulting from the relative under development of facilities in schools in some other countries. Best of all is the experience of being in another country with visits carefully structured to promote the use of the language by children and young people, especially through meeting other young people. Much is already taking place, but we suggest that the Department, in consultation with the British Council and the Embassies of overseas countries, takes action to increase the level of such visits and exchanges, and that there is additional support for such opportunities in particular for schools and pupils in challenging circumstances. We also advise consideration is given to the provision of some additional funding is provided to support the Foreign Language Assistants programme.

7.42 Particularly at Key Stage 4, the Government's policies for providing work experience and enterprise education outside the school should be seen as an opportunity for young people to see languages at work in the world. Particular note should be made of this on their records of placements. Some providers of work experience can give opportunities for pupils to go overseas. We advise that the appropriate modest level of funding should be provided to support organisations that arrange work experience in support of this, providing there are firm arrangements to ensure that the experience is well structured by the overseas company, and that there are arrangements for accrediting the pupils achievements for example by ASDAN, and BTechs.

7.43 There are a number of impediments to successful contacts abroad – application processes, legal requirements and insurance for example. We suggest that the Department, in collaboration with key partners such as the British Council, find ways to help schools address these issues.

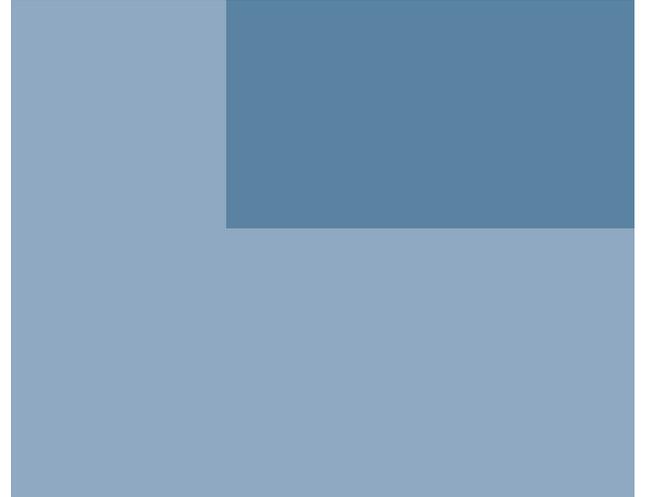
The Role of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

7.44 The LSC has emphasised the importance of language skills to employers in its latest statement of priorities. However, LSC investment decisions are increasingly driven by skills priorities identified by regional and sector bodies. This direction of travel has been confirmed in the recent Further Education and Training Bill, published in 2006. There are grounds for concern that there will not be a strong voice for languages in setting the funding priorities for the nation. We advise that the Secretary of State considers identifying languages as one of his priorities in his annual grant letter to the LSC.

The Specialist Language Colleges

7.45 Nearly 300 schools have been designated as having languages as their first, second or combined specialism. They have an established role in developing practice in other secondary and primary schools. That should be sustained, perhaps as special care for schools in which the take up of languages has fallen to low levels. For such schools they should consider carefully with the management and language teams, what they might do to help.

7.46 Further attention needs to be given to achieving the target of 400 Specialist Language Colleges and the roles that they can play in support of Key Stage 4 provision. The schools that have successfully redesignated and have achieved high performing specialist schools status (HPSS) are of particular relevance here. In



2005 such schools were offered the opportunity to take up languages as a second specialism 'out of cycle' i.e. not linked to their redesignation year.

7.47 We **propose** that resources are maintained for Language Colleges to support the Languages Strategy and concerted efforts are made to increase the numbers of second specialisms in languages. We also propose offering a further or annual opportunity to specialist schools to take up languages as a second specialism 'out of cycle'.

Support Networks

7.48 For the kind of changes that are proposed in the Report to be effective, there will be a need for coordination and support at a national and regional level. This will be of particular importance in relation to the continuing professional development of teachers.

7.49 We have already noted that language teachers are already well served by support organisations. We mentioned the role of the British Council in supporting the international dimension, the SSAT and its networks supporting specialist schools and in particular CLT, The National Centre for Languages which offers a comprehensive range of support services for language teachers. There is also an active

subject association – ALL. We **propose** that public support for these bodies is maintained and where possible increased to address specific concerns relating to languages post 14.

7.50 At a regional and local level, support can be offered not only by such national bodies but by Local Authorities, especially when they have maintained a post of Languages Adviser; by Specialist Language Colleges and by the CILT network of Comenius Centres. In some cases Higher Education Institutions are in a position to give regional support.

7.51 But many Local Authorities have either withdrawn or much reduced the support they once gave to language teachers through Language Advisors. There is need for some professional leadership of the teachers to oversee the arrangements for professional development to which we give particular emphasis in this Report, and to organise the use of secondary language teachers, who may become surplus to requirements in the short term, in primary schools.

7.52 We **propose** that consideration is given to a 3 year programme for supporting local and regional consortia of LAs, SLCs, and Comenius Centres for example – who take on the role of coordinating and promoting lasting change in schools.

Coherence

7.53 Work is continually taking place on the curriculum, learning programmes and Key Stage Frameworks. It is clear that there should be closer coordination of the timetable for revision of the framework and curriculum and that these should always be considered together. The Department should see that this is so.

7.54 We therefore advise that the Department accepts a responsibility for ensuring that the work is closely coordinated. We urge in particular that the programme for languages in primary schools, Key Stages 2, 3, and 4 are developed as a coherent whole. Piecemeal changes are not the best way of doing the job.

CHAPTER 8

Other possible measures

- 8.1 Our primary concern in the work we have done has been with putting the study of languages on a better footing. We believe adopting the proposals we make in Chapter 7 to that end will materially increase the take-up of languages.
- 8.2 In this chapter we turn to consideration of measures to support that.

Action Taken in November

- 8.3 Two such actions were taken by us before this interim report. One was to invite School Improvement Partners to review with secondary heads their provision for languages in the context of the Ministerial letter of January. The second was to ask universities, working with specialist language schools and colleges, to seek the agreement of head teachers to their encouraging pupils to continue with a language. They were taken with a view to influencing decisions for students in the last year of Key Stage 3.
- 8.4 The universities working with these partners would be influential in schools if this approach could be continued in a structured way in the future, building on the relationships they already have with schools. This needs further consideration.

Pupils already in Key Stage 4

- 8.5 The pupils in this Key Stage are already committed to their chosen pathways.

- 8.6 But it may be that a proportion of them would welcome some formal assessment and recognition of the skills they have acquired in languages during Key Stage 3. This might be done for example through the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages). It would however be in the interests of those pupils to have an opportunity to refresh and, if possible, enhance their capability, ideally through short intensive work, for example, through an immersion courses that might be arranged in consultation with a specialist language college at the end of Year 10. Other options might include the use of distance learning materials in an extended school day, and if such exist, through school language clubs.

School Achievement and Attainment Tables

- 8.7 The influence of the achievement and attainment tables on head teachers and their management teams is powerful. This is particularly so of the proportion of pupils gaining 5 A* to C passes in the GCSE. It is directly relevant to a school's standing and its ability to attract pupils. It is widely held by the language community that this, coupled with the difficulty many students find with learning a language, has been an important factor in the switch away from languages at the end of Key Stage 3. New indicators for languages could be included in the performance tables. The Department has this issue under current consideration and we will return to it in our final report.
- 8.8 We **propose** that the Department advises head teachers of the contribution of awards from the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) qualification to the performance tables 5 A*-C and points scores.

Other Options

8.9 We now outline two possible ways of giving further support to the take-up of languages. The first is a qualified return to a mandatory requirement. The second is a middle way, building on the Minister of State's approach in her letter to schools in January.

The Question of a Qualified Return to a Mandatory Requirement

8.10 In our consultation there have been very different views on a possible return to a mandatory requirement.

8.11 Such a return would have to be weighed against the reasons that led to the decision in 2004 to remove them: the need for a curriculum that motivates many more of our people to stay in education and training to eighteen. The present curriculum for languages works against that and any return would have to be preceded by a new approach to the curriculum. It would need to take into account the views of employers involved in designing the specialised diplomas. We understand they see the diplomas as including languages as an option but not a requirement.

8.12 We would therefore say that if languages were to become part of the required curriculum it would be a substantially qualified return and to that end we would make the following points for consideration:

- a) The Curriculum should enable the language to be studied in different contexts. This would, for example, be particularly relevant to a pupil pursuing a language as part of one of the new specialised diplomas. Such action would be highly necessary to make the study of more interest than it is now to many pupils, and to make it relevant to them.
- b) There would be an option to continue the study to one of two levels. This would enable pupils at

different levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 to move forward in a way that reflected their abilities and the importance of a language to them.

- c) For pupils who are at a low level of achievement in Mathematics or English (or both) at the end of Key Stage 3 there should be an automatic disapplication, although the pupil would have the entitlement to continue with the study of a language. The entitlement would be important, for example to enable pupils for whom English was not the mother tongue. It could also be valuable for some statemented pupils, although for them, again, a language would not be made mandatory, but an entitlement.
 - d) The pupil would be required to be working for a prescribed qualification, of what ever kind, for example the GCSE: (full or short course), an Asset Languages Qualification based on the Languages Ladder, or a vocational unit. It is relevant here to note that the achievement against the ladder could be at different levels for each of the four strands, speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- 8.13 We would consider such changes essential because it would be wrong to make students return to a curriculum which for many is inappropriate or, as they see it, not relevant.



8.14 In any consideration of use of a mandatory power, account would have to be taken on the availability of language teachers. It might therefore have to be set for an appropriate date in the future. There is also a need for further consultation with employer interests on the requirements of the specialised diplomas.

A Middle Way

8.15 The response so far to the Minister of State's letter of January 2006 to schools asking them on a voluntary basis to set targets of between 50 and 90 percent of pupils taking a language at Key Stage 4 has been disappointingly low. But it is an approach that could be strengthened and we outline an approach to doing that.

8.16 There are no statutory powers to require governing bodies to set a target of this kind. But the Secretary of State has a power to require governing bodies of maintained schools to set annual targets in respect of the performance of compulsory school age pupils in public examinations or national curriculum assessments. A similar target could be set for the percentage of pupils achieving a language qualification, which by implication would require a school to consider the number of pupils taking the subject at Key Stage 4. The Languages Ladder could be one of these qualifications.

8.17 We **propose** that the Department should make a study of this approach and the non statutory guidance to governing bodies on the criteria it would expect these to have in mind in setting targets. The guidance would reflect the expectation in the Minister of State's January letter that between 50-90 percent of pupils would be continuing with the study of a language.

8.18 The Secretary of State has power by Statutory Order to prescribe the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) to assess languages at the end of

Key Stage 3, as we have suggested: it would be motivating both to schools interested in points score and pupils interested in certificated achievement by a public examination of standards. The cost of this and the timing of introduction would need to be considered.

The Potential Contribution of Ofsted and the Chief Inspector

8.19 Ofsted inspections are only at intervals of 3 years and are 'light touch'. The Inspector is concerned with the overall performance of the school, not specifically with languages. They are nevertheless highly influential on the thinking and planning in schools, and on the basis that the schools were directed to set specific targets for languages, inspectors may be expected to comment, at least by exception. Ofsted has supplemented its published guidance for inspectors by issuing an additional briefing on modern languages in Inspection Matters 10.

8.20 The next comprehensive report on languages in schools will be due in the Spring of 2008 and the Secretary of State could ask Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, on the basis of Ofsted's surveys of a sample of schools, to advise on the extent to which schools were setting meaningful and challenging targets in relation to languages.

A Contribution from School Improvement Partners

8.21 The School Improvement Partners are expected typically to allocate several days each year to a secondary school. That is another potential source of comment and influence through their own standing with the school and the influence of Local Authorities with schools.

Conclusion

8.22 The measures we have proposed for changes to the languages curriculum, the content and assessment of the GCSE, with our key proposals on pedagogy, motivation, and on promoting

languages, as well as a long term proposal for incorporating languages into the primary curriculum, will all be very material to the take up of languages. Subject to further work on the detail of the two supportive measures, we think the middle way, if it delivers, would be the better one. We shall want to go into it more fully in our further work. We will also examine more closely the option of a suitably qualified return to a mandatory requirement which, subject to the reservations we have set out, should be used if it proves to be needed. But this is not our preferred course. Indeed we urge that where they have not already done so, all Heads and Governing bodies should, over the next three months, take action reflecting the aptitude and aspirations of their pupils, and mindful of what we say about alternative forms of award, at appropriate levels, and their contribution to achievement and attainment tables.

8.23 In the light of responses to consultation we will return to these matters.

CHAPTER 9

Summing up and the work ahead

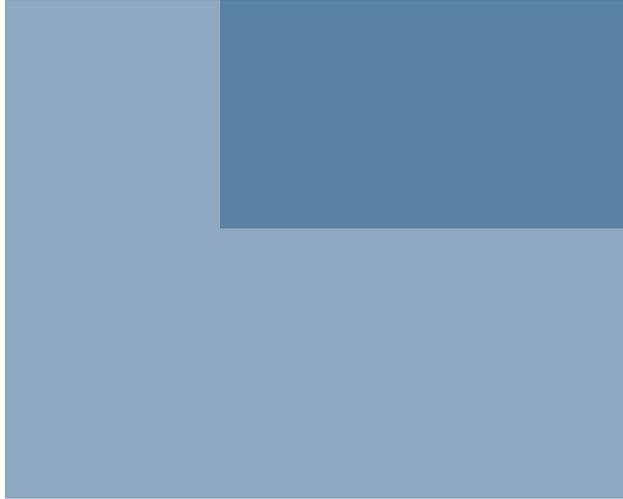
- 9.1 Before the removal of languages from the mandatory curriculum at Key Stage 4, only 80 percent were studying them. This points to a high level of disapplication, in particular amongst lower achieving pupils and those with special educational needs.
- 9.2 The drop since then has extended to pupils across the ability range. This is of concern to the nation and to the future of our language capability. We need able linguists if our country is to prosper and play its proper role in the world, and if our society is to be open and at ease with its rich complexities. We also need linguists if future generations are to continue to learn languages.
- 9.3 But the decline has been proportionally much more among lower achievers and in schools facing more challenging circumstances. Such pupils often find languages difficult and unengaging, and to some extent not relevant. The priorities of very many employers they will have in mind do not include languages. The vocational options and subjects such as PE, Art and Media are more attractive and motivating to them and to schools concerned about their A* to C scores.
- 9.4 Recent surveys show that the fall in pupils taking languages at the GCSE (51 percent this year) is continuing, albeit more slowly and suggest that the further movement out of languages continues to be concentrated on the lower achievers and more challenging schools.
- 9.5 In addition, therefore, to an absolute decline in language competence, languages are also becoming academically elitist and the vision of languages for all is at risk for a very large proportion of the less academic pupils at age fourteen.
- 9.6 But the long-term interests of all pupils, for whom the realities of Globalisation will increasingly be a major factor in their lives and future employment mean that English is not enough.
- 9.7 The attitude of pupils to language learning is much affected by their experiences in Key Stage 3. It is therefore critical that the flight from languages should be addressed by a better KS3 curriculum. Proposals on this are due to the Secretary of State this month. Turning to Key Stage 4 in Chapter 7, we propose a range of measures that are needed to put languages on a better footing.
- 9.8 It will be our task in the second stage of this Review to develop the ideas we have put forward for a more engaging and relevant curriculum content, more flexible and personalised assessment and better ways of organising languages learning.



- 9.9 We think that the action the Minister of State took in January this year to ask schools to set targets of 50 to 90 percent for pupils continuing to take a language at Key Stage 4 should be supported, and in Chapter 8 we have said how that could be done. In planning to set the target schools need to be encouraged to look beyond the GCSE and to make use of other kinds of course and certification.
- 9.10 We have set out some preliminary thinking on a return to a qualified mandatory requirement. There are strong arguments for and against. One thing though is clear: there is no case for returning to a blanket compulsion to GCSE for all. It is equally clear that the flight from languages has gone too far. The Key Stage 4 languages curriculum of the future will have to be much more flexible and it would be wrong to force all students to continue a language study to the same extent or with the same objective. Providing these changes will take some time. There is also a need to consult more in relation to the new specialised diplomas and to consider the implications for future teacher supply, in particular given the demands of languages in the primary school. We shall return to this issue in the final report.
- 9.11 The fundamental issue is to make languages come alive for all teenage pupils through curriculum contexts and a range of outcomes that are motivating to them, provided within a framework that makes sense to them, and helps teachers in their task. What we have to say on pedagogy in Chapter 5 is the other element in making languages for all a reality for teenagers.
- 9.12 These are the issues on which we shall be concentrating in the second stage of our work.

Provisional Proposals

1. We **propose** action by the Department working with overseas embassies to seek the engagement of multinational companies, and draw attention to events, like the Olympics, where, working with the media, the Department and its partners could promote interest amongst young people in languages. (paras 6.7 & 6.8)
2. We **propose** that language learning should be embedded in the National Curriculum for primary schools in the next review of the primary curriculum, based on a well founded understanding of what content and approach to language learning is most suitable for children in primary schools, and how best to build on that at Key Stage 3. In saying this we recognise that there will have to be some compensating adjustments to the primary curriculum elsewhere. (para 7.7)
3. We **propose** that over time primary schools should be enabled, with the help of specialist language schools and local secondary schools, to offer some choice in the language learnt. (para 7.4)
4. We **propose** that the provision for teacher support in primary schools should be continued and where necessary extended at least until 2010. (para 7.2)
5. We **propose** for consideration that a range of options to facilitate teaching in contexts that are motivating to pupils, from which the pupil would be required to select a specified number, should become the basis of a reformulation of the GCSE which is urgent and very much needed. (para 7.15)
6. We **propose** that the reformulation of the GCSE should take account of the issues of cognitive level and study of culture. (para 7.17)
7. We **propose** that action should be taken to arrest the continuing loss of qualified teachers. (para 7.13)
8. We **propose** that sufficient provision should be made for the continuing professional development of language teachers in secondary schools. (para 7.11)
9. We **propose** that the assessment of speaking and listening in the GCSE is changed to make it less personally stressful and hence a more reliable test of a candidate's capability. Moderated teacher assessment over a short period would be a better way. (para 7.28)
10. We **propose** that the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) is now promoted for general use by schools. It will provide an important opportunity to recognise progress for learners of all ages from the earliest primary years through to A Levels and beyond. (para 7.30)
11. We **propose** that there should be non-statutory formative classroom assessment at the end of Key Stage 2, using the language ladder to facilitate continuous progression in learning from primary to secondary school, and thus avoid the frustration and regression that can occur when the move takes place. We have no wish for this to form the basis of any league table: the purpose is formative. (para 7.6)
12. We **propose** that current regulations on language provision are withdrawn and that schools should be able to offer one or more languages based on clear non-statutory guidance from the Department. (para 7.38)
13. We **propose** that the Department fosters and supports various nascent initiatives and proposals that have come to attention during the Review, for 'open school learning' providing



excellent learning materials for use by pupils and to support the work of teachers in the classroom. (para 7.24)

14. We **propose** that continued resources are made available to specialist language colleges to support the National Languages Strategy and that concerted efforts are made to increase the numbers of second specialism and combined specialism in languages, including further opportunities for specialist schools to take up languages as a second specialism “out of cycle.” (para 7.47)
15. We **propose** maintaining support for existing national and local bodies supporting language teaching and learning. (para 7.49)
16. We **propose** that the Department ensures that head teachers are aware of the contribution of awards under the Languages Ladder (Asset Languages) to points scores in achievement and attainment tables. (para 8.8)
17. We **propose** that schools should also be encouraged to value and wherever possible make provision for some learning of the languages of their local communities and to reflect those languages and cultures in the curriculum. This can be a powerful way of involving parents in the educational process. (para 7.5)
18. There has been long, sustained argument that the standards for the awards of grades are more demanding than for other subjects, and that this has contributed to the flight from languages, both because of the concern of students to get good grades and the concern of schools to do well in the 5 A* to C achievement and attainment tables. This is a continuing sore point: it is important and we **propose** that it is resolved. (para 7.27)
19. We **propose** that the DfES should make a study of the use of the Secretary of State’s powers of direction to require schools to set performance targets and consider guidance to governing bodies. (para 8.17)
20. We **propose** that consideration is given to a 3 year programme for supporting local and regional consortia of LAs, SLCs, and Comenius Centres for example – who take on the role of coordinating and promoting lasting change in schools. (para 7.52)

You can download this publication or order copies online at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications
Search using the ref: 04317-2006DOM-EN

PPOAK/D16-6869/1206/351

© Crown copyright 2006

Produced by the Department for Education and Skills

Extracts from this publication may be reproduced for non commercial education or training purposes on the condition that the source is acknowledged.

For any other use please contact

HMSOlicensing@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

75% recycled

This leaflet is printed
on 75% recycled paper



When you have finished with
this leaflet please recycle it