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# **DEVELOPING MULTILINGUALISM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN WALES: AN IMPACT STUDY**

PRESENTED TO BRITISH COUNCIL WALES  
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September 2019



<b>1. Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	4
1.2 Methodology .....	4
1.3 Main findings .....	5
1.4 Recommendations .....	7
<b>2. Introduction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Context for the impact study .....	8
2.2 Methodology .....	8
<b>3. Study findings .....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Rationale for introducing MFL provision .....	10
3.2 Types of MFL provision .....	13
3.3 Impact of MFL provision .....	16
3.4 Sustainability, good practice and future development of MFL .....	20
<b>4. Conclusions and recommendations .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Annex: Case studies .....</b>	<b>25</b>

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 Introduction

British Council Wales commissioned Arad Research in January 2019 to carry out an impact study of selected primary schools that have introduced international languages 'as part of their curriculum.

The Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience in the new National Curriculum for Wales,<sup>2</sup> which is currently under development, will embrace Welsh, English and International Languages from ages 3 to 16. The Welsh Government's *Global Futures* strategy aims to improve and promote Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in Wales and encourage learners to become 'Bilingual plus 1' from primary level.<sup>3</sup>

The research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of schools' reasons for, and approaches to, integrating MFL into learning at Key Stage 2. The study explores some of the successes and challenges associated with MFL provision in primary schools, drawing on the views of practitioners and learners and outlines recommendations relating to the delivery of MFL in primary schools in Wales.

## 1.2 Methodology

The initial stages of the study involved reviewing background information relating to the development of MFL in primary schools in Wales. Six key stakeholders were interviewed; representatives with responsibility for MFL from the four regional education consortia, an expert in the delivery of MFL across the UK and a representative from Estyn. The main element of the study involved visits to, or telephone interviews with, 10 primary schools. A purposive sampling approach was taken to this study in order to select schools that are delivering MFL provision during the current academic year. Arad interviewed headteachers, MFL co-ordinators/teachers and held group discussions with learners.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and international languages refer to the same teaching areas. MFL are referred to as international languages in the new Welsh Government curriculum.

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government. 2017. [New school curriculum: overview](#)

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government. 2015. [Global Futures, a plan to improve and promote modern foreign languages in Wales 2015-2020](#), p. 3. See also the first year (<https://gov.wales/written-statement-global-futures-year-our-plan>) and second year (<https://gov.wales/written-statement-global-futures-two-years-our-plan>) reports.

## 1.3 Main findings

### Drivers for MFL provision

The development of MFL provision in primary schools in Wales is currently being driven by a number of factors. The alignment of *Global Futures* to the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience in the new curriculum for Wales underpins the ambition to ensure young people in Wales are equipped to understand other cultures and recognise the importance of MFL.

The role of headteachers in identifying and delivering opportunities to develop MFL provision and supporting their staff to take this forward have been key features across all the case study schools. MFL co-ordinators are also leading by monitoring progress and identifying partnerships and funding opportunities and being encouraged by headteachers who recognise their skills and aspirations for language learning. Headteachers and MFL co-ordinators have emphasised their ambition to be creative, bilingual or multilingual schools and for their pupils to prosper as lifelong learners and global citizens, with the teaching and learning of MFL linking well with schools' international ethos and aspirations.

Successful funding applications to a range of UK and international organisations has provided support and resources for some schools; this includes working with a range of organisations to develop MFL opportunities and ensuring that teachers have access to appropriate training. The regional educational consortia and British Council Wales are considered to have been key partners in supporting this approach and the partnerships developed with schools should be sustained in future to build on this progress.

### MFL and the new curriculum

Schools have used the flexibility afforded through the new curriculum to develop creative approaches for teaching and learning MFL, linking language learning to aspects such as science, music and art. Across the schools participating in this impact study, teachers are using a variety of techniques to introduce MFL and engage learners. In many instances, integrating MFL within the curriculum, and ensuring 'incidental' learning has been key for learners' progress and enjoyment. Opportunities to share good practice with other local schools is also developing productive partnerships and using secondary MFL teachers in the primary sector presents opportunities to share skill and knowledge.

Both Welsh-medium and English-medium primary schools reported the benefits of linking MFL to the teaching and learning of Welsh. Teachers described their use of pedagogical approaches to help pupils make links between Welsh and MFL, looking at sentence structures and cognates to improve their skills and confidence as language learners. MFL co-ordinators outlined that there is scope to develop these links to Welsh further, instilling positive attitudes and enhancing awareness of multiculturalism and diversity, which relate to the aims of Cymraeg 2050.

Teachers delivering MFL in primary schools possess a range of expertise, with some having a high level of proficiency in the language while others are starting at the beginning and learning alongside the pupils. As a result, access to relevant training and effective resources has been critical to success for all levels of teachers and this flexible approach to CPD for MFL should continue to be encouraged and funded in future. A Wales-wide audit of MFL in the primary sector would allow identification of current strengths and skills gaps and could allow for more targeted support for MFL teaching and learning.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Impact on pupils

Primary schools that have introduced MFL have reported a range of positive impacts on pupils, teachers, the wider school and regional partnerships. Pupils' literacy and oracy skills are reported to have improved, with progress in communication skills and engagement with learning reported in all schools. Schools have used a range of methods to introduce MFL, including music, rhymes and games. Teachers report that these methods have helped engage learners, leading to improved confidence and self-esteem among participating pupils. Anecdotal feedback from staff highlighted the positive impact MFL learning has had on both high achievers and lower ability learners.

Some schools have started monitoring progress and the impact of participation in MFL on pupil attainment. However, MFL has been introduced too recently in other schools for any significant monitoring to have been undertaken. This is an area that will require further focus in future and for hub schools to develop and share approaches to assessing learner progress and impact.

### Partnerships

Partnerships with other local primary schools and secondary schools have provided useful support for teachers delivering MFL and have also strengthened transition activities for pupils. The sharing of resources and expertise via regional educational consortia, the British Council Wales, international organisations and schools in other countries has also proved beneficial for schools' engagement with language learning.

There is potential to develop and strengthen such partnership opportunities further to enhance staff skills, support the exchange of good practice and expand the introduction of MFL in the primary sector. Enhancing the role of, and funding for, 'hub' schools in promoting MFL, developing more partnerships with secondary schools through the expertise of secondary school teachers could all support the drive to expand MFL in the primary sector.

### Sustainability

All schools involved in the study have intentions to sustain or indeed to increase MFL provision, introducing provision to other year groups. Schools intend to continue to access quality resources such as *Cerdd Iaith*, *Language Nut* and *PowerLanguage* platform. Nevertheless, schools have reported that lack of curriculum time has proved challenging to ensure MFL is consistently and effectively delivered. Some headteachers and stakeholders noted that a lack of awareness of, and access to, funding for MFL training, which could improve teachers' confidence and skill levels and provide opportunities to acquire resources, was a further challenge to successful delivery.

Stakeholders also underlined the importance of developing understanding of effective second language teaching pedagogies among primary teachers. It was suggested that more structured and systematic approaches to professional development are needed if primary languages are to be expanded or scaled up significantly as part of the new curriculum arrangements.

### Future development of MFL

The current level of available funding does not appear to match the ambition primary schools have for MFL provision. Additional funding and support is therefore likely to be needed to provide training opportunities for staff, allowing them to attend training and visits to other schools to observe and share practice. The success of the initial MFL provision explored during this impact study is leading to a vision for an enhanced multilingual approach in some schools, which should be supported through Global Futures and its successor strategies, and Welsh Government's forthcoming international strategy.

## **1.4 Recommendations**

1. Headteachers are key to the successful implementation of MFL in primary schools and future promotion of *Global Futures* and successor strategies should be targeted towards effective engagement with them.
2. The drive to support MFL in primary schools should encourage the development of a multilingual approach where staff skills, funding and pupil and parental aspirations allow. This flexible approach could form part of any successor strategy to *Global Futures* and link to future planning of secondary MFL provision.
3. Regional consortia should continue with the process of promoting the expertise of MFL secondary school teachers, developing pupil ambassadors and funding hub schools to support the drive to expand MFL in the primary sector.
4. A flexible approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for primary teachers, recognising their differing levels of MFL expertise and confidence, should continue to be supported. This CPD should focus on developing skills in second language teaching pedagogies as well as language skills among primary teachers.
5. Specific support should be provided to primary schools to improve awareness of how to promote ‘incidental’ learning of MFL across the curriculum. This can be linked to approaches to promoting transferable skills for pupils.
6. There is scope to develop the links and learning materials between MFL and Welsh further to support pupils’ development of transferable skills and to enhance progress towards multilingualism.
7. Sharing of good practice for the development of monitoring systems to assess pupil progress and the impact of MFL should be a focus for hub schools in future.
8. A national audit of MFL primary provision, building on work undertaken in some regions, would allow for a better understanding of current strengths and weaknesses and allow for more targeted support in future. This audit could also explore the demand for a dedicated online resource for MFL, which could enable schools to share good practice in MFL provision.
9. British Council Wales has an important role to fulfil in continuing to support schools to access training and funding and should focus on facilitating ongoing networking and funding opportunities for MFL.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Context for the impact study

British Council Wales commissioned Arad Research in January 2019 to carry out an impact study of selected primary schools that have introduced international languages as part of their curriculum.

The Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience in the new Curriculum for Wales,<sup>4</sup> which is currently under development, will embrace Welsh, English and International Languages from ages 3 to 16. The Welsh Government's *Global Futures* strategy aims to improve and promote Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in Wales and encourage learners to become 'bilingual plus 1' from primary level.<sup>5</sup>

Taking this policy context into account, this research is timely as it seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of schools' reasons for, and approaches to, integrating MFL into learning at Key Stage 2. It also explores the views of headteachers and MFL co-ordinators on the strategic fit of MFL within the new curriculum arrangements. The study explores some of the successes and challenges associated with MFL provision in primary schools, drawing on the views of practitioners and learners, including views on the impact of language learning. Finally, the report outlines recommendations relating to the delivery of MFL in primary schools in Wales.

An overview of the methodology employed is provided below. Section 2 presents the findings of the impact study, and includes short examples of good practice with links to the five more detailed case studies (included in the Annex). Section 3 contains conclusions and recommendations to support British Council Wales in their commitment to promote MFL and wider internationalism in Wales.

### 2.2 Methodology

The initial stages of the study involved desk-based research; reviewing background information relating to the development of MFL in primary schools in Wales. Five key stakeholders were interviewed; these included representatives with responsibility for MFL in the four regional education consortia and an expert in the delivery of MFL across the UK.

The main element of the study involved visits to, or telephone interviews with, 10 primary schools. A purposive sampling approach was taken to this study in order to select schools that are delivering MFL provision during the current academic year (2018/19). The research team worked with British Council Wales and regional consortium representatives to ensure the sample included: representation from across all four regions; a number of Welsh-medium schools; a cross-section of schools in terms of size (based on pupil numbers) and numbers of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM). During school visits, members of the research team interviewed headteachers, MFL co-ordinators/ teachers and held group discussions with learners. Where it was not possible to carry out a group discussion with pupils, they were asked to complete a short questionnaire about their experience of MFL learning at their school.

Table 1.1 provides a summary of contributors to this impact study. Figure 1.1 illustrates the location of the contributing primary schools.

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<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government. 2017. [New school curriculum: overview](#)

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government. 2015. [Global Futures, a plan to improve and promote modern foreign languages in Wales 2015-2020](#) p. 3.

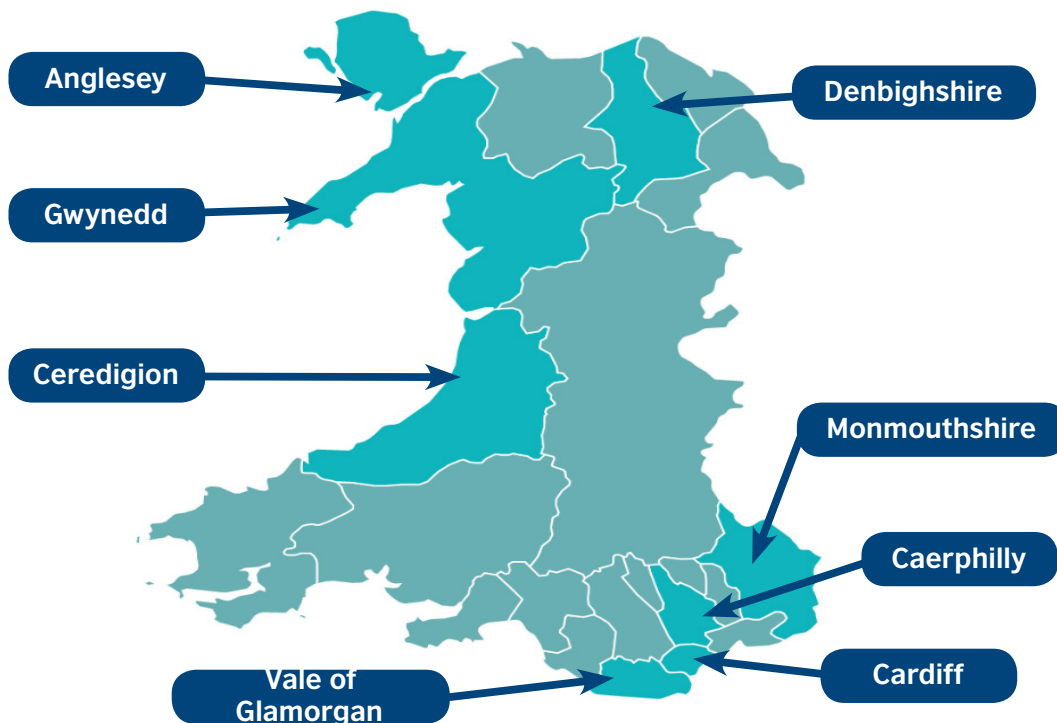


Table 1.1: Summary of the research participants

Research participant	Number engaged
Key stakeholders (e.g. consortia representatives)	5
Headteachers	9
MFL co-ordinators/teachers	9
Pupils (focus group or questionnaire)	33

Note: In some schools the headteacher is also the MFL co-ordinator/teacher.

Figure 1.1: Location of participating schools



Map created using Piktochart

Note: One primary school from most of the labelled local authorities who participated in the impact study (two schools from Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire).

# 3. STUDY FINDINGS

## 3.1 Rationale for introducing MFL provision

### Key findings relating to the rationale for introducing MFL

#### External drivers:

- Importance of *Global Futures* as a driver
- Availability of funding and expert support (e.g. consortia, British Council Wales) for MFL projects
- Opportunities presented by the new curriculum to diversify the learning experience for primary pupils

#### School and cluster-wide factors and enablers:

- Schools are building on language skills of school staff
- Transition projects with secondary schools and international exchange projects
- New opportunities to develop literacy and oracy skills
- Links with pupils' home languages

The ten schools engaged through the study reported a range of reasons or drivers for introducing MFL. It is possible to classify these as either external drivers or school/cluster-wide facilitators. All schools reported that a combination of external factors and enabling conditions within the school had played a part in establishing MFL provision.

The Welsh Government's *Global Futures* programme was the principal catalyst for introducing MFL provision in participating schools. Having access to training and resources through *Global Futures*, along with support from their regional consortium, provided schools with the incentive to trial language learning. A number of schools also cited the influence of the new Curriculum for Wales, noting that they were keen to provide new and richer learning experiences that exemplify or demonstrate a commitment to the four purposes of the curriculum.

Schools also noted that participation in MFL projects funded by international organisations was a driver for introducing International Languages. Stakeholders interviewed also noted that introducing international languages in primary schools provided an opportunity to develop pupils' understanding of their place in the world which also aligns with the vision of the new Curriculum for Wales to develop 'informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world'.

In addition to these external drivers, primary headteachers cited other reasons for wishing to introduce languages, ranging from using the existing language skills of members of staff, participation in transition projects with secondary schools and enriching pupils' literacy and oracy skills through language learning. Headteachers' role in identifying and delivering opportunities to develop MFL provision and supporting their staff to take this forward has been a key feature across all case study schools.

Headteachers are enthusiastic about diversifying the learning experience for pupils in Key Stage 2, a feeling that is shared by MFL coordinators interviewed during the study.

Several headteachers outlined that the language skills of existing staff were an important factor or driver for introducing MFL. One head reported that the arrival of a new member of staff, a German speaker, provided the impetus to introduce MFL. Since September 2018, this teacher has integrated German into the curriculum for his Year 4 class, and helps to run an extra-curricular German club open to all children from Years 3 to 6. At another school, both the headteacher and MFL co-ordinator are MFL graduates and their passion for languages has led to the introduction of French and Italian across several year groups. In another, a member of the school support staff speaks German and helps to run a popular lunchtime club.

Whilst undoubtedly helpful in supporting MFL delivery, the research has found that having language specialists in school is not a precondition for introducing and supporting delivery. In some schools, non-specialist teachers have committed to leading MFL delivery, embarking on language learning courses to improve their own skills.

Several other schools introduced MFL through participation in wider projects. For example, one school participated in the *Cerdd Iaith* project (a project managed by British Council Wales and funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation focusing on learning languages through music) in partnership with their regional educational consortium, BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Several others reported being involved in *Global Futures* Pilot projects. Another school received £1,500 Goethe Institut funding to purchase *Language Magician*, an online tool to support language learning, supported by the MFL teacher setting up a *Duolingo* classroom app.

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*“Language Magician was a fun way of learning, as when you are younger you don’t like to be just sat there writing down things, you want to learn in a fun way, and I think you do learn better when you are not having to just sit there.”*

### Pupil

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Some of the schools have additionally linked the introduction of MFL to transition partnerships with local secondary schools. As part of a pilot partnership project instigated by the regional education consortium, one school partnered with the local secondary school to introduce German. The secondary school students helped the primary school with the project, visiting weekly to teach German to Year 5 and ran a lunchtime German club for Year 6 under the teacher’s supervision. Other innovative models of delivery linked to transition arrangements were also reported: in one example an MFL teacher in a secondary school teaches French to a feeder primary school’s Year 6 pupils, while another primary school links MFL to transition days for Years 5 and 6 with several local secondaries.

For headteachers, the introduction of MFL also links to their school ethos and the type of learning opportunities they want to provide to pupils. The headteacher of one school reported that MFL links to their *‘aspirations of being a creative, bilingual school’* and has allowed them to introduce Spanish to Years 5 and 6. For another headteacher, the focus was on the four purposes of the new curriculum and on creating ambitious learners, creative and independent thinkers, and promoting Welsh citizenship and global understanding. This headteacher explained that introducing MFL directly support their aim as a school to *‘change attitudes, perceptions and develop language skills that will enable them to become life-long learners and global citizens.’*

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## STUDY FINDINGS

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One headteacher noted that she wanted *'to give the pupils the same opportunities as we had to work and study abroad'*. This school's vision for MFL is aligned with the Welsh Government's aim – as set out in *Global Futures* – for a future generation of young linguists who will lead prosperous lives, meet interesting people and experience the excitement of travel and adventure.

Several schools reported that language learning supports efforts to promote cultural awareness, diversity and inclusion among pupils. One MFL lead noted that the school has *'always supported pupils' home and community languages within the school and that learning MFL links to this'*. The researchers heard many examples of lessons that combine English (and Welsh) with other international languages – linked to learning themes being covered as part of enrichment activity. One school summarised such an approach in an internal evaluation it produced:

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*"The school delivered a lesson based on the topic 'fruits et légumes' as part of wellbeing week. Pupils responded to the teacher's input in both French and Welsh, with some English during the introductory session. The teacher also invited pupils to provide the names of fruits in their home languages such as Polish and Tamil. The lesson provided an opportunity for pupils to demonstrate their multilingual skills, [moving] seamlessly and confidently between languages. Introducing pupils' home languages was a positive and innovative feature which celebrates multilingualism. The pupils appeared proud of their contribution."*

**Excerpt from internal evaluation of French lesson, incorporating Welsh and home/community languages, English-medium primary school**

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Similarly, another primary school introduced tasters of languages such as Dutch, Polish and Japanese using native speaking pupils to help with this approach.

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*"We think it's important for [pupils] to understand that there's a whole world out there [...] and we have always tried to celebrate the children's home languages."*

### Headteacher

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Schools have received support from organisations such as the regional consortia and British Council Wales and successfully secured additional funding to introduce MFL. For example, one school successfully applied for additional funding (£2,000) from the Goethe Institut, which paid for the *Language Nut* learning app and allowed the MFL co-ordinator opportunities to visit other schools to learn from their experiences of MFL provision. The Goethe Institut are also funding a trip for seven pupils to visit the Institut in London during summer 2019.

## 3.2 Types of MFL provision

### Key findings

#### Types of MFL provision:

- Schools are linking MFL closely to the new curriculum through creative approaches to language learning
- Welsh language learning skills are being linked to learning other languages
- Links with international schools support teacher and pupil skills
- A range of digital programmes is used to support learners

All of the schools interviewed as part of the research outlined the opportunities afforded by the new curriculum arrangements to introduce MFL and link it to pupil learning and progression. Schools reported that the move towards a more flexible and tailored approach to curriculum design means they can include specific cultural elements which provide opportunities to explore different languages in various contexts. Some also noted the international dimension that is rooted within the new curriculum through its commitment to developing 'ethically informed citizens of the world'; it was suggested that this requires schools, including primary schools, to place an emphasis on teaching pupils about other languages and cultures.

For other schools, there is scope to link Welsh language learning skills to the learning of another language. Both Welsh-medium and English-medium primary schools reported the benefits of linking MFL to the teaching and learning of Welsh. One Welsh teacher reported that the children had been telling her what cognates were; having discussed these during German lessons. MFL co-ordinators highlighted the benefits of MFL apps and resources that can be linked to Welsh-medium provision with games and music activities proving effective. For schools, this is all part of a wider approach to promote interest in other cultures while celebrating their own.

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*“There are similarities between Welsh and French in terms of sentence structure, identifying differences between masculine and feminine nouns. And we feel that children are able to take it all in and they enjoy the experience. If they have a little bit on a regular basis from when they are young, they’ll have the basics in a third language by the time they move up to secondary education.”*

**MFL co-ordinator**

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*“My feeling is to give them immersion in as many different languages as we can, my plan is for French with Years 3 and 4, moving to German for Years 5 and 6. As we are having a little bit more freedom to develop the new curriculum, and as it is a major part of the Literacy, Languages and Communication AoLE. We want to be involved in that international aspect.”*

**Headteacher**

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## STUDY FINDINGS

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Schools reported a wide range of creative methods of introducing a range of languages to different year groups. These approaches illustrate the potential for introducing MFL in innovative ways, incorporating cross-phase delivery through partnerships with secondary schools and building links with international schools. Some schools have also invested in developing the language skills of staff in order to embed provision and support its sustainability over the longer term.

### Two approaches to introducing German provision

In one school, Year 5 have received German lessons, initially during the first half hour of the day. The goal has been to enable pupils to write to German pupils in a school their teacher was visiting. Language Magician was used at the beginning to support learning development. German is available at the secondary school from Year 9, but due to the enthusiasm of the pupils when they moved to secondary school, a German club was offered to Year 7.

Another school has been teaching German in Year 4 since September 2018. Pupils are taught German for one hour a week alongside incidental German during other lessons. The children have benefited from resources provided via the Goethe Institut to support their learning through songs, games, apps and videos, with cartoon characters used to help pupils learn German words.

Schools are employing different strategies to integrate languages into the curriculum. For example, in one school pupils learnt songs about pirates in German and Welsh to support literacy work based on a pirate theme. These activities also formed part of an assembly delivered to parents. Pupils are encouraged to answer the register in German or Welsh and are learning a variety of other songs in German to develop their basic vocabulary.

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*“Languages sit in the curriculum really well, you have to be creative, we’re linking them to RE, geography, literacy, numeracy and therefore making staff more aware that languages are important.”*

**MFL co-ordinator**

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*“German is another thing that we can do, and it is fun to learn something different and it will help us as we get older...as well as learning about the language we also learn about the culture and what they celebrate, their history and religion.”*

**Pupil**

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In another school a group of pupils are currently entering a French pop music video competition run by the Alliance Française, composing a rap during an after-school club. The following vignettes illustrate the differing approaches adopted by primary schools in Wales and the case studies in the Annex provide further information on some of the approaches delivered.

### Vignette 1

In one small rural school the headteacher delivers French provision to key stage 2 pupils (there are a total of 10 key stage 2 pupils in the school). She generally provides up to an hour of French every week, often in blocks of around 20 minutes. Due to the small size of the school, she teaches French to Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 at the same time, but sometimes separates them into small groups to work on particular tasks. She focuses on listening and speaking skills and primarily on key themes such as singing, numbers, colours, and introducing themselves.

To support provision the school uses the *PowerLanguage* platform (access has been purchased through consortium funding), which includes useful worksheets and resources. The consortium has also provided further support by purchasing resources for schools to use (DVD with songs, books, dictionaries). She also tries to embed French into other lessons, ensuring that French is interwoven into other subjects. For example, when learning about animals she will introduce their French names as well.

### Vignette 2

In a school participating in the *Cerdd Iaith* project, two teachers delivered Spanish provision to Years 5 and 6. Neither of the teachers spoke any Spanish to begin with but this was viewed as a positive, pupils and teachers were starting at the same level and learning together. Teachers had additional CPD for activities e.g. learning songs and rhythms in Welsh, Spanish and English, resources about Patagonia and the voyage of the Mimosa. They were supported by British Council Wales, ERW's MFL co-ordinator and professional musicians from the National Orchestra of Wales. *Cerdd Iaith* provided a range of resources and materials, which gave the school access to songs and music, language cards and worksheets, which were then supplemented by professional musicians giving music lessons.

### Vignette 3

In 2017-18 the school introduced Italian into reception, Years 2 and 3 studied German, Years 4 and 5 French and Year 6 Spanish, which also involved a transition project with a local secondary. The school has a focus on creative ways to teach languages. They link languages firmly into the curriculum, linking to Global Citizenship including a celebration of Bastille Day, celebrating International Languages Day by linking to art and European artists. As well as language skills, they want to provide intercultural understanding and desire for their young people to think about the wider world. They are undertaking projects on space and the seaside in the Foundation Phase, again linking to other aspects of the curriculum and giving languages purpose and resonance. They have links with a French school and are also building relations with a school in Spain.

### 3.3 Impact of MFL provision

#### Key findings

##### Impact of MFL provision:

- Schools report positive impacts on learners, teachers, schools and partnerships
- Pupils' literacy and oracy is improving along with confidence, aspirations and transferable skills
- MFL is providing improved opportunities for transition work with secondary schools
- Regional educational consortia, British Council Wales and international organisations support access to training and resources
- Teachers are keen to pursue further training to deliver MFL. However, there are challenges regarding time, funding and access to CPD

Schools that have introduced MFL over the past two years report a wide range of positive impacts for learners, teachers, the wider school and their local and regional partnerships. These have ranged from improvements in pupils' literacy and oracy skills and their confidence and aspirations along with improved opportunities for primary schools to work with secondary schools on MFL transition projects. Schools also reported challenges, particularly in finding time to fit MFL into the curriculum, accessing further CPD and resources to sustain and enhance teacher skills.

#### 3.3.1 Impact on pupils

For all schools there has been a noticeable impact on pupils' skills and aspirations through MFL provision. Language learning is reported as being something new, engaging and interesting for pupils in primary schools. Schools reported strong engagement levels from pupils across the participating year groups (largely Years 4, 5 and 6) and all schools reported improved levels of confidence and self-esteem amongst participating pupils. All schools highlighted the benefits for wider literacy and oracy, again reporting enhanced skills, confidence levels and engagement with learning, with one Headteacher reporting that *'pupils have risen to the challenge.'*

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*"They pick it up so quickly, it's amazing."*

**MFL co-ordinator**

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*"It's a completely new subject and this tends to make pupils enthusiastic. It also means they are better prepared for MFL in Key Stage 3."*

**Headteacher**

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In one school MFL co-ordinators and teachers have observed that those pupils who are already bilingual or multilingual excel at other languages, *'using their decoding skills'*. Another school reported that more able and talented (MAT) pupils *'really look forward to it as it's something they can't do yet they challenge themselves.'* In another school pupils were reported to enjoy the resources provided through *Cerdd Iaith*, linking MFL to music, dance and singing, while another MFL co-ordinator praised the learning app *Language Nut*, commenting, *'the pupils enjoy the competitive element of the resource, where they can see other schools' scores. The children recognised that the games were testing them 'but in a fun way.'*



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*“I was excited when I heard we were going to learn Spanish but also slightly nervous, I didn’t know what it was going to be like. I relaxed quickly though, you get into it, it gives you confidence.”*

*“If you learn words in songs you begin to recognise them when you see them written down”*

*“We like languages because you can go to other countries and meet people, travel the world, do good jobs like photography and architecture, you can go to posh restaurants where they speak French or decide to move to a country and be a chef.”*

### **Pupil focus groups**

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Some schools also reported that pupils who do not usually achieve as highly in other subjects were observed to be doing well with the new language. In one school pupils who encounter difficulties engaging in lessons were enthusiastic about ‘international week’ and the language learning activities involved. MFL was also reported to have had an impact on quieter children in several schools, with MFL co-ordinators highlighting that learning MFL is not a traditional way of learning and can contribute to developing these pupils’ confidence to engage. In all schools MFL co-ordinators reported being impressed by pupils’ ability to recall vocabulary and phrases and by their enthusiasm to learn more.

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*“They were so confident... very eloquent.”*

### **Headteacher**

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*“We email other schools in Welsh and French. We tell our names, ages, about our pets, what we like doing. We’re writing a song in French called ‘Bienvenu au Pays de Galles’, it’s about what’s nice and beautiful in Wales and has a rap too.”*

### **Pupil focus group**

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*“Pupils have a section at the back of their homework books where they have a French vocabulary list. They are encouraged to research and add new words in their own time under their own initiative. They have really enjoyed this independence and ownership, coming to school and showing off to their classmates the new words they have discovered and added over the weekend.”*

### **MFL co-ordinator**

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One school reported that using German, Welsh and English during assembly presentations illustrated the progress made by pupils in their language skills and their confidence to interchange between languages. Another school reported that their pupils are developing good standards of Welsh and French in writing as evidenced to their Challenge Advisor, identifying commonalities and patterns between different languages. The following vignette also highlights pupils’ positive response to learning a new language. The case studies included in the Annex to this report also include comments from pupils on the difference learning MFL has made to them.

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## STUDY FINDINGS

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### Vignette 4

For one school, language provision has become part of School Improvement Targets. For the head, “this shows parents, governors and staff that MFL are taken seriously”. While there are currently no assessment tools for Key Stage 2 French and German in Wales progress is reviewed half termly for governors and their challenge adviser. For the SLT representatives impact on pupils of learning MFL is therefore more about attitudes to learning, confidence, and aspirations. The head reported that “the parents are very supportive; they feel the value of a multilingual and cultural approach. They want their children to experience this”.

“It has been a really successful start, in a pupil voice survey 86% of pupils said they loved languages. They wanted more, it was helpful for staff to see the positive response and to be able to deliver on this since.” MFL co-ordinator

### 3.3.2 Partnerships

Primary schools working in partnership with local secondary schools reported that MFL-based work has enhanced transition activity, providing opportunities for pupils to meet secondary teachers and to experience taster language lessons. There has also been school-to-school working to co-develop resources and exchange good practice. Some primary and secondary schools have combined to develop funding applications to support exchange visits, and partnerships with schools through programmes such as Erasmus+ and those funded by international organisations such as Goethe Institut, Alliance Française and the Italian Consulate.

One school has two Erasmus+ links; one in Mallorca and one in Budapest and is involved in a two-year exchange programme with a Hungarian school. Ten pupils are visiting Hungary in June 2019 and the schools share writing and songs between the pupils. The school is also part of UK German Connection (funded by the German Government) and a teacher from Germany contributed to class sessions during a week-long school placement.

Support from all four regional consortia to introduce and sustain MFL was welcomed by schools. The consortia are reported to have provided a range of support including funding, training, resources, expertise and contacts. MFL training sessions have proved popular, with introductions to the types of support and resources available and different pedagogies and teaching approaches being shared at these events. Some consortia have also purchased resources for schools to use as part of delivering MFL and provided further small amounts of funding to help the schools attend training, delivering language days and supporting networking.

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*“Our regional MFL lead is a Spanish and French secondary teacher, she is really pushing us in a good direction and has started opening doors for us re: Global Futures.”*

#### Headteacher

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Representatives from the four consortia outlined their structured approaches to supporting MFL, with some having undertaken audits of MFL provision in primary schools in order to better target resources and build on schools’ strengths and aspirations. Some consortia are currently monitoring the progress and impact of these initiatives, providing a further evidence base for the positive impact of MFL provision within primary schools in future.

Input from British Council Wales is also reported by schools to have been very beneficial, again in terms of provision of support for networking, developing resources and in the expertise of its staff, who have encouraged schools to develop new networks as well as alerting them to other potential funding opportunities and projects such as *Cerdd Iaith*. One MFL co-ordinator commented on the opportunity to attend the State of the Language talk, *‘it has opened doors to new opportunities with British Council Wales and other schools in the area and with secondary schools for transition work’*.

Delivering MFL has led to an increase in co-operation between primary schools, working in some regions through clusters, and exchanging good practice relating to ways of integrating MFL into the new curriculum. Some of the case study schools are hub schools within their regional consortium and are provided with additional funding to lead on cluster or partnership working for languages with other local primaries. One school is currently co-creating new resources with support from their consortium as part of this approach. For the school's MFL co-ordinator '**these are saving time and removing barriers**'. Representatives from the regional consortia outlined further initiatives to support cooperation including the development of MFL ambassadors within schools.

However, hub schools within the study group reported that engagement remains a challenge due to limited funding, securing cover, lack of time and concerns that MFL provision is to the detriment of other aspects of the curriculum. Several case study schools, which have recently introduced MFL reported similar challenges with regard to identifying 'purposeful' CPD, mentoring and developing sharing resources. Representatives from the regional consortia echoed these views and outlined that building teacher confidence remains a key challenge along with the time it takes to upskill staff.

Further challenges regarding access to resources and support, and some headteachers not valuing – or seeing – the potential of languages were reported. Concern was also expressed about the continuing decline of MFL take-up in secondary schools in Wales and the introduction of languages in primary schools was considered to be an important element in addressing this.

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*“Perceptions of languages are so important; they have to be part of pupils’ aspirations. You have to make it easy for schools, Welsh Government have to value them, promote them and encourage them.”*

**Headteacher**

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### 3.3.3 Impact on staff

Teachers involved in delivering MFL reported that it has increased their confidence as teachers. For some with previous experience of studying or teaching MFL new resources have given them enhanced knowledge and ideas of introducing languages to primary pupils. Those with no previous experience reported increased confidence levels, appreciation for support from the consortium and aspirations to continue learning MFL with their pupils. Several teachers reported that they now had confidence to engage with other colleagues to promote MFL across other year groups and demonstrate the positive impact that MFL is having on pupils.

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*“My French isn’t amazing. I did French to GCSE. I think it’s an advantage that I’m learning and that they are aware of this. If I make a mistake they’re happy to correct me and I’m happy for them to do this. This gives them a sense of taking the reins a little bit and it makes them feel proud. They feel like the boss.”* **MFL Co-ordinator**

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For several schools, a key feature of the positive impact of MFL has been having well trained staff. One school noted that they have put a focus during recruitment on teachers with language skills, and existing staff have been encouraged to develop and sustain any language skills that they have. Six teachers at the school have been registered on Open University modules for language learning, which are reported to have helped staff with their Welsh too.

Teaching staff confirmed that their main challenges included finding time and space in the curriculum and developing their own language skills. Despite support from consortia it was reported that the professional learning offer relating to MFL in some regions is only available to secondary schools. Teachers commented that they would like further resources that could guide their own learning and would welcome the opportunity to observe secondary school teachers teaching languages as well as the opportunity (and cover) to participate in more one-off intensive training days.

### 3.4 Sustainability, good practice and future development of MFL

#### Key findings

##### Sustainability, good practice and future development of MFL:

- All schools visited are continuing with MFL provision, including in some cases committing to sustaining provision after project funding ends
- Some schools are planning to extend the choice of languages and year groups where MFL is provided
- Building capacity and confidence of staff is key to expansion plans
- Using resources and exploring partnerships and exchange of good practice with other schools is ongoing
- New curriculum and initiatives like *Global Futures* offer opportunities, but further, sustainable funding to support MFL should follow

All of the primary schools have plans to sustain, and in some cases extend, MFL provision, looking at introducing languages earlier and making plans to extend the choice of languages and the year groups to whom it is provided. For one school '*a bilingual approach has become a multilingual approach*,' and they plan to teach Italian in reception and Year 1 and a range of languages to other year groups. Another school intends to offer a different language to each year group, with the intention of developing pupils' 'passion for language' and linking languages to different school projects. These examples indicate the ambition of some of the schools in taking MFL forward over the next few years.

Other schools are aiming to build up provision more gradually, building on the success of previous projects and continuing to use resources these provided. One headteacher commented that this approach was helping to embed MFL into wider school provision and raise awareness of the value and importance of language learning. Another reported that MFL was now '*part of our ethos*' and included in the five year school development plan and they were planning '*a steady roll out*' of language learning opportunities across year groups.

Several schools also noted they collected input from parents and governors to inform language provision and underlined that this consultative approach helps raise the profile of language learning. Schools noted that they saw International Languages as a logical part of the new curriculum and their commitment to promoting internationalism would help ensure provision is sustained.

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*"I'm going to make it fit, because of the value they will have out of it, we are not thinking in the box of English, we are thinking in the box of literacy and communication, it hits so many of the skills."*

#### Headteacher

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Increasing the pool of staff able to deliver MFL was considered a priority for schools looking to sustain provision. In some cases the MFL co-ordinator is also the headteacher or other senior member of staff and there is recognition that encouraging and supporting other teachers to develop, or enhance existing, language skills is necessary to widen opportunities to other year groups. For one co-ordinator it is critical to be able to convince other members of staff who have perhaps not had a good experience of language learning to teach it. Several others acknowledged that delivering languages could be a challenge without having an expert on the teaching staff or good resources.

One MFL co-ordinator noted that teachers *'need to know that they do not have to be fluent in a language to teach it, having a bank of planning and learning resources is key, yet all teaching and support staff need time to upskill'*. Opportunity for support, potentially from secondary school MFL teachers and consortium funded training was considered essential. MFL co-ordinators also highlighted that it will take time to embed MFL within the curriculum, including time for teachers to plan and utilise resources to deliver quality MFL provision.

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*"It's all very well having a specialist in school, but you need more teachers who can teach languages, and it is important for teachers to understand you don't have to be a certain level to teach"*

### Headteacher

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*"Literacy and oracy is key – the new curriculum will offer more opportunities to be creative about this – it will allow every pupil to thrive and express themselves, languages can be a huge part of this, and teachers can facilitate this."*

### Headteacher

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Schools report that there is a wealth of resources available to support delivery of MFL. However, schools' commitment and ideas have to be matched with funding to continue to support MFL within the context of the new curriculum in Wales. *Global Futures* was welcomed by most schools although several were unaware of what it covered in terms of MFL learning and others felt there was a current lack of funding to support the ambition of the programme. Concerns were also raised about what was described as the 'vagueness' of the programme's aims and, as outlined earlier, perceived limitations in the programme's ability to address the fall in the numbers of pupils studying MFL at GCSE and beyond.

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*"MFL need greater commitment, more support especially with funding as many schools are running deficits. Schools will look inwards otherwise; they won't collaborate, and this will go against everything Welsh Government and the consortia are trying to achieve. It's easy to drop languages if there are no resources, funding gives us the opportunity to create and share resources, to get other staff involved."*

### MFL Co-ordinator

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Despite the support available through existing programmes and resources to support non-specialist language teachers in the primary sector, the study also heard some concerns about the sustainability and the ability to expand primary language provision. These concerns fell into three categories.

Firstly, while there is support available, stakeholders suggest there is a lack of awareness of the training opportunities on offer. This was illustrated by a number of the schools who participated in the study who noted that they were unaware of resources and training prior to their involvement in *Global Futures* or other targeted initiatives.

Secondly, there is a lack of understanding across the school system of the professional development needs of the primary sector workforce in relation to language teaching: there is insufficient knowledge of what teachers needs are in order to enable them to be effective second language teachers, both in terms of their language skills, access to resources and teaching methods.

Thirdly, and linked to the point above, stakeholders interviewed underlined the importance of recognising the need to develop an understanding of, and expertise in, second language teaching pedagogies among primary teachers. Stakeholders emphasised the difference between first and second language acquisition and the need to ensure teachers are supported to develop the teaching skills and methods needed to teach second and third languages. Stakeholders suggested that more structured and systematic approaches to professional development are needed if primary languages are to be expanded or scaled up significantly as part of the new curriculum arrangements.

# 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Drivers for MFL provision

The development of MFL provision in primary schools in Wales is currently being driven by a number of factors. The alignment of *Global Futures* to the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience in the new Curriculum for Wales underpins the ambition to ensure young people in Wales are equipped to understand other cultures and recognise the importance of MFL. Although some schools participating in this impact study were very aware of the potential for *Global Futures* in supporting MFL provision, not all were aware of it, or convinced of its effectiveness. It therefore appears that there needs to be further focus on supporting the development of creative and innovative teaching and learning of MFL across Wales.

Headteachers have driven the introduction of MFL provision across the schools featured in this report, but other members of staff are also taking the lead in some schools. MFL co-ordinators are monitoring progress and identifying partnerships and funding opportunities and being encouraged by headteachers who recognise their skills and aspirations for language learning. Headteachers and MFL co-ordinators have emphasised their ambition to be creative, bilingual or even multilingual schools and for their pupils to prosper as lifelong learners and global citizens, with the teaching and learning of MFL linking well with schools' international ethos and aspirations.

Successful funding applications to a range of UK and international organisations has provided support and resources for some schools; this includes working with a range of organisations to develop MFL opportunities and ensuring that teachers have access to appropriate training. The regional educational consortia and British Council Wales are considered to have been key partners in supporting this approach and the partnerships developed with schools should be sustained in future to build on this progress.

## International Languages and the new curriculum

Schools have used the flexibility afforded through the new curriculum to develop creative approaches for teaching and learning MFL, linking language learning to aspects such as science, music and art. Across the schools participating in this impact study, teachers are using a variety of techniques to introduce MFL and engage learners. In many instances, integrating MFL within the curriculum, and ensuring 'incidental' learning has been key for learners' progress and enjoyment. Opportunities to share good practice with other local schools is also developing productive partnerships and using secondary MFL teachers in the primary sector presents opportunities to share skill and knowledge.

Both Welsh-medium and English-medium primary schools reported the benefits of linking MFL to the teaching and learning of Welsh. Teachers described their use of pedagogical approaches to help pupils make links between Welsh and MFL, looking at sentence structures and cognates to improve their skills and confidence as language learners. MFL co-ordinators outlined that there is scope to develop these links to Welsh further, instilling positive attitudes and enhancing awareness of multiculturalism and diversity, which relate to the aims of Cymraeg 2050.

Teachers delivering MFL in primary schools possess a range of expertise, with some having a high level of proficiency in the language while others are starting at the beginning and learning alongside the pupils. As a result, access to relevant training and effective resources has been critical to success for all levels of teachers and this flexible approach to CPD for MFL should continue to be encouraged and funded in future. A Wales-wide audit of MFL in the primary sector would allow identification of current strengths and skills gaps, and could allow for more targeted support for MFL teaching and learning.

### Impact on pupils

Primary schools that have introduced MFL have reported a range of positive impacts on pupils, teachers, the wider school and regional partnerships. Pupils' literacy and oracy skills are reported to have improved, with progress in communication skills and engagement with learning reported in all schools. Schools have used a range of methods to introduce MFL, including music, rhymes and games. Teachers report that these methods have helped engage learners, leading to improved confidence and self-esteem among participating pupils. Anecdotal feedback from staff highlighted the positive impact MFL learning has had on both high achievers and lower ability learners.

Some schools have started monitoring progress and the impact of participation in MFL on pupil attainment. However, MFL has been introduced too recently in other schools for any significant monitoring to have been undertaken. This is an area that will require further focus in future and for hub schools to develop and share approaches to assessing learner progress and impact.

### Partnerships

Partnerships with other local primary schools and secondary schools have provided useful support for teachers delivering MFL and have also strengthened transition activities for pupils. The sharing of resources and expertise via regional educational consortia, British Council Wales, international organisations and schools in other countries has also proved beneficial for schools' engagement with language learning.

There is potential to develop and strengthen such partnership opportunities further to continue to enhance staff skills, the exchange of good practice and expand the introduction of MFL in the primary sector. Enhancing the role of, and funding for, hub schools in promoting MFL, developing more partnerships with secondary schools through using MFL pupil ambassadors and the expertise of secondary school teachers would all support the drive to expand MFL in the primary sector.

### Sustainability

All schools involved in the study have intentions to increase MFL provision, expanding the opportunity to other school years, or to sustain the progress made. Schools intend to continue to access resources such as *Cerdd Iaith*, *Language Nut* and *PowerLanguage* platform and other programmes found to be effective. Nevertheless, schools have reported that lack of curriculum time has proved challenging to ensure MFL is consistently and effectively delivered. Lack of sustained access to funding for MFL training, which would improve teachers' confidence and skill levels to deliver MFL and provide opportunities to acquire resources, was noted by some teachers and stakeholders as a further challenge to successful delivery.

Stakeholders also underlined the importance of developing understanding of effective second language teaching pedagogies among primary teachers. It was suggested that more structured and systematic approaches to professional development are needed if primary languages are to be expanded or scaled up significantly as part of the new curriculum arrangements.

### Future development of MFL

The current level of available funding does not appear to match the ambition primary schools have for MFL provision. Additional funding and support is therefore likely to be needed to provide training opportunities for staff, allowing them to attend training and visits to other schools to observe and share practice. The success of the initial MFL provision explored during this impact study is leading to a vision for an enhanced multilingual approach in some schools, which should be supported through *Global Futures* and its successor strategies and Welsh Government's forthcoming international strategy.

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## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Recommendations

1. Headteachers are key to the successful implementation of MFL in primary schools and future promotion of *Global Futures* and successor strategies should be targeted towards effective engagement with them.
2. The drive to support MFL in primary schools should encourage the development of a multilingual approach where staff skills, funding and pupil and parental aspirations allow. This flexible approach could form part of any successor strategy to *Global Futures* and link to future planning of secondary MFL provision.
3. Regional consortia should continue with the process of promoting the expertise of MFL secondary school teachers, developing pupil ambassadors and funding hub schools to support the drive to expand MFL in the primary sector.
4. A flexible approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for primary teachers, recognising their differing levels of MFL expertise and confidence, should continue to be supported. This CPD should focus on developing skills in second language teaching pedagogies as well as language skills among primary teachers.
5. Specific support should be provided to primary schools to improve awareness of how to promote 'incidental' learning of MFL across the curriculum. This can be linked to approaches to promoting transferable skills for pupils.
6. There is scope to develop the links and learning materials between MFL and Welsh further to support pupils' development of transferable skills and to enhance progress towards multilingualism.
7. Sharing of good practice for the development of monitoring systems to assess pupil progress and the impact of MFL should be a focus for hub schools in future.
8. A national audit of MFL primary provision, building on work undertaken in some regions, would allow for a better understanding of current strengths and weaknesses and allow for more targeted support in future. This audit could also explore the demand for a dedicated online resource for MFL, which could enable schools to share good practice in MFL provision.
9. British Council Wales has an important role to fulfil in continuing to support schools to access training and funding and should focus on facilitating ongoing networking and funding opportunities for MFL.



# ANNEX: CASE STUDIES

The following five case studies provide more detailed overview of MFL delivery and impact.

## **Case study 1: Llansannor & Llanharry CIW Primary School, Cowbridge**

- 230 pupils
- 5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals
- English is the home language for almost all pupils
- CSC region

Key themes presented include different curricula approaches; Italian; and languages and school improvement.

## **Case study 2: Ysgol T Llew Jones, Brynhoffnant**

- 197 pupils
- 30% of pupils are Welsh speaking
- 14% of pupils are eligible for free school meals
- ERW region

Key themes presented include *Cerdd Iaith*; Spanish; and impact on pupil oracy and attainment.

## **Case study 3: St. Paul's Church in Wales Primary School**

- 209 pupils
- 29% of pupils eligible for free school meals
- English is the predominant language for 63% of pupils
- CSC region

Key themes presented include accessing funding; German; expanding community languages.

## **Case study 4: Osbaston Church in Wales School, Monmouth**

- 201 pupils
- A very small percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals
- Very few pupils have support in English as an additional language
- EAS region

Key themes presented include partnership working with secondary school; German; making MFL a school priority.

## **Case study 5: Ysgol Gynradd Santes Gwenfaen Rhoscolyn, Holyhead, Anglesey**

- 106 pupils
- Until Year 2 everything is delivered in Welsh
- 11% of pupils eligible for free school meals
- GwE region

Key themes presented include impact of training; Welsh medium education; learning with the pupils.

# CASE STUDY 1

## Llansannor and Llanharry CIW Primary School Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan

### About the school:

- 230 pupils
- 5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals
- English is the home language for almost all pupils

### Background

The school is passionate about modern foreign languages and both the headteacher and MFL co-ordinator speak French and Italian.

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*“Languages sit in the curriculum really well, you have to be creative, we’re linking them to RE, geography, literacy, numeracy and therefore making staff more aware that languages are important.”*

**MFL co-ordinator**

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### MFL Provision

They started with the idea of becoming a bilingual school, inspired by a school that was delivering French from the age of five in London. They were supported in this ambition by Estyn and their education consortium and initial preparations included assessing the skillset of staff and training opportunities (two staff subsequently received Erasmus + training in German) and contacting a representative of the Italian Consulate who delivered Italian lessons.

In 2017-18 Italian was introduced into reception, Years 2 and 3 studied German, Years 4 and 5 French and Year 6 Spanish, which also involved a transition project with the local secondary school.

This year they have continued to receive funding from the Italian consulate to teach Italian in reception and Year 1, and deliver German in Year 2, French in Years 3 and 4 French, Spanish in Year 5 and French during Year 6.

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*“A bilingual approach had suddenly become a multilingual approach...it was a really successful start, in a pupil voice survey 86% of pupils said they loved languages. They wanted more, it was helpful for staff to see the positive response and to be able to deliver on this since.”*

**Headteacher**

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The school puts a focus on creative ways to teach languages. They link languages firmly into the curriculum, linking to Global Citizenship including a celebration of Bastille Day, celebrating International Languages Day by linking to art and European artists. As well as language skills. They want to provide intercultural understanding and desire for their young people to think about the wider world.

The school is completing projects on space and the seaside in the Foundation Phase, again linking to other aspects of the curriculum and giving languages purpose and resonance. They have links with a French school, and are building relations with a school in Spain too.

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*“We email other schools in Welsh and French. We tell our names, ages, about our pets, what we like doing. We’re writing a song in French called ‘Bienvenu au Pays De Galles’, it’s about what’s nice and beautiful in Wales and has a rap too.”*

### **Pupil**

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## Impact on pupils and the school

The pupils are developing good standards of Welsh and French in writing as evidenced to their Challenge Advisor. They are spotting commonalities, cognates, progress which links closely to the requirements of new curriculum. MFL is about raising pupils’ ambitions and confidence in terms of language learning. A key feature of provision is having well trained staff. The school notes that they have put a focus in recruitment on those teachers with language skills – for the SLT there are additional positive advantages in that these teachers often have better literacy and grammar skills too.

Teaching staff therefore have a range of language skills and have been encouraged to develop and sustain these through CPD.

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*“We like languages because you can go to other countries and meet people, travel the world, do good jobs like photography and architecture, you can go to posh restaurants where they speak French or decide to move to a country and be a chef.”*

### **Pupil**

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## Future Sustainability

Language provision has become part of their School Improvement Targets and progress is reviewed half termly for governors and the challenge adviser. The school would like to consider immersion classes in future. However, for the moment the focus is on continuing their provision and activities as a hub school. They do note, however, that schools’ commitment and ideas have to be matched with funding in order to continue to support MFL within the context of the new curriculum in Wales.

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*“The new curriculum and Global Futures can be a catalyst and a launching pad for MFL within schools if the right support is there.”*

### **Headteacher**

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# CASE STUDY 2

## Ysgol T Llew Jones Brynhoffnant, Ceredigion

### About the school:

- 197 pupils
- 30% of pupils are Welsh speaking
- 14% of pupils are eligible for free school meals

### Background

The school was built in 2012, merging other primaries in the area. It has 197 pupils, 30% of whom are Welsh speaking. They started MFL provision two years ago through the Cerdd Iaith/Listening to Language project, one of four schools in the region to take part. They have always had an international element to the school, having worked with schools in Norway, Sweden and Ireland on an EU funded Comenius project and running an annual international week.

### MFL Provision

The school undertook the project with Years 5 and 6, using two teachers. Neither of the teachers spoke any Spanish to begin with but this was viewed as a positive, as pupils and teachers were starting at the same level and learning together. *Cerdd Iaith* provided a range of resources and materials, giving teaching staff access to songs and music, Spanish language cards and worksheets, which were then supplemented by the visit of professional musicians.

They also had an education consortium training day, delivered by a secondary school Spanish teacher from Swansea and additional support from British Council Wales.

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*“The mix of music and learning Spanish really appealed in a bilingual school. It was an ambitious project and fitted in with aspirations and ethos of being a creative school.”*

**Headteacher**

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### Impact on pupils and the school

Participating in the project has given the pupils greater confidence and self-esteem and 'they have risen to the challenge'. Teachers reported a positive impact on pupils' oracy skills and attainment, with some moving from level 3 to level 4 within 6 months of participating in the project. It has increased the teachers' confidence too, made them more aware of international cultures and opened doors to new opportunities with British Council Wales and secondary schools for transition work.

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*"I was excited when I heard we were going to learn Spanish but also slightly nervous, I didn't know what it was going to be like. I relaxed quickly though, you get into it, it gives you confidence."* **Pupil**

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The challenges have included finding time in the curriculum and developing teachers' language skills further, they would love to observe how a secondary teacher teaches languages and participate in more one-off intensive training days.

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*"Mike the musician came in and did activities with us. Learning the songs was really fun and we did it in Welsh, English and Spanish. It all made sense."*

**Pupil**

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### Future Sustainability

The project came to an end in 2018. However, the school has continued to use the *Cerdd Iaith* resources and Spanish for Years 5 and 6 has now been integrated into the school provision rather than a specific project. In the view of the Head, 'this can help with progress and sustainability.'

In future they would like to introduce MFL for each class, potentially broadening the choice of languages to French and German too. They believe that this approach would link well to the new curriculum. However, teachers will require further CPD, to ensure they are knowledgeable enough to introduce and teach these languages. Good resources have been integral to their progress as a bilingual school, and literacy and oracy is key for them to allow every pupil to thrive and express themselves. MFL is seen as being an important part of this approach.

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*"MFL provision links closely to the new curriculum. We want to be able to embed things creatively. We aim for every pupil to leave the school being bilingual in English and Welsh so there is scope to link these skills to the learning of another language."*

**Deputy Head**

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# CASE STUDY 3

## St. Paul's Church in Wales Primary School Cardiff

### About the school:

- 209 pupils
- 29% of pupils eligible for free school meals
- English is the predominant language for 63% of pupils

### Background

The arrival of a German speaking member of teaching staff provided impetus for MFL in the school. Since September 2018, German has been integrated into the curriculum for Year 4. Year 6 are taught French to support transition to secondary school. The school is also engaged in a partnership with a school in Hungary. An extra-curricular German club is available to all Year 3 to 6 pupils.

The school successfully applied for funding from the Goethe Institut, which paid for *Language Nut*, a digital language resource, and the MFL co-ordinator to visit other schools. The Goethe Institut are also funding a trip for seven pupils to visit the Institut in London. The headteacher highlights that 'it's not about teaching a language' but about teaching many different languages in order to get the benefits.

### MFL Provision

Year 4 pupils are taught German for one hour a week alongside incidental German during other lessons. The children have benefited from resources provided via the Goethe Institut to support learning via songs, games, apps and videos. Pupils reported enjoying the cartoon characters used in the short videos to help them learn vocabulary. The school has Erasmus+ links in Mallorca and in Budapest. Ten pupils are visiting Hungary in June 2019 and the schools are sharing writing and songs.

The school are also part of UK German Connection, and a teacher from Germany contributed to class sessions for a week during a school placement.

A small group of Year 6 pupils are creating a rap for a French pop music video competition run by the French Institute. The pupils are confident to have a go at different activities with the intention for all activities being for 'pupils to just have fun'.

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*"We can get to be really good, as we are learning when we are younger. German is used in a different country; a different place and it feels really cool to learn something completely new."*

#### Pupil

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The school uses *Language Nut* to support learning, pupils were very positive about their experience and how the different approaches helped them; for example, learning songs in German such as 'Happy Birthday' and 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' helps to learn vocabulary.

### Impact on pupils and the school

Some pupils with English as a second language really excel in German as they 'use their decoding skills'. The *Language Nut* resource has also been beneficial for Welsh. The pupils enjoy the competitive element of the resource, where they can see other schools' scores. The children commented that the games were testing them 'but in a fun way'. Pupils are aware that there is no assessment for the German, and they seem more relaxed as they enjoy learning the language.

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*"We have fun, the response has been so positive, pupils are open to learning a language [...] I think it has benefitted Welsh greatly as well."*

**MFL co-ordinator**

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The children commented that learning German will help them to find languages easier to learn as they get older. Pupils also enjoyed sharing their new skills with their family; teaching younger relatives 'Welsh and German to help in nursery'.

Guest speakers from the Cardiff Stuttgart Association have also visited the school and video conferencing opportunities were arranged for pupils to ask questions in German on sea life to a film-maker in Austria.

### Future Sustainability

As long as the new curriculum allows for the incorporation of language, there will be time to teach it, but it will take time to embed. Between them pupils speak 27 languages and the school plans to expand language provision to include community languages as well as MFL. Time for teachers to plan is required and it is critical to be able to convince other members of staff who have perhaps not had a good experience of MFL to teach it. Funding to enable staff training would help.

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*"It's all very well having a specialist in school, but you need more teachers who can teach languages, and it is important for teachers to understand you don't have to be a certain level to teach"*

**Headteacher**

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With the new curriculum in its infancy, the school is interpreting the requirements and being able to personalise the new curriculum means local cultural elements can be included; e.g. Grangetown Carnival provides the school with opportunities.

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*"We think it's important for them to understand that there's a whole world out there [...] and we have always tried to celebrate the children's home languages."*

**Headteacher**

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# CASE STUDY 4

## Osbaston Church in Wales School Monmouth, Monmouthshire

### About the school:

- 201 pupils
- A very small percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals
- Very few pupils have support in English as an additional language

### Background

The school linked with a local secondary school for 'The Gruffalo Project' in 2017; culminating in Year 5 pupils performing the Gruffalo story in German. The Gruffalo's author, Julia Donaldson attended and promoted language learning to pupils. The pupils continued to learn German when they moved to Year 6, a couple of sixth formers from the secondary school also ran the German club under the teacher's supervision.

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*"My feeling is to give them immersion in as many different languages as we can, my plan is for French with Years 3 and 4, moving to German for Years 5 and 6. As we are having a little bit more freedom to develop the new curriculum, and as it is a major part of the Literacy, Languages and Communication AoLE, we want to be involved in that international aspect."*

**Headteacher**

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A secondary MFL teacher provides PPA cover in the school. German is available at the secondary school from Year 9, but due to the enthusiasm of the pupils involved in the Gruffalo project when they moved to secondary school, a German club was offered to Year 7.

The school received Goethe Institut funding to purchase the Language Magician. At the beginning the school encountered difficulties with the technology and being able to have everyone online at the same time. Currently MFL is in addition to existing school priorities, but with the direction of the new curriculum MFL will be a priority the school intends to develop.

### MFL Provision

Since January 2019 Year 5 have received German lessons, initially during the first half hour of the day. The goal was to enable pupils to write to German pupils, in a school their teacher was visiting. As a result of the German being delivered by the PPA teacher the format varies according to whether the PPA is timetabled for morning or afternoon.



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*“Language Magician “was a fun way of learning, as when you are younger you don’t like to be just sat there writing down things, you want to learn in a fun way, and I think you do learn better when you are not having to just sit there.”*

**Pupil**

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The aspects of Language Magician that the children enjoyed were that it was not too hard, there were multiple choice questions, and answers are given at the end. Pupils also found using German songs a fun way to learn. The MFL teacher commented that using songs can also help to immerse the children in German culture too. The MFL teacher set up a Duolingo classroom (an app). This worked well, and pupils continued to use it when they moved to secondary. The pupils became competitive, as they knew the teacher would see their weekly scores.

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*“I’m trying to ignite a passion there, not just for the language but for the culture, so that hopefully they will take that with them.”*

**MFL co-ordinator**

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### Impact on pupils and the school

There has been a noticeable impact on pupils’ transferable skills. The Welsh teacher reported that the children had been telling her what cognates were; having discussed these during German lessons. Games have been useful, staff use these as part of their Welsh teaching and these are useful to teach German too, e.g. Splat.

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*“German is another thing that we can do, and it is fun to learn something different and it will help us as we get older...[..]. as well as learning about the language we also learn about the culture and what they celebrate, their history and religion.”*

**Pupil**

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### Future Sustainability

Next year German will be taught to Years 5 and 6, and French to Years 3 and 4. If languages became a priority within the cluster, the school would like to be able to take the lead for MFL.

Although there is a wealth of resources available access to training would be welcome; the consortium’s professional learning offer included MFL training for secondary schools only. The primary school is awaiting Erasmus+ funding in partnership with the secondary school. The MFL teacher hopes there will be funding for training linked to *Global Futures*, particularly as there was funding for Welsh training in the past.

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*“I’d like to get it [German] a weekly thing where we get at least half an hour, we’d like it as part of our curriculum because it’s really fun to learn a new language.”*

**Pupil**

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# CASE STUDY 5

## Ysgol Gynradd Santes Gwenfaen Rhoscolyn Holyhead, Isle of Anglesey

### About the school:

- 106 pupils
- Until Year 2 everything is delivered in Welsh
- 11% of pupils eligible for free school meals

### Background

The MFL teacher attended a training course delivered by the educational consortium, which provided ideas and plans for primary schools.

Weekly French lessons have been taught to Years 3 and 4 since October 2018 and to Years 1 and 2 since January 2019. Lessons for Years 5 and 6 are planned during summer 2019. The majority of children are from English-speaking households and the school delivers through the medium of Welsh in order to fully immerse the children in the Welsh language.

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*“I think Years 3 and 4 is a brilliant age for children to learn French. They’re prepared to have a go, without being too self-conscious or worried about making mistakes. It’s also a good age at which children are able to copy and mimic what I’m saying in French. So they still have that ability to soak everything up, whilst also being able to distinguish between the three languages.”*

#### MFL co-ordinator

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A third language is considered easier to introduce from Year 3 onwards, by which time the children have reached a point where they are comfortable in Welsh and English and are ready to take on French.

### MFL Provision

The school views the project as something fun that will gradually build children’s knowledge of French over time so that they have a good foundation in readiness for when they enter secondary education.

*PowerLanguage Platform* resources are proving very useful and an excellent foundation for those with little experience of MFL. The resources are aimed at children who have never spoken a word of French and are tailored for different year groups.

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*“I have been so impressed by what they have been able to retain. Pretty much everything we have learnt has sunk in. If we revisit something a few weeks later, they will recall it all. And that applies to just about everyone in the class.”*

#### MFL co-ordinator

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For Years 1 and 2 there are half-hour ‘filler sessions’. So when written Welsh work is completed some French is taught e.g. my name is, colours. Years 3 and 4 are taught French for about an hour each week.

The school has moved towards more creative approaches to teaching and learning, using thematic approaches to teaching, with the new curriculum in mind.

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*“There are similarities between Welsh and French in terms of sentence structure, identifying differences between masculine and feminine nouns, and we feel that children are able to take it all in and they enjoy the experience. If they have a little bit on a regular basis from when they are young, they’ll have the basics in a third language by the time they move up to secondary education.”*

**MFL co-ordinator**

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### Impact on pupils and the school

The focus is on fun, learning through games and enjoyment. All children have engaged fully with the French lessons. The pupils remember that every Friday morning is French, and they greet the teacher with a ‘Bonjour Miss’. There is more of an emphasis on oral skills and so they enjoy that. The pupils have recorded themselves having short conversations in French and listened back to this.

A parent visiting the class was impressed that the children could follow and take part in a discussion in three languages.

The teacher commented that she has realised that you ‘can’t know everything’. It has taught her the benefits of being guided by the learners and to have confidence in them. Learning side-by-side with children is an enriching experience for the teacher.

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*“My French isn’t amazing. I did French to GCSE. I think it’s an advantage that I’m learning and that they are aware of this. If I make a mistake they’re happy to correct me and I’m happy for them to do this. This gives them a sense of taking the reins a little bit and it makes them feel proud. They feel like the boss.”*

**MFL co-ordinator**

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### Future Sustainability

French has become a part of promoting what is good about the school to parents and that the school is prepared to embrace new things. The school has many visits from prospective parents, and these are encouraged during French lessons as the lessons show how learning can be fun, dynamic, with the learners actively involved.

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*“The French lessons have become a part of promoting what is good about the school to parents, demonstrating that the school embraces new things and is prepared to try different activities.”*

**Headteacher**

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