**Language learning in primary
and secondary schools in England**
Findings from the 2012 Language Trends survey

Research report

Teresa Tinsley
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About the authors

Teresa Tinsley

Teresa Tinsley established and developed the Language Trends series of surveys which have charted the health of languages in various sectors of education since 2002. As well as producing and analysing information on the situation of languages in English secondary schools, the surveys have also covered provision for community languages across the UK, and language learning in Further and Adult Education.

Fomerly Director of Communications at CILT, the National Centre for Languages, Teresa founded Alcantara Communications in 2011 and since then has undertaken policy-focused research on languages for the British Academy and the British Council, as well as CfBT Education Trust. Her work for CfBT includes an international review of primary languages, *Lessons from abroad*, as well as the 2011 Language Trends report.

Kathryn Board OBE

Kathryn is an applied linguist by training and spent the early part of her career teaching in Afghanistan and later lecturing at the University of Ghent in Belgium. In the early 1980s she spent time authoring and editing a range of published courses for adults learning English.

Following a long international career in public diplomacy and a number of senior roles in the British Council which took her to countries across Europe and Latin America, Kathryn was appointed Chief Executive of CILT, The National Centre for Languages in 2008. As well as launching a new vision and strategy for the charity, she led on a number of successful new developments for CILT including work with teachers of languages in Europe and China. When the Government withdrew funding for CILT in 2011, Kathryn successfully negotiated the transfer of the core team of language teaching specialists to CfBT Education Trust. As Head of Language Strategy and Delivery for CfBT she has led the highly successful DfE-funded Languages Support Programme, working with newly-designated teaching schools and their alliances of schools across the country to develop and share best practice in the teaching of languages.

Kathryn has been closely involved in the annual Language Trends survey for the past five years.

The authors would like to thank Jan Lawrance and Eva Oliver for their invaluable support in carrying out this research.

Executive summary

Language Trends 2012 is the 11th in a series of annual reports charting the health of language learning in English schools. Based on large-scale surveys, past reports have focused on secondary schools and especially on the take-up of languages in Key Stage 4 (KS4 hereafter) since languages became an optional subject within the National Curriculum in 2004. In 2012, for the first time, state primary schools have also been surveyed, and the report offers some crucial information on the development of languages in Key Stage 2 in advance of government plans to make the subject compulsory from age 7 from 2014.

CfBT Education Trust is grateful for the continuing support of the two languages subject associations, the Association for Language Learning (ALL) and the Independent Schools' Modern Languages Association (ISMLA) for their collaboration in designing and promoting the survey and in helping to interpret the findings.

Policy context

The 2012 survey took place in a context of continuing proactive policy development affecting languages in schools. A few months before the survey was launched, the government announced its intention to make languages compulsory in Key Stage 2, and a consultation on this, and on the languages to be included, took place during the period the survey was open. In February 2013 the government published its proposals for the National Curriculum in Key Stages 2 and 3 (KS2 and KS3 hereafter). These confirm the intention to make a foreign language compulsory in KS2 from 2014, and set out some high expectations for pupil achievement.[1] It also intends to take forward far-reaching reforms to GCSEs and to replace the current modular A levels with terminal examinations.[2] In the course of 2012, the exam board OCR announced that it would be withdrawing its Asset Languages qualifications in 20 of the 25 languages offered. These qualifications had previously been developed as a way of offering flexible accreditation for a wider range of languages, as well as encouraging the development of skills in community languages spoken by pupils.

In June 2012, the European Commission published the results of the first European Survey on Language Competences which showed that only 9% of English pupils surveyed at age 15 were competent in their first foreign language beyond a basic level, compared to 42% of their peers across all the European countries taking part.[3] There are now proposals to introduce two European 'benchmarks' in relation to language learning, the first of which relates to the proportion of 15-year-olds achieving 'beyond basic' competence in their first foreign language, and the second relates to the proportion of the cohort learning more than one foreign language.[4]

During 2012, both the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the British Chambers of Commerce, two major employer organisations, published calls for improvements to language education in schools in order to support UK aspirations for growth and improved export performance.[5]

Examination figures

Examination data published by the Department for Education (DfE) in January 2013 show that there was a 1% increase in the proportion of KS4 pupils taking a GCSE in a language subject in 2012 (41% compared to 40% in 2011).[6] Because of changes in the size of the cohort, the actual number of entries for languages declined; however, the numbers of entries for French and German declined

by a greater proportion than did the overall number of entries for all subjects put together. Entries for GCSE in Spanish and other foreign languages continue to rise, but not in sufficient number to compensate for the decline in French and German. This pattern of decline in French and German with rising numbers for Spanish and other foreign languages is mirrored at A level. Entries for French and German at A2 declined by more than 50% between 1996 and 2012. Entry figures for NVQ language units and Asset Languages show that between 2011 and 2012 there was a decrease in entries in these qualifications at Level 2 but an increase of 26% in entries for NVQ language units at Level 1.

Key survey findings

Languages in primary schools

Nearly all the primary schools that responded to the survey say they are offering pupils the opportunity to learn a foreign language within class time. More than 80% say they are at least reasonably confident about meeting the statutory requirement to teach languages in KS2 from 2014 and believe that their provision is sustainable. However, one third (33%) have no arrangements to assess pupil progress, while nearly half regard assessment as a key priority for improvement. Schools have least confidence in their ability to deliver the more technical and rigorous aspects of language teaching, including reading, writing and grammatical understanding. They see improving staff expertise and self-confidence as major priorities: as many as 23% may have no member of staff with language competence higher than GCSE and up to 8.5% may have no language expertise at all amongst their staff. A minority of primary schools –around 15% – are not confident in the sustainability of the provision they offer and a smaller proportion than this – just under 10% – were not confident they would be able to teach a language to all KS2 pupils from age 7 from 2014.

There is a low level of liaison with secondary schools on issues related to language teaching – only 40% of respondents say they have contact with secondary schools. This is a concern in relation to continuity of language learning as pupils move from KS2 to KS3. Where primary schools do have contact with secondary schools, this is frequently in the form of secondary schools coming in to provide teaching.

Languages at Key Stage 3

Secondary schools' systems for organising the Year 7 curriculum are complex and not flexible enough to cope with the diverse range of language learning experiences presented by children arriving from primary school. Only 11% of responding state secondary schools had arrangements to allow all pupils to continue with the same language learnt in KS2. There is a perception of a lack of consistency and progress in languages in KS2, leading many secondary teachers to dismiss what has been learnt. Although some secondary schools have successful, well-established relationships with their primary feeder schools, providing continuity with primary language teaching is not on the agenda for many secondary schools.

Around one in five schools (both state and independent) have seen a reduction in the time allocated for language teaching in KS3. Timetable organisation and pupil groupings within the school are frequently decided in ways which language teachers believe are not conducive to successful language teaching.

KS3 has been shortened to two years in around a quarter of state secondary schools, meaning that pupils who do not go on to take languages at GCSE receive only two years' teaching and have very little incentive for learning. Some schools have introduced different types of accreditation, including

the Foundation Certificate of Secondary Education (FCSE, Level 1 qualification), hoping that success in this will encourage pupils to continue to GCSE. One in five state schools 'disapply' lower-ability pupils from having to study a language at all.

Languages at Key Stage 4

The main finding of the 2011 survey was that there had been a marked increase in the take-up of languages in Year 10 in response to the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) performance measure. In 2012 this increase has been carried through into Year 11 and maintained in Year 10, but there is little evidence of a continuing upward trend in Year 10. Some schools with very low take-up are edging this up but the overall impression is that any changes in response to the announcement of the introduction of the EBacc have already been made and that schools are not planning any further measures to continue to increase take-up.

Findings confirm those of 2011, namely that schools with higher levels of disadvantage and lower overall achievement are more likely to have made changes to their languages provision in response to the EBacc. However, there is evidence that, while the EBacc is starting to 'close the gap' for bright pupils in these types of schools, it may be opening a breach on another front: between 'academic' pupils who are compelled or strongly encouraged to take a language to GCSE and those not destined for EBacc pathways, who are often discouraged from doing so.

Substantial differences in relation to languages remain, both between the independent and state sectors, and between schools with different levels of disadvantage within the state sector. The gap between state and independent schools is particularly evident in relation to opportunities to study a second foreign language (FL2). Nine out of ten independent schools offer pupils the opportunity to take an FL2, whereas this is only the case in 61% of state schools, and generally involves only a small minority of pupils (5% or fewer).

There is no consensus within the state sector on the question of making languages compulsory once again at KS4. Respondents to the survey were split evenly between those whose schools would welcome this, those who would not, and those who were not sure. However, 73% of respondents from the independent sector said they would welcome it. State school teachers identified the motivation of pupils as the main barrier, and also cited the views of parents. They also saw logistical constraints in timetabling, and in the supply of suitably qualified teachers. Student motivation and timetabling constraints were also cited as barriers in the independent sector.

There is widespread dissatisfaction, in both state and independent sectors, with the current GCSE and especially with the current arrangements for 'controlled assessments' in speaking and writing, which are seen as demotivating for pupils and detrimental to developing the competences necessary to take languages in the sixth form.

Languages post-16

Although overall numbers of students taking languages post-16 in the state sector remain fairly stable, both French and German continue to decline – French in particular, this year – as opposed to German in previous years. 36% of state schools and 43% of independent schools report declines in numbers taking French post-16 over the last three years. In the independent sector, which provides a large proportion of entries for A level languages, there is also evidence (as in 2011) of overall decline across all languages.

However, independent schools still tend to have larger numbers opting to take languages in the Sixth Form and better continuation rates from AS to A2. There is also evidence of the introduction of a wider range of languages, albeit not necessarily to A level standard. Independent schools are less likely to report continuation rates in languages as being worse than for other subjects.

There is perceived to be a widening gap between the levels of language required for GCSE and AS, which is discouraging take-up by all except committed linguists. Those respondents who commented expressed support for a terminal examination at the end of Year 13 for these students. However, there is still a need for a practical intermediary qualification for those taking a language as a complementary subject.

Only a small number of schools have so far responded to the Russell Group's advice on 'facilitating subjects', and although a proportion say they will do so in future, it is not clear whether this will be at the level of school management or simply by language departments hoping to promote take-up.

Additional findings

Both independent and state schools make efforts to allow 'bilingual' or 'native speaker' pupils opportunities to prepare for qualifications in the languages they speak, generally on an extra-curricular basis. The most frequently mentioned languages in this connection were Polish, Bengali and Portuguese.

Respondents in both independent and state sectors believe their strengths lie in teaching pupils the rules of language, and how to apply them, and in meeting the needs of a wide range of pupils. Respondents in both sectors prioritise the improvement of pupils' linguistic skills as something they need to develop. While teachers in both sectors see developing spontaneous speaking as the most pressing area for development, teachers in the independent sector also prioritise reading and writing, while those in the state sector feel that, after speaking, listening skills need the greatest attention.

Secondary language teachers from both sectors believe that their subject suffers from a lack of pupil motivation, exacerbated by wider societal attitudes which undervalue language learning. They would like to see wider recognition of the value of language learning as an essential tool for success in the modern workplace.

Conclusions

This survey provides the first nationwide evidence on the situation of languages in primary schools since 2008 and shows that, despite anecdotal reports of a reduction in provision during the period of this government's national curriculum review, language teaching is now a reality in a very high proportion of primary schools. Although 97% of respondents reported that they are teaching a language, this may be an overestimation of the national picture, in that primary schools not teaching a language may have been less inclined to reply. Nonetheless, the survey achieved a high volume of responses and clearly shows that languages are firmly on the agenda in primary schools.

However, the report provides evidence of a very wide spectrum of practice and a lack of consistency between schools both in their approach to language teaching and in the outcomes they achieve. There is a strongly expressed need – as well as evidence of an implicit need – for further training and support, particularly for those schools without expertise or commitment to the notion of language teaching in primary schools.

Despite some creditable examples of successful practice, there is generally a low level of interchange between primary and secondary schools, and a disconnect between systems which means that the vast majority of pupils do not experience continuity and progression in their language learning when they move from KS2 to KS3. Secondary schools cannot cope with the diversity of pupils' language learning experiences in KS2, and it is not on their agendas to do so.

Following the introduction of the EBacc as a performance measure, many schools have moved to make languages compulsory or highly recommended for some pupils. This suggests that most able pupils are now engaging in language learning. However there is a dearth of provision for less 'academic' pupils and no incentive for schools to provide this.

Teachers would welcome reforms to both GCSE and A level examinations; they would like to see changes which encourage steady progression in the development of linguistic skills and their practical use in a range of contexts.

Structure of the report

Chapter 1 outlines the historical and current policy contexts for languages in primary and secondary schools in England. Together with Chapter 2, which summarises the school examination data (GCSE and A level) from the 1990s to 2012, the two chapters provide readers with contextual information against which the Language Trends survey has been conducted.

Chapter 3 reports briefly on the research design and data collection process for Language Trends 2012. Chapters 4-8 report the findings from the survey, analysing languages provision and issues at each key stage. The concluding chapter (Chapter 9) summarises the most important findings of the survey and draws some conclusions about the current positive developments and key challenges faced by languages in primary and secondary schools in England.

1. Introduction

Language Trends 2012 is the 11th in a series of annual reports charting the health of language teaching in English schools. Based on national surveys of schools, this year for the first time the research was extended to primary as well as secondary schools. The report therefore provides an extensive and up-to-date picture of language provision in English schools at a time of rapid policy development.

1.1 The policy context

Primary schools

The 2002 National Languages Strategy had as one of its main objectives that all primary schools should be in a position to teach a foreign language throughout KS2 by 2010.[7] At that time around 20–25% of primary schools were thought to be teaching a language. A programme of training and development saw 92% of primary schools offering a language at the time of the most recent survey, carried out in 2008 and published in 2009.[8] However, with the change of government, a review of the national curriculum and the withdrawal of funding for local authority support, there was some evidence that this proportion had declined.[9]

Following its review of the curriculum, the present government proposes that foreign languages should become compulsory in KS2 in 2014.[10] Its expectations for what should be covered by the end of the key stage were published in February 2013. They require pupils to make substantial progress in one of seven named languages: French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Spanish, Latin and Ancient Greek. The focus is on high standards of practical communication using both the written and the spoken language.

Secondary schools

Foreign languages were established as a foundation subject – compulsory for all pupils up to the age of 16 – in the Education Act of 1988 and the first cohort of 16-year-olds completed their full five years of language study a decade later in 1998. The 2002 Green Paper, *14–19: Extending opportunities, raising standards*[11] aimed to free up the curriculum post-14 in order to introduce a wider range of qualifications that pupils would find motivating and relevant. One of the consequences of this was that languages ceased to be a compulsory subject at KS4. The drop-out from languages study in KS4 was immediate, although under the terms of the 2002 Education Act languages did not officially become an optional subject until September 2004. The 'Language Trends' survey was established to monitor this situation and has over the years explored the reasons behind the dramatic decline in language learning from 78% of the cohort sitting a GCSE in languages in 2001, to just 40% in 2011[12] (see further analysis of examination data in Chapter 2).

Whilst some of the reasons for the decline that emerged through the Language Trends surveys were attitudinal (parents, students and in some cases school leaders not being sufficiently convinced of the value of languages) there were also structural reasons. A growing number of attractive and alternative qualifications offered other routes – perceived as easier – to the 'five A*-C at GCSE' required by league tables. There was a significant discrepancy between language colleges, independent schools and grammar schools, where provision and take-up of languages remained relatively high, and comprehensive and other schools where take-up of languages went into severe decline. The perception – and, many argued, the reality – that languages were a 'hard' subject was a significant negative factor in the culture of league tables and school targets.[13]

By 2005 – a year which saw one of the biggest falls in numbers taking a language GCSE – the government was persuaded to put pressure on schools to do more to stop children dropping languages by instituting a 'benchmark' for schools of between 50% and 90% of their cohort continuing with a language in KS4 and putting the onus on school management to deliver this. The government appointed Lord Dearing to review language provision along with the National Director for Languages at the time, Dr Lid King. Their report, the 'Languages Review', was published in 2007 and from it came a series of measures to boost take-up in KS4 – including reforming the GCSE examination and developing alternatives to it to provide a better match with the needs and interests of different groups of learners. The Review held back from recommending that languages should once again become a compulsory subject, but said that this should remain an option for government if the measures introduced failed to have any impact.

Since coming to power in May 2010, the government has introduced the EBacc,[14] originally conceived as a 'new award' for any student who achieves a good GCSE in English, maths, science, a humanities subject and a modern or ancient language. It was introduced as an accountability measure for schools from January 2011. The DfE also reduced the number of qualifications which count as equivalents towards schools' five A*-C GCSE performance measure. Language qualifications such as Asset Languages and NVQ language units have not met the government's criteria to be included and the examining board OCR has announced that it will be withdrawing its Asset Languages qualifications in 20 of the 25 languages it offers.[15] In 2012 the government put forward proposals to replace GCSEs with EBacc certificates; however, following consultation these have been withdrawn. However, the government still plans to make significant changes to the structure and content of GCSE exams. These changes are likely to include an increase in standards and a new grading system to reflect this. The Secretary of State has said that he wants to see an end to the 'tiering' of GCSEs, so that all candidates have access to all grades. He wants the examinations to be linear, taken exclusively at the end of the course, with fewer 'bite-sized' questions and exam aids used only where absolutely necessary.[16]

In February 2013 the Secretary of State also announced a new accountability measure for schools, based on pupils' progression in eight subjects, three of which must be EBacc subjects, between KS2 and KS4.[17] It is understood that this measure will sit alongside the EBacc and the five GCSE A*-C performance measures.

At A level there was a steep decline in entries for language subjects in the mid-1990s and a high-profile inquiry into languages provision concluded in 2000 that the level of uptake for languages post-16 was insufficient for the nation's needs.[18] Entries for languages subjects at A level continued to decline gently in the early 2000s and have since remained at a similar level, albeit in a context of increasing A level entries across all subjects. The introduction of modular A levels in the Curriculum 2000 initiative[19] was seen as bringing both advantages and disadvantages to languages. On the one hand, it encouraged students to include a language within a broad range of subjects in the first year of their course but on the other, the expectation that students should complete high-level language modules a very short time after completing their GCSEs meant that the step up in levels was very demanding – and the results often disappointing. A 2012 report on progression rates in 11 subjects for the DfE[20] found that French, German and Spanish had the lowest progression rates of all from GCSE to AS – 13%, 12% and 19% respectively. This compared to Biology with the highest progression rate, at 36%. The report found that only 9% of pupils taking French to GCSE progressed to A level (A2). This impacts on the demand to study language degrees at university, where languages have been designated 'strategically important and vulnerable subjects' since 2005.[21]

Language Trends 2012 sought to explore the situation for languages in schools post-16, just as the government stated its intention to reintroduce terminal examinations for A level.[22]

Other recent policy measures which impact on languages are the rapid development of academies and free schools, which are exempt from the national curriculum, and the change in funding and accountability arrangements for Specialist Colleges.

International comparisons

European institutions including the European Commission and the Council of Europe have been major players in encouraging policy development on language learning. Multilingualism is seen as crucial to enabling European businesses to take advantage of opportunities within the Single Market, as well as enabling individuals to live, work and study in another member state. European institutions have particularly promoted the teaching of languages from a young age, and the learning of two foreign languages.[23]

In June 2012, the European Commission published the results of the first European Survey on Language Competences.[24] This showed that only 9% of English pupils surveyed at age 15 were competent in their first foreign language beyond a basic level, compared to 42% of their peers across all the European countries taking part. There are now proposals to introduce two European 'benchmarks' in relation to language learning. The first relates to the proportion of 15-year-olds achieving 'beyond basic' competence in their first foreign language, and the second relates to the proportion of the cohort learning more than one foreign language.[25]

1.2 The value of language skills

During 2012, two major employer organisations, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the British Chambers of Commerce, published reports calling for improvements to language education in schools in order to support UK aspirations for growth and improved export performance.

The CBI report, based on a survey of its members, found that nearly three quarters of UK private sector employers see a need for – or at least a benefit in having – foreign language skills in their business and that only 28% had no need at all for language skills. 68% said they were not satisfied with the foreign language skills of school and college leavers. It made the point that long-standing weaknesses in foreign language skills had intensified since the requirement to take a language to GCSE was removed and noted in this regard that 'the combination of an increasingly global economy and heightened cultural sensitivities is making new demands on people at work'.[26]

The British Chambers of Commerce report found that the availability of language skills was an important factor in determining business decisions: nearly half of the companies that responded to its survey said that language barriers influenced their decisions on doing business in international markets. It asked businesses about the foreign language skills of their staff and found that even with French – the language for which businesses were best provided – only 4% said they had staff competent to conduct business deals in the language. It called for languages to be made compulsory up to AS Level in order to address this deficit.[27]

The British Academy has added to these economic arguments evidence on the social and cultural value of languages for intercultural relations at home and abroad. Language study, it has argued, is intellectually and culturally beneficial in its own right and language should be seen both as an object of study and a means of accessing knowledge in other fields.[28] In February 2013, the British

Academy published a major report on supply and demand for language skills across the UK, drawing attention to the need for education, business and government to work together to address the 'market failure' in language learning currently afflicting the UK.[29]

1.3 Language Trends 2012

In order to set the findings of the 2012 Language Trends survey within the context of educational outcomes at 16 and 18, the report includes an analysis of GCSE and A level data on languages over the past ten years, including the latest figures from summer 2012. In the case of A level it also looks further back to the mid-1990s. Future trends in GCSE and A level entries can be projected from the survey data.

We are very grateful to Linda Parker of the Association for Language Learning and to Nick Mair of the Independent Schools' Modern Languages Association for their support in encouraging schools to respond to the survey, as well as for their insights in designing the questionnaire and helping us to analyse the data. We would also like to acknowledge the time and effort of all those who completed this year's survey and provided such detailed comments. Such information is vital in understanding the national picture and in developing the capacity of all of us to improve provision.

Please note the following:

- In using quotations from respondents, we differentiate where relevant between those from the independent sector (I) and those from state schools (S).

- All surveys took place in the autumn term. Therefore, where dates are mentioned, the academic year in question is that beginning in the year quoted: e.g. 2012 refers to the academic year 2012/13.

- Where questions allowed multiple responses, the totals add up to more than 100%. Where multiple answers were permitted, this is indicated.

- Percentages have generally been rounded to the nearest per cent. This means that not all totals add up exactly to 100%.

- The report uses the term 'languages' to refer to all languages except English, Latin and Ancient Greek, and does not use qualifiers such as 'modern' or 'foreign'. Where the report also refers to Latin and Ancient Greek, this is made explicit by distinguishing between 'modern' and 'ancient' languages. However, in general the simpler term, 'languages', is preferred.
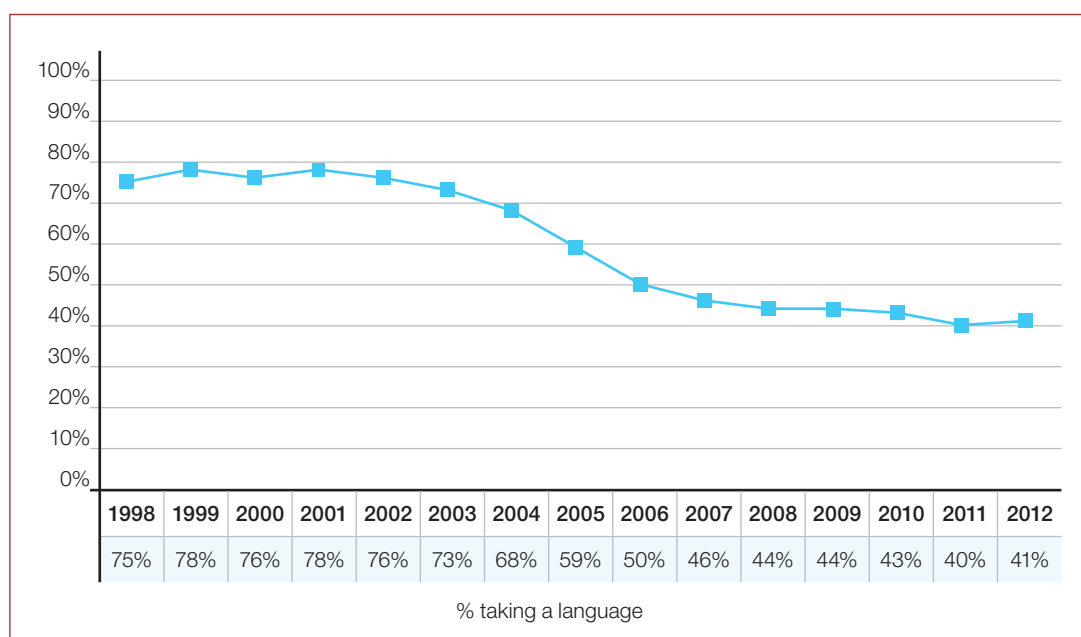
2. Schools examination data in England

The data summarised below are based on the DfE examination entry figures and cover all GCSE entries for KS4 pupils and A level entries of 16–18 year old pupils in English secondary schools and colleges, both state-funded and independent. The latest figures provided are those for the summer examination results in 2012, published in January 2013.[30] We have updated the time series for both GCSE and A level entries annually from the 1990s onwards.[31]

2.1 GCSE

There was a 1% increase in the proportion of KS4 pupils sitting a language GCSE in summer 2012 (Figure 2.a). 41% of the cohort sat a GCSE in a language[a] subject, compared to 40% in 2011. The figure for state schools alone was 39%.

Figure 2.a: Percentage of Key Stage 4 pupils taking a GCSE in a language, England, 1998-2012

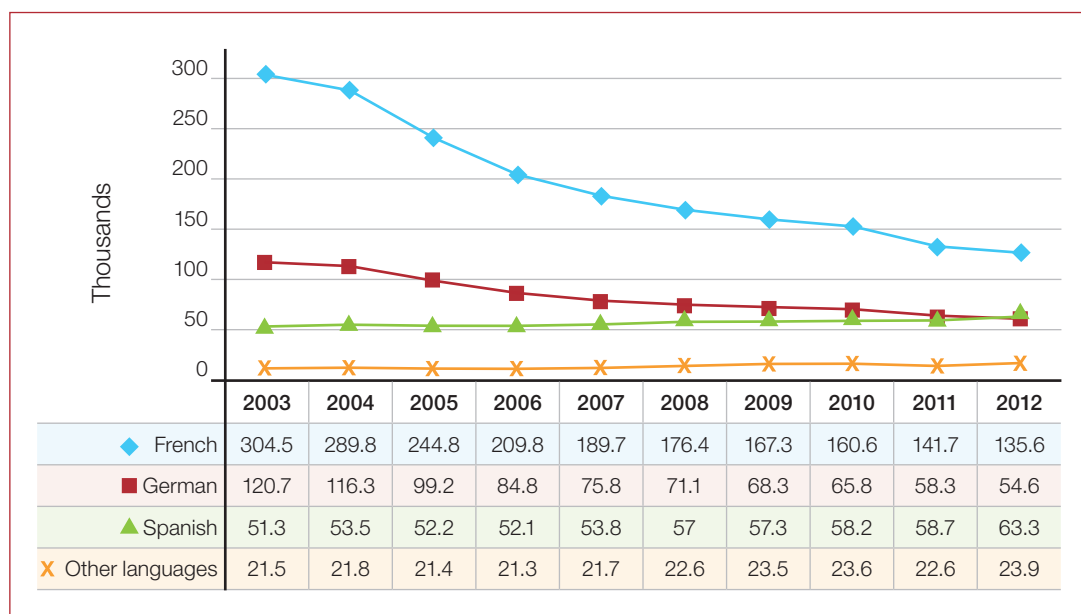|	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
% taking a language	75%	78%	76%	78%	76%	73%	68%	59%	50%	46%	44%	44%	43%	40%	41%

As shown in Figure 2.a, there was a steep decline in the proportion of pupils taking a GCSE in a language in the period immediately after languages became an optional subject in 2004. Following Lord Dearing's Languages Review in 2007, various measures taken appeared to have halted the decline, although it was not reversed. However, in 2011 the results showed a further drop. The 1% increase in 2012 may reflect findings of the 2011 Language Trends survey which found that, following announcements relating to the EBacc and changes in Performance Tables, some schools were making arrangements for pupils who had previously opted out of languages to take the GCSE examination.

Figure 2.b shows the impact of the overall decline on the three most commonly taught languages – French, German and Spanish, and on other languages.[b]

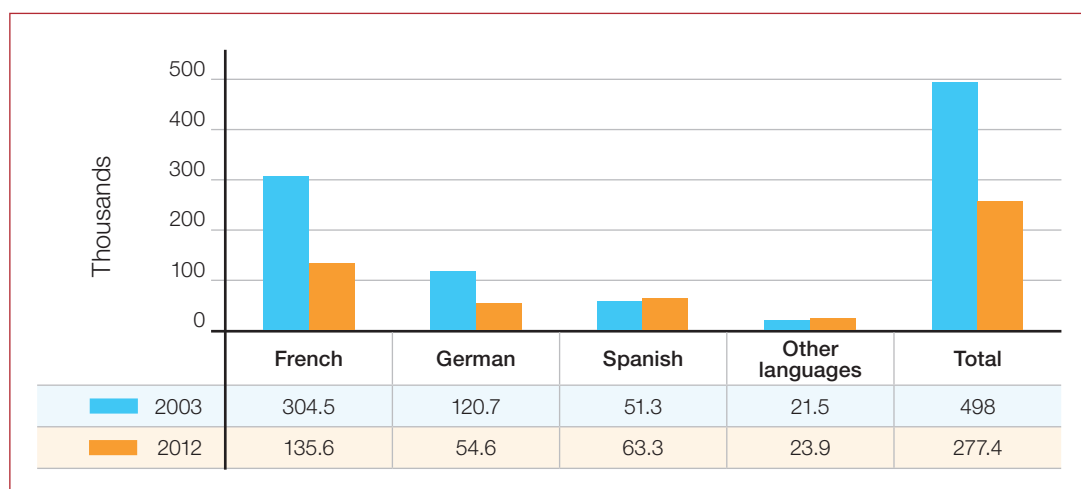---

[a] See Introduction for a discussion of terminology.
[b] DfE figures for 2012 for the first time gave a separate figure for the number of entries for Italian – 3,400. However, as we do not have comparable figures for previous years, we have included this number with the 'Other languages' figure.

Figure 2.b: Number of students taking GCSE by language, England, 2003-2012

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
◆ French	304.5	289.8	244.8	209.8	189.7	176.4	167.3	160.6	141.7	135.6
■ German	120.7	116.3	99.2	84.8	75.8	71.1	68.3	65.8	58.3	54.6
▲ Spanish	51.3	53.5	52.2	52.1	53.8	57	57.3	58.2	58.7	63.3
X Other languages	21.5	21.8	21.4	21.3	21.7	22.6	23.5	23.6	22.6	23.9

As can clearly be seen, the decline affected the two languages which were most commonly taught, French and German, and these have declined further in 2012. However Spanish and 'Other languages'[c] have risen – even during a period of overall decline – and Spanish is now the second most widely taken language at GCSE, having overtaken German. Over the ten-year period, overall entries for GCSE languages have declined by 44%. French and German have both declined by 55% whilst Spanish has increased by 23% and other languages by 11%. As shown in Figure 2.c below, the increases in Spanish and other languages have not been enough to compensate for the declines in French and German.

Figure 2.c: Numbers of entries for GCSE language examinations, 2003 and 2012
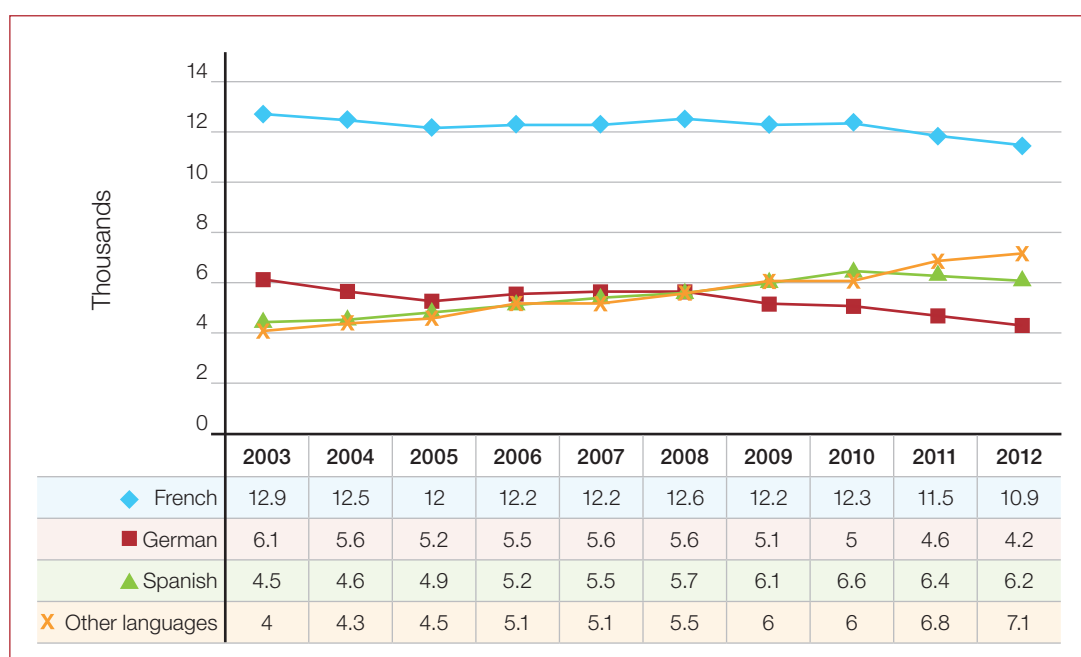
	French	German	Spanish	Other languages	Total
2003	304.5	120.7	51.3	21.5	498
2012	135.6	54.6	63.3	23.9	277.4

[c] Apart from French, German and Spanish, GCSE examinations are available in Italian, Urdu, Polish*, Chinese, Arabic*, Irish, Russian*, Portuguese*, Turkish, Bengali, Japanese, Gujarati, Punjabi, Persian, Dutch, Modern Greek, Modern Hebrew* and Welsh. Those marked with an asterisk saw an increased number of entries between 2009 and 2012, according to data published by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

2.2 A level

Figure 2.d shows the evolution of entries for different languages at A level. Although there has not been such a steep decline in entries over the ten-year period as at GCSE, the pattern of take-up for different languages is remarkably similar, with French and German declining (by 16% and 31% respectively over the ten years) and Spanish and other languages increasing (by 38% and 77% respectively).[d] This represents a 3% increase over the period, although as the overall number of A level entries has risen during this time, it shows a decline in the share of entries.
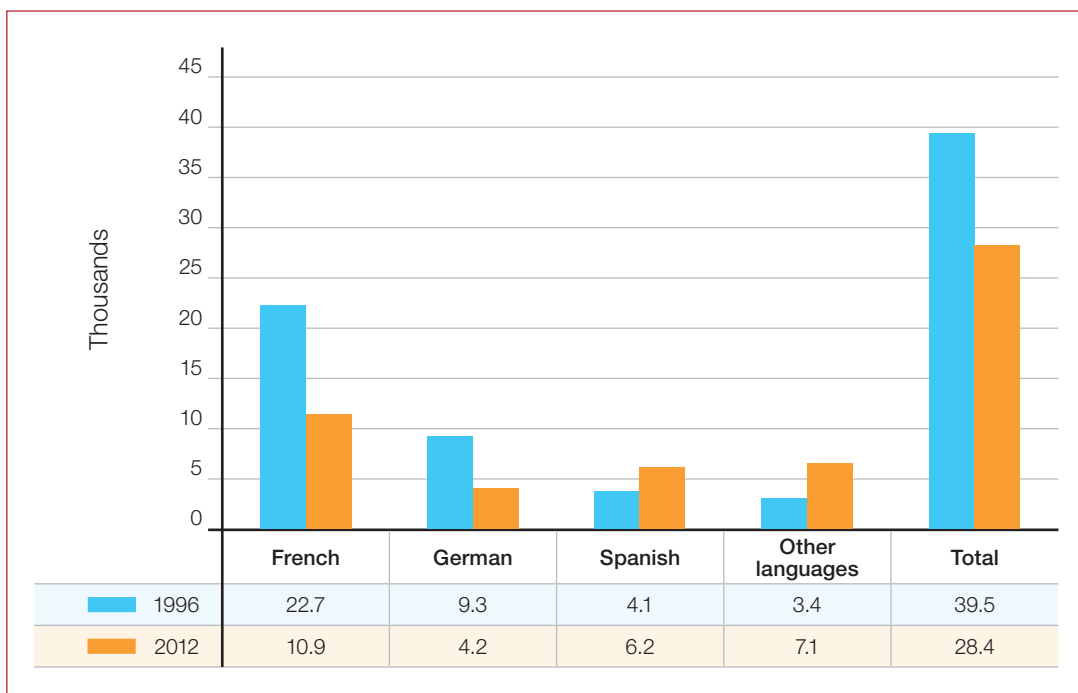
Figure 2.d: Entries for A level languages examinations, 2003-2012

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
◆ French	12.9	12.5	12	12.2	12.2	12.6	12.2	12.3	11.5	10.9
■ German	6.1	5.6	5.2	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.1	5	4.6	4.2
▲ Spanish	4.5	4.6	4.9	5.2	5.5	5.7	6.1	6.6	6.4	6.2
X Other languages	4	4.3	4.5	5.1	5.1	5.5	6	6	6.8	7.1

As noted in previous Language Trends reports, a major decline in A level languages entries took place between 1996 and 2003. Therefore, although the impression given by Figure 2.d may be one of relative stability overall, it hides previous serious decline. Figure 2.e below shows that in the period 1996 to 2012 entries for both French and German declined by more than 50%, and language entries overall by 11%. Spanish has increased by 51% and other languages, from a very small base, by 109%. The overall percentage decline in language entries from 1996 to 2012 was 28%.

[d] The 'other languages' available at A level examinations are the same as at GCSE (see previous footnote). According to JCQ data, all of these languages saw an increase in entries for A level between 2009 and 2012 except: Welsh, Irish, Punjabi, Greek, Bengali, Hebrew and Gujarati.
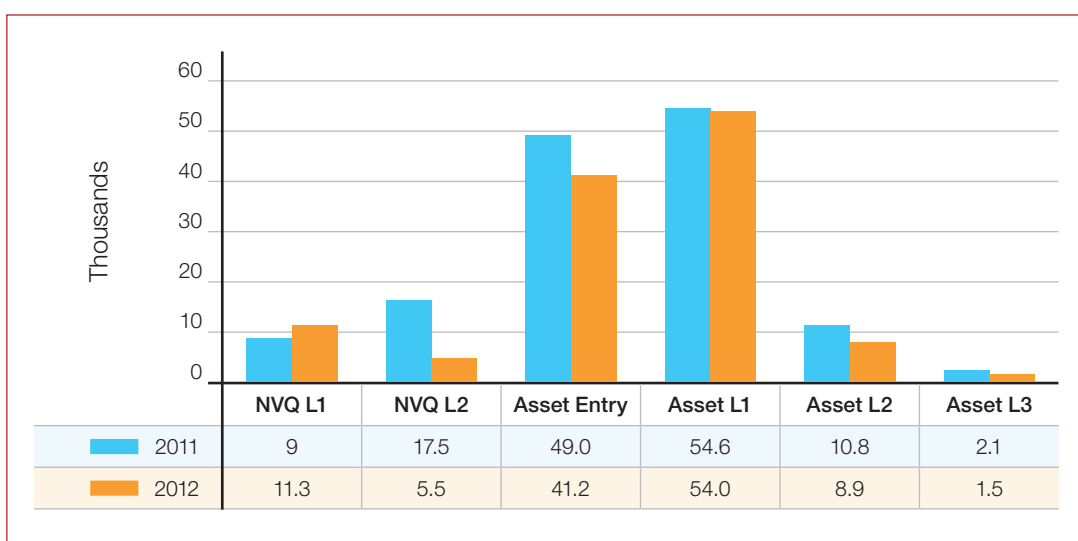
Figure 2.e: Numbers of entries for A level languages examinations, 1996 and 2012

	French	German	Spanish	Other languages	Total
1996	22.7	9.3	4.1	3.4	39.5
2012	10.9	4.2	6.2	7.1	28.4

2.3 Alternative qualifications

In 2011 for the first time, and again in 2012, the DfE published entry figures for NVQ language units and Asset Languages qualifications (Figure 2.f).

Figure 2.f: Entries for NVQ language units and Asset Languages qualifications, 2011 and 2012

	NVQ L1	NVQ L2	Asset Entry	Asset L1	Asset L2	Asset L3
2011	9	17.5	49.0	54.6	10.8	2.1
2012	11.3	5.5	41.2	54.0	8.9	1.5

The figures show that in 2011, 17,500 students took NVQ Level 2 language units (an equivalent level to GCSE but not recognised in Performance Tables). This represents just over 6% of the numbers of students who sat GCSE languages. In addition, there were a further 10,800 entries for Level 2 Asset examinations. However, both these sets of entries declined in 2012 – NVQ by more than 30%. Taken in conjunction with the increase in participation for GCSE languages, and evidence from the 2011 Language Trends survey that some schools were withdrawing from alternative accreditation as a result of changes to the Performance Tables, this may suggest that some students who would otherwise have taken NVQ language units at Level 2, or possibly Asset Languages qualifications at Level 2, were switched instead to the GCSE examination. Further evidence for this is provided by the results of this year's survey (see section 6.6).

Asset Languages examinations at Level 3 also saw a decline in entries from 2011 to 2012. However, entries for Level 1 qualifications have risen in the case of NVQ by 26% and have not declined substantially in the case of Asset Languages. This may show that they are still regarded as useful qualifications for students who have not (yet) reached GCSE level in the language they are studying.

2.4 Summary

• The proportion of students taking a language GCSE rose by 1% in 2012.

• However, the numbers of students taking French and German at GCSE, which have fallen steeply in ten years, continue to decline.

• Spanish and other languages are increasing, but not by enough to compensate for the decline in French and German.

• This situation is similar at A level though the decline is not as sharp at this level as it was a number of years ago.

• There has been a decline in entries for NVQ language units and Asset Languages qualifications at Level 2, possibly as a result of Performance Table changes.

• Entries for alternative qualifications at Level 1 are remaining stable or increasing.

3. Research design and data collection

The Language Trends survey of secondary schools in England has been carried out annually since 2002 to track developments in language provision and take-up.[32] In 2012 state primary schools were also surveyed for the first time.

3.1 Development of the questionnaires

The online questionnaires were developed in August and September 2012 by the Languages Education team at CfBT (formerly CILT, the National Centre for Languages) in consultation with ALL and ISMLA. The survey was piloted by a number of heads of languages and primary languages coordinators, and improvements to the questionnaire were made as a result of the feedback received.

Primary questionnaire

The questions explore the extent of provision for foreign languages, which languages are offered, and how the teaching is organised. They seek to determine the extent to which state primary schools are in contact with local secondary schools and ask about perceived strengths and challenges in relation to the future status of languages as a National Curriculum subject at KS2. More specifically, the following areas are covered:

- Whether the school offers pupils the opportunity to learn a foreign language in or outside class time
- What percentage of children in each year group receive some language teaching within class time
- Which languages are offered in and outside class time
- How schools monitor and assess progress in language learning
- What types of contact the schools have with local secondary schools
- What documentation forms the basis of the languages programme
- Who provides the teaching of languages, and how confident they are
- How sustainable schools believe their current language provision is
- Strengths and challenges

A copy of the complete questionnaire is provided at Appendix A.

Secondary questionnaire

The core questions explore secondary school languages provision, take-up, aspects of the languages curriculum, languages teaching and learning. To enable longitudinal comparisons, many of the questions in the questionnaire are the same or similar to those in previous years' surveys. Some new questions were added in 2011 to reflect the latest developments in languages policy and practice and some of these too have been repeated in order to provide comparative data over the two years. These are marked below as 'New in 2011'. In addition to these, some further new questions have been added in the 2012 survey in order to gain further information on issues emerging as particularly important in 2012, including the range of accreditation available for languages, and progression post-16. These are marked '**NEW**'.

The following areas are explored for Key Stages 3 and 4:

Key Stage 3
- The take-up of languages at KS3 and changes to languages provision at KS3
- Transition from KS2 to KS3

Key Stage 4
- Whether languages are optional or compulsory for all pupils at KS4 in the school
- Whether languages are optional for some but not all pupils at KS4 **NEW**
- The proportion of pupils currently studying any language in Year 10 and Year 11 in the school
- The proportion of pupils studying more than one language at KS4
- Current school trends in language take-up at KS4
- Time allocation for languages in KS4 **New** in 2011
- Impact of the EBacc on languages provision in schools **New** in 2011
- Respondents' views on proposals for EBacc examinations **NEW**

Post-16
- Current school trends in language take-up post-16
- Continuation rates from AS to A2 **NEW**
- The impact of the Russell Group of Universities guidance (2011)[33] on the school **New** in 2011

Additional issues
- The range of languages offered in schools at KS3, KS4, post-16 and outside curriculum time
- Respondents' perceptions of their school's strengths in language teaching, and areas they would prioritise for improvement **NEW**
- Respondents' views on accreditation options for languages **NEW**
- Alternative accreditation offered for languages, apart from GCSE, A level and AS

To read the complete questionnaires, please go to Appendix A.

3.2 Data collection

A random sample of 3,000 schools was selected from the population of state-funded mainstream primary schools with pupils reaching the end of KS2, thus excluding infant and first schools. The sample was selected to be representative by region and performance quintile (based on the average point score as published in the 2011 Primary School Performance Tables).

A random sample of 1,500 secondary schools was selected from the DfE database (EduBase – www.education.gov.uk/edubase). The sample comprised 1,000 state-funded schools and 500 independent schools. This represented a smaller sample than in previous years, which had included a total of 2,000 schools, 1,500 of which were state-funded and 500 independent. The state-funded sample was selected to be representative by region and performance quintile (based on the average total point score per pupil at KS4 as published in the 2011 Secondary School Performance Tables) and the independent schools to be representative by region. The sample excluded middle schools and special schools.

In September 2012 an invitation to complete the online questionnaire was sent out to all schools in the sample, addressed to the head of languages in the case of the secondary schools and headteachers in primary schools. Information regarding alternative ways of responding to the survey including email, fax or telephone was also sent to schools.

Reminder letters and emails were sent to heads of languages and primary headteachers at various points during the term. In order to allow schools more time to complete the survey, the deadline – initially 16 November – was extended to 14 December 2012, when the term ended for most schools. In order to boost the response rate and to achieve a more balanced sample of respondents, nearly 700 secondary schools who had not replied by the initial closing date were contacted by telephone.

A total of 357 state-funded secondary schools, 150 independent secondary schools and 719 primary schools responded to the survey, yielding response rates of 35.6%, 27.8% and 23.7% respectively. The response rate for secondary schools (both independent and state-funded) was lower than for the previous year, but similar to responses received in earlier years. Although the response rate from primary schools was lower, the number of responses obtained was higher because of the size of the sample (and the base number of primary schools in England).

Comparisons of the achieved sample with the national population of schools have been carried out (see Appendix B). In the primary responses there is a slight regional bias towards schools in the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber, and away from schools in the West Midlands. There is also a slight bias towards schools in the mid-high performance quintile. However, these are not significant. The state secondary achieved sample leans slightly towards schools in the South West and schools in the highest performance quintile, but again this bias is not significant. However, the social profile of responding state secondary schools leans significantly towards schools with lower proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. The achieved sample of independent schools leans towards schools in the East and South East of England, and away from schools in the West Midlands and outer London. There is a significant slant towards independent schools in the mid and higher performance quintiles. This is because independent special schools – often very small schools – are not always defined as such on the DfE database. We may conclude that many of these which were selected for the original sample chose not to answer the questionnaire. We can therefore be fairly confident that the achieved sample is more representative of mainstream independent schools.

The tables for the sample characteristics can be found at Appendix B.
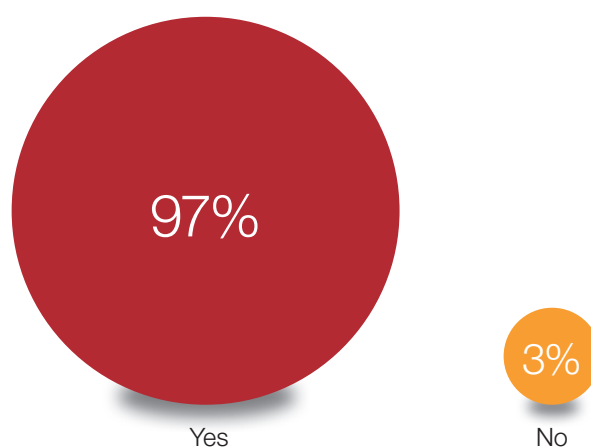
4. Languages in primary schools

This chapter covers survey findings on:

• The extent of provision
• Languages offered
• Monitoring and assessment
• Staffing
• Liaison with secondary schools
• Perceived strengths and challenges in implementing compulsory language teaching in KS2

4.1 Provision for foreign languages

Schools were asked whether they offered pupils the opportunity to learn a language, either in curriculum time or outside normal class time. Nearly all those who responded to the survey (97%) said they offered pupils the opportunity to learn a language in class time; four schools offered extra-curricular opportunities and only 20 schools had no provision at all (Figure 4.a).

Figure 4.a: Does your school offer pupils the opportunity to learn a language within class time?

97%
Yes

3%
No

An analysis of language teaching provided by year group shows that 84% of responding primary schools (604) teach languages to all pupils in class time *throughout KS2*. This compares with 69% of primary schools found to be fully meeting the 'entitlement' to language learning at the time of the 2008 survey conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).[34] A further 10% (74) teach languages in class time throughout KS2, but not to all pupils.

Of the 20 schools not teaching languages, 17 had previously offered it. The main reason for stopping teaching languages, given by nine schools, was lack of teaching staff. 12 schools said that a secondary reason was lack of external support and resources. An analysis of the characteristics of these 20 schools shows that nine of the 20 are in the lowest quintile for educational achievement at KS2, and 11 have above-average numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals.

4.2 Languages in the Early Years and Key Stage 1

Responses indicate that language teaching is also fairly widespread in class time in Early Years and Key Stage 1. 17% of respondents said they teach a language to all pupils in Nursery, 37% in Year 1 and 44% in Year 2. Indications of what this teaching involves come from free comments:

'[Children in] Nursery begin with "culture studies" and learn elements of cultures around the world, focusing on the children in the class, and then move on to France and then begin very basic French words.'

'The Reception class has had 15 minutes of French a week and a French club was offered for Years 1 and 2 as an extra-curricular activity.'

'In Key Stage 1 a wide variety of language are celebrated – greetings, registers, counting etc… we have a large variety of languages spoken by our families and have engaged in Family Learning to help support the parents. We have also encouraged them to share their languages with us.'

4.3 Languages offered in Key Stage 2

Nearly three quarters of schools offer French, nearly one in five offers Spanish and a small proportion (3–4%) offers German (Figure 4.b).

Figure 4.b: Proportion of responding primary schools offering French, Spanish and German in class time in Key Stage 2

	French	Spanish	German
Years 3 & 4	72%	17%	3%
Years 5 & 6	74%	16%	4%

Although the situation at Lower KS2 (Years 3 and 4) is almost identical to that at Upper KS2 (Years 5 and 6), Figure 4.b shows that French and German are slightly more frequently taught in upper KS2 than in lower KS2, while Spanish is slightly more frequently taught in lower KS2. In 2008, researchers for the NFER found that 89% of primary schools were offering French in KS2, 25% were offering Spanish and 10% were offering German.[35]

The numbers of schools offering languages other than those mentioned above are in single figures, less than 1% of the sample of over 700:

Table 4.i: Numbers of schools offering various languages in class time in Key Stage 2:

	Arabic	Italian	Japanese	Mandarin	Latin
Year 3	2	6	3	2	1
Year 4	2	7	3	2	2
Year 5	1	5	2	5	5
Year 6	1	4	5	4	3

A total of 15 schools (2% of respondents) offer Latin, six within class time and nine as an extra-curricular subject. None offers the subject throughout KS2.

No schools participating in the survey offered Russian, Urdu or Ancient Greek – the other languages included on the prompt form. However, in free comments, schools mentioned a wide variety of other languages introduced to children during class time, including: Portuguese, Hebrew, Welsh, Turkish, Danish, Swahili, Afrikaans, Nepalese, Dutch, Polish and Cornish, as well as British Sign Language and the communication support system Makaton. Typically, these languages are introduced to tie in with festivals and celebrations such as the European Day of Languages, or introduced incidentally as greetings, songs etc. Some schools mentioned more formal 'investigating languages' programmes which encouraged children to identify patterns and develop inference and dictionary skills.

4.4 Extent of provision

Time allocated to languages

Across KS2 the most usual amount of time dedicated to languages each week (by schools offering languages to that year group) is 30 minutes. Table 4.ii shows that the time allocated tends to increase slightly as children get older: 21.5% of schools offering languages in Year 3 dedicate an hour or more per week, while 26.5% of schools do so in Year 6.

Table 4.ii: Time allocated to languages in Key Stage 2 (% of schools offering languages to that year group)

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
time < 30 mins	5.7%	4.7%	3.8%	3.5%
30 mins ≤ time < 45 mins	54.4%	53.0%	50.5%	49.6%
45 mins ≤ time < 60 mins	18.4%	18.9%	20.7%	20.4%
time ≥ 60 mins	21.5%	23.4%	25.1%	26.5%

Proportion of children receiving language teaching

Answers indicate that in almost all schools classroom-based language teaching involves all pupils in the relevant KS2 year group. In nearly nine out of ten schools, all children in the year group were receiving language teaching. In around 3–4% of schools, up to 24% of children did not receive language teaching and in just one or two schools the proportion of children not receiving language teaching was higher than 25%. Where schools offer provision in KS1, in 92% of cases this is for the whole year group.

Extra-curricular provision

Extra-curricular language classes were offered by around one third of responding schools in addition to the curriculum offer, or in just four cases, instead of this. Around 12% of schools offered extra-curricular classes for children in KS2 in French, and around 9% in Spanish. German and Italian were also offered outside the curriculum – in around 2% of schools in each case, for children throughout KS2. Less than 1% of schools (ten) offered extra-curricular classes in Latin in Year 5, and just five schools offered Urdu on a similar basis throughout KS2. Other languages offered outside of class time by single numbers of schools were Arabic, Japanese and Mandarin. Free comments identified a wide range of languages offered as after-school classes, sometimes for all interested pupils, sometimes just for those with a background in the relevant language. Languages specifically mentioned (other than those referred to above) were: Turkish, Yoruba, Albanian, Bengali, Nepalese, Polish, Somali, Punjabi, Czech, Thai, Slovakian, Lithuanian and Cantonese.

4.5 Monitoring, assessment and documentation

Schools were asked how they monitor and assess progress in language learning. One third of schools (33%) have no arrangements at all for assessing progress. However, 39% of schools monitor progress against the Key Stage Framework for Languages and 26% use materials designed by their school. Some schools use Asset Languages, the European Languages Portfolio, assessment materials designed by their local secondary school (Table 4.iii) or a combination of methods.

Table 4.iii: Ways in which schools monitor and assess progress in language learning (multiple answers permitted)

We do not currently assess primary languages	33%
Asset Languages – teacher assessment	7%
Asset Languages – teacher certification	1%
European Languages Portfolio	6%
Key Stage 2 Framework	39%
Assessment materials designed by the school	26%
Assessment materials provided by local secondary school	5%
Other	12%

Schools answering 'other' said they used the Languages Ladder, or assessment materials which accompany commercial or local authority schemes of work. Some mentioned tracking systems used by their schools across the curriculum. Others said that assessment was carried out by secondary teachers or external agencies used to deliver the languages programme.

The characteristics of the 33% of schools that do not have arrangements for assessing languages were compared with those of the schools that did. This showed that schools with lower levels of educational achievement, according to the Primary School Performance tables, were more likely to report that they had no assessment arrangements. There is some indication also that schools with higher rates of free school meals are more likely to report that they do not assess primary languages. Further research would be necessary to establish any patterns emerging.

Documentation underpinning primary languages programmes

Schools were asked what documentation forms the basis of their primary languages programme. Respondents most commonly used commercial schemes of work (48%) or the KS2 Framework for Languages (45%) – see Table 4.iv. Around one third of respondents (31%) used schemes of work developed by their school or local authority and 11% used the non-statutory programmes of study for languages in KS2.

Table 4.iv: Use of different forms of documentation to underpin primary languages (multiple answers permitted)

Commercial schemes of work	48%
Schemes of work developed by LA or school	31%
Key Stage 2 Framework	45%
Non-statutory programmes of study	11%
Other	9%

Schools which replied 'Other' to the question of documentation added free comments which show that there is a broad spectrum of practice in relation to the incorporation of languages within the primary curriculum. Compare, for example, the two quotations below:

'We are developing our own scheme of work based around the broad half-termly topics within our curriculum, e.g. Materials, Water, Ancient Greece.'

'External teachers bring in their own schemes of work.'

Forty schools did not select any of the available options in response to the question about what documentation they used. One school, in the very early stages of introducing language teaching, commented:

'The aim was simply to familiarise pupils with some basic French and not worry about levels, assessment etc.'

4.6 Teaching staff

Respondents were asked who provides the teaching of languages. Table 4.v shows that in more than two thirds of schools (68%) the primary class teacher undertakes the teaching of languages (though not necessarily alone – multiple answers were permitted). It is significant that although another possible response: 'Primary class teacher with training' was provided, no schools ticked this option. In 22% of schools, language subject leaders provide the language teaching and 9% of schools make use of peripatetic specialist teachers. The use of Teaching Assistants (TA) or Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) is a feature in 17% of schools, but the use of Foreign Language Assistants, headteachers, volunteers and others is relatively infrequent. Besides 'primary teacher with training', three other options remained unselected by any school: 'native speaker', 'language teacher' and 'specialist language college teacher'. In the 'Other' category, schools mentioned specialists provided by an Italian government agency, a private agency, and, in a number of cases, cover teachers. Several also mentioned language graduates without teaching qualifications.

Table 4.v: Who currently provides the teaching of languages?

Language subject leaders	22%
Primary class teacher	68%
Other specialists based in school	9%
Peripatetic specialist teacher	9%
TA or HLTA	17%
Foreign language assistant	3%
Headteacher	4%
Volunteer parent or governor	3%
AST or SLE* advisory teacher	1%
Other	7%

*AST = Advanced Skills Teacher. SLE = Specialist Leader of Education

The quotations below illustrate the diversity of practice in how schools provide language teaching:

'We have three members of staff who have taught MFL.'

'We currently buy in peripatetic language teachers and existing class teachers observe all their lessons in order to build their confidence.'

'In a small school such as this one we rely on volunteers.'

Qualifications of those teaching languages
The survey found that 40% of schools (262) have at least one member of teaching staff involved in languages who has a languages degree. In 65% of schools (427) at least one member of teaching staff has an A level or degree in the languages they are teaching. In 23% of schools (153) the highest

languages qualification of teaching staff involved in language teaching is GCSE. However there are bilingual/native speakers in 21 of these schools. In 11% of schools (78) where languages are being taught there are no members of teaching staff involved in languages teaching who have a formal language qualification (GCSE or above) – however in 22 of these schools there are bilingual/native speakers. This means that up to 8.5% of schools (56) may have no staff with language expertise at all and up to 23% (132) may have no staff with language competence above GCSE level.

Languages subject leaders

Four out of five responding schools (79%) said that they had a subject leader for languages. There was a huge variety in relation to the seniority and expertise of this individual, ranging from headteachers or deputy heads, visiting specialists or Advanced Skills Teachers, through to teaching assistants, cover teachers, unqualified staff or 'a part-time teacher currently on maternity leave.'

Staff confidence to teach languages

Respondents were asked about how they rated their staff's confidence to teach languages in different key stages. Table 4.vi shows how confident respondents believe staff are in teaching the language to the level required at different stages. Confidence is generally higher in KS2 than at earlier stages. Except in the Nursery/Foundation stage, more respondents said their staff felt 'fairly' or 'very' confident than felt 'not very' or 'not at all' confident, although more felt 'fairly' than 'very' confident. Just over a quarter of respondents to this question do not believe their staff feel confident about teaching a language in either upper or lower KS2.

Table 4.vi: How confident are staff in teaching the level of language required at different stages?

	Years 5 and 6	Years 3 and 4	KS1	Pre-KS1
Very	29%	25%	18%	17%
Fairly	44%	49%	43%	34%
Not very	23%	23%	30%	35%
Not at all	4%	9%	9%	14%

Despite the relatively high levels of confidence expressed in the responses to the above question, more than one quarter of schools say their staff are not confident about teaching languages to the level required in KS2. When respondents were asked to comment on the challenges facing them, their more in-depth answers indicate that staff confidence and competence is an important concern – see sections 4.8 and 4.9.

4.7 Liaison with secondary schools

In order get a clearer picture of arrangements for transition between KS2 and KS3, respondents were asked about contacts with the language departments of local secondary schools. Only 40% (268) said formal arrangements were in place. Respondents were asked to indicate from a prompt list what types of contact they had. Table 4.vii shows that the most common type of contact is when secondary schools offer outreach teaching: 58% (156) of those who said they had formal contacts were involved in this type of liaison with secondary schools, equivalent to 23% of schools responding to the survey overall. A total of 129 schools responding to the survey exchanged information informally by email or telephone. This is equivalent to 19% of schools overall.

Table 4.vii: Schools' involvement in different types of liaison with secondary schools (multiple answers permitted)

	As % of total respondents (N=678)	As % of those with contacts (N=268)
Network/cluster meetings	18%	45%
Cross-phase observations	3%	7%
Joint planning of CPD sessions	2%	6%
Joint planning of lessons	2%	5%
Joint planning of primary units of work	5%	12%
Informal exchange of information with secondary schools	19%	48%
Secondary schools offer language improvement courses to my school	4%	10%
Secondary schools offer outreach teaching to my school	23%	58%

Free comments in relation to respondents' contacts with secondary schools show that while there are some well-established and successful links, even where transition arrangements exist, languages may not form part of the agenda:

'We have worked as a family of schools to deliver MFL for 8 years.'

'Transition is through cluster meetings and the employment of transition workers… MFL is not a priority for discussion.'

Arrangements with local secondary schools are extremely varied, ranging from secondary schools taking the main responsibility for language teaching in the primary school through to a 'brief tick sheet on what each child can do when they leave Year 6'. One school commented on disparities of practice between local secondary schools:

'One… regularly provides a form for pupils to indicate what language learning has taken place. One… asks for Asset Levels… other schools do not request information.'

This experience mirrors that of secondary schools faced with disparities of practice within different primary schools – see section 5.4.

4.8 Areas of strength and priorities for improvement

From a list of issues identified in the most recent Ofsted report on modern languages,[36] respondents to the survey were asked to choose a maximum of three that they considered to be areas of strength in their school, and three that they would prioritise for improvement.

Table 4.viii shows that 46% of respondents to this question felt that teaching children language learning strategies was one of the strengths in their school, along with a whole-school approach and introducing languages to the school for the first time. Respondents were, on the whole, much less confident in the areas of reading, writing, assessment and monitoring of teaching quality.

Table 4.viii: Areas of strength identified by respondents (multiple answers permitted)

Monitoring teaching quality	8%
Staff expertise in languages teaching	15%
Staff confidence in languages teaching	20%
Whole-school approach to languages	40%
Introducing languages to the school for the first tme	40%
Transition from KS2 to KS3	13%
Teaching of intonation and pronunciation	35%
Using the knowledge of heritage languages that pupils have	15%
Assessment of pupils	9%
Planning for progression across the four skills	26%
Writing, including correct use of grammar	5%
Reading, including grammatical understanding	8%
Languages learning strategies	46%

Free comments on strengths and priorities for improvement perceived by respondents reveal that primary schools are not all seeking to meet the same goals in relation to language learning. Some do not prioritise reading and writing as a matter of policy:

'We focus on oral rather than written work. The children should be enjoying games and interactive activities.'

'… we worked closely with local secondary schools [who] were adamant that they would rather primary schools did not focus on the reading and writing.'

'School at present is happy to develop the spoken language and conversational French.'

Mirroring findings on strengths, when schools were asked what they would prioritise for further development (Table 4.ix) they identified the assessment of pupils as a key area, along with building staff expertise and confidence in languages teaching, teaching writing, and planning for progression.

Table 4.ix: Areas identified as priorities for improvement (multiple answers permitted)

Monitoring teaching quality	24%
Staff expertise in languages teaching	34%
Staff confidence in languages teaching	35%
Whole-school approach to languages	18%
Introducing languages to the school for the first tme	2%
Transition from KS2 to KS3	26%
Teaching of intonation and pronunciation	14%
Using the knowledge of heritage languages that pupils have	11%
Assessment of pupils	49%
Planning for progression across the four skills	32%
Writing, including correct use of grammar	33%
Reading, including grammatical understanding	22%
Languages learning strategies	12%

These findings show that, although more than 50% of schools feel at least 'fairly confident' about teaching a foreign language (see section 4.6), improving this level of confidence is an important priority. The next section looks more closely at this in relation to future challenges perceived by respondents to the survey.

4.9 Looking forward

Respondents were asked how sustainable they believed their current language provision to be. Figure 4.c shows that more than 60% believe it to be fairly sustainable, and 25% think it is very sustainable. A total of 15% believe provision is not very or not at all sustainable.

Figure 4.c: How sustainable is language provision?

%	Not sustainable	Not very	Fairly	Very
	1%	14%	61%	25%

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of the government's intention to make language learning compulsory for all pupils from age 7 from 2014. The overwhelming majority (95% of those who answered this question, 88% of total respondents) were aware of this.

Asked how confident they were that their school would be able to meet this requirement, again, the vast majority expressed confidence. Figure 4.d shows that fewer than 10% of respondents were 'Not very' or 'Not at all' confident they would be able to meet the government's expectations.

Figure 4.d: Whether schools are confident they will be able to meet the requirement to make languages a compulsory subject in Key Stage 2 by 2014

	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Did not respond to question
%	39%	44%	8%	1%	8%

When asked what the main challenges would be in meeting this requirement, more than two thirds (68%) felt that improving the language proficiency and confidence of existing staff members was a major challenge (Table 4.x). This contrasts strongly with the level of confidence expressed in section 4.6. More than one third (37%) were concerned about access to effective training and CPD support. Well over half (59%) thought that curriculum time was an issue. Funding, language resources and teacher supply were seen as challenges by between one quarter and one third of respondents.

Table 4.x: Challenges in meeting the government's requirement for compulsory language learning

Accessing effective training/CPD support	37%
Resources for languages	26%
Funding	38%
Improving staff's language proficiency and confidence	68%
Finding enough suitably qualified/trained teachers	33%
Finding sufficient curriculum time	59%

An analysis of free comments sheds further light on the concerns of primary schools in relation to developing language teaching. The majority of schools express the need for further support and training, both explicitly and implicitly:

'We will have to think carefully about how languages are delivered and by whom... many of our existing teachers do not have language skills and would struggle to teach a language.'

'When the government removed the requirement to teach MFL we felt we should carry on despite our lack of expertise. However, I do worry that we might do more harm than good!'

'We will be looking for support/help from our local high schools.'

*'We struggle with differentiation as some children have really taken off by the end of Year 4…
I have asked for but not been given any guidance about how best to tackle this.'*

'The support we have been given so far has been sketchy and not comprehensive enough.'

Schools are at different stages in implementing primary languages and there is a very diverse range of practice, summed up by the following quotations:

'We have been meeting this requirement for a number of years and have built up a strong bank of MFL strategies and activities.'

'Children enjoy snappy, fun sessions but we do little writing or formal recording.'

'French is often included as part of a registration activity and the majority of children are able to count in French; however, little or no curriculum time is currently designated to MFL.'

Experienced schools with some good practice now want to move on:

'I feel we are in the process of developing something exciting that really does work!'

'Assuring long-term learning as opposed to enjoying a given lesson and vaguely remembering something of the work covered.'

However, a number of schools are not yet convinced of the benefits. Their main concerns revolve around a perception that the teaching of other languages might be 'confusing' or a belief that there is a conflict with the acquisition of good English:

'It is difficult to factor in a modern foreign language when the main job is to teach proficiency in English.'

'We would question the teaching of languages to pupils who struggle with their own language, those pupils who cannot pronounce letters and sounds in English or who are unable to count to ten in English, let alone French or any other language.'

Others already see how these apparently conflicting aims can be brought together. One school aimed to develop:

'… a whole-school approach to language learning and create links with literacy, to develop English alongside another language and draw comparisons.'

Another felt that all children including those with English as an Additional Language had benefitted from language teaching:

'The impact… is enormously positive. They have had their eyes opened to a larger world and the few children in the school who are bilingual are given a much higher status than before.'

4.10 Key issues identified

- A high proportion of primary schools (97%) say they are offering language teaching within class time, and 84% say they are teaching languages to all year groups across KS2. However, there are huge variations in the approach and the extent of teaching that this involves. Some schools concentrate solely on oral skills and do not attempt to teach the written language. However, the vast majority say they are teaching at least 30 minutes per week.

- Whilst some schools have well-established programmes, others are still in the early stages of developing provision. In some schools, language teaching is closely integrated with learning in other curriculum areas; in others it is completely dependent on external providers.

- In 65% of responding schools, there is at least one member of staff with an A level or degree in the language being taught. However, up to 8.5% of schools have no staff with any foreign language competence, and up to 23% have no staff with foreign language competence beyond GCSE level.

- Schools are consolidating their offer around French and, to a lesser extent Spanish. Compared with previous NFER surveys, other languages, for example German and Italian, are offered by a smaller proportion of schools than in 2006–08.

- Only 40% of primary schools have contacts with their local secondary school on language issues. However, the minority of schools which do have very close contacts are sometimes dependent on these secondary schools for the provision of teaching.

- More than half of schools say they are reasonably confident in what they already do, but at the same time they identify improving the confidence and competence of their staff as a key priority. They are less confident in the more technical/specialist/rigorous aspects of language learning.

- More than a quarter of schools are not confident in providing language teaching in KS2, and 15% do not feel provision is sustainable in their school. A number of schools do not believe that teaching a foreign language is a priority and fear that doing so may conflict with the need to improve literacy and communication skills in English.

- There is a clear explicit and implicit need for further support, training and guidance in relation to the implementation of compulsory status for foreign languages within the primary curriculum from September 2014.

5. Languages at Key Stage 3

This chapter covers:

• Provision for languages in KS3
• Languages offered
• Issues relating to transition from KS2

5.1 Provision for foreign languages

All pupils in the vast majority of schools (95%) study a language for the whole of KS3, as they are statutorily required to do (Figure 5.a).

Figure 5.a: Take-up of languages at Key Stage 3, 2007 to 2012

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
■ State	98%	98%	97%	96%	97%	95%
◆ Independent	98%	100%	99%	99%	98%	97%

Three quarters of state-funded schools and two thirds of independent schools have made recent changes to provision at KS3 (Table 5.i). Common changes at KS3 include the introduction of new languages and the reduction of lesson time for the subject. These trends are similar in both state-funded and independent sectors. However, another change, the shortening of KS3 from three to two years is much more evident in the state-funded sector where it now affects one in four schools. Where pupils do not continue studying a language in KS4 this means they only have two years of compulsory language learning.

Table 5.i: Changes to Key Stage 3 languages provision in the last few years, 2012 (multiple answers permitted)

	Independent schools	State
Lower-ability pupils have been disapplied*	9%	21%
Modification to KS3 languages provision or teaching approaches in order to ensure higher numbers of pupils gain the EBacc	2%	18%
KS3 has been shortened to two years	3%	24%
Weekly lesson time has been reduced for KS3 languages	19%	21%
Accreditation has been introduced	6%	16%
One or more languages have been discontinued	6%	16%
One or more languages have been introduced	26%	25%
Other changes	6%	6%
No, there has been no change	42%	24%

*Officially released from the statutory requirement to study a language

The same question on changes made to languages provision at KS3 was also asked in 2011, with very similar results. However, one clear trend is the increasing number of schools in the state sector shortening KS3 to two years (24% in 2012 compared to 21% in 2011, 14% in 2009 and 6% in 2007).

A slightly smaller proportion of state schools said that they have made changes to KS3 languages provision with a view to ensuring that more students gain the EBacc – 18% in 2012 compared to 21% in 2011.

Free comments show that there is little consistency in the types of changes being made, many of which are knock-on effects of other changes within the school rather than measures directly aimed at language provision. Lower-ability pupils are sometimes removed from language lessons, have a shorter time allocation for languages or in some cases do not 'start' languages until Year 8 because of literacy or maths interventions.

Many schools operate systems which allow pupils to take more than one language in KS3. The arrangements that schools have for this have been modified in various ways, though without any degree of consistency which would amount to a clear trend.

As regards reductions in the time given to languages at KS3, one respondent commented: *'Three hours per fortnight. Proving impossible to give pupils a firm grounding in the subject.'* Another felt that curriculum time was less important than class size: *'KS3 classes have 32 pupils in them – to develop speaking skills, class sizes of about 24 would be better.'* Where accreditation had been introduced, this tended to be FCSE.

5.2 Languages offered

The majority of both state and independent schools offer French, Spanish and German. Latin is much more widely offered in the independent sector than in state schools at KS3, and Ancient Greek is not offered at all at this key stage in the state sector.

Figure 5.b: Languages offered in Key Stage 3, 2012

	Arabic	French	German	Italian	Japanese	Mandarin	Russian	Spanish	Urdu	Latin	Ancient Greek
■ 2012 State	1%	95%	56%	7%	1%	5%	1%	63%	3%	6%	0%
■ 2012 Independent	0%	97%	63%	6%	2%	9%	5%	83%	0%	50%	12%

Comparisons with similar data collected in the 2007 Language Trends survey show the following changes in language provision in KS3 over the five-year period:

German is offered by 5% fewer state schools, and 10% fewer independent schools.

Italian is offered by 2% more state schools, and 1% more independents.

Mandarin is offered by 2% more state schools, and 1% more independents.

Spanish is offered by 10% more state schools, and 7% more independents.

Latin is offered by 1% more state schools, but by 1% fewer independents.

Ancient Greek is offered by 1% fewer independent schools and not at all in the state sector.

These findings show broadly similar trends to GCSE and A level entry figures: a decline in German and an increase in Spanish and other languages. They may also indicate that these trends are likely to continue to be reflected in the examination figures as pupils currently in KS3 progress through the system.

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5.3 Accreditation

The survey did not specifically ask whether some students were taking GCSE at KS3; however, a number of respondents referred to early entry GCSE. Around 7% of state schools and 5% of independent schools said they were using Asset Languages qualifications at KS3. 10% of state schools and just three of the responding independent schools use the FCSE qualification with KS3 pupils. Schools report that success in this encourages more pupils to continue to GCSE.

'As KS3 has been reduced to two years, pupils now undertake the FCSE qualification in Year 8 as a preparatory course for the GCSE.' (S)

Other types of accreditation mentioned at KS3 were the ABC Certificate in Practical Languages (for intensive courses in Japanese and Chinese given in Year 8) and the 'Young Leaders Award' (FLLA) for Year 9 pupils.

5.4 Impact of primary languages on Key Stage 3 provision

Although the majority of state-funded schools (78%) report having started to receive significant numbers of Year 7 pupils who have studied a language in KS2, this proportion is somewhat lower than in 2011 (84% – see Figure 5.c).

Figure 5.c: Proportion of schools which have started receiving significant numbers of Year 7 pupils with language learning experience at Key Stage 2, 2011 and 2012

	State	Independent
2011	84%	80%
2012	78%	84%

Most schools (84% of state schools, 91% of independent schools) reported that they had taken some measures to respond to pupils' prior learning to ensure continuity and progression in languages (Table 5.ii). Around half of state schools (52%) say they are in contact with their feeder primaries in relation to language teaching, but fewer than one in five (16%) are involved in joint planning (for languages) with them. More than half (59%) say that they cater for pupils' varying needs through differentiated activities and half (50%) say they have adapted their scheme of work to build on pupils' prior language learning. Very few schools in the state sector (11%) have arrangements which allow all pupils to continue with the same language they learnt at KS2. This compares with 35% of independent schools, which ensure all their pupils are able to continue with the same language. 15% of state schools and 27% of independent schools have a policy of introducing a new language in Year 7 (comments indicate that this is sometimes in addition to, rather than instead of the language learnt in KS2). Independent schools are more likely to test pupils on entry, and to set them in groups either on arrival or later in the year.

Table 5.ii: Measures taken to build on pupils' language learning at Key Stage 2 (multiple answers permitted)

	Independent schools	State schools
We are involved in joint planning with our feeder schools	13%	16%
We are in contact with our feeder schools, in order to exchange information on prior learning	43%	52%
Pupils are placed in groups later in the year, e.g. after some introductory or taster sessions	22%	20%
Pupils are tested upon entry and set according to ability and prior knowledge	22%	12%
We cater for individual pupils' needs through differentiated activities	55%	59%
We have adapted our Year 7 curriculum/scheme of work to build on pupils' learning in KS2	46%	50%
All pupils begin a new language in Year 7	27%	15%
All pupils are able to continue with the same language that they have learned in KS2	35%	11%
No measure has been taken	9%	16%

Comments from state school respondents indicate that the already complex arrangements they have for languages at KS3 are not able to cope with the diversity of experiences of learning a language that children have had in primary school:

'Sadly students are split into French learners or Spanish learners and this does not take students' previously learned knowledge in mind. Such a shame, but sadly beyond our control.'

'They are placed into ability sets according to KS2 data, but not specific to French.'

Many secondary schools take children from large numbers of feeder primary schools with different approaches to teaching languages:

'Some schools took it more seriously than others and introduced a proper scheme of work, others introduced it on a more cultural basis.'

'Many students have done little language tasters… often in up to three different languages.'

'Although spoken French skills are good following KS2 study, the writing skills of the students in the foreign language are not so.'

A great many comments are dismissive of the quality of teaching provided in primary schools, and so tend to 'start from scratch' or even 'unteach' 'because it is wrong':

'KS2 teaching is haphazard, delivered by (often reluctant) non-specialists who can sometimes do more harm than good.'

'The teaching in the feeder schools is inconsistent and sometimes groups of pupils arrive with significant misconceptions that have to be undone.'

It would be useful to undertake further research into what it is that teachers believe is 'wrong' and whether or not this relates to conflicting theories about how languages are learnt.

In some cases there is a clear mismatch between the languages taught in primary school and arrangements which secondary schools put in place in KS3:

'All the primary schools disregarded our advice and opted for Spanish at KS2. We are not in a position to teach Spanish GCSE.'

'Our feeder schools teach French. Upon entry, all pupils here study German.'

'Year 7 Spanish is not offered this year, just French. This has caused disappointment to those who were studying it in KS2.'

Sometimes requiring all students to start a new language is part of a policy to cope with the diverse experiences they have had:

'With 40 feeder schools it is impossible to successfully plan for continuity. Consequently, they begin a new MFL at KS3 (German or Spanish) and can pick up French in Year 8, albeit only in one hour per week.'

Where transition arrangements are most effective, it is where secondary teachers have been involved in the teaching in primary schools:

'Two teachers go to primaries to teach, so we know exactly what is going on in these schools.'

There is evidence that some secondary schools understand what type of experiences their Year 7 children have had, and have given significant thought as to how to build on them:

'In Years 7 and 8 we have adopted the Michel Thomas approach which focuses on key structures rather than groups of nouns by topic. This allows us to make the most of any language knowledge gained in primary school.'

'We try to focus on grammar and target language for a genuine purpose in the classroom rather than content language which pupils have already covered at KS2. We encourage pupils to include their primary knowledge in open-ended tasks.'

However, the overall impression is, as one respondent put it:

'They do not get a sense of a language learning journey and this is a real problem for us and one which we have found no solution to as yet.'

Comments from independent schools indicate that the issue of transition has not been resolved in this sector either. Similar comments are made about the difficulty building on the range of different experiences pupils have had and on the necessity of 'revisiting' material previously covered. However, they are in general less dismissive than respondents from the state sector about the language teaching skills of their primary colleagues. Some pragmatic solutions are put forward:

'We take a very grammatical approach in Years 7 and 8 so that they can use the vocab learnt previously with new grammar.'

'We look at prior learning and direct pupils to study a new language if they have spent a lot of time studying one language already, as our KS3 courses are beginner courses. They have the opportunity to pick their original language back up again later.'

5.5 Key issues identified

- Secondary schools' systems for organising the Year 7 curriculum are complex and not flexible enough to cope with the diverse range of language learning experiences presented by children arriving from primary school. There is a perceived lack of consistency and progress in KS2 languages, leading many secondary teachers to dismiss what has been learnt.
- Although some secondary schools have successful, well-established relationships with their primary feeder schools, providing continuity with primary language teaching is not on the agenda for many secondary schools.
- Around one in five schools (both state and independent) had the time allocation for language teaching reduced in KS3. Timetable organisation and pupil groupings within the school are frequently decided in ways which respondents believe are not conducive to successful language teaching.
- KS3 has been shortened to two years in around a quarter of state secondary schools, meaning that pupils who do not go on to take languages at GCSE receive only two years' teaching and have very little incentive for learning. Some schools have introduced different types of accreditation in order to address this. One in five state schools 'disapply' lower-ability pupils from having to study a language at all.

6. Languages at Key Stage 4

This chapter covers:

- Status of languages at KS4 (whether optional or compulsory)
- Languages offered, and changes over time
- Time allocation
- Trends in take-up for languages
- Take-up and offer of a second foreign language
- Accreditation
- Responses to the English Baccalaureate
- Future challenges

6.1 Compulsory versus optional status

The questionnaire asked respondents whether the study of a language is compulsory or optional for KS4 pupils in their school for the school year 2012/13. The responses show that languages are compulsory in KS4 for all pupils in 22% of state-funded schools and in 77% of independent schools. As Figure 6.a shows, this discrepancy between the maintained and independent sectors has existed since schools were first able to make languages an optional subject at KS4 in 2004. There has been a slight decline, since 2010, in the proportion of independent schools which make languages a compulsory subject for all pupils in KS4.

Figure 6.a: Proportion of schools where languages are compulsory for all pupils at Key Stage 4, 2004-2012

	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
State-funded	30%	26%	23%	22%	24%	20%	23%	22%
Independent	75%	75%	83%	82%	82%	89%	82%	77%

Note: No figures are available for 2006 as the question was not asked in Language Trends 2006. No figure is available for independent schools for 2004 as Language Trends 2004 did not include independent schools in the survey sample. The percentage noted is the 2005 figure, re-used for indicative purposes.

Further analysis of the characteristics of state-funded schools where languages are compulsory shows that around three quarters of selective schools (74%) make languages a compulsory subject in KS4, compared to fewer than one in five comprehensive schools (19%). Schools with higher achievement overall (based on the average total point score per pupil at KS4 as published in the 2011 School Performance Tables) and below-average numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) are more likely to require all KS4 pupils to study at least one language (Figures 6.b and 6.c).

Figure 6.b: Proportion of state-funded schools where languages are compulsory at Key Stage 4, by educational achievement, 2012

	Low	Mid-low	Middle	Mid-high	High
%	13%	15%	15%	29%	35%

Figure 6.c: Proportion of state-funded schools where languages are compulsory at Key Stage 4, by socio-economic indicator, 2012

Above average FSM   Below average FSM

In this year's survey, for the first time schools were also able to say whether languages were optional for some pupils but compulsory for others (Figure 6.d). Nearly one third (29%) of state secondary schools now make a language compulsory at KS4 for some groups of pupils:

Figure 6.d: Proportions of schools where languages are compulsory for some or all pupils, 2012

	Compulsory for all	Optional for all	Optional for some but not all
State-funded	22%	49%	29%
Independent	77%	18%	5%

Free responses show that where a language is compulsory at KS4 for some students, this may be for the majority (where the least able pupils are permitted to drop the subject) or, more frequently, for the minority where just those in the top set or sets are required to take a language to GCSE. Sometimes this decision is taken on general ability, or on performance in English, and sometimes on the basis of whether pupils are predicted to achieve C or above in the language at GCSE. See also section 6.6 for discussion of changes schools have made in response to the EBacc.

6.2 Languages offered

The picture of languages offered at KS4 is very similar to that at KS3 (see 5.2) but with a slightly higher incidence of lesser-taught languages, particularly Mandarin. As in KS3, the range of languages available is wider in the independent sector than in the state sector. Two state schools responding to the survey offer Ancient Greek, rounded up to 1%.

Figure 6.e: Languages offered at Key Stage 4 by state and independent schools, 2012

	Arabic	French	German	Italian	Japanese	Mandarin	Russian	Spanish	Urdu	Latin	Ancient Greek
State	1%	95%	59%	7%	1%	3%	1%	70%	4%	6%	1%
Independent	1%	95%	68%	10%	3%	14%	7%	87%	0%	59%	22%

Trends

Comparing these data to results achieved in the 2007 Language Trends survey, the following trends are evident (bearing in mind that very small percentage changes are not statistically significant):

- The proportion of schools offering **German** in KS4 has declined by 3% in the state sector and by 11% in the independent sector, over the five- year period.
- **Italian** has increased by one percentage point in the independent sector and remained static in the state sector.
- **Japanese** has also declined – by 2% in the state sector and 1% in the independent sector.
- **Mandarin** is now offered in 1% more schools in the state sector and by 9% more independent schools.
- **Russian** is offered by 1% fewer schools in both sectors.
- **Spanish** is offered by 14% more state schools and by 6% more independent schools.
- **Urdu** is no longer found in the independent sector at KS4 (down from 3% in 2007) but is stable in the state sector.
- Although we do not have information on **Ancient Languages** going back as far as 2007, figures from 2011 show some evidence of a slight decline in these in independent schools: 4% fewer independent schools say they offer Latin at KS4 than in 2011 and 1% fewer offer Ancient Greek.

This shows that the diversification of languages taught is fragile: the growth of Mandarin in the independent sector appears to have been at the expense of other lesser-taught languages, which have declined over the same period.

The major trend of note is the evolution of German and Spanish. Figure 6.f shows how the one has declined and the other expanded in the period since 2005. Although this refers to state schools at KS4, the picture is broadly similar for KS3 and post-16, and in the independent sector also.

Figure 6.f: Percentage of maintained schools offering German and Spanish at Key Stage 4, 2005-2012

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
■ German	73%	71%	62%	61%	55%	60%	58%	59%
◆ Spanish	52%	57%	56%	60%	63%	64%	66%	70%

Reported changes in pupil take-up for different languages

Respondents in schools where languages were optional were asked to report on changes in take-up of the main languages taught in KS4 over the previous three years.

French

As shown in Table 6.i, in 2012 53% of state schools where languages are optional have seen increased uptake for French and only 20% report decreases in 2012, following a period in which more schools had seen decreases than increases.

Table 6.i: French: proportions of state schools where languages are optional at Key Stage 4 reporting changes in pupil take-up at Key Stage 4 over the preceding three years, 2007-2012

French	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Decrease	55%	46%	46%	44%	21%	20%
Discontinued	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Increase	19%	23%	23%	24%	48%	53%
New	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
No change	24%	29%	29%	31%	27%	25%

German

Similarly with German (Table 6.ii): in 2012, 39% of state schools have seen increased uptake in this language over the past three years and a smaller number than in previous years report declines, although 10% say the subject has been discontinued as a GCSE option.

Table 6.ii: German: Proportions of state schools where languages are optional at Key Stage 4 reporting changes in pupil take-up at Key Stage 4 over the preceding three years, 2007-2012

German	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Decrease	44%	46%	43%	38%	25%	25%
Discontinued	16%	2%	16%	13%	8%	10%
Increase	15%	24%	19%	23%	34%	39%
New	1%	0%	2%	0%	2%	4%
No change	24%	27%	19%	26%	30%	22%

Spanish

Spanish continues to grow (Table 6.iii), and more than two thirds of state schools have either increased numbers or introduced it as a new language in the past three years.

Table 6.iii: Spanish: Proportions of state schools where languages are optional at Key Stage 4 reporting changes in pupil take-up at Key Stage 4 over the preceding three years, 2007-2012

Spanish	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Decrease	26%	24%	27%	27%	14%	9%
Discontinued	6%	1%	5%	6%	2%	4%
Increase	35%	38%	35%	36%	53%	57%
New	14%	9%	10%	7%	11%	11%
No change	19%	27%	22%	25%	20%	19%

6.3 Time allocated

Respondents were asked how much time per week is allocated for GCSE languages courses in KS4. Answers ranged from less than two to as many as six hours per week, with most responses clustering around 2.5 hours per week (or five per fortnight), both in the state and the independent sector. Two hours per week was not thought adequate, but even where the allocation was greater than this, the main problem highlighted was the distribution of the time available. Respondents were critical of timetables which gave them double periods with long time intervals between, regarding shorter, more frequent lessons as better for language learning. A number of responses from the state sector commented on time having been reduced for languages in KS3 (see 5.1), putting extra pressure on what had to be achieved at KS4.

Most respondents felt that a greater time allocation would be beneficial, and some thought that the allocation for languages should be comparable to that for maths and English rather than other optional subjects. Some schools had seen their time allocation reduced as a result of schools giving more time to these subjects. Only one mentioned that lesson time for languages had been increased in response to the EBacc.

There is no evidence from the survey that independent schools typically allocate more time for languages at GCSE than state schools. Around 10% of schools had a different allocation for Year 10 than for Year 11 (typically two hours per week one year and three hours per week the other, though some had the greater time allocation in Year 10 and others in Year 11). Where schools offered a second foreign language, the time allocation for this was often not the same as for the first foreign languages – though again, in some cases it was more and in others less. Where GCSE was taken in one year, students typically had five hours of lessons per week.

Free comments provide a flavour of teachers' frustration with what they see as unhelpful timetabling:

'Only seeing pupils twice a week is too infrequent.' (I)

'Languages should be taught every day as English and maths are.' (S)

'They either need to reduce what is required at GCSE or give us more time. Five tenses including irregular verbs, infinitive clauses, subordinate clauses, negation, (in)direct object pronouns, opinions etc. The list is endless and they don't even need to know this to get a grade C at GCSE English.' (S)

'Languages are not a two-year course like, for example, some social sciences subjects – they are continuation courses from Years 7, 8 and 9.' (S)

'In addition pupils attend a compulsory lunchtime conversation lesson of half an hour. This is essential as we feel that two double lessons are not sufficient to obtain the higher grades at GCSE level.' (I)

6.4 Take-up

We asked schools to state the approximate percentage of pupils currently studying at least one language in Year 10 and in Year 11 respectively.

State-funded schools

In 2011 there was a sudden 15 percentage point increase in the number of schools with more than 50% of pupils taking a language in Year 10, and this increase has, as would be expected, now translated into an increase in take-up in Year 11 (Figure 6.g). The results of this survey show that this increase has been maintained in 2012's Year 10; however, there has been no further increase beyond that seen in 2011. Findings from other questions in the survey suggest that schools moved quickly to increase numbers in 2011 where this could be easily done, but have not put in place measures to reach significantly greater numbers of pupils – see section 6.6.

Figure 6.g: Percentage of schools with 50% or more pupils studying a language in Key Stage 4, state-funded schools, 2005-2012

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
■	Year 10	48%	45%	45%	45%	41%	36%	51%	51%
◆	Year 11	53%	46%	44%	45%	43%	38%	38%	48%

However, a more fine-grained analysis of the responses, where schools are placed into one of five bands according to the proportion of their pupils studying a language (Figure 6.h), shows that there are fewer schools this year in the lowest band of 24% or fewer Year 10 pupils studying a language (17% as opposed to 21% in 2011). At the same time there are proportionately more schools in the next band, with between 25% and 49% of pupils studying a language in Year 10. This indicates that some schools with very low numbers of pupils taking a language have managed to increase numbers since 2011.

Figure 6.h: Banding of state schools according to different levels of take-up for languages in Year 10, 2005–2012

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
■ <25%	27%	28%	30%	32%	33%	39%	21%	17%
■ 25-49%	25%	27%	25%	23%	27%	25%	29%	32%
■ 50-75%	16%	17%	19%	21%	14%	15%	24%	23%
■ >75%	32%	28%	26%	24%	26%	21%	27%	28%

The characteristics of schools with different patterns of participation in language study in KS4 were analysed by admissions policy, educational achievement and socio-economic indicators. Almost all selective schools (96%) but only half of comprehensive schools (50%) have more than 50% of pupils taking a language in Year 10. Schools with lower levels of educational achievement overall (Figure 6.i) and those with higher proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) (Figure 6.j), are associated with lower participation in language study in Year 10.

Figure 6.i: Percentage of state-funded schools with 50% or more pupils studying a language in Year 10, 2012 by overall educational achievement

	Low	Mid-low	Middle	Mid-high	High
%	31%	38%	59%	58%	64%

Figure 6.j: Percentage of state-funded schools with 50% or more pupils studying a language in Year 10, 2012 by socio-economic indicator (FSM)

31%

Above average FSM

61%

Below average FSM

Independent schools

Take-up for languages at KS4 remains very high in the majority of independent schools; however, there is some indication that the proportion of independent schools where more than 75% of pupils study a language in Key State 4 is declining. Figure 6.k shows that in 2012, only 80% of independent schools had more than 75% of their pupils studying a language in Year 10, compared to 88% in 2011. The same is true for Year 11 (not shown). Future surveys will determine whether this is a trend or a variation linked to an exceptional sample in 2012.

Figure 6.k: Banding of independent schools according to different levels of take-up for languages in Year 10, 2005-2012

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
■ <25%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%	7%
■ 25-49%	4%	2%	3%	3%	5%	5%
■ 50-75%	6%	6%	8%	2%	4%	9%
■ >75%	88%	88%	87%	92%	88%	80%

Self-reported trends in take-up

State-funded schools in which languages are optional were asked to report on trends in take-up over the past three years. The results from this year's survey show that, whereas from 2005 to 2010 more schools reported decreases than increases, in 2011 and again in 2012, the number of schools reporting an increasing trend exceeds those reporting declines in language take-up (Figure 6.l). The proportion of schools with languages as an optional subject reporting increases in take-up has risen from 59% in 2011 to 69% in 2012.

Figure 6.l: Self-reported overall languages take-up at Key Stage 4 over the past three years, state-funded schools with languages as optional, 2005-2012

	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
■ Decrease	86%	61%	52%	48%	48%	21%	17%
◆ Increase	5%	21%	22%	26%	25%	59%	69%
▲ No change	9%	17%	26%	25%	28%	21%	14%

Note: Similar questions were not asked in Language Trends 2006.

61% of respondents who reported an overall increasing trend in language take-up at KS4 believe that the improvement is a significant change rather than a year-by-year fluctuation (Figure 6.m). This is almost exactly the same proportion as in 2011, when 62% of respondents regarded this as a significant change.

Figure 6.m: Whether respondents regard increases in take-up as a significant change

	I'm not sure. It's too early to say	Not really. It's more of a general fluctuation	Yes
%	17%	23%	61%

Dual linguists – pupils studying more than one language

The questionnaire asked to what extent pupils are studying more than one language, whether as an examined curriculum subject or as an extra. This question is of particular interest given proposals to establish a European benchmark for the numbers of secondary school pupils learning more than one foreign language.[37] Figure 6.n shows that in 2012 a similar proportion of state schools to that in 2011 have pupils studying more than one language in KS4. However, figures from previous years show that this has declined over a longer period (68% in 2008 and 66% in 2009). 61% of state schools still offer some pupils the chance to take a second foreign language, compared with 89% of schools in the independent sector. The proportion of independent schools with pupils studying more than one language has also declined, from 97% in the 2010 survey (no figures for years prior to this are available for the independent sector) to 89% in 2012.

Figure 6.n: Schools with pupils studying more than one language at Key Stage 4, 2010-2012

	2010	2011	2012
■ State	67%	61%	61%
◆ Independent	97%	93%	89%

The survey asked those schools with pupils learning more than one language at KS4 what proportion of the year group this involved. Figure 6.o shows that in the state sector this is likely to involve only small numbers of students, whereas in the independent sector, schools are more likely to have significant numbers of students studying two foreign languages. In the state sector, only 2% of schools with pupils studying more than one language in Year 10 have more than 50% of pupils doing so, whereas this is the case for 14% of such schools in the independent sector. A comparison with findings from 2011 shows that there has been a decline in the proportion of independent schools with more than 50% of pupils taking a second language – 14% in 2012, down from 20% in 2011. In the state sector there has been little change in the proportions shown for 2012 compared to those from previous year.

Figure 6.o: Schools with different proportions of pupils taking more than one language in Year 10, 2012

The figures for uptake of more than one language in Year 11 are roughly similar to those for Year 10 pupils.

Schools were asked whether the second language is studied in curriculum time. In the independent sector, this is the case in 95% of schools, and in the state sector in 80% of schools. Arrangements varied in 12% of state schools.

From free comments, it can be seen that schools employ a variety of models to provide for the second (or third) foreign language. In some schools, both state and independent, pupils can choose two language options within curriculum time. In other schools, both state and independent, pupils must take the second or third foreign language outside the normal timetable – before or after school, or during the lunch time. Some schools combine these options, with one hour within the timetable and a second outside it. Both independent and state schools have 'bilingual' or 'native speaker' pupils and where these are in lesser-taught languages, provision tends to be outside curriculum time. A number of state schools reported students taking GCSE in their first foreign language in Year 10 and picking up a second in Year 11.

6.5 Accreditation

As in previous years, the survey asked schools whether they offered any alternative qualifications to GCSE at KS4. Around one third of both state and independent schools overall were using different forms of accreditation in different key stages.

Figure 6.p: The proportion of schools offering alternative qualifications to GCSE and A level languages, 2006-2012

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
■ State-funded	22%	29%	40%	47%	45%	33%	34%
◆ Independent	8%	12%	11%	17%	24%	28%	33%

In KS4, the most commonly offered alternatives to GCSE were, in the state sector, NVQ language units (10%) and in the independent sector the IGCSE (15%). 3% of both state and independent schools offered Asset Languages qualifications to KS4 pupils; in the state sector, 2% offered Entry Level certification and 5% offered the FCSE.

Comparing these figures with those obtained from Language Trends surveys in previous years, the survey found that, in state schools, the use of NVQ language units had declined (although not significantly). The use of Asset languages (now only 3%) had declined more steeply from 10% of state schools using these in 2008 and 2009, although in the independent sector the proportion had not changed. In 2012, more schools (5%) said they used the FCSE qualification than had been the case in previous years (3%). Although this is a small percentage change, free comments indicate that it is significant.

In the independent sector, the use of the IGCSE language exams has grown from 8% of schools in 2009 to 15% in 2012, although the 2011 figure was also 15%, so there appears to be no further growth at present.

6.6 Response of schools to the English Baccalaureate

In order to explore further the impact of the EBacc on KS4, we asked schools explicitly whether they had made any changes or are currently making changes to language provision at KS4 following the announcement of the EBacc. Those responding positively were asked what measures they had taken and those responding negatively were asked to say why they had not made any changes.

40% of state-funded schools responding to the question reported that they have already made changes to language provision following the announcement of the EBacc. This is exactly the same proportion as reported in answer to this question in 2011. Another 13% have plans to make changes within the next year or two (see Figure 6.q below). This again is very similar to the 2011 figure of 14%. As in 2011, very few independent schools are taking the EBacc into account in their planning.

Figure 6.q: Are schools making changes to language provision at Key Stage 4 in response to the EBacc?

	No	Not for the year 2012/13 but we have plans to do so in the next couple of years	Yes
State	48%	13%	40%
Independent	84%	10%	5%

Further analysis of state-funded schools by school characteristics shows that those with higher levels of social disadvantage are more likely to have made changes in response to the EBacc measure (58%) than those with lower-than-average proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals (30% – Figure 6.r). Schools across the educational achievement spectrum have made changes, particularly those in the lowest and highest quintiles (Figure 6.s). Comprehensive schools are much more likely to have made changes than selective schools – 41% compared with 4% – as would be expected, given that in selective schools high proportions of pupils already study a language in KS4.

Figure 6.r: Schools which have made changes to language provision in Key Stage 4 in response to the EBacc, by socio-economic indicator (FSM)

Above average FSM: 58%
Below average FSM: 30%

Figure 6.s: Schools which have made changes to language provision in Key Stage 4 in response to the EBacc, by overall educational achievement

%	Low	Mid-low	Middle	Mid-high	High
	44%	35%	34%	38%	43%

As shown in Table 6.iv below, of those state-funded schools making changes, 45% have made languages compulsory for *some* pupils and 7% have made languages compulsory for *all* pupils. The proportion of schools making languages compulsory for some pupils has risen by 10 percentage points since 2011. As in 2011, the majority of schools making changes in response to the EBacc have modified option blocks and/or advice to pupils. The proportions of schools introducing improved advice or opportunities for pupils to take a qualification in their 'home' language (other than English) and bringing in intensive one-year GCSEs have remained similar to last year.

Table 6.iv: Measures introduced or planned in response to the EBacc, state schools, 2011 and 2012 (multiple responses permitted)

	2011	2012
Option blocks have been modified to guide some pupils into taking a language	55%	62%
Advice to pupils about which subjects to choose has been modified	55%	53%
Languages have been made compulsory for some pupils	35%	45%
Improved opportunities or guidance for pupils to take a qualification in their 'home' languages	24%	20%
Intensive one-year GCSE course for students who previously opted out of languages	11%	10%
Languages have been made compulsory for all pupils	8%	7%
Other	9%	7%

Several comments indicate that although schools had pushed languages in response to the EBacc in 2011, there was little enthusiasm for measures which might impact on greater numbers of learners:

'We did for the current Year 11s and it is disastrous for the students who don't really want to do a language.'

'From 2011 all of the top pathway students are studying for a GCSE language; the number of students in this pathway has increased by about 5% for 2012/13 but it won't increase much more than this unless the pathways and the options process are changed again.'

Some schools indicated that the EBacc was actually reducing numbers for languages:

'The change has been that the least able students are now able to drop their language at the end of KS3.'

'The EBacc may eliminate the double languages option for our students as we seek to maintain the status of other arts and humanities subjects such as RE and economics.'

Schools not responding to the English Baccalaureate

As shown above in Table 6.iv, a substantial proportion of schools in both the independent and state-funded sectors (84% and 48% respectively) indicate that they have not made any changes and have no plans to do so. Coded responses received from open Question 13 (see Appendix A) indicate that the following factors have prevented schools from taking actions:

Table 6.v: Why do schools not intend to make changes to languages provision at Key Stage 4 as a response to the EBacc? 2012

	Independent schools	State schools
	Number of schools	
It is necessary because take-up is already high	55	48
Free choice is prioritised over the EBacc	14	24
The school wants to encourage take-up but not change provision	1	10
The school is waiting to see what the longer-term implications are	8	5
There is no flexibility to change provision	0	2
Don't know	0	8

In a majority of those schools in the independent sector, and around half of those schools in the state-funded sector where no changes have yet been made in response to the EBacc, this is because take-up for languages is already high. The most frequent reason why the remaining schools have not responded to the EBacc is that schools are not taking the EBacc into account. The following quotations from respondents give further insight into the reasons behind schools' decisions not to respond to the EBacc measure:

'Core MFL was not successful with lower sets and not popular with parents and so there are no plans to make languages compulsory again to fulfil the requirements of the EBacc.'

'As an Academy, [name of school] has no plan to make EBacc subjects compulsory as BTECs seem to be a choice for the lower ability students.'

Accreditation

Responses to the 2011 Language Trends survey indicated that the accreditation and the assessment of language learning in KS4 was an important area of concern for languages teachers. The 2012 survey therefore included questions to elicit more detailed information about these concerns.

Respondents were asked for their views on the government's proposals for substituting GCSEs with new EBacc examinations[e] and what changes they would like to see. This was an open question, and the responses have been coded, with quotations illustrating typical responses.

By far and away the strongest message emerging was the dislike of existing 'controlled assessments' for GCSE speaking and writing (68 respondents from the state sector and 15 from independent schools – the largest number of comments from this sector). Respondents believed they were time-consuming for teachers, demotivating for learners and not a genuine test of linguistic competence:

[e] A government consultation on this was running concurrently with the Language Trends survey. In the light of responses, proposals have now been withdrawn. However the government still intends to make profound changes to GCSEs, and the responses are important to note in this context.

'… controlled assessment seems to be killing language skills and enthusiasm to take a language at KS5.' (S)

'Would like to see an end to controlled assessments which encourage average-to-bright learners to rote learn which is pointless, and weaker students do not have a hope of doing this so are discouraged from doing a language at all.' (S)

'I am not in favour of controlled assessments and I believe they are harming the teaching of languages.' (I)

Another 23 respondents from both sectors made comments relating to the consistency and grading of the current GCSE exams. They wanted to see greater consistency: across boards, from one year to the next, between languages and other subjects, and between languages. Five respondents wanted the exams to be fully external and thought that speaking should not be marked by the teacher. 23 respondents (from both sectors) would welcome a return to a final exam, whereas three thought students ought to have more than one opportunity to demonstrate what they had learnt. Only four respondents, all in the state sector, said they were happy with the existing GCSE exam, although ten called for less change generally.

18 state sector respondents felt that the EBacc had had a positive effect on the status of languages and on take-up within their school, and nine respondents from independent schools also welcomed the move to give languages the status of 'an essential element in a balanced curriculum'. However this was tempered by strongly expressed concern in the state sector (44 respondents, plus one from the independent sector) that suitable accreditation should be available for lower-achieving pupils:

'Vocational provision for languages should be reinstated… We are now actively discouraging students who do not speak much in lessons or who are incapable of learning by rote for writing purposes as these students will not achieve a GCSE grade.'

18 respondents (again from both sectors) called for examinations/syllabuses which encouraged the teaching of languages for 'practical use' in 'realistic situations', or with more cultural input. However, there was no consensus on what constituted relevant content, with one respondent calling for 'holiday Spanish' and another arguing strongly against 'teaching children to book hotel rooms.'

11 respondents were concerned about the time allocation for languages, with one calling for minimum national guidelines. This was closely linked to concern to improve standards to meet the requirements of the EBacc:

'The proposals have meant that more students are studying languages. But a significant amount of teaching time is needed for students to feel they are capable of achieving a good grade.' (S)

The survey asked whether the provision or take-up of alternative accreditation for languages had been affected by recent changes to Performance Tables in relation to the EBacc. A small proportion of state-funded schools (14%) said that this had been the case, although not as large a proportion as said so in 2011 (20%). Comments confirmed that the EBacc had directly led to reductions in the provision of NVQ and Asset Languages qualifications (25 respondents) although five respondents said numbers had increased and three said there had been no impact.

In the independent sector, the main alternative qualifications offered are Asset Languages, the IGCSE and the International Baccalaureate (see section 6.5). Comments show that dissatisfaction with the current GCSE (*'a nightmare for all concerned and the only purpose it has served is to put all off learning languages, pupils of all abilities and staff included'*) has led schools to 'vote with their feet' and adopt the IGCSE which is regarded as a better preparation for AS/A2 (see further discussion on accreditation post-16 in Chapter 7).

There were two comments on Classics within the EBacc, one from a state school, the other from an independent:

'Do not allow Ancient Languages to count as languages in the EBacc. They have no oral or listening elements and the four skills distinguish language learning as a discipline.' (I)

'The study of classical languages should be an addition to the study of modern languages and not a replacement for them.' (S)

6.7 Looking forward

Should languages be a compulsory subject at Key Stage 4?
For the first time the survey asked whether schools would welcome languages being made a compulsory subject at KS4. Figure 6.t shows that in the independent sector nearly three quarters of respondents thought their school would welcome languages becoming compulsory in KS4 and only 10% would not. In the state sector however, responses were evenly distributed between those whose schools would welcome compulsory status for languages in KS4, those who would not, and those who were unsure.

Figure 6.t: Whether schools would welcome languages being made a compulsory subject in Key Stage 4

	Yes	No	Not sure
State	34%	35%	31%
Independent	73%	10%	17%

Challenges in providing languages for all pupils in Key Stage 4

Respondents were asked what challenges they would face in providing languages for all pupils in KS4, and asked to choose as many issues as they thought relevant from a prompt list (Table 6.vi). Teachers in the state sector tended to indicate many more issues they regarded as challenging in relation to the provision of languages for all pupils than colleagues in the independent sector. For state sector teachers, the motivation of pupils emerged overwhelmingly as the issue of most concern (68% of respondents). However there are clearly other challenges too, including timetabling (48%), teacher supply (33%), accreditation (31%) and the views of parents (32%). Motivation and timetabling also emerged as challenges in the independent sector, although the proportions are smaller as most independent schools already make languages compulsory for all pupils in KS4.

Table 6.vi: Challenges in providing languages for all pupils in Key Stage 4 (multiple answers permitted)

	Independent schools	State schools
Views of parents	6%	32%
Buy-in from teachers of other subjects	3%	12%
Views of senior management	8%	29%
Motivation of students	19%	68%
Funding and resources	5%	27%
Suitable accreditation	8%	31%
Supply of suitably qualified/trained teachers	7%	33%
Timetabling	19%	48%
Languages are already compulsory in our school	60%	19%
Other	23%	8%

In the 'Other' category, state schools mentioned large numbers of SEN pupils, or those with 'weak literacy', dealing with mixed-ability classes, and overcoming perceptions that languages are difficult. One respondent noted that:

'There is no longer the pool of teachers accustomed to teaching across the ability/motivation range.'

Another noted that larger numbers at GCSE would be logistically impossible, given the amount of time and organisation required for controlled assessments.

Despite the much smaller numbers of independent schools identifying challenges, it is clear that whereas the motivation of pupils may be a barrier for them too, the views of parents are not likely to be so. Two independent schools referred to the presence of SEN pupils exempted from languages in their schools.

6.8 Key issues identified

• An increasing number of schools where languages are optional report that the number of students taking languages at KS4 has risen in the last few years.

• The increases identified in Year 10 uptake in 2011 as a result of the EBacc have been sustained but are not producing a continuing upward trend. Schools made changes in 2011 but have taken no further measures to improve take-up of languages.

• Many schools have made languages compulsory for their 'top' pupils; however, there are indications that there is a corresponding reduction in numbers taking less academic language courses.

• There is widespread dissatisfaction, in both state and independent sectors, with the current GCSE and especially with the controlled assessment regime, which is seen as demotivating for pupils and as dampening both pupils' enthusiasm and capacity to take languages in the sixth form.

• The evidence in this survey indicates that teachers would welcome a return to externally assessed final exams.

7. Languages post-16

7.1 Languages offered

The profile of languages offered post-16 (Figure 7.a) is similar to that at KS3 and KS4:

Figure 7.a: Languages offered post-16

	Arabic	French	German	Italian	Japanese	Mandarin	Russian	Spanish	Urdu	Latin	Ancient Greek
State	0%	78%	55%	9%	4%	4%	2%	55%	1%	6%	1%
Independent	2%	98%	75%	24%	6%	17%	16%	88%	0%	54%	27%

A comparison with findings from the 2007 Language Trends survey shows the following changes in provision of languages at post-16:

- The proportion of schools offering **German** has declined by 3% in the state sector and by 6% in the independent sector.
- At the same time, the proportion of schools offering **Spanish** post-16 has increased by 12% in the state sector and 13% in the independent sector.
- Independent schools are now markedly more likely to be offering **Italian** or **Mandarin** post-16 (both up by 9%) and **Russian** (up by 6%). These languages, and also **Japanese**, have also gained ground in state schools, although by a smaller proportion.

More schools tend to offer the lesser-taught languages at post-16 than lower down the school and this is particularly so in the independent sector. For example, whereas in KS3 (see Figure 5.b) only 6% of independent schools offer Italian, 24% do so in the Sixth Form (Figure 7.a above). Further information is needed on the levels at which these languages are studied, whether they are being learnt as new languages and what impact they have on university entry or degree subject choice.

7.2 Take-up and continuation rates

The survey asked about trends in language take-up post-16.

In the state-funded sector in 2012, the numbers of schools reporting declines in take-up for language subjects exactly balance those reporting increases (Table 7.b). This is a more positive picture than in 2011, when more schools reported declines than reported increases in overall numbers taking languages post-16.

Figure 7.b: State-funded schools reporting overall changes in take-up for languages post-16 over the last three years, 2011 and 2012

	2011			2012		
	33%	25%	41%	30%	30%	40%

Decrease ■ Increase ■ No change

However, in the independent sector (Figure 7.c) more schools report declines than increases in both 2011 and 2012, and the proportion of schools reporting declines is greater in 2012 than it was in 2011. Similarly, the proportion of schools reporting increases in 2012 is lower than the proportion doing so in 2011:

Figure 7.c: Independent schools reporting overall changes in take-up for languages post-16 over the last three years, 2011 and 2012

	2011			2012		
	30%	24%	45%	35%	18%	47%

Decrease ■ Increase ■ No change

The next set of charts shows the position for French, German and Spanish respectively.

French

Figure 7.d shows that in both the state and independent sectors, more schools have seen decreasing numbers for French post-16 than have seen increases. The gap between those schools which have increased numbers for French and those which have seen declines has widened between 2011 and 2012 in both sectors. This is particularly marked in independent schools, where in 2012, 43% of respondents said they had seen numbers decline for French over the past three years, while only 14% had seen an increase (Table 7.e).

Figure 7.d: State-funded schools reporting overall changes in take-up for French post-16 over the last three years, 2011 and 2012

	2011			2012	
32%	23%	46%	36%	21%	42%

■ Decreased or discontinued ■ Increased or introduced ■ No change

Figure 7.e: Independent schools reporting overall changes in take-up for French post-16 over the last three years, 2011 and 2012

	2011			2012	
27%	22%	51%	43%	14%	43%

■ Decreased or discontinued ■ Increased or introduced ■ No change

German

Figures 7.f and 7.g show that in both state and independent sectors, the proportion of schools reporting declines in numbers taking German post-16, or where the subject has been discontinued, is greater than the proportion saying numbers have increased. However, the gap between schools reporting increased take-up and those with declining numbers is smaller in 2012 than in 2011, in both sectors. This suggests that the rate of decline in numbers learning German may be slowing.

Figure 7.f: State-funded schools reporting overall changes in take-up for German post-16 over the last three years, 2011 and 2012

	2011			2012		
	46%	16%	39%	37%	26%	37%

■ Decreased or discontinued   ■ Increased or introduced   ■ No change

Figure 7.g: Independent schools reporting overall changes in take-up for German post-16 over the last three years, 2011 and 2012

	2011			2012		
	49%	10%	41%	33%	18%	49%

■ Decreased or discontinued   ■ Increased or introduced   ■ No change

Spanish

In contrast to the picture for French and German, Spanish shows increasing numbers post-16 in
both the state and independent sectors (Figures 7.h and 7.i). In both 2011 and 2012, more schools
report increases in take-up for Spanish post-16 than report declines. In the state sector (Figure 7.h),
44% of schools said they had seen numbers for Spanish post-16 increase over the last three years,
or had introduced the language as a new subject. This compares to 31% the previous year, already
an impressive proportion. Similarly, the number that reported decreases in uptake for Spanish
dropped from 26% in 2011 to 17% in 2012. However, in the independent sector (Figure 7.i), whilst
35% reported increases in Spanish in 2011, this proportion had dropped to 25% in 2012, while the
number reporting decreases rose from 18% to 22%.

**Figure 7.h: State-funded schools reporting overall changes in take-up for Spanish post-16
over the last three years, 2011 and 2012**

	2011			2012	
26%	31%	43%	17%	44%	39%

■ Decreased or discontinued   ■ Increased or introduced   ■ No change

**Figure 7.i: Independent schools reporting overall changes in take-up for Spanish post-16 over
the last three years, 2011 and 2012**

	2011			2012	
18%	35%	47%	22%	25%	53%

■ Decreased or discontinued   ■ Increased or introduced   ■ No change

The overall picture of decline in the independent sector, particularly as it affects French, will be a cause of concern to university language departments who rely heavily on candidates from independent schools. In both the independent and the state-funded sectors, a greater proportion of schools are now reporting declines in numbers taking French than those reporting declines in German. This is in contrast to previous years when German has been the language most affected by decline.

Typical numbers enrolling on AS languages courses

Respondents were asked how many students on average normally enrol for language courses at AS level, and the proportion that normally continues to A2.

Figure 7.j shows that in both the independent and state sectors, schools are more likely to have only small numbers of students opting to study a language at AS level, but that larger numbers are more common in the independent sector than in the state sector. The independent sector is more than twice as likely to have 30 or more students enrolling for languages at AS level.

Figure 7.j: Typical numbers enrolling for languages at AS level, independent and state-funded schools, 2012

	<5	5 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	>30
State	36%	24%	21%	11%	8%
Independent	27%	23%	19%	13%	17%

Continuation rates

Figure 7.k shows that schools in the independent sector report that they achieve higher continuation rates from AS to A2 than schools in the state sector.

Figure 7.k: Typical proportion of AS language students who continue to A2

	More than 90%	75%-89%	Less than 75%
State	12%	32%	56%
Independent	21%	41%	37%

Respondents were asked how continuation rates from AS to A2 for languages in their school compared with continuation rates for other subjects. Figure 7.l shows that schools in the independent sector were more likely than state schools to say continuation rates for languages were similar to other subjects; and that a higher proportion of respondents in the state sector found that continuation rates were worse for languages than for other subjects. Very few respondents in either sector felt that continuation rates for languages were better than other subjects.

Figure 7.l: How does the continuation rate for languages compare to that for other subjects?

	Similar	Worse	Better
State	49%	47%	5%
Independent	61%	31%	7%

Comments indicate that the step up in level between GCSE and A level means that many pupils find languages hard in the sixth form and *'when they look at what they need for universities, they choose safer subjects'*. In the independent sector, teachers commented that their students were looking to achieve A and A* grades and perceived it to be more difficult to obtain these grades in languages than in other subjects. There is a perception in both independent and state sectors that students either choose a language subject as their fourth AS, always intending to give it up, or that they are 'committed linguists' and stick with it. Comments from the independent sector indicate they may have a higher proportion of these 'committed linguists' from the start, although they are concerned that so few take a language for its complementary value. Several respondents from the state sector commented that those students who did continue to A2 tended to re-sit their AS and achieve much better results after a longer period of sixth form study.

One state school had identified the problem lower down the school and was starting to address it:

'This year we have a very healthy crop of able students who have been stretched and challenged at GCSE… who have continued to AS and we hope will continue to A2.'

See also section 7.3 for further comments on accreditation post-16.

Guidance on facilitating subjects

In May 2011 the Russell Group of universities published a guidance document for schools and students, *Informed choices*, which named languages as one of the 'facilitating subjects' which increase students' chances of obtaining a place on the most competitive university courses.[38] Data on students' achievements in facilitating subjects are now included in DfE Performance Tables for Key Stage 5. Respondents to the Language Trends survey were asked whether their school had changed its advice to students as a result of this report. Figure 7.m shows that independent and state schools have taken remarkably similar positions in relation to this, with more than half having taken no action, around one third expecting to make changes in the next few years, and only a small proportion of schools having already changed advice to students regarding A level options. In 2011 (not shown), a higher proportion (around two thirds in both sectors) said they had not yet taken any action, and a higher proportion also said that they had already made changes (17% of state schools and 21% of independent schools).

Figure 7.m: Impact of Russell Group report on advice to students regarding A level options, 2012 and 2011

	No	Not this year, but we have plans to do so in the next couple of years	Yes
■ State	55%	33%	12%
■ Independent	54%	33%	13%

Comments show that, in the state sector, although the Russell Group publication was being used by language departments in promoting their subject, it had not generally been taken up as school policy:

'Officially there is no advice regarding facilitating subjects; however, informally we do advise students about the benefits of studying a language post-16. This seems to have very little impact on their choice…'

'It is left to the MFL department to 'market' our subject in this way.'

Although some commented that their school was now 'more open' about which subjects are considered 'softer options', there were clearly many other factors affecting advice on subject choice, not least exam results. One school had established three post-16 pathways: 'Advanced' (including facilitating subjects), 'Normal' and 'BTEC'.

Comments from independent schools revealed that either they had always given this advice (*'We do not offer subjects that do not facilitate university entrance'*) or that they were unwilling to promote subjects *'where pupils may not do as well'* or which might impact on other subjects:

'There is a sense of embarrassment surrounding the Russell League universities' advice; essentially, it attacks indirectly other subjects.'

7.3 Accreditation

Respondents expressed a higher level of satisfaction with the AS and A2 examinations than with GCSE. Eleven state schools and nine independents felt that the examination was generally suitable, although there were criticisms of harsh or inconsistent marking and grading, particularly from the independent sector. The dearth of candidates achieving A* was particularly noted:

'None of our ten German native pupils obtained A*s for A-level German last year.' (I)

A small number also felt that the content of the examinations was 'dry', 'banal' or 'inappropriate' and should be reviewed, and that there should be greater recognition for the level of competence required.

There is perceived to be a widening gap between GCSE and AS which discourages take-up and continuation rates. Several respondents commented that a terminal examination at the end of two years, as proposed by the government, would be preferable.

However, the AS examination was still thought to be useful. In the state sector, there was also support for a 'less academic' alternative to A level for students who wanted to continue with a language.

Very few responding schools used alternative accreditation to A levels for languages in this phase. 8% of responding independent schools, and 2% of state schools, use the International Baccalaureate. 2% of state schools and 4% of independents use Asset Languages accreditation. There were four state schools using NVQ language units at this level and two using the FCSE. Compared to previous years, this represents a very similar picture.

7.4 Key issues identified

- Although overall numbers taking languages post-16 in the state sector remain fairly stable, both French and German continue to decline and French in particular this year, as opposed to German in previous years. In the independent sector, which provides a large proportion of entries for A level languages, there is evidence of overall decline.

- However, independent schools still tend to have larger numbers opting to take languages in the sixth form and better continuation rates from AS to A2. There is also clear evidence of the introduction of a wider range of languages, albeit not necessarily to A level standard. Independent schools are less likely to regard continuation rates in languages as worse than in other subjects.

- There is perceived to be a widening gap between GCSE and AS, which is discouraging take-up by all except committed linguists. Those respondents who commented expressed support for a terminal examination at the end of Year 13 for these students.

- However, there is still a need for a practical intermediary qualification for those taking a language as a complementary subject.

- Only a small number of schools have so far responded to the Russell Group's advice on 'facilitating subjects', and although a proportion say they will do so in future, it is not clear whether this will be at the level of school management or simply by language departments hoping to promote take-up.

8. Additional findings from secondary schools

8.1 Other languages taught

In response to an open question on other languages taught in or outside the curriculum at any key stage, 12 languages other than those prompted were mentioned by state-funded schools, and seven additional languages by independent schools. These were most often taught as extra-curricular options at lunchtimes or after school. In the state sector, the most frequently mentioned languages other than those given were Polish (13 schools), Bengali (six schools) and Portuguese (five schools). In the independent sector, Portuguese and Dutch were the most frequently mentioned additional languages offered, each by four schools. Turkish, Punjabi, Swedish, Cantonese and Modern Greek were mentioned by just two or three schools. Languages mentioned by just a single school were Korean, Danish and British Sign Language.

8.2 Strengths and priorities for improvement

Respondents were asked to identify three aspects of language teaching in their schools which they regarded as strengths, from a prompt list developed from the most recent Ofsted report on languages.[39] Table 8.i shows that the most commonly-reported area of strength in both independent and state schools was the teaching of rules and how to apply them. More than half of respondents from independent schools and more than 40% of state schools thought they had strengths in this area. A high proportion of respondents in both sectors also believed themselves to be strong in meeting the needs of pupils with different levels of progress. More than a third of state schools felt they had strengths in the areas of marking and assessment, compared to a much smaller proportion of independent schools. However, the numbers of independent schools feeling confident about their ability to prepare learners for advanced language learning, and to develop spontaneous speaking in the foreign language were significantly higher than in the state sector.

Table 8.i: Self-reported strengths

	Independent schools	State schools
Developing listening skills in realistic situations	7%	4%
Developing speaking skills/spontaneous talk	21%	9%
Developing more independent reading	5%	5%
Developing extended and creative writing	16%	21%
Improving the teaching of rules and how to apply them	49%	43%
Building intercultural understanding into language teaching	21%	21%
Meeting the needs of pupils with different levels of progress	42%	37%
Improving the use of the target language by teacher and pupils	13%	13%
Improving the use of ICT and authentic language resources	27%	24%
Leadership and management	12%	22%
Creating a varied and interesting curriculum	18%	26%
Developing creative approaches to GCSE	5%	10%
Preparing learning for advaced level language learning	27%	9%
Developing coherent marking schemes and assessment practices	13%	35%
Other	0%	2%

Table 8.ii shows the areas identified by respondents as priorities for improvement in their school. It shows that although the development of speaking skills was deemed to be a strength in more than one in five independent schools (Table 8.i), over half of them would prioritise this as an area for improvement. An even higher proportion of respondents from the state sector (around two thirds) would also prioritise the development of spontaneous speaking skills. These findings echo those reported in the 2011 Language Trends survey. A related area, improving the use of the target language by teachers and pupils, is also highlighted as a priority by more than a third of state school respondents, although by a smaller proportion of independent schools. After speaking, independent schools would prioritise the development of reading and writing, whereas state school respondents give more weight to listening. The most pressing priorities for all respondents are the development of pupils' linguistic skills. Very few prioritise improving leadership and management of languages, or the teaching of rules and how to apply them.

Table 8.ii: Self-reported priorities for improvement

	Independent schools	State schools
Developing listening skills in realistic situations	22%	25%
Developing speaking skills/spontaneous talk	54%	63%
Developing more independent reading	33%	24%
Developing extended and creative writing	27%	22%
Improving the teaching of rules and how to apply them	5%	5%
Building intercultural understanding into language teaching	4%	7%
Meeting the needs of pupils with different levels of progress	14%	20%
Improving the use of the target language by teacher and pupils	22%	37%
Improving the use of ICT and authentic language resources	25%	12%
Leadership and management	0%	2%
Creating a varied and interesting curriculum	7%	13%
Developing creative approaches to GCSE	24%	21%
Preparing learning for advaced level language learning	17%	21%
Developing coherent marking schemes and assessment practices	12%	10%
Other	4%	2%

8.3 Final comments

Respondents from both secondary state and independent schools were asked to comment on any other issues they wished to raise. A wide range of issues were mentioned, many by just one or two respondents adding further commentary to previous issues raised such as the curriculum time allowed for languages, the availability of the second foreign language, transition from KS2 and the issue of whether languages should be made compulsory in KS4.

However, two issues emerged as by far the most significant, namely dissatisfaction with the GCSE examination, and wider attitudes towards language learning. The first emerged strongly in responses from both independent and state schools, and the key points have already been covered elsewhere in this report. One respondent summed up the situation with this plea:

'Would just like there to be a real appraisal of current teaching of languages and a real look at the exams and the practicalities of these and whether they are actually encouraging students to study further or the opposite.' (S)

9. Conclusions

This survey provides the first nationwide evidence on the situation of languages in primary schools since 2008 and shows that, despite anecdotal reports of a reduction in provision during the period of this government's National Curriculum review, language teaching is now a reality in a very high proportion of primary schools. The findings show that previous initiatives were successful in embedding language teaching throughout the sector, and that primary schools have made efforts to maintain this through a period of policy uncertainty.

However, it should be recognised that, though 97% of respondents said they are teaching a language, this may be an overestimation of the national picture, in that primary schools not teaching a language may have been less inclined to reply to the survey. Nonetheless, the survey achieved a high volume of responses and clearly shows that languages are firmly on the agenda in primary schools.

The primary languages initiative is still very new for some schools. There is a very wide spectrum of practice across the sector and a lack of consistency between schools in both their approach to language teaching and the outcomes they achieve. Some schools concentrate solely on oral skills and do not attempt to teach the written language. In some schools language teaching is closely integrated with learning in other curriculum areas; in others it is completely dependent on external providers. In around two thirds of schools, there is at least one member of staff with an A level or degree in the language being taught; however, a small proportion of schools have no staff with any language qualifications. Some schools teach one language, others provide tasters of a range of different languages. One third of primary schools responding to this survey have no arrangements to assess pupil progress. Some schools do not believe that teaching a foreign language is a priority and fear that doing so may conflict with the need to improve literacy and communication skills in English.

There is a strongly expressed need – as well as an all-too-evident implicit need – for further training, support and guidance, particularly for the minority of primary schools without expertise or commitment to the notion of teaching a foreign language. The concerns of those who believe that 'they may do more harm than good' urgently need to be acknowledged and addressed. There is a clear message about the need for further staff development, particularly in their own linguistic skills and in understanding what makes quality provision, whilst at the same time developing their confidence. The newly-published National Curriculum attainment targets for languages in KS2 highlight the need to maintain confidence and enthusiasm to teach languages in primary schools, whilst at the same time addressing these discrepancies in provision and raising standards across the board.

Despite some creditable examples of successful practice, there is generally a low level of interchange between primary and secondary schools, and a disconnect between systems, which means that the vast majority of pupils do not experience continuity and progression in their language learning when they move from KS2 to KS3. Only 11% of state secondary schools have arrangements which allow all pupils to continue with the same language learnt in primary school. Secondary schools cannot cope with the diversity of pupils' language learning experiences in KS2, and it is not on their agendas to do so. A perception of excessive disparity and diversity in language provision in primary schools – and, indeed, the reality in many cases – is leading secondary schools to dismiss the value of what has been learnt and to 'start at the beginning again'. In a number of cases teachers even mention 'unteaching' or 'unpicking' what children have learnt. This is wasteful of public resources,

teachers' efforts and children's time and suggests the need for a much greater push on quality and consistency in primary schools, as well as an obligation on secondary schools to do more to take children's prior learning into account. This needs to be addressed at school management level: language teachers are not those making decisions on timetable organisation and pupil groupings within the school and the evidence from this survey shows that these are frequently decided in ways which teachers do not find conducive to successful language teaching.

Following the introduction of the EBacc as a performance measure, an increasing number of schools report that the number of students taking languages at KS4 has risen. The increases identified in Year 10 uptake in Language Trends 2011 have been sustained; however, they are not resulting in a continuing upward trend – changes were made in 2011 but no further measures have been taken to improve take-up of languages. Among the changes made, many schools have made languages compulsory or highly recommended for some pupils. The figures suggest that most able pupils are now engaging – willingly or not – in language learning. However, there is a dearth of provision for less 'academic' pupils and no incentive for schools to provide this. Therefore, while the EBacc is starting to 'close the gap' for bright pupils in schools with lower attainment overall, or high levels of disadvantage, it may be opening a breach on another front: between 'academic' pupils who are compelled or strongly encouraged to take a language to GCSE and those not destined for EBacc pathways, who, on the evidence of this survey, are often discouraged from doing so.

Responses from the secondary sector show widespread preoccupation with the examination system. There is dissatisfaction in both state and independent sectors with the current GCSE and especially with the system of controlled assessments for speaking and writing, which is seen as demotivating for pupils and detrimental to developing the competences needed to take languages in the sixth form. On the evidence here, teachers would welcome a return to externally assessed final exams at both GCSE and A level. They would like to see changes which measure and encourage steady progression in the development of linguistic skills and their practical use in a range of contexts.

The nature of the GCSE exam, a perceived widening gap between GCSE and AS, and severe or inconsistent marking at A level with a dearth of A* grades, are all seen as the factors behind poor take-up of languages post-16. Although there has been an expansion in numbers taking lesser-taught languages at A level, continuing declines both French and German highlight the vulnerable status of languages as a degree subject. The A level in languages is seen to appeal only to 'committed linguists' and off-putting to those who would like to take a language as a complementary subject. If A levels are to be reformed to become terminal examinations at the end of a two-year course, the AS could perhaps be redeveloped as a practical intermediary qualification for these students.

Secondary language teachers from both sectors believe that their subject suffers from a lack of pupil motivation, exacerbated by wider societal attitudes which undervalue language learning. They would like to see wider recognition of the value of language learning as an essential tool for success in the modern workplace.

Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaires for Language Trends 2012

Appendix B: Sample characteristics

Appendix A: Questionnaires for Language Trends 2012

Language Trends 2012 Primary

Language Trends Primary 2012

The place of languages in the primary curriculum is under close scrutiny following the Government's announcement of its intention to make language learning compulsory for all pupils from age 7 from September 2014. It is vital that policymakers understand the issues faced by schools and teachers, yet there has been no national survey of provision since 2008.

We are very grateful to you therefore for taking part in this survey, which is jointly run by CfBT Education Trust, the Association for Language Learning (ALL) and the Independent Schools' Modern Languages Association (ISMLA). In order to provide some comparability with previous research, the questions are based on those used by the NFER in its surveys of primary schools undertaken for the Department for Education between 2006 and 2008, and on CfBT's audit of primary schools involved in its DfE Languages Support Programme.

The survey will take you around 10 minutes to complete. Your time in doing so is much appreciated.

If you prefer to complete this survey by fax or e-mail or if you would like to phone us with your queries, please contact:

Eva Oliver

CfBT Education Trust, 60 Queens Road

Reading, Berkshire RG1 4BS

by Friday 21 December 2012.

Tel: 0118 902 1676, Fax: 0118 902 1434, E-mail: eoliver@cfbt.com

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

1. Verification questions (we need your school name and Unique Reference Number as printed on the letter to verify the responses)

Full name of your school:

Unique Reference Number:

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

2. Does your school offer pupils the opportunity to learn a foreign language within the curriculum ?

○ Yes

○ No

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

3. Does your school offer pupils the opportunity to learn a foreign language outside class time, including clubs?

◯ Yes

◯ No

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

4. Please indicate, in each column below, the languages your school currently offers in each year group within class time.

	None	Arabic	French	German	Italian	Japanese	Mandarin	Russian	Spanish	Urdu	Latin	Ancient Greek
Nursery	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 4	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 5	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 6	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)

5. Please indicate for each of the year groups approximately how many minutes per week the children are learning languages within class time . If none, please specify.

Nursery	
Year 1	
Year 2	
Year 3	
Year 4	
Year 5	
Year 6	

6. Approximately what percentage of children in each year group currently receives some languages teaching within class time ?

	None	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-99%	100%
Nursery	○	○	○	○	○	○
Year 1	○	○	○	○	○	○
Year 2	○	○	○	○	○	○
Year 3	○	○	○	○	○	○
Year 4	○	○	○	○	○	○
Year 5	○	○	○	○	○	○
Year 6	○	○	○	○	○	○

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

7. Please indicate in each column below the languages your school currently offers in each year group outside class time, including clubs.

	None	Arabic	French	German	Italian	Japanese	Mandarin	Russian	Spanish	Urdu	Latin	Ancient Greek
Nursery	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 4	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 5	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Year 6	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

8. Are there any circumstances preventing the continuity of languages learning? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Children with SEN
- ☐ Children with EAL
- ☐ Children preparing for SATs
- ☐ No, all children are involved in language learning
- ☐ Other (please specify)

9. How does your school monitor and assess progress in languages learning? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ We do not currently assess primary languages
- ☐ Asset Languages - teacher assessment
- ☐ Asset Languages - teacher certification
- ☐ European Languages Portfolio
- ☐ KS2 Framework
- ☐ Assessment materials designed by the school
- ☐ Assessment materials provided by local secondary school
- ☐ Other (please specify)

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

10. Is there any formal liaison between your school and the languages departments in local secondary schools?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Language Trends 2012 Primary

11. What types of contact do you have with local secondary schools in order to support transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3? Please tick all that apply.

- [ ] Local secondary schools offer outreach teaching to my school
- [ ] Local secondary schools offer languages improvement courses/ modules to my school
- [ ] Exchange information informally with local secondary schools (e.g. by e-mail, telephone calls)
- [ ] Joint planning of primary units of work
- [ ] Joint planning of lessons
- [ ] Joint planning of CPD sessions
- [ ] Cross-phase observations
- [ ] Network/ cluster meetings
- [ ] Other (please specify)

12. What documentation forms the basis of your primary languages programme?

- [ ] Commercial schemes of work
- [ ] Schemes of work developed by Local Authority or your school
- [ ] KS2 Framework
- [ ] Non-statutory PoS for KS2
- [ ] Other (please specify)

13. How many teaching staff are there in your school in total and how many are teaching languages?

Total number of teaching staff

Number of staff teaching primary languages

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

14. Who currently provides the teaching of languages? (please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Language subject leaders
- ☐ Primary class teacher
- ☐ Other specialists based in school
- ☐ Peripatetic specialist teacher
- ☐ Teacher from secondary school
- ☐ Teaching assistant or higher level teaching assistant
- ☐ Foreign language assistant
- ☐ Headteacher
- ☐ Volunteer parent or governor
- ☐ AST or SLE advisory teacher
- ☐ Other (please specify)

15. For the teaching staff involved in languages, please supply the following information. When none applies, please enter zero.

How many of them are bilingual/ native speakers?

How many of them have a languages degree or equivalent as their highest qualification in the languages they are teaching?

How many of them have a languages A level or equivalent as their highest qualification in the languages they are teaching?

How many of them have a languages GCSE or equivalent as their highest qualification in the language they are teaching?

16. Does your school have a subject leader for languages?

○ Yes

○ No

If yes, please say who this person is (e.g. class teacher, headteacher, teaching assistant)

17. How do you rate your colleagues'/ staff's confidence to teach the level of languages appropriate for the following key stages?

	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident
Foundation and nursery	○	○	○	○
KS1	○	○	○	○
Lower KS2	○	○	○	○
Upper KS2	○	○	○	○

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

18. How do you rate your colleagues'/ staff's confidence in languages methodology that is appropriate for the following key stages?

	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident
Foundation and nursery	◯	◯	◯	◯
KS1	◯	◯	◯	◯
Lower KS2	◯	◯	◯	◯
Upper KS2	◯	◯	◯	◯

19. How sustainable do you believe your current languages provision is?

◯ Very sustainable

◯ Fairly sustainable

◯ Not very sustainable

◯ Not sustainable

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

20. The list below includes some challenges for languages including those raised in the Ofsted languages report of 2011. Please identify up to THREE aspects of languages teaching in your school that you consider to be strengths and THREE areas in which you think there is room for improvement.

	Area of strength	Priority for improvement
Languages learning strategies	◯	◯
Reading, including grammatical understanding	◯	◯
Writing, including correct use of grammar	◯	◯
Planning for progression across all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)	◯	◯
Assessment of pupils	◯	◯
Using the knowledge of heritage languages that pupils already have	◯	◯
Teaching of intonation and pronunciation	◯	◯
KS2 to KS3 transition	◯	◯
Introducing languages to the school for the first time	◯	◯
Whole-school approach to languages	◯	◯
Staff confidence in languages teaching	◯	◯
Staff expertise in languages teaching	◯	◯
Monitoring teaching quality	◯	◯

Other (please specify)

Language Trends 2012 Primary

21. Has there been any foreign languages provision (including clubs) in your school in the past 5 years?

◯ Yes

◯ No

22. What was the reason for your school ceasing to teach languages, or not starting to teach languages? (tick one on each column)

	Main reason	Secondary reason
Lack of teaching staff	◯	◯
Lack of funding	◯	◯
Lack of external support and resources	◯	◯
Other curriculum priorities	◯	◯
Too difficult to organise	◯	◯
School/ staff were not convinced of importance/ benefit for pupils in the school	◯	◯

Other (please specify)

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

23. Are you aware that the Government intends to make languages learning compulsory for all children from the age of seven from 2014?

◯ Yes

◯ No

24. How confident are you that your school will be able to meet this requirement?

◯ Very confident

◯ Fairly confident

◯ Not very confident

◯ Not at all confident

25. What will be the main challenges for your school in meeting this requirement? Please tick all that apply.

☐ Finding sufficient curriculum time

☐ FInding enough suitably qualified/ trained teachers

☐ Improving languages proficiency and confidence among existing staff members

☐ Funding

☐ Resources for languages (physical/ practical)

☐ Accessing effective training/ CPD support

Other (please specify)

26. What existing strengths could you build on to meet this requirement?

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

27. Please comment further about how you will meet these challenges.

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

28. Please use the space below to provide any further comments regarding languages teaching and learning in your school.

29. Please let us know which one of the following applies.

◯ I am happy for the comments to be attributed to me or my school

◯ I would prefer these comments to remain anonymous

30. We are very keen to showcase good practice in primary languages. If you are happy for us to contact you, please give brief details below. Your details will remain anonymous in our report.

Your name:

Your position:

Your e-mail:

Your phone number:

Best time to phone you:

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Language Trends 2012 Primary

The survey is now complete.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

The results of the survey will be published on the CfBT website in March 2013.

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Language Trends 2012 Secondary

Language Trends Secondary 2012

Thank you very much for taking part in the survey, which is jointly run by CfBT Education Trust, the Association for Language Learning (ALL) and the Independent Schools' Modern Languages Association (ISMLA).

The place of languages in the secondary curriculum continues to be an important matter of public concern and it is vital that policymakers understand the issues faced by schools and teachers.

The survey will take you around 15 minutes to complete. Your time in doing so is much appreciated.

If you prefer to complete this survey by fax or e-mail or if you would like to phone us with your queries, please contact:

Eva Oliver

CfBT Education Trust, 60 Queens Road

Reading, Berkshire RG1 4BS

by Friday 21 December 2012.

Tel: 0118 902 1676, Fax: 0118 902 1434, E-mail: eoliver@cfbt.com

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Language Trends 2012 Secondary

1. Verification questions (we need your school name and Unique Reference Number as printed on the letter to verify the responses)

Full name of your school:

Unique Reference Number:

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Language Trends 2012 Secondary

2. Please indicate, in each column below, the languages your school currently teaches in the curriculum at KS3, KS4, post-16 (if applicable), as well as any languages taught outside curriculum time. *Please tick all that apply.*

	KS3 (Year 7-9)	KS4 (Year 10 and 11)	post-16	outside curriculum time
Arabic	☐	☐	☐	☐
French	☐	☐	☐	☐
German	☐	☐	☐	☐
Italian	☐	☐	☐	☐
Japanese	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mandarin	☐	☐	☐	☐
Russian	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spanish	☐	☐	☐	☐
Urdu	☐	☐	☐	☐
Latin	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ancient Greek	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other language (please specify which language at which stage)

Page 3

Language Trends 2012 Secondary

This page relates to KS4 (Year 10 and 11) only.

3. Is the study of languages compulsory or optional for KS4 (Year 10 and Year 11) pupils in your school?

By compulsory, we mean that school policy is that all pupils must take at least one language (although there may be a small number of exceptions).

◯ Compulsory for all

◯ Optional for all

◯ Optional for some but not all

4. Please give the approximate percentage of pupils currently studying at least one language in Year 10 and Year 11 respectively:

	10% or below	11%-24%	25%-49%	50%-75%	76%-90%	Above 90%
Year 10	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Year 11	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

5. Are any of these pupils studying more than one language?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Page 4

Language Trends 2012 Secondary

This page relates to KS4 (Years 10 and 11) only.

6. Please give the approximate percentage of pupils currently studying more than one language in Year 10 and Year 11 respectively:

	5% or below	6-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	41-50%	51-80%	81-90%	Above 90%
Year 10	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Year 11	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

7. Is the second language studied in curriculum time?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Arrangements vary

If 'arrangements vary', please specify your arrangements in the space below.

Language Trends 2012 Secondary

8. How many teaching hours per week are currently allocated to KS4 students taking a language at GCSE?

9. Do you regard this as adequate?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Please comment further on the time allocation for languages in your school.

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Language Trends 2012 Secondary

This page relates to KS4 (Year 10 and 11) only.

10. Please indicate any changes over the last 3 years in pupil take-up at KS4 for each language offered at your school. Please tick all that apply.

	New	Increase	No change	Decrease	Discontinued
Arabic	○	○	○	○	○
French	○	○	○	○	○
German	○	○	○	○	○
Italian	○	○	○	○	○
Japanese	○	○	○	○	○
Mandarin	○	○	○	○	○
Russian	○	○	○	○	○
Spanish	○	○	○	○	○
Urdu	○	○	○	○	○
Latin	○	○	○	○	○
Ancient Greek	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

11. Overall, has your school experienced an increase or decrease in pupil take-up for languages at KS4 over the last 3 years?

○ Increase (above 10%)

○ Increase (10% or below)

○ No change

○ Decrease (10% or below)

○ Decrease (above 10%)

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12. In your mind, do you think this is a significant change?

◯ Yes

◯ Not really. It's more of a general fluctuation.

◯ I'm not sure. It's too early to say.

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13. Has your school made any changes to languages provision in KS4 following the changes to Performance Tables to reflect EBacc subjects?

◯ Yes

◯ Not for the year 2012/13, but we have plans to do so in the next couple of years

◯ No

If no, please tell us briefly why

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14. If yes, what policies and measures have been introduced in your school? *Please tick all that apply.*

- [ ] MFL has been made compulsory for some pupils
- [ ] MFL has been made compulsory for all pupils
- [ ] Option blocks have been modified to guide some pupils into taking a language
- [ ] Advice to pupils about which subjects to choose has been modified
- [ ] Improved opportunities or guidance for pupils to take a qualification in their 'home' languages
- [ ] Intensive one-year GCSE course for students who previously opted out of languages
- [ ] Other

If other, please specify

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15. If no, please tell us briefly why

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16. Does your school have post-16/ Sixth Form pupils?

◯ Yes

◯ No

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This section relates to post 16/Sixth Form only.

17.

Please indicate any changes over the last 3 years in pupil take-up at post 16/Sixth Form for each language offered at your school. Please tick all that apply.

	New	Increase	No change	Decrease	Discontinued
Arabic	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
French	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
German	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Italian	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Japanese	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mandarin	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Russian	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Spanish	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Urdu	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Latin	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ancient Greek	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Other (please specify which language in which trend)

18. Overall, has your school experienced an increase or decrease in pupil take-up for languages at post 16/Sixth Form over the last 3 years?

◯ Increase

◯ No change

◯ Decrease

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This page relates to post 16/Sixth Form only.

19. How many students at your school, on average, normally enrol for language courses at AS level? (Please indicate approximate numbers for all languages combined.)

◯ Just a few students

◯ 5-10 students

◯ 11-20 students

◯ 21-30 students

◯ More than 30 students

20. What proportion of these normally continue to A2?

◯ More than 90%

◯ 75-89%

◯ Less than 75%

21. How does this continuation rate for languages compare with that for other subjects?

◯ Similar

◯ Worse

◯ Better

Please comment further on the reasons for this

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Language Trends 2012 Secondary

This page relates to post 16/Sixth Form only.

22. Has your school made or is it in the process of making changes to the advice it gives students about A Level choices in the light of debate concerning 'facilitating subjects' for university entry?

◯ Yes (in the box below, please tell us what changes you have made and why)

◯ Not for the year 2012/13, but we have plans to do so in the next couple of years

◯ No (in the box below, please tell us briefly why)

Please tell us why

23. Do you have any further comments on languages in the Sixth Form in your school?

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This section relates to KS3 (Years 7-9) only .

24. Do all (or almost all) pupils study a language in KS3 (Years 7-9)?

◯ Yes

◯ No

25. Have you started receiving significant numbers of pupils in Year 7 who have studied a language at KS2?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Language Trends 2012 Secondary

This page relates to KS3 (Years 7-9) only.

26. Please tell us what arrangements you have to build on these pupils' prior learning to ensure continuity and progression. Please tick all that apply.

☐ We are in contact with our feeder schools in order to exchange information on prior learning

☐ We are involved in joint planning with our feeder schools

☐ We have adapted our Year 7 curriculum or scheme of work to build on pupils' learning in KS2

☐ Pupils are tested upon entry and set according to ability and prior knowledge

☐ Pupils are placed in groups later in the year, e.g. after some introductory or taster sessions

☐ All pupils are able to continue with the same language that they have learned in KS2

☐ All pupils begin a new language in Year 7

☐ We cater for individual pupils' needs through differentiated activities

☐ No special measures have been taken

Please provide further details briefly

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Language Trends 2012 Secondary

This page relates to KS3 only.

27. Have there been any of the following changes to languages provision at KS3 over the last few years in your school?

Please tick all that apply.

☐ One or more languages have been introduced

☐ One or more languages have been discontinued

☐ Accreditation has been introduced

☐ Weekly lesson time has been reduced for KS3 languages

☐ KS3 has been shortened to two years

☐ Modification to KS3 languages provision or teaching approaches in order to ensure higher numbers of pupils gain the EBacc

☐ Lower-ability pupils have been disapplied

☐ Other

☐ No, there has been no change

Please specify

[text box]

28. Please use the space below if you have any other further details/comments about language provision at KS3 in your school.

[text box]

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29. Do you currently offer any other accreditation for languages apart from GCSE/ A level (e.g. IGCSE, Asset Languages, NVQ, FCSE, IB, etc.) at KS3, KS4 or post 16?

○ Yes

○ No

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30. Please indicate the other accreditation for languages you offer and at which stage.

Please tick all that apply.

	KS3	KS4	Post-16
Asset Languages	☐	☐	☐
Entry level certificate	☐	☐	☐
FCSE	☐	☐	☐
IGCSE	☐	☐	☐
International Baccalaureate	☐	☐	☐
NVQ languages	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐
Pre-U	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify which accreditation at which stage, including GCSE, A-level and any other types of accreditation you offer, have offered or would like to offer.)

31.

Please estimate the total proportion of the whole year group (as a percentage) following these qualifications.

In Year 7	
In Year 8	
In Year 9	
In Year 10	
In Year 11	
In Year 12	
In Year 13	

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32. Has the provision or take-up of alternative accreditation for languages been affected by recent changes to Performance Tables in relation to the EBacc?

◯ Yes

◯ No

If yes, please tell us briefly how

33. Please comment on the Government's proposals for substituting GCSEs with new English Baccalaureate exams in relation to their impact on languages. What changes would you most like to see brought in?

34. Please use the space below to give us your views on the accreditation available for languages (including GCSE and A level).

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35. The list below includes some challenges for languages, including those raised in the Ofsted languages report of 2011. Please identify THREE aspects of languages teaching in your school that you consider to be strengths and three areas for improvement.

Please tick NO MORE THAN THREE IN EACH COLUMN.

	Area of strength	Priority for improvement
Developing listening skills in realistic situations	◯	◯
Developing speaking skills, esp. in spontaneous talk	◯	◯
Developing more independent reading	◯	◯
Developing extended and creative writing	◯	◯
Improving the teaching of rules and how to apply them (e.g. sound-spelling links, grammar)	◯	◯
Building intercultural understanding in language teaching	◯	◯
Meeting the needs of students with different levels of progress	◯	◯
Improving the use of the target language both by the teacher and by pupils	◯	◯
Improving the use of ICT and authentic language resources	◯	◯
Leadership and management	◯	◯
Creating a varied and interesting curriculum	◯	◯
Developing creative approaches to GCSE	◯	◯
Preparing learners for advanced level language learning	◯	◯
Developing coherent marking schemes and assessment practices	◯	◯
Other	◯	◯

If other, please specify

Language Trends 2012 Secondary

36. Would your school welcome languages being made a compulsory subject at KS4?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Not sure

37. What are/ would be the main challenges for your school in providing languages for all pupils at KS4? Please tick all that apply.

☐ Timetabling

☐ Supply of suitably qualified/ trained language teachers

☐ Suitable accreditation

☐ Funding and resources

☐ Motivation of students

☐ Views of senior management

☐ Buy-in from teachers of other subjects

☐ Views of parents

☐ Languages are already compulsory at KS4 in our school

Other (please specify)

38. Are there any other issues that you wish to raise in relation to the current situation of language teaching in your school and nationally?

39. Please let us know your preference

◯ I am happy for the comments to be attributed to me or my school

◯ I would prefer these comments to remain anonymous

40. We are very keen to showcase good practice in language learning. If you are happy for us to contact you for further discussion, please give brief details below. Your details will remain anonymous in our report.

Your name

Your position

Your email

Your telephone number

Best time to phone you

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The survey is now complete.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

The results of the survey will be published on the CfBT website in March 2013.

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Appendix B:
Sample characteristics

		Independent						State-funded Secondary						State-funded Primary					
		Responses		Sample		Base		Responses		Sample		Base		Responses		Sample		Base	
Region	North East	6	4%	15	3%	21	2%	18	5%	49	5%	141	5%	50	7%	156	5%	701	5%
	North West	17	11%	54	10%	94	11%	44	12%	141	14%	430	15%	140	20%	477	16%	2337	16%
	Yorkshire & the Humber	10	7%	41	8%	66	8%	40	11%	115	11%	302	10%	111	16%	362	12%	1637	11%
	East of England	24	16%	60	11%	99	11%	35	10%	103	10%	317	11%	55	8%	277	9%	1455	10%
	East Midlands	4	3%	33	6%	52	6%	34	10%	79	8%	238	8%	67	10%	311	10%	1404	10%
	West Midlands	9	6%	52	10%	87	10%	39	11%	130	13%	347	12%	51	7%	324	11%	1522	11%
	Inner London	13	9%	41	8%	71	8%	9	3%	52	5%	137	5%	14	2%	140	5%	643	5%
	Outer London	9	6%	58	11%	95	11%	28	8%	89	9%	264	9%	39	6%	222	7%	931	7%
	South East	42	28%	125	23%	186	22%	57	16%	136	14%	446	15%	103	15%	431	14%	2006	14%
	South West	16	11%	61	11%	90	10%	53	15%	109	11%	286	10%	62	9%	328	11%	1604	11%
Performance Quintile	A - low	15	10%	105	19%	158	18%	62	17%	183	18%	581	20%	128	18%	610	20%	2895	20%
	B	21	14%	105	19%	159	18%	65	18%	185	18%	580	20%	126	18%	554	18%	2664	19%
	C	34	23%	95	18%	158	18%	74	21%	221	22%	583	20%	130	19%	567	19%	2673	19%
	D	34	23%	101	19%	158	18%	72	20%	209	21%	580	20%	158	23%	593	20%	2749	19%
	E - high	44	29%	100	19%	160	19%	84	24%	205	20%	583	20%	138	20%	629	21%	2882	20%
	NA	2	1%	34	6%	68	8%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	12	2%	75	2%	377	3%
%FSM eligible Quintile	A - low							88	25%	196	20%	582	20%	154	22%	604	21%	2751	20%
	B							83	23%	192	19%	576	20%	144	21%	566	19%	2728	20%
	C							75	21%	216	22%	575	20%	143	20%	591	20%	2719	20%
	D							60	17%	190	19%	569	20%	141	20%	571	20%	2722	20%
	E - high							51	14%	208	21%	574	20%	120	17%	587	20%	2729	20%

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