

Primary Languages

The national picture - policy

The introduction of statutory languages in Key Stage 2 from September 2011 was part of the proposed new primary curriculum, which was removed from the *Children, Schools and Families Bill* in May 2009.

The future shape of the primary curriculum and the statutory status of languages will depend on the policies of the new government. No assumptions about the future should be made as we do not know what position languages have in the new education policies.

The government is currently embarking on a process of consultation about and review of the National Curriculum for primary and secondary KS3. In the meantime, the **non-statutory entitlement** remains current Government policy until decided otherwise and the **KS2 framework** and other existing guidance are still in place and still available for teachers to use to support classroom teaching

The national picture - practice

Primary Modern Foreign Languages: Survey Of National Implementation Of Full Entitlement To Language Learning At Key Stage 2

(NFER report, DCSF-RR127, July 2009)

- 92% of primary schools have started teaching a language (increase of 22% since 2006)
- 69% are teaching languages across the whole of KS2 (increase of 35%)
- 90% are confident that the current provision is sustainable (increase of 26%)
- Over two thirds of schools have accessed free training; most are using the KS2 framework
- Main aims of primary languages are: enthusiasm for language learning, speaking and listening skills, understand other cultures
- Time allocation averages 40 minutes a week
- Teaching is most commonly carried out by class teachers

It also noted that the main challenges remaining were:

- lack of staff knowledge
- assessment
- transition to secondary school

Download full report:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-RR127>

Languages Learning at KS2 report (Open University et al, DCSF-RR198, January 2010)

- Heads and teachers were committed and enthusiastic because languages enriched the curriculum and made a contribution to personal, social and literacy development in English
- Pupils were enthusiastic and motivated
- Training (funded) had been significant in the development of provision. Schools have an expectation that funding will be maintained
- Focus mostly on developing listening and speaking skills

It also noted that:

- children can achieve Y6 outcomes after 4 years of language learning but writing remains the most challenging area
- there was little evidence of intercultural understanding objectives being met
- whole school curriculum planning and assessment remain areas for development

Download full report:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-RR198>

Modern Languages Achievement and Challenge: 2007-2010

(Ofsted, January 2011, No. 100042)

Key Findings

- Achievement was good or outstanding in just under six out of ten of the primary schools visited. Pupils made most progress in speaking and listening because this was where most emphasis was placed in lessons. Although there were good examples of systematically planned reading, these were rare and even more so for writing.
- Pupils' enjoyment of language learning in the primary schools visited was very clear. They were usually very enthusiastic, looked forward to lessons, understood why it was important to learn another language and were developing a good awareness of other cultures.
- Teaching was good in two thirds of the 235 lessons observed. Despite some occasional shortcomings in pronunciation and intonation, primary teachers' subject knowledge and their teaching methods were predominantly good.
- Senior leaders were very committed to introducing modern languages into primary schools. The initiative featured well in whole-school planning with a clear rationale for how and when it would be taught and by whom. Weaknesses lay in assessment, and the monitoring and evaluation of provision, often because leaders did not feel competent enough to judge language provision.

Download full report:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Modern-languages-achievement-and-challenge-2007-2010>

Next steps

The Curriculum Review - message from ALL (Association for Language Learning)

11 February 2011

“The Department for Education has announced the [review of the primary and secondary National Curriculum in England](#) - and wants to hear your opinions about what is taught in schools.

This is a real opportunity to get languages into a stronger position in primary and secondary schools.

*The Review will be in two phases. The first phase gives us a chance to say **whether languages should be in the core National Curriculum** and if so **what would need to be put in place to support this**. Phase 2 (early 2012) will allow us to **contribute to the discussion on the content of the core subjects**.*

ALL will have regular monthly meetings with the DfE during the Review period and this is an opportunity for us to demonstrate solid support from the community for languages as an important subject across Key Stages.

*We are therefore encouraging all of our members to contribute to the simple online consultation on the Curriculum Review. **It's crucial that as many of you as possible respond to the [online questionnaire](#).**”*

Association for Language Learning: <http://www.all-languages.org.uk/>