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Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Making languages count

A national modern foreign languages strategy



Consultation

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Making languages count

A national modern foreign languages strategy

- Audience** Bodies concerned with education and training in Wales, including Chief Executives and Directors of Education in County and County Borough Councils, Headteachers and Governing Bodies of maintained schools, Professional Associations, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Higher Education Institutions, Further Education Institutions, Fforwm, work-based learning providers, employer organisations and forums, Funky Dragon, Sector Skills Councils, Careers Wales, CILT Cymru, Welsh Language Board, Estyn, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.
- Overview** This document consults on a draft strategy for the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages. The strategy refreshes and will supersede *Languages Count*, the Welsh Assembly Government's national modern foreign language strategy published in 2002. Modern foreign languages are defined in the national curriculum for Wales as European or world languages such as Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish and Urdu.
- Action required by 26 June 2009** Responses to this draft consultation document should be sent by Friday 26 June 2009 to Chris Roderick at the address given below or e-mailed to CSB@wales.gsi.gov.uk
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- Additional copies** Additional copies may be obtained from the address above. This document is also available on the internet at: www.wales.gov.uk/consultations and can be copied from there.
- Related documents** *One Wales; The Learning Country: Vision into Action; Skills that Work for Wales – A Skills and Employment Strategy*



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Ministerial Foreword

In *Languages Count*, the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for modern foreign languages, we set out a very clear message. In an increasingly global society learning a foreign language empowers individuals, promotes cultural understanding and diversity and helps build an outward-looking economy equipped to create wealth.

As a bilingual nation we start from a unique position. We provide education through the medium of English and Welsh and the place of both languages is embedded in our education and training system. Our young people therefore have a head start in the development of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are at the heart of language learning and can be readily applied to wider European and world languages. We have worked with partners across Wales to build on our strengths, underline the value of skills in a foreign language and extend opportunities to learn a foreign language.

As a result an increasing number of learners are being introduced to a foreign language while in primary school and we have embedded opportunities to develop or refresh language skills in the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification. In addition, the number studying foreign languages in the higher education sector has steadily increased and we have supported employers in using languages to improve their competitiveness. Through our partnership with CILT Cymru, the National Centre for Languages, support and advice has been provided to practitioners and business in improving access to language skills and the quality of provision.

Making languages count provides a timely opportunity to take stock of achievements and identify areas for improvement. It sets out how we plan to engage learners, promote positive perceptions of the value of modern foreign languages and build on the skills developed in secondary, and increasingly in primary schools. Our approach is based on partnership at all levels, recognising that languages count – economically, culturally and personally. *Making languages count* is therefore targeted at those who provide learning opportunities and those who have need of and make use of foreign language skills. I would encourage you to read and provide feedback on this draft strategy so that, together, we can provide the skills that will open doors for learners and business across Wales and the world.



Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Executive summary

In *The Learning Country: Vision into Action* a commitment was given to refresh *Languages Count*, the Welsh Assembly Government's modern foreign languages strategy in the light of recent developments. *Making languages count* is a draft strategy that sets out the progress made and invites views on next steps. It identifies how we propose to build on strengths and, working with partners, address areas for improvement in a range of settings, namely the learning of modern foreign languages in primary and secondary schools, 14–19 settings, business, further and higher education and adult community learning.

Early language learning in primary schools

It is recognised that learning a modern foreign language from an early age is a positive experience that enhances the development of language skills and enriches the curriculum and pupils' learning. Currently, modern foreign languages can be offered by a primary school on a non-statutory and voluntary basis. In line with the commitment in *Languages Count* we have piloted provision of a modern foreign language in 118 primary schools working in most instances with partner secondary schools. The initial evaluation was very positive and we propose therefore to continue to extend opportunities for pupils in primary schools aged 7–11 to learn a modern foreign language. Proposals for further work include:

- consultation on whether the provision of a modern foreign language should be a statutory requirement at Key Stage 2 as part of wider consultation to inform the next review of the school curriculum
- further development of the current raft of primary schools working with CILT Cymru to offer a modern foreign language as Innovator schools
- provision of resources in the Better Schools Fund for local authorities to support additional primary schools in offering a modern foreign language
- specialist advice and guidance by CILT Cymru to support primary schools in offering a modern foreign language.

The Key Stage 3 modern foreign language experience in secondary schools

The learning experience at Key Stage 3 is central in both developing skills and knowledge and encouraging pupils to continue with a modern foreign language in Key Stage 4 and onwards. All maintained schools are required to provide a modern foreign language at Key Stage 3. The strategy sets out proposals to continue to improve the quality of provision for modern foreign languages and includes:

- production of guidance by Estyn on best practice in curriculum planning and classroom practice
- extension of the current Compact arrangements to offer local authorities support from CILT Cymru in reviewing and improving the learning of modern foreign languages
- identification and support for the provision of community languages and extending opportunities for a wider range of languages to be taught
- promotion of modern foreign languages as an integral part of international links.

Modern foreign languages in 14–19 Learning Pathways

We want to encourage more 14–19-year-olds to continue to study a modern foreign language by developing a range of flexible learning pathways that will add to and complement current opportunities and qualifications. Proposals for further work include:

- developing units in a range of languages that can be delivered within the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification and receive accreditation for learners' achievements
- support for schools and colleges to identify and pilot a wider range of modern foreign language qualification routes including use of NVQ language units
- partnership with Careers Wales to make best use of education business links to promote the value of foreign languages in planning career and learning options.

Language skills for higher education, lifelong learning and employability

Based on the evidence that access to foreign language skills can be an important component in business competitiveness, we propose to continue to extend opportunities to develop such skills in a range of settings and, in particular, higher and further education and adult community learning. Proposals for further work include:

- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to work with schools and colleges of further education to establish a pan-Wales network to promote the value of modern foreign languages in career planning
- mapping the support and advice provided to business in the use of modern foreign languages to improve business competitiveness
- work with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to continue to extend the range of opportunities for students to study a modern foreign language
- making best use of European Commission funded programmes to develop and practice foreign language skills
- support for adult community learning providers to identify and disseminate good practice in the teaching of modern foreign languages.

The consultation period ends on 26 June 2009. Responses should be sent to:

Chris Roderick
Curriculum Support Branch
Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
Welsh Assembly Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ.

It should be noted that the responses to the consultation will be made public. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the author are published along with the response. If you do not wish to be identified as the author of your response please state this expressly in your response.

1. Introduction

A good knowledge of other languages builds bridges and promotes understanding between cultures.¹

Background

1.1. *Languages Count*, the national strategy for the promotion of modern foreign languages (MFL) in Wales was published in April 2002. The strategy set out an agenda for modern foreign language learning that has been taken forward by the Welsh Assembly Government with partners across Wales over the ensuing years.

1.2. In *The Learning Country: Vision into Action* a commitment was given to refresh the strategy in the light of recent developments. *Making languages count* is therefore, a draft strategy that sets out the progress made and invites views on next steps. It identifies how we propose to build on strengths and, working with partners, address areas for improvement in a range of settings. In particular, it looks to ensure that learning capitalises on the opportunities presented by the Foundation Phase, the revised national curriculum for modern foreign languages, the non-statutory *Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales*, 14–19 Learning Pathways and the programme of work set out in *Skills that Work for Wales*.

1.3. One of the major outcomes from *Languages Count* was the establishment of CILT Cymru, the National Centre for Languages in Wales, in 2002 with support from the Welsh Assembly Government. Using its expertise in the learning of foreign languages, CILT Cymru has worked with partners to drive forward the agenda for action set out in *Languages Count*. CILT Cymru therefore engages with all those concerned with the learning and teaching of languages in both the education and business sectors.

1.4. We have come a long way since the launch of *Languages Count*. Modern foreign language learning has been successfully developed in many primary schools. In the secondary school sector since 2002 teacher assessments of the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or more in a modern foreign language at the age of 14 have improved year on year. This is testimony to the work undertaken by practitioners in schools to improve the learning and teaching of modern foreign languages and the advice and support provided by local authorities and CILT Cymru.

1. European Commissioner for Multilingualism Leonard Orban, 31 January 2008.

1.5. There is, therefore, much to build on including the increasing numbers of pupils moving into secondary education with language skills, the wider range of language qualifications available in Wales, the study of a modern foreign language by 14–19-year-olds as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate, a healthy take-up of modern foreign languages in higher education, and an increasing awareness of the importance of languages for business and lifelong learning.

1.6. Set against this, the overall level of attainment of 14-year-olds in modern foreign languages is still lower than for most other subjects. In addition, while the work undertaken by CILT Cymru through its Compact scheme with secondary schools and local authorities has shown what can be done to improve take up of languages by 14–19-year-olds, the overall percentage of 15-year-olds entering for a foreign language GCSE has fallen across Wales since 2002. Progress has therefore been uneven and there remain areas for development. These include a need to continue to develop the content and focus of programmes in secondary schools and further and higher education and to raise students' awareness of the added value of languages in career and further study pathways.

Aims of the revised strategy

1.7. Learning a language is a skill for life. Languages contribute to learners' awareness of themselves as part of a global society and promote understanding of others. In the world of work knowledge of languages contributes to economic growth and intercultural understanding in the business environment. In the revised strategy we aim to continue to emphasise the importance of language learning and to encourage the development of language skills across a range of settings.

1.8. The strategy aims to:

- extend opportunities for pupils to learn a modern foreign language while in primary school
- provide support and advice so that schools can enhance the learning and teaching of modern foreign languages in the first three years of secondary education
- increase the opportunities for 14–19-year-olds to study a modern foreign language through the creation of pathways developed by schools and colleges working in partnership with business, higher education and other stakeholders

- support businesses that wish to improve their competitiveness by increasing their foreign language capability
- improve opportunities to learn a modern foreign language in adult community learning.

1.9. This updated strategy is, therefore, for all stakeholders concerned with the promotion and development of modern foreign language skills, in particular in schools, colleges, higher education institutions and for business. It complements the European Commission's first comprehensive policy on promoting multilingualism, published in September 2008 which encompasses the economic, social and cultural aspects of languages in a lifelong learning perspective.

1.10. You are asked to read the strategy and respond to the consultation questions. Following the completion of the consultation period and, in the light of views received, the strategy will be finalised and published.

2. Early language learning in primary schools

My son is looking forward to going to high school to continue French. He has been inspired!²

2.1. Learning a language from an early age is increasingly recognised as a positive experience which enriches the curriculum and pupils' learning. We want to build on the good practice and early language skills already established in a large number of primary schools so that as many pupils as possible have a positive experience of modern foreign languages in primary school and develop language skills that they can build on in secondary schools in Key Stage 3.

2.2. In the Foundation Phase (aged 3–7 years) children enter English or Welsh-medium schools and settings and are immersed in language experiences and activities through their learning in Language, Literacy and Communication Skills. They are helped to develop an awareness of Wales as a country with two languages and to show positive attitudes to speakers of languages other than English and Welsh. In schools and settings where English is the main medium of communication, children's Welsh language skills are progressively developed throughout the Phase. Language skills learned in one language support the development of skills and knowledge in another language. Pupils build on these language skills in both English and Welsh in Key Stage 2 and therefore have a head start in the development of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are at the heart of language learning and can be readily applied to acquisition of wider European and world languages.

2.3. The challenge that the Welsh Assembly Government set itself in *Languages Count* was to work with partners across Wales to capitalise on this base. In particular, since the launch of *Languages Count* work has been undertaken to develop practical approaches to the learning of a modern foreign language in primary schools that complement and enhance the statutory curriculum and benefit pupils when they move to secondary education. This chapter sets out the achievements to date, identifies areas for improvement and outlines next steps.

Modern foreign languages in primary schools

2.4. A central element of CILT Cymru's remit has been the development and management of a programme of work with schools and local authorities on effective and flexible approaches to the provision of a foreign language for pupils in Key Stage 2 – those

² *Evaluation of the Key Stage 2 Modern Foreign Language Pilot Projects in Wales 2003–06* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007).

aged 7–11 years. This work was a central feature of *Languages Count* and to date:

- 118 primary schools in Wales have been involved in the pilot work, including 21 school clusters, where a secondary school and its feeder primary schools are working in partnership
- nine of the 21 clusters are Welsh-medium schools
- 30–45 minutes of language learning are provided per week in the majority of schools
- 19 of the clusters taught French and four of these also taught either German or Spanish
- one cluster taught only Spanish and one cluster taught only German
- 93 per cent of the parents who responded to the evaluating team in 2006 supported the introduction of modern foreign languages in primary schools.

2.5. The schools involved in this work have received a range of support from CILT Cymru including training, advice and guidance. This work is ongoing and the initial stage was subject to external evaluation in 2006³. The key findings published early in 2007 were very positive and concluded that the pilots had successfully widened pupils' experience and enthusiasm for languages. Key findings from the evaluation include:

- school staff, parents and pupils agreed that the introduction of a modern foreign language at Key Stage 2 was a worthwhile addition to the statutory curriculum
- pupils became more aware of other cultures and peoples
- there was a positive effect on language skills in English and Welsh
- having a degree of fluency in two languages (English and Welsh) was seen to provide an advantage in learning a third or fourth language
- the pilot supported effective transition links between primary and secondary schools and encouraged a positive approach to languages by pupils when they arrived at secondary school

3. *Evaluation of the Key Stage 2 Modern Foreign Language Pilot Projects in Wales 2003–06* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008).

- the pilot successfully engaged both boys and girls, including pupils with additional learning needs
- there was a high degree of enthusiasm for the project from teachers, pupils, parents and school governors.

2.6. The evaluation, therefore, confirmed that pupils in primary schools enjoyed learning a foreign language and made significant strides in developing the skills that provide a basis for their language learning in Key Stage 3 and beyond. **We will continue to support the current pilots until the end of the 2008–09 school year** to enable a further evaluation to assess the impact of MFL learning in primary schools and to track the first full cohort of pupils studying a foreign language in primary school through secondary education up to 16 years of age. This will provide data on the impact of the pilots on take up of modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4 and the qualifications achieved on completing compulsory education.

2.7. Decisions about a possible statutory status for modern foreign languages at Key Stage 2 will be informed by the detailed evidence from the evaluation. The pilot was not sufficiently advanced to be considered as part of the new curriculum introduced from September 2008. **We will, therefore, consult on whether the provision of a modern foreign language should be a statutory requirement at Key Stage 2 as part of wider consultation to inform the next review of the school curriculum.** This will ensure that any decision on statutory status can be considered by practitioners and other key partners in the light of the overall curriculum requirements.

Maintaining the momentum

2.8. While decisions on statutory status for modern foreign languages at Key Stage 2 needs to be informed by outcomes from the pilot we are encouraged by the evidence from the pilot schools that a foreign language can be delivered effectively on a voluntary and non-statutory basis. We propose therefore to take action to provide support and extend opportunities for primary schools to offer a modern foreign language.

A non-statutory framework for learning and teaching languages in the primary setting

2.9. As a first step we have already put in place a non-statutory framework for learning and teaching of modern foreign languages in a primary setting⁴. Building on the experience of teachers and schools that took part in the pilot, we have developed, through the recent national curriculum review, a programme of learning that can be adapted to local circumstances and provide a platform for the further development of skills in Key Stage 3. The framework can be used by schools to review and develop provision. It also provides a clear context for teachers intending to develop language provision in the future.

2.10. The structure of the framework reflects the structure of the revised Key Stage 3 Programme of Study to support transition. It also reflects the structure of the revised programmes of study for English and Welsh to reinforce common skills and activities for language learning across three languages. We have supported the delivery of the framework through the publication of guidance, which includes a DVD (*Modern foreign languages Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3*). This guidance also highlights the potential of language learning to enhance and link with other areas of the curriculum, which was a strong feature of the pilot.

A cross-curricular approach

In Geography, pupils compare their local area with a similar area in France. The school takes advantage of existing links with a French primary school to get information about France and exchange information with peers (photos, maps, letters, pamphlets etc). Themes are also linked to assemblies and religious education. For example in a topic on farming, pupils learnt the names of farm animals in French and wrote a prayer in three languages for the Harvest Festival. Children are given opportunities to explore the culture and traditions of the foreign country and to compare celebrations in France and Wales. In PE, they take part in games and activities with pupils giving and following instructions in French.

4. Appendix KS2, *Modern foreign languages in the National Curriculum for Wales*, (DCELLS).

Promoting triple literacy

2.11. It was encouraging to note that a high proportion of practitioners, parents and pupils contacted as part of the evaluation of the pilots, expressed the view that learning a third or fourth language had a significant benefit on their learning of English and Welsh. It is important therefore that we make best use of the skills developed in learning English and Welsh.

2.12. We will therefore continue to encourage schools to consider how the provision of a modern foreign language can benefit from, and complement, the ongoing development of skills in English and Welsh. There is already guidance on this area, often referred to as triple literacy skills, in *Making the Link: Language learning 5–14* (ACCAC, 2003). When first published this guidance broke new ground by covering English, Welsh and modern foreign languages in order to support common approaches and concepts.

Triple literacy in action

One primary school looked at the programmes of study for English and Welsh second language and the scheme of work for French and developed a coordinated approach towards teaching themes such as weather and days of the week so that during lessons children could be encouraged to make comparisons between the languages and recognise similarities.

Language teaching methodology was also a focus with the Year 6 class teacher and the visiting French peripatetic teacher observing each other, team teaching and sharing language teaching resources. They also drew up a list of common grammatical terminology and developed trilingual language displays in classrooms and communal areas around the school.

Supporting local provision

2.13. We will build on the experience of the pilot work to date and CILT Cymru's work in providing a national programme of advice, support and training for schools and LEAs to help primary schools to extend opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to learn a foreign language. We now have over 100 primary schools mostly working with partner secondary schools to provide a foreign language. We want to capitalise on their experience, skills and expertise to support

other schools to make similar provision. **We will therefore make funding available to CILT Cymru to establish a network of Innovator schools with experience of provision of modern foreign languages at Key Stage 2.** Funding will be targeted at continuing to develop modern foreign language provision and sharing of experience and practice with others. In most instances Innovator schools will work in clusters with a secondary school partner with the aim of establishing at least one secondary primary cluster in each local authority area.

2.14. The advice provided by CILT Cymru and practice in Innovator schools will provide a platform for local authorities and schools to extend opportunities for the learning of foreign languages. **To underpin this we will provide financial support through the Better Schools Fund for local authorities to extend the number of primary schools making provision for foreign language learning in Key Stage 2.**

2.15. CILT Cymru has played a central role in guiding and supporting the work to date and has produced guidance materials, including the comprehensive pack of information *Getting Started* that draws on the practice and lessons flowing from the pilots. The guidance includes advice on delivery of language learning, development of cluster work and building on language skills on transfer to secondary education. The materials are widely available and are supported by a programme of specialist INSET from CILT Cymru as requested by clusters and LEAs.

2.16. Beyond this we recognise the need to provide opportunities for practitioners in the primary sector to develop or refresh their languages skills. Many HEIs already provide opportunities for undergraduates to complete language modules as an additional element of their course of study. **We will therefore work with providers of Initial Teacher Training to extend opportunities for those undertaking teacher training for the primary sector to develop or refresh their foreign language skills.**

2.17. It will also be important to extend opportunities for practitioners in the primary sector to improve their foreign languages skills. This might include short periods of immersion training and making use of opportunities for language learning provided by interactive ICT based packages. **As a first step and in partnership with the British Council we will provide funding for**

practitioners in primary schools to visit their target language country as part of a package of professional development that will draw together a short immersion course in the development of language skills with the forging of international links between institutions.

Supporting transition from primary to secondary school

2.18. The pilot work has demonstrated the very positive contribution that the learning of modern foreign languages can make to improving the experience of pupils in making the transition from primary to secondary school. In particular the schools have made good use of the guidance published initially by ACCAC *Crossing Bridges: Using languages to support transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3*. The guidance provided examples of good practice in primary and secondary schools working together effectively to develop language skills and to support effective transition. The practice developed through the pilot in developing transition arrangements has ensured that pupils were able to build quickly and effectively on their modern foreign language skills and knowledge on entering Year 7.

2.19. Transition activities identified in both *Crossing Bridges* and recent pilot work included:

- cultural or European days either inviting Year 6 pupils to the secondary school or held in the primary school with secondary input
- fortnightly transition days when Year 6 pupils spend the day at the secondary school and have lessons in different subjects for example French, English, Welsh and sport
- Year 6 visits to the secondary school to play language games, learn songs and use ICT.

2.20. Where primary schools are delivering a modern foreign language in Key Stage 2 we will encourage schools to include this in the Transition Plan agreed with their partner secondary school and also to share their experience with other primary schools in the local cluster looking to make similar provision.

A language-focused transition day

One cluster organised several language-focused activities during a day for Year 6 pupils at the secondary school. These activities were organised across a range of departments, including a lesson on the weather using foreign languages, singing in French with the music department, sporting activities through the medium of French with the PE department, introduction to language software with the ICT department and finally a treasure hunt to help the pupils find their bearings ready for the new term in Year 7.

I really like it that I know the language teachers from last year. They've really helped me to settle into my new school

The international perspective

2.21. Pilot schools also reported that the provision of a modern foreign language provided opportunities for schools to introduce a wider international perspective to learning. Many schools have a range of international links often developed with support from the European Commission's Comenius initiative. Such links provide a fund of opportunities for language learning to contribute to projects that enrich the curriculum, promote intercultural awareness and improve motivation. **In partnership with the British Council Wales we will develop and promote opportunities for primary schools to develop international links that incorporate the use of a modern foreign language.**

Growing up in a new Europe

A school in North Wales has established, through a Comenius project, links with schools in Germany, Sweden and Ireland. The main themes of the project were the promotion of intercultural awareness through exchanging information about traditions, languages and culture. The pupils worked on a language CD by providing words in their own language on different themes and recording how the words sound. The Welsh school contributed in both English and in Welsh. As part of the project each class wrote to a class in one of the partner schools. Although the working language of the partnership was English, the pupils introduced phrases from other languages into their writing.

2.22. The focus of language learning in most primary schools will be initially on the languages of the European Community. However, modern Wales is a partner in an increasingly global economy. In addition, there is an opportunity to reflect and build on the many languages now spoken in local communities so that young speakers of languages other than English and Welsh are made welcome and their language is valued in the curriculum. Incorporating other languages into school life enables all pupils to benefit from this diversity and develops pupils' intercultural understanding. **We will provide support for primary schools to explore the potential for the provision of a wider range of languages.** The emphasis will be on the drawing together of clusters of primary and secondary schools to provide continuity in learning.

Valuing all languages

A Roman Catholic primary school in Cardiff provides a welcoming and inclusive environment for newly arrived Polish pupils. The school actively encourages parents and members of the Polish community to play a full role in school-life and children's learning. The school provides a lunch-time club where Polish songs, dances and games are learnt by any interested pupils and celebration of the school's diversity is evident throughout the curriculum. Pupils and parents have the opportunity to participate in various events organised by the school, including: Polish carol singing; Polish dancing in the annual 'Stars in their Eyes' show and a Polish stall at school fetes.

3. The Key Stage 3 modern foreign language experience in secondary schools

As students progress through their education at school, a modern foreign language will be of benefit to their personal and educational development in a variety of ways.⁵

3.1. Pupils' experience of learning a modern foreign language on transfer to secondary school and throughout Key Stage 3 is a crucial phase in learning. *Languages Count* identified the need to improve the quality of provision for modern foreign languages in the first three years of secondary education both to raise attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 and to encourage more young people to continue with language learning beyond the age of 14. A wide range of innovative approaches to learning a modern foreign language in Key Stage 3 have been developed by teachers, often with the support of CILT Cymru and other partners. We want to build on this innovation so that the Key Stage 3 experience in secondary schools is motivating, challenging and encourages pupils to continue with their study of a modern foreign language into Key Stage 4 and beyond.

Aiming for Excellence in modern foreign languages

3.2. Alongside publication of *Languages Count*, Estyn produced guidance for secondary schools, *Aiming for Excellence in Modern Foreign Languages* that provided practical advice on improving the quality of learning and teaching at Key Stage 3 with detail on the characteristics of good teaching. The guidance was designed for use by practitioners in schools and also underlined the value added by the ongoing support and advice provided by local authorities and others with expertise in the teaching of modern foreign languages in improving the quality of provision and the standards achieved by learners.

3.3. It is evident that practitioners valued the guidance provided in *Aiming for Excellence in Modern Foreign Languages*. We are conscious that there have been many developments, including the piloting of modern foreign languages in primary schools, since Estyn produced its advice. **We have therefore asked the Inspectorate to develop further advice and guidance for schools and local authorities drawing on recent inspection evidence and in the light of the new curriculum requirements.** It is anticipated that this guidance will be complete and made available to all schools in 2009.

5. *Seven hundred reasons for studying languages*, Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, University of Southampton.

A new national curriculum for modern foreign languages

3.4. As part of the wider revision of the school curriculum and assessment arrangements we have already taken steps to improve the learning and teaching of modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3. The revised national curriculum programme of study for modern foreign languages was introduced from September 2008. It has a strong skills-based approach and focuses on developing pupils' linguistic competence, language skills and intercultural understanding through a range of activities designed to engage and motivate pupils. It provides the scope for teachers to teach through contexts that engage the interests of their pupils. There are clear links to the non-statutory *Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales* as well as learning across the curriculum. The School Effectiveness Framework for Wales is a key tool for continuous improvement in schools to review, evaluate and plan and will help schools to make effective links across the curriculum.

3.5. The Welsh Assembly Government has provided guidance and resources to support teachers in delivering the new programme of study.

CILT Cymru

3.6. We have commissioned CILT Cymru to work with local authorities and schools to improve the learning and teaching of modern foreign languages in Key Stage 3. As one element of this work CILT Cymru has provided an annual programme of specialist INSET training that can be accessed by schools across Wales. The programme has provided advice for practitioners on the effective use of the opportunities offered by ICT to improve whole class teaching. It has also demonstrated how learning can be enhanced through the promotion of thinking skills that raise the level of cognitive challenge in language lessons.

CILT Cymru Compact

3.7. In parallel with this programme, CILT Cymru has also provided tailored, specialist support and advice to schools on modern foreign language learning through its Compact scheme. Under the Compact scheme each school is supported in developing and delivering a plan to improve the learning experience, raise standards and improve take up of modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4. To date 63 secondary schools have participated in the Compact scheme with work ongoing in a further 29 schools.

3.8. Work with schools has included use of assessment for learning activities to promote pupils' writing and speaking skills and the use of ICT including interactive websites and multimedia ICT suites to develop language skills. This work has been supported by changes to lesson delivery, targeted careers sessions for Year 9 pupils, focusing planning on structure rather than topics, purchasing multimedia projectors to enliven lessons and bringing new material and resources into the classroom.

3.9. Feedback confirms that the scheme has produced substantial benefits for staff and pupils as well as raising the status of modern foreign languages within the school and the community. Schools taking part in the scheme have clear targets for the improvement of pupil performance at Key Stage 3 and for increasing take-up at Key Stage 4. The support of the headteacher and governors, evidence of a team/departmental approach and attention to equal opportunities issues, such as the achievement of boys, are essential. Best practice from schools participating in the Compact has been drawn together recently by CILT Cymru on a DVD *Making Languages Count: Inspiring success and raising take-up in MFL through the CILT Cymru Compact scheme*.

Motivating learners and developing independence

In order to promote the value of learning a modern foreign language and to try to increase the uptake of French and German at Key Stage 4, we decided to devote a day to creating a bilingual magazine called 'Eurosplash'. With the help of our French and German assistants, approximately 100 Year 9 pupils worked in groups of 4 to 6 to write a feature for the magazine. A number of themes were included such as our School Exchange visits, film reviews, tourist information and sporting events. Pupils were given a framework to structure their articles and many produced extended pieces and made excellent use of the Internet and other materials made available to them. They enjoyed the informal 'newspaper office' atmosphere we tried to create and working towards the printing deadline! The response to this project has been incredibly positive. In a questionnaire handed out to pupils who participated, 49 per cent said that the experience has made them more interested in taking modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4.

3.10. As a result more than 60 per cent of Compact schools have succeeded in increasing the number of pupils studying a modern foreign language in Key Stage 4. As an illustration of what can be achieved, individual schools have made significant increases with, for example, one secondary school recently reporting 80 per cent of pupils opting to continue with modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4. This is more than double the national take up of modern foreign languages at 14 years of age.

3.11. To build on this success CILT Cymru has launched a local authority Compact scheme piloted over two years with schools in Denbighshire and Neath Port Talbot. The scheme is based on the development and implementation of an agreed programme of work with the local authority to support schools in improving language learning. Following the very positive response to the pilot work further local authority Compacts are now being put in place with Swansea and Flintshire.

3.12. Through its Compact scheme CILT Cymru has made a significant contribution to improving the learning and teaching of languages in secondary schools. We want, therefore, to extend opportunities to draw together the expertise and experience of specialists from CILT Cymru, local authorities and schools to review and develop provision across local authorities for modern foreign languages. **We will ask CILT Cymru to extend the Local Authority Compact scheme to provide a rolling programme of support and advice on the provision of modern foreign languages for every local authority where requested.**

Widening the range of languages

3.13. The requirement that schools at Key Stage 3 teach a language of one of the countries of the European Community was amended from September 2008. Schools can now teach a European or world language taking into account demand, interest, progression routes and resources. This recognises the need to look beyond the current patterns of language learning in schools with its focus on the widely spoken European languages. It also reflects both the range of community languages spoken in Wales and the appreciation of the need to widen our horizons so that Wales can compete effectively in an increasingly global economy.

3.14. The linguistic map of Wales is changing and an increasingly wide range of languages is spoken by learners in schools and colleges. In *Languages Count*, the Welsh Assembly Government recognised that it is important to provide opportunities for language development and accreditation in community languages. The survey *Language Trends 2005: Community language learning in England, Scotland and Wales*⁶ was carried out in order to identify mainstream and complementary providers of community language education in the area covered by each local authority. It was established that in Wales, a total of 98 languages other than English and Welsh are spoken by young people.

3.15. *Positively Plurilingual* the report arising from the survey restates the contribution made by community languages to benefit society and individuals. It confirms that Wales has a major linguistic asset in its multilingual population which, if developed wisely and inclusively alongside English and Welsh, has the potential to benefit Wales as a whole. A number of schools offer pupils the opportunity to develop skills in their own language both within the curriculum and in out of school classes and clubs. Many pupils are also offered opportunities for accreditation and to gain qualifications in these languages.

Opportunities for all languages

A school in Cardiff believes that learners should have the opportunity to maintain their home language and be offered the chance of accreditation in that language. Among the languages offered in Key Stage 3 alongside French are Bengali, Urdu, Arabic, Somali, Gujarati and Punjabi, with most offered in mainstream time. The languages are offered as options in Key Stage 4 using mainly GCSE but also Asset languages for accreditation and where appropriate, some learners are offered the opportunity for early accreditation before the end of Key Stage 4. Students who don't choose to continue with their home language pre-16 are offered the opportunity to do so in the Sixth form and there are small groups studying AS and A level, which are offered in partnership with two other schools. Languages are seen as part of pupils' culture and identity and are highly valued. Learning and accreditation are offered flexibly to meet all learners' needs.

6. The survey was conducted by CILT, the National Centre for Languages in partnership with the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research. Funded by DfES in England, SEED in Scotland and the Welsh Assembly Government, it was carried out by researchers at Scottish CILT (University of Stirling) and involved telephone interviews with representatives of every local authority in England, Wales and Scotland.

3.16. Key factors identified in the report which support the delivery of community languages include increasing provision, providing opportunities to gain qualifications, networking and the sharing of resources, links to the world of work and global citizenship. In order to build on good practice, **we will commission CILT Cymru to conduct a survey among schools and colleges to establish existing provision and perceived needs in the delivery and provision of community languages. Following this we will develop guidance to disseminate and build on good practice. Through the Compact arrangements CILT Cymru will also work with local authorities and schools to pilot a wider range of language provision in schools. This will include the development of appropriate progression routes so that attainment is recognised.**

Wales-Chongqing School Link Project

3.17. Over the past two years the Welsh Assembly Government, in partnership with the British Council Wales, has developed an initiative to link primary and secondary schools from across Wales with schools from the Chongqing Municipality in China. Wales is twinned with Chongqing Municipality. In total 31 schools from Wales have now been partnered with schools in Chongqing, facilitating staff exchange. British Council Wales has confirmed that at least 20 further schools have registered an interest in future engagement with China.

3.18. Although some Mandarin taster sessions have taken place, this project has not been extended to incorporate significant levels of Chinese language provision. However, schools involved in the initiative have been canvassed and a number have shown interest in developing Chinese language provision. With this in mind, the Cardiff Confucius Institute jointly with the Lampeter Confucius Institute are working to put in place a pan-Wales approach to delivering Mandarin Chinese to schools. The proposals have been developed with the support and collaboration of the Welsh Assembly Government, the British Council Wales and CILT Cymru.

3.19. The intention is that the project will not be restricted to those schools linked to Chongqing, but will embrace, where possible and practicable, any school in Wales that expresses an interest and commitment to introduce the teaching of Chinese. **We will continue to support the Wales Chongqing initiative with the aim of extending opportunities for schools to provide Mandarin and strengthen intercultural links.**

Making the link – language departments working together

3.20. As in primary schools, we have sought to capitalise on the language skills of pupils learning English and Welsh from an early age. Such skills provide a foundation for language learning that can be used to develop a third or fourth language. Through *Making the Link: Language learning 5–14* we emphasised that a more integrated and transparent approach to language teaching in secondary schools would benefit all pupils, for example, by using the same terminology in the various languages to describe the same parts of speech and would also allow teachers to take account of their pupils' prior learning.

3.21. We commissioned CILT Cymru to undertake a range of action research projects that supported language departments working together. The joint activity between language teachers at secondary level has helped to raise awareness of the need for language skills across the curriculum, thus boosting the status of languages within secondary schools.

3.22. Much of the groundwork needed to develop such strategies is therefore in place, but a number of changes have taken place since the guidance was first published. **We will therefore update the guidance for triple literacy to build on good practice in primary and secondary schools. We will bring it into line with the revised national curriculum programmes of study and also take into account other initiatives including the Foundation Phase and the *Skills Framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales*.**

Colour-coordinated languages

The MFL, Welsh and English departments created a colour coded grammar booklet for use across Key Stage 3, the idea being that pupils will assimilate words more easily if they can link them to a colour or shape. The booklet has been consolidated by the parallel use of whiteboard presentations, as well as posters, thereby creating a colour-coordinated environment of visual reinforcement inside and outside the classroom. Working together ensured that we have an inter-departmental approach to help raise standards of achievement for all, including boys and SEN pupils. Not only has it raised awareness amongst pupils about grammar patterns but also fostered an appreciation of the advantages of being able to speak different languages. The booklet has provided the basis for the opportunity to create a variety of classroom activities, including visual, hands on, listening, speaking, reading and writing activities, which we plan to develop further.

Making languages relevant

3.23. It is important that pupils are well informed about the value of modern foreign languages when considering opportunities for employment and further learning. CILT Cymru has therefore worked in partnership with Careers Wales to ensure that young people in the first three years of secondary education have access to information on opportunities for foreign language learning when considering the options available as part of 14–19 Learning Pathways. This has included the development and dissemination of a range of resources related to the use of languages in the world of work such as *Languages Work* and *Languages Mean Business*.

3.24. The materials have been complemented by a programme of visits to schools to provide information for pupils in Year 9 making decisions on options in Key Stage 4. Where schools have made positive moves to ensure their pupils engage with modern foreign languages and they are seen to be important and relevant, there is often a clear increase in the numbers of pupils choosing to study a language in Key Stage 4.

Links abroad and contact with speakers of the language

3.25. Motivation and engagement with modern foreign languages is improved where learning is closely allied to the development of pupils' intercultural understanding and contact with speakers of other languages. Learning a modern foreign language therefore complements work across the curriculum with particular strengths in areas such as Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship. Such work benefits from the use of international links that incorporate opportunities for pupils to use languages outside of the classroom and to interact with native speakers.

3.26. We will therefore work with British Council Wales to provide secondary schools with the opportunity through programmes such as eTwinning and eLanguages to establish international links to support and enhance the learning of modern foreign languages. We will also work with partners to provide practical advice on how schools can develop and make good use of such links.

3.27. To encourage good practice and increase uptake we will celebrate success in schools. Many schools in Wales have already achieved one of the three categories of the International School Award. Schools that gain the award are given accreditation for three years. The award provides a framework for developing international work as a whole school commitment. With support from the Welsh Assembly Government, there is already a specific award ceremony to celebrate excellence in Wales. **In partnership with the British Council and CILT Cymru we will recognise and celebrate those schools that provide evidence of excellence and innovation in the provision of foreign languages. This will include effective and motivating use of ICT, use of cross-curricular approaches, language diversification, innovative option pathways and accreditation.**

4. Modern foreign languages in 14–19 Learning Pathways

Languages are highly prized – from breaking the ice to building bridges.⁷

4.1. We believe that all young people should have an entitlement to include the study of a modern foreign language within their chosen 14–19 learning pathway. The challenge, therefore, is to provide a range of flexible learning options that are relevant to the needs of young people and therefore encourage more students to include modern foreign languages as one element of their learning.

14–19 Learning Pathways

4.2. Recent research has confirmed that employers recognise the contribution made by foreign language skills to profitability and extending business opportunities. The CBI education and skills survey in 2008 concluded that 75 per cent of firms value conversational ability with 25 per cent requiring full fluency. In addition, almost half (48 per cent) of employers are currently recruiting some people specifically for their foreign language skills. It is important, therefore, that all 14–19 learners are aware of the value of foreign language skills and how such skills can improve their employability and intercultural understanding in an increasingly global society.

4.3. The learning of a modern foreign language has therefore been included within one of the five specified areas of learning to be made available to all students in the local curriculum menu that will underpin 14–19 Learning Pathways across Wales. There are already a range of opportunities to study a modern foreign language. As well as the more traditional qualifications such as GCSE, AS and A level, some learners have embarked on alternative qualification pathways such as the Certificate of Business Language Competence or are making use of the opportunities provided by the Languages Ladder and Asset Languages. In addition, all students following the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification complete a language module.

4.4. Nevertheless it is recognised that to capitalise on the opportunities provided by 14–19 Learning Pathways there is a need to ensure that all students have access to a range of learning options and qualifications that support language learning. This means making best use of the opportunities presented by the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification and ensuring that students have access to a wide range of modern foreign language qualifications.

The Welsh Baccalaureate qualification – language module

4.5. The roll-out of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification at Advanced and Intermediate levels in post-16 provision began in September 2007. It is anticipated that by 2010 at least 40 per cent of post-16 students in Wales will be following Welsh Baccalaureate qualification courses. In addition, 5,000 students are involved in piloting a Foundation level Welsh Baccalaureate qualification with the Intermediate level also being piloted in Key Stage 4. It has been agreed that roll-out at these levels will commence from September 2009.

4.6. The Welsh Baccalaureate Core comprises a range of elements including a language module. The 20 hour language module provides an opportunity for all learners to improve their language skills either in a language they have studied previously or by taking up a new language. Centres delivering the module offer a range of languages including Spanish and Japanese. They have also developed flexible delivery patterns including immersion courses, supported self-study, language days, e-learning and study abroad. This ensures that students have access to modern foreign language provision that complement their chosen pathway. For example at a college in North Wales, the language module is an integral part of students' BTEC Travel and Tourism programme.

4.7. Some centres have linked language learning to wider qualifications in fields such as Business Studies. Others have linked their foreign language learning to other elements of the Welsh Baccalaureate Core such as Work-Related Education and Enterprise.

Integrating the language module with a Team Enterprise activity

At a school in Cardiff, students took part in four days of intensive language tuition in Spanish, Italian and French in order to carry out a language related enterprise activity during the school's language week. Students worked in groups to plan the enterprise activity and came up with a range of ideas. For example organising a stall to sell products or provide a service would contribute towards the enterprise qualification as well as develop their language skills. During the language week students had to carry out the planned activity, using the language learned as much as possible with fellow students, members of staff and visitors. This meant that students used their language skills for a real purpose and integrated them in a meaningful way as part of their team enterprise activity.

4.8. The language module has also made a useful contribution to the development of international links and students' intercultural understanding. For example, a school in mid-Wales has excellent international links including a programme of exchanges with partners in Spain and Italy. Developing an international dimension in schools and colleges can contribute to the enrichment and diversity of the curriculum as well as supporting renewed interest and motivation in foreign languages. Such work can also contribute to the achievement of the International School Award managed by the British Council which recognises good practice in international work.

Welcome to Japan – Language and inter-cultural understanding

At a school in Pembrokeshire around 30 students participated in a week of learning Japanese as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate. The Year 12 students had no knowledge of the language before and were introduced to Japanese culture and lifestyle, how to introduce themselves, how to count, talk about school and their hobbies. The week culminated in a performance using traditional Japanese taiko music when the students dressed up in traditional Japanese clothes and used their new language skills. All the teachers were thoroughly impressed by the standard that was reached by the students after only twenty hours of tuition.

4.9. We will look to make best use of the opportunities provided by the language module in the Welsh Baccalaureate. In particular there is a need for good practice to be identified and made widely available. The Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) is developing guidance for the language module to reflect the best practice in Welsh Baccalaureate schools and colleges. In particular we want to ensure that students have access to a range of languages with accreditation to acknowledge their achievements. We also want to identify and promote approaches that integrate language learning in wider learning programmes and encourage students to go beyond the minimum hours required by the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification. **We will work with partners to promote the development of foreign language units that can be delivered through the Welsh Baccalaureate language module and provide accreditation for the achievements of learners.**

Extending the range of qualifications and opportunities for 14–19-year-olds

4.10. Language learning should challenge and motivate students whatever their ability and whatever their chosen pathway. While GCSE is appropriate for many learners, it is currently not always the most suitable course for all students. However, the new GCSE courses to be offered from September 2009 offer greater flexibility for students to adapt, in particular the skills of speaking and writing, to suit their own interests and aspirations. The new short course GCSE also offers a more flexible route for those wishing to study for a smaller qualification. Schools and colleges should however also provide access to courses that offer real alternatives. Courses leading to vocationally-related qualifications can help students to develop and apply their language knowledge, skills and understanding in more work-related contexts. There are a number of different qualifications that schools and colleges may offer students, including qualifications for students working at lower levels. The number of hours required for study and the level of the qualifications vary and can therefore provide applied routes that are flexible and can be integrated in a range of learning pathways. These qualifications can support links with business, build on Key Stage 3 foreign language study and provide progression routes to further learning.

4.11. Some schools and colleges in Wales have, therefore, been looking at alternative, more vocationally orientated, qualifications and we have commissioned CILT Cymru to support this work. For example, CILT Cymru has organised training events to set out what is available and how these alternative courses might be integrated into students' learning pathways. In addition, as one element of its Compact scheme, CILT has worked with the local authority in Neath Port Talbot to review the range of qualifications offered and pilot wider options. Working in partnership with the Black Country Networks for Excellence and CILT Cymru, teachers have undergone initial training to introduce the Certificate of Business Language Competence (CBLC), a vocationally linked language qualification that can be offered by schools and colleges. Various models of delivery are being tried: some schools will use the qualification with Year 9 pupils to motivate them to carry on with languages at Key Stage 4, whilst others will be using it with students studying for the language module of the Welsh Baccalaureate. In another school, the qualification will form an integral part of the students' travel and tourism course. The Welsh Assembly Government has funded the translation into Welsh of resources to support these qualifications and extend the range of more vocational resources available to Welsh-medium schools and colleges.

4.12. In other area of Wales OCN and NVQ Language Units are being offered to complement vocational qualifications in areas such as Travel and Tourism and Business Studies. CILT Cymru is now working with schools and colleges to widen access to NVQ Language Units as an alternative to GCSE for students following more applied pathways in Key Stage 4. In one authority the local 14–19 network offers Spanish and German as twilight delivery in a local college mostly for 14–16-year-olds. This allows students to pick up a second foreign language which is not on offer within their school. Some schools and colleges are also offering the small single skill qualifications offered by Asset Languages. The Welsh Assembly Government has funded Welsh language provision for French and is piloting Welsh second language.

4.13. While there is much to build on it is accepted that currently many students have only limited access to qualification routes beyond GCSE, AS and A Level. We are committed to addressing this. **We will ask CILT Cymru to work with schools and colleges to identify and pilot innovative approaches to the accreditation of language skills that have the potential to be offered in a range of learning settings. As one element of this work we will ask CILT Cymru to provide regular updates on the range of opportunities available and practical advice and support in extending the qualification routes offered in individual schools and colleges.**

4.14. There is a growing number of 14–19 learners in Wales for whom English or Welsh is not their first language. Encouraging the maintenance of the languages and cultures of these learners is of recognised importance. Some schools already offer opportunities for these students to gain accreditation in their home language at GCSE and beyond. **We will work with schools and colleges to promote opportunities for the continued study of learners' home languages including, where appropriate, making use of the wide range of languages provided by Asset languages.**

Languages and work experience

4.15. Learning providers and employers recognise the value derived from providing opportunities for students from across Wales to share their experiences, skills and best practice with fellow European trainees. The Welsh Assembly Government is establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Mobility with regions

including Catalonia, Tuscany, the Basque country and the Balearic Islands to promote work placement exchanges and facilitate the learning of European languages. In addition, the Leonardo da Vinci strand of the European Community's Lifelong Learning Programme provides opportunities to work with European partners to exchange best practice, increase the expertise of staff and develop the skills of learners. The programme is open to every organisation involved in vocational education and training.

4.16. Work experience of this kind provides a useful opportunity for students to both pursue their main area of study and develop and hone their language skills. For example, a number of colleges in Wales offer courses in travel and tourism, health, construction and beauty that include the learning and accreditation of languages using OCN or NVQ language units. In some instances such courses include an element of work experience abroad. At one college, automotive students learn Italian prior to their work experience at FIAT in Turin. We believe that such experience adds significant value to learning and would like to see far more students offered and taking up this option. Fforwm is developing, on behalf of interested colleges in Wales, bids for European funding to develop exchanges, which will include linguistic preparation for students in Further Education to get the most out of their period abroad. **We will ask CILT Cymru to work with Fforwm and learning providers to make best use of opportunities provided by the European Community's Lifelong Learning programme for students to take up work experience placements in Europe.**

Building partnerships

4.17. There are opportunities to develop language skills through work experience with employers in Wales who use foreign languages in their day to day business. For example, as part of its Language Champions programme CILT Cymru has piloted an initiative with Cardiff International Airport where students examine how the language needs of those using the airport are met and suggest areas for improvement. As a result students use a foreign language for a real purpose and develop their skills in a work environment. Teacher placement days have also been organised with employers such as Thompson Financial as part of professional development for practitioners delivering more vocationally orientated language learning.

4.18. CILT Cymru already has extensive links with Careers Wales. We want to see this relationship developed to capitalise on the expertise in education business links held by Careers Wales and in particular to develop the Language Champion programme. **We will ask CILT Cymru to work with Careers Wales to develop a menu of opportunities linking schools with employers that make use of foreign language skills in the workplace. This will include development of specific initiatives such as Language Champions and extending opportunities for work experience.**

Support for practitioner development

4.19. Initial teacher education and training and continuing professional development provide the foundations for ongoing improvement in the quality of provision in schools and colleges and the standards achieved by learners. Modern foreign languages have been recognised as a priority subject area for Initial Teacher Training. As a result the Welsh Assembly Government provides training grants of £7,200 for eligible persons taking up Initial Teacher Training. The grants aim to encourage the best quality, highly committed language graduates to train as teachers on one year postgraduate courses. In addition, those that complete the training and go on to teach modern foreign languages as a newly qualified secondary school teacher are eligible for a teaching grant of £2,500. In the 2008/09 academic year it is planned that 107 post graduate secondary places will be provided for initial teacher training in modern foreign languages and ten undergraduate secondary places.

4.20. With regard to ongoing professional development the Welsh Assembly Government's Better School Fund has identified modern foreign languages as a priority area with resources made available to support the implementation of the revised school curriculum and assessment arrangements and specifically to enable primary schools to extend opportunities for language learning in partnership with secondary schools. In the further education sector, bursaries of £6,000 are available to modern foreign languages graduates to undertake postgraduate training in preparation for teaching in further education.

5. Language skills for higher education, lifelong learning and employability

We want our citizens to be able to travel around Europe easily, and to be able to take up opportunities to work and study in all corners of the EU, as well as to seize opportunities with companies trading with other parts of the world.⁸

5.1. The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that the study of modern foreign languages can increase individuals' employment prospects in an increasingly globalised society and so that they can take advantage of opportunities in Wales, Europe and beyond. It is also recognised in the world of business: that English is not enough; that language knowledge can increase competitiveness and that business can be lost through a lack of language skills. This section focuses on modern foreign language provision outside schools and colleges, in particular on the areas of business, higher education and adult community learning and how we can encourage wider participation and development of language skills in these sectors.

Foreign language skills for business

5.2. A research study carried out in 29 countries on behalf of the European Commission, 'Effects on the European Union Economy of Shortages of Foreign Language Skills in Enterprise' (ELAN)⁹ has shown that language skills can significantly improve export success for European companies. In particular, the ELAN study concluded that:

- small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which have a languages strategy and invest in staff with language skills are shown to be able to achieve 44 per cent more export sales than those which do not
- it is estimated that 11 per cent of exporting SMEs may be losing business because of identified language communication barriers.

5.3. The survey found that across Europe a broad spectrum of languages will be needed by SMEs to support expansion into new markets. There is likely to be a growth in demand for linguistic and cultural skills in both global and neighbouring European languages, including English. However, although English is a key language for gaining access to export markets, the survey results conclude that the picture is far more complex than the much-quoted view that English is the world language. Russian is extensively used in Eastern Europe

8. Commissioner for Multilingualism Leonard Orban, 16 November 2007.

9. This study was commissioned by the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission in December 2005 and undertaken by CILT, the UK National Centre for Languages, in collaboration with an international team of researchers. Its objective was to provide the Commission and decision-takers in Member States with practical information and analysis of the use of language skills by SMEs and the impact on business performance.

as a lingua franca (along with German and Polish). French is used to trade in areas of Africa and Spanish is used similarly in Latin America. Longer-term business partnerships depend upon relationship building and relationship-management. To achieve this, cultural and linguistic knowledge of the target country are essential.

5.4. The ELAN findings are consistent with the conclusions reached in the recent CBI Survey of Education and Skills (2008):

Languages are growing in importance for business as UK firms operate in an increasingly global marketplace. The UK has a high volume of trade with countries where English is not spoken – over 75 per cent of our export trade in 2006. Having confidence in a foreign language helps deepen and ease cultural understanding and business access – particularly important in countries such as China.

Speaking the client's language

Thomson Financial with 7,700 employees in total worldwide and niche markets in different sectors provides information and solutions to inform financial decision-making.

With a focus on Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Thomson Financial Cardiff has recruited nearly all of its 80 staff, 50 per cent of whom are new graduates originating from different countries, from the Cardiff area. During the selection process, language skills are rated of greater importance than any financial or technology experience. All employees are required to have fluency in specific languages, as the daily work of an employee is language-specialised telephone investigative work or internet-based research using foreign languages.

Phil Davies, General Manager of Thomson Financial Cardiff, predicts that there will be increasing demand in language use in the Cardiff office since their targeted market is expanding to include Eastern Europe, in particular Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary and Turkey. At present, the company uses its own Thomson University to enhance its staff's language skills through computer-based language training. They believe speaking a client's language is the most effective way to collect local market intelligence.

Identifying and meeting foreign language needs

5.5. The key message from both the ELAN and CBI surveys is that employers that either have or wish to have contacts with non-English-speaking countries need to look at the contribution that foreign languages can make to improving communication with clients and suppliers. It is recognised that there are many small employers that have only a local sphere of interest and may not have such a requirement. This is reflected in the Future Skills Wales survey of 2003 where the majority of employers placed foreign language skills low on their list of requirements. However, growth-orientated and exporting companies as well as some employers in the public sector do need actively to address foreign language skills. They need to look at a flexible approach to meeting identified needs including recruiting native speakers with language skills, developing multilingual websites, use of translators and interpreters, recruiting staff that already have language skills and investment in language training.

5.6. To help address this, through our partnership with CILT Cymru, we will support the work of the Sector Skills Councils to ensure that cultural and language skills needs are properly identified and integrated into skills planning. We will also support business through the network of support already put in place to help companies acquire the skills – including foreign languages skills – that are needed for business success. In *Skills that Work for Wales*, the Welsh Assembly Government's skills and employment strategy, a number of actions are set out to enhance this support. This includes advice and access to funding for businesses provided through an expanded Workforce Development Programme and also a new Sector Priorities Fund. The latter will provide targeted financial support to ensure that learning is directed more closely to meet the needs of business sectors. In addition, International Business Wales works with companies to develop bespoke strategies including the acquisition of language skills to support both international businesses looking to relocate to Wales and Welsh companies entering or extending their work in the export market.

5.7. One element of CILT Cymru's work has been to provide specialist advice and support to employers in identifying and meeting foreign language needs. However, the service currently provided is limited in scope and scale. The findings from both the ELAN and CBI surveys point up the potential loss to business resulting from lack of attention to foreign languages skills.

5.8. The evidence suggests that there is a need to look again at how well needs are being met in this sector. **We will therefore ask CILT Cymru to work with employers and business to help identify areas for improvement in the specialist support provided to companies on the value and use of foreign languages and cultural skills to improve competitiveness.** In particular we will look to CILT Cymru to set out how best to ensure that companies are aware of and can access support and advice in including foreign languages as one element of an effective communication strategy with clients and suppliers. We will also ask CILT Cymru to consult on whether there is a need for further practical advice and support for businesses looking to embed foreign languages in their planning and decision-making.

Higher education

5.9. The CBI Survey of Education and Skills (2008) confirmed that companies that lack employees with appropriate language skills could face significant and growing problems in developing their business internationally. Three quarters of those surveyed value conversational ability and half (48 per cent) are currently recruiting some people specifically for their foreign languages skills. This is consistent with figures drawn together by CILT that employment rates for language students six months after graduation are higher than for students across all subjects.

5.10. Higher Education is an important pathway for the development of foreign language skills. In particular Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), provide a range of flexible learning pathways that recognise that for many, basic conversational skills in both employment and private lives are sufficient, whereas others will require a high degree of fluency in one or more foreign languages. Provision at degree and post graduate level is therefore just one, but an important, aspect of the overall menu of opportunities offered by HEIs to develop language skills.

5.11. In line with commitments in *Languages Count*, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) has completed a strategic review of modern foreign language provision in the sector. The review looked at projected trends in the supply and demand for modern foreign language provision and identified options for the maintenance and development of provision in HEIs in Wales.

Following consultation the Council provided development funding and worked with partners to:

- develop the marketing of modern foreign languages in Wales and further afield including widening access activities
- formulate an organised, comprehensive approach to engaging employers
- collaborate on provision of MFL courses across departmental and institutional boundaries including distance learning.

5.12. Analysis of data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency confirms that there is an ongoing improvement in recruitment to higher education courses in modern foreign languages. While there has been a small decline in full-time undergraduate provision (of 3.1 per cent) between 2002/03 and 2006/07 this has been offset by a large increase in part-time undergraduate enrolments (up by 60.1 per cent). Overall recruitment to courses that include modern foreign language provision has improved by 28.1 per cent. This compares with improvements of 3.9 per cent in England, 11.4 per cent in Scotland and with a decline of 13.2 per cent in Northern Ireland. **We will ask the HEFCW to continue to work with HEIs to improve the range of opportunities for the study of foreign languages with specific attention to extending provision of joint honours courses and non-specialist provision including distance learning.**

Widening participation

5.13. The HEFCW also encourages HEIs to look for opportunities to use foreign language learning in their widening participation activities with schools and colleges of further education. Subsequently a number of institutions have used foreign languages as a vehicle to encourage young people to access higher education. For example, Cardiff University operates the *Languagezone* for those studying foreign languages (including Welsh as a second language) at GCSE and A level. There are also internet forums for schools students in Years 12 and 13.

Living a language

International students from Cardiff University have been encouraging pupils from a secondary school in Cardiff to try out new languages through games, dance and food in French, German and Italian.

Cardiff is one of the leading universities for student involvement in the Erasmus scheme, which supports academic exchange between the institutions of 31 European countries. An Erasmus student from Gibraltar, fluent in five languages, led sessions in the Italian Cafe. She said: 'I really enjoyed the day. The pupils were very enthusiastic and picked up useful vocabulary for use in a restaurant or cafe in Italy. They soon learnt forms of greetings and how to order different food. If they didn't ask in Italian they didn't get to taste the food!'

The Widening Access Manager, said, 'This is the second year we've worked together with the school to promote modern European languages. Last year the event led to a 25 per cent increase in the numbers of pupils taking up French GCSE compared to the previous year.'

The University's language support will continue with weekly video-conferencing sessions for Year 10 and 11 students. International students will lead oral practice sessions for students in preparation for their GCSE French examinations.

5.14. In addition, the four *Reaching Wider* partnerships which operate across Wales to extend access to higher education from under-represented target groups and to break down perceived barriers have organised a number of activities to promote modern foreign languages: for example, revision groups have been established with specialist language tutors on line; workshops on the importance of modern foreign languages designed for Year 8 pupils, building on key skills such as working in teams and improving performance as well as improving language skills.

Opening doors and minds in Bangor

In autumn 2007 80 school children from North Wales came to Bangor University for a CILT Cymru 'Opening Doors' event aimed at promoting opportunities for young linguists beyond A level. The day showcased the range of opportunities the study of foreign languages can bring. It included taster sessions, talks from a range of people who used languages in their work. Students were introduced to how language can be used in discussing issues in the countries and communities where the language is spoken. Two final year modern foreign language students from Bangor gave presentations on the opportunities offered by the year abroad. The day was a complete success and students left the day enthused by the experience.

5.15. There are therefore already good links in many parts of Wales to encourage young people to consider opportunities for language learning in higher education including those promoted through the *Reaching Wider* initiative. As a result there is much good practice in Wales. We would like to see this extended across Wales so that there are agreed arrangements and structures for HEIs in every part of Wales to work with schools and colleges to enthuse and encourage young people to continue to study languages. In addition there is a need to ensure that good practice is shared and exchanged with partners in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. **We therefore welcome the proposal that the HEFCW will work with the Higher Education Academy to establish a Wales wide network – Routes into Languages Cymru – to promote career paths to students studying foreign languages.** The network will also be charged with identification and sharing of practice with partners across the UK.

5.16. Given the wide range of languages now spoken across Wales it is recognised that accessible and high quality translation services play an important role in the delivery of public services. The Wales Interpretation and Translation Service project has been established with support from the Welsh Assembly Government to look at the use of language services in public and voluntary bodies. The project has already identified a range of issues for attention including supporting linguistic skills with appropriate training so that translators can operate effectively in specific service areas and the

need for early action to address areas where there are a shortage of language skills. **In the light of the full recommendations to be produced by the project we will work with Careers Wales and learning providers, including HEIs, to promote career opportunities in translation and to provide pathways for learners to combine modern foreign language learning with vocational training.**

International study placements

5.17. Studying or working in other countries is one of the most effective routes for developing language skills and learning about other cultures. Programmes such as Erasmus are offered as one element of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programmes. Targeted at higher education students and teachers Erasmus encourages student and staff mobility for work and study and promotes cooperation among universities across Europe. The scheme currently involves nine out of every ten European higher education establishments and supports cooperation between the universities of 31 countries. Over 1.5 million students have benefited from Erasmus grants to date and the European Commission hopes to reach a total of three million by 2012.

5.18. Take-up of the opportunities provided by such programmes is higher in Wales than many other parts of the United Kingdom but falls some way short of participation rates in other European countries. In a multicultural, multilingual job market, the ability to communicate in another language is highly desirable. In addition studying and working in another country is an invaluable experience. In the recent European Commission communication 'Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment' it was noted that 'Erasmus students ranked their improvement in language skills as the foremost benefit of their period abroad'.

The benefits of work placements abroad

A Leonardo funded work placement project offered places to students from Aberystwyth, Bangor and Swansea Universities as part of their compulsory year abroad. Nine students took up placements in France, Germany, Italy and Spain. The participants benefited in many ways: much-improved language skills vital to success in their degrees, enhanced CVs/employability, new skills acquired (professional, personal, social), greater breadth of personal experience and development in confidence, new contacts and opportunities on a professional and personal level. Many commented that they had a greater appreciation of other peoples and cultures following their Leonardo experience, developing a deeper understanding of the factors that shape a nation. The desire to travel more widely and learn more about other cultures was expressed. The opportunities provided by an open European employment market were appreciated by all and intentions to live and work abroad were expressed.

5.19. The HEFCW supports Erasmus through funding to HEIs to meet costs while students are abroad. Similarly the British Council works with HEIs across Wales to promote Erasmus. However, it is clear that more needs to be done to promote take-up. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many students do not apply because of concerns as to whether they will be able to communicate effectively while on placement. **We will ask CILT Cymru to work with the British Council and HEIs in Wales to develop and pilot short language modules for students considering taking up the opportunities provided by Erasmus and other programmes.**

Adult community learning

5.20. Adult community learning plays an important role in providing easy access to flexible learning opportunities for both leisure and employment. For many it can also provide a gateway to further learning. It has, therefore, been a popular option for those looking to extend or update existing foreign language skills or to acquire new languages. Although motives in learning a language are varied and often linked to visits abroad such learning improves employability and enhances personal development. Many adults are also parents and

grandparents, making them a key factor in supporting provision in schools, especially now that the thrust of foreign language learning is moving towards the primary sector. The child of parents who are well-disposed towards other languages has a huge advantage over the child whose parents are diehard monolinguals.

5.21. A recent national survey undertaken in the UK by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)¹⁰ suggested that the influence of global markets and migration had underlined the importance of language learning. Of those learning languages other than English or Welsh, a quarter learn for work-related reasons, but more learn and use their skills for personal interest and enjoyment.

5.22. We are aware that practice in provision of foreign languages in adult community learning settings varies across Wales. **We will commission CLT Cymru to organise an event that will draw together practitioners delivering foreign languages in adult community learning.** This will provide the opportunity for tutors to discuss aspects of teaching languages in general, such as making best use of ICT resources, maintaining retention rates, dealing with very wide ranges of ability and experience in a class and developing awareness of freely-available resources such as the range of BBC materials. Consideration will also be given to whether a bespoke website aiming to provide news, ideas and a forum for discussion would add value. Existing examples of such websites could be drawn on for inspiration.

5.23. Looking across the sector the need for a more strategic approach has been recognised and the Welsh Assembly Government has consulted on proposals for the future planning and delivery of adult community learning. This includes the establishment of Adult Community Learning Partnerships with responsibility for planning and funding in specified geographic areas. The approach proposed recognises the need for adult community learning to respond flexibly to the diverse needs of particular groups of learners. **We will support ongoing work by ensuring that decisions on determination of national priorities and provision at the local level are informed by data on demand for particular foreign languages, progression patterns into further learning and identification of the characteristics of good practice.**

10. *Figures of Speech: The 2007 NIACE survey on languages*, Yanina Dutton and Sue Meyer, May 2007.

6. Consultation questions

You are invited to provide responses to the following questions by Friday 26 June 2009. If required, a template can be downloaded from www.wales.gov.uk/consultations or sent on request. Requests for a paper copy of the template should be addressed to:

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Overview

1. Do the proposals set out in *Making languages count* strike the right balance between work to improve opportunities for the learning of modern foreign languages in primary and secondary schools, further and higher education, adult community learning and support for business in identifying and meeting foreign language needs?
2. Are there areas where more needs to be done to promote opportunities for foreign language learning that are not addressed in *Making languages count*?

Section 2: Early language learning in primary schools

3. Do you support the proposal to extend opportunities for pupils to be introduced to learning a modern foreign language while in primary education?
4. Do the proposals at Section 2 (Early language learning in primary schools) provide an effective basis for extending opportunities for pupils to learn a modern foreign language while in primary education?

Section 3: The Key Stage 3 modern foreign language experience in secondary schools

5. Do you agree with the proposals set out in Section 3 to improve standards of attainment in modern foreign languages and encourage more pupils to continue with learning a modern foreign language beyond the age of 14?

6. Are there specific actions, for example the development of the CILT Cymru Compact programme, that should be identified as priorities and for early attention?

Section 4: Modern foreign languages in 14–19 Learning Pathways

7. Do you agree that the proposals in Section 4 provide an effective and flexible basis for young people aged 14–19 years to incorporate a modern foreign language within their learning pathway?

8. Do you support the proposals to promote opportunities for the continued study in schools and colleges of learners' home languages?

Section 5: Language skills for higher education, lifelong learning and employability

9. Section 5 sets out a wide programme of work. We would welcome your comments on the proposals including the following:

- commissioning CILT Cymru to work with partners to improve the support provided to business to identify and plan to meet foreign language needs
- making better use of programmes such as Erasmus and Leonardo for students to develop and practice foreign language skills
- asking CILT Cymru to work with adult community learning providers to identify and disseminate good practice in the teaching of modern foreign languages.

Responses to this consultation will be made public. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the author are published along with the response unless you indicate otherwise.

7. References

Aiming for Excellence in Modern Foreign Languages (Estyn, 2002)

Asset Languages. Asset Languages is the assessment scheme for the Department for Children, Schools and Families' Languages Ladder and is being developed by Cambridge Assessment through OCR and Cambridge ESOL

www.assetlanguages.org.uk

Crossing Bridges. Using languages to support transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 (ACCAC, 2005)

Evaluation of the Key Stage 2 Modern Foreign Language Pilot projects in Wales 2003–06 (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007)

ELAN: Effects on the European economy of shortages of foreign language skills in enterprise (European Commission, 2007).

Figures of Speech. The 2007 NIACE survey on languages, Yanina Dutton and Sue Meyer, (NIACE, 2007)

Getting Started. Guidance to Support the Introduction of a Modern Foreign Languages in Key Stage 2 (CILT Cymru, 2008)

Languages Count: The Welsh Assembly Government's National Modern Foreign Languages Strategy, (Welsh Assembly Government, 2002)

Language Trends (CILT Annual Survey, 2008)

The Learning Country: Vision into Action (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006)

Making the Link: Language learning 5–14 (ACCAC, 2003)

Making Languages Count: Inspiring success and raising take-up in MFL through the CILT Cymru Compact scheme (CILT Cymru, 2008)

Modern foreign languages in the National Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008)

Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment (European Commission Communication 2008).

Positively Plurilingual. The contribution of community languages to UK education and society (CILT, 2006)

Seven hundred reasons for studying languages (The Higher Education Academy, LLAS)

Skills That Work for Wales. A Skills and Employment Strategy and Action Plan (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008)

Strategic Review of Modern Foreign Language Provision in HEFCW-funded Higher Education Institutions (HEFCW, 2005)

Taking stock. CBI education and skills survey 2008 (CBI, 2008).

