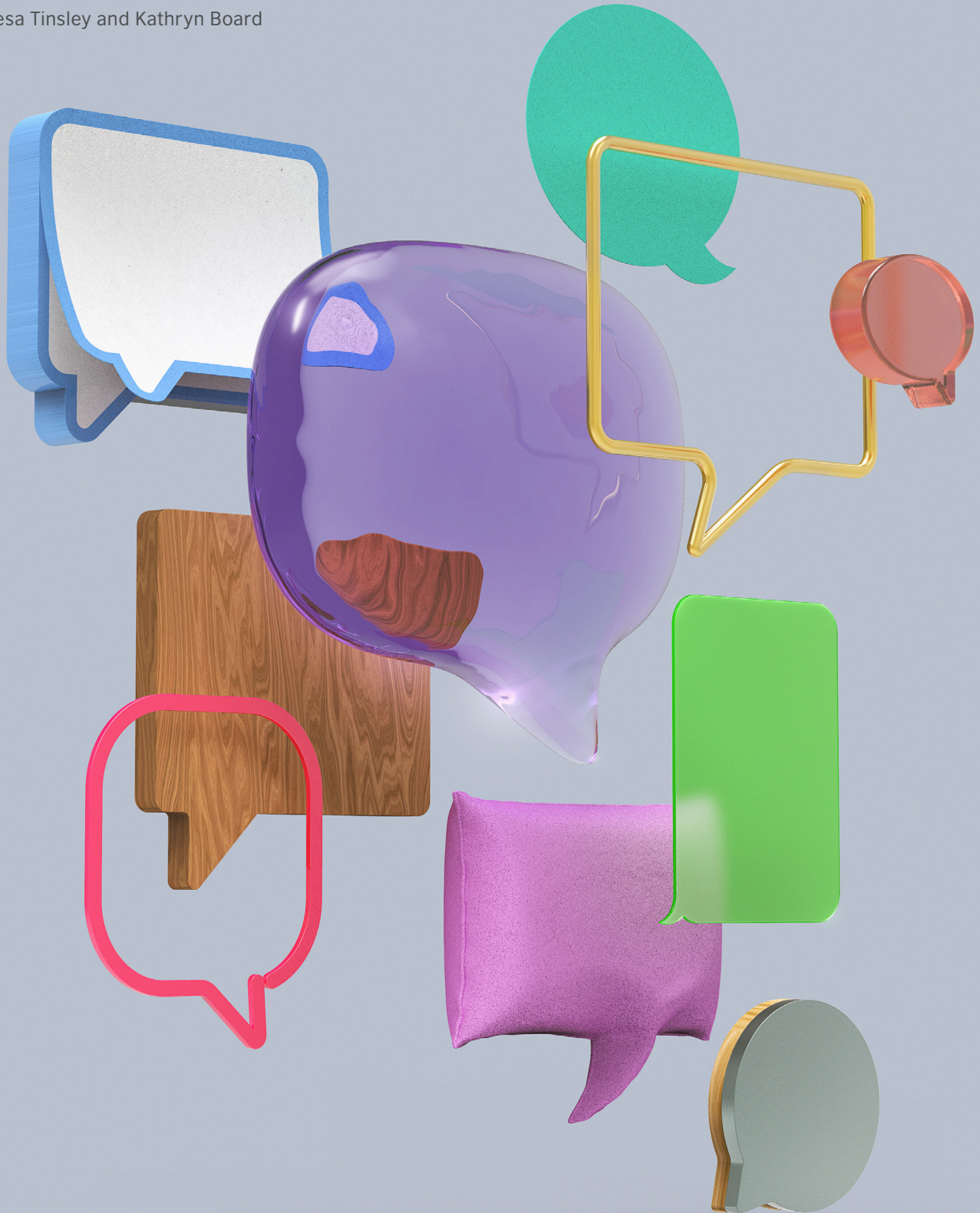**LANGUAGE TRENDS 2016/17**
LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PRIMARY
AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND

SURVEY REPORT

by Teresa Tinsley and Kathryn Board

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Learning another language not only provides practical communication skills, but has a unique role to play in developing cognition, literacy and cultural knowledge. The annual Language Trends surveys gather information on how well primary and secondary schools are providing for this important, but sometimes challenging, area of the school curriculum, and the challenges they face.

Our research, which has been conducted annually since 2002, provides a unique, longitudinal record of language teaching in both independent and state secondary schools across England. Over the years, we have been able to track the implementation and impact on teachers and their pupils of far-reaching educational policies, such as the decision to make the study of a language optional at Key Stage 4 in 2004, and to provide a useful conduit for teachers' views on a wide range of issues affecting their professional lives. Since 2012, when it was announced that the study of a language would become compulsory for all pupils in Key Stage 2, the Language Trends research has also included an annual survey of English primary schools. Previous years' Language Trends reports can be found at: https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/schools/support-for-languages/thought-leadership/research-and-insight

The 2016/17 survey was carried out between September and December 2016, with an invitation to complete the survey sent to 2,970 state secondary schools, 655 independent secondary schools and 3,000 state primary schools. Following an initial low response rate from primary schools, the sample was doubled to 6,000. Responses were received from 701 state secondary schools, 146 independent schools and 727 primary schools.

This year's Language Trends research was launched at the point at which the UK is embarking on a process to readjust its relationships with the rest of the world as a result of the vote to withdraw from the European Union (EU). It is not yet known how radical this readjustment will be and how it will affect our relationships with the countries whose languages are most commonly taught in English schools, namely French, German and Spanish.

However, a diminishing supply of young, home-grown linguists available to businesses wishing to work internationally or to train as teachers could create long-term difficulties for the country – particularly post Brexit when access to the current supply of multilingual professionals from mainland Europe may also be restricted. This survey provides the first indications from teachers of the potential impact of the vote to leave the EU on language teaching in schools.

In November 2016, the Teaching Schools Council published a review of modern foreign languages teaching practice, highlighting the damage both to pupils and to the national interest of the low levels of participation and achievement seen in languages at GCSE. The report noted that less than a third of pupils currently achieve a good GCSE in a language, judging the decline in numbers taking A-level to be 'of disastrous proportions'.[1] Failure to achieve a good grade in a language is the main obstacle to achieving the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), the performance measure for schools introduced in 2011, which the government hopes will be achieved by 90 per cent of pupils.

An exploration of how schools are responding to this aspiration, and how language teaching in primary schools might, in due course, contribute to this ambitious aim, form the backbone of this year's report. We look at the implications for languages in Key Stage 3 and Post-16, and also present data exploring inequalities in language learning based on regional and socio-economic factors, gender, and type of school.

The survey also raises issues specifically reported by respondents as matters of concern. These include the issue of funding for schools and colleges (the Association of Colleges reported recently that languages are among the worst-hit subjects as a result of cuts being made to post-16 courses), concerns relating to the implementation of new

specifications for GCSE and A-level, and guidelines relating to child safety which are proving an obstacle to many schools' longstanding international visits and exchange programmes.

EXAMINATION DATA

As in other years, our report is prefaced by an analysis of the examination data made available by the Department for Education (DfE). This reveals that participation in GCSE languages has stabilised at just under 50 per cent of the cohort, in spite of the initial gains seen in the first year after the introduction of the EBacc. There are wide variations in the numbers of pupils taking languages at GCSE by region and local authority, and a growing disparity between the 65 per cent of pupils who take a language to GCSE in Inner London, and the 43 per cent in the North East, falling to 28 per cent in Middlesbrough.

The number of pupils taking a language at A-level is down by one third since 1996, with a decrease of three per cent in the past year alone. The last 20 years have seen a huge shift away A-level entrants for French and German, which in 1996 accounted for more than 80 per cent of candidates, towards Spanish and other languages, which now represent more than half of candidates. However, in the past year, Spanish and other languages have also been affected by declining numbers, making post-16 language study one of the most pressing concerns to be addressed. A-level entries for languages are heavily skewed toward female candidates (64 per cent) and towards the independent sector, which accounts for 32 per cent of language entries, from a share of the post-16 pupil cohort of only 18 per cent.

LANGUAGES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

KEY FINDINGS

Language teaching is becoming more firmly embedded in the primary curriculum: nearly two thirds of primary schools have more than five years' experience teaching the subject. However, challenges remain in the form of significant disparities in provision as well as a lack of funding for the training of classroom teachers, resources and the recruitment of specialist staff. Teachers participating in the survey report that languages have a relatively low profile in their schools compared to those 'core' subjects which are assessed through SATs. This means language classes are often dropped or shortened in favour of other priorities. The disparity of provision means that pupils in many schools are unlikely to achieve the expected national outcomes at the end of Year 6 when pupils move to secondary school.

A number of respondents to this year's survey express the view that language teaching at primary level makes a valuable contribution to social inclusion within their school. This is because all children, whatever their background, home language

or experience of other subjects, begin to learn something new at the same time. In this way, the language class creates A-level playing field where everyone starts in the same place.

The assessment of pupil learning in primary languages is still very much 'work in progress', with many schools finding that an informal approach or keeping group records is as much as they can manage. The reasons given by responding teachers include pressure from 'core' subjects, lack of time for individual pupil assessment and a lack of knowledge of how to go about it. Teachers would welcome greater guidance on this.

As many as 88 per cent of respondents in this year's research express whole-hearted commitment to primary languages, with some also stating that it should start earlier, in Key Stage 1. Language teachers have observed benefits, which include improvements in pupils' confidence and understanding about the world, as well as cognitive benefits, including the application of grammar. However, respondents report that there is little recognition within the wider school community of the contribution of language learning to general literacy, and that schools are focusing on those subjects which are tested formally at the expense of others. While some respondents emphasise the benefit of languages to all pupils, and especially to those of lower ability or those who already have another language, others express quite the opposite view on the 'suitability' of language learning for pupils already learning English as an additional language. This difference of opinion is attributable to the very broad spectrum of pupils identified nationally as having English as an Additional Language (EAL).

The quantitative and qualitative evidence from this year's research shows that the great disparity in provision, noted in previous years' research, continues, with one in ten primary schools not providing a minimal 30 minutes per week of language teaching. Our analysis reveals that schools which teach for less than 30 minutes per week are more likely to have higher levels of free school meals (FSM), and lower levels of educational attainment generally. Also of concern is the frequency with which the continuity and regularity of language lessons are being squeezed in favour of other priorities. Our survey shows that formal assessment of language learning takes place in approximately one in eight (13 per cent) primary schools.

On a more positive note, this year's research shows that there has been a modest but identifiable improvement in the expertise of staff employed as language teachers in primary schools: since 2014, the percentage of staff with only a GCSE level or less has decreased from 31 per cent to 28 per cent, whilst the percentage who are bilingual or have degree-level qualifications has risen from 42 per cent to 46 per cent. This improvement has been achieved through recruitment rather than training. Nearly a quarter of primary schools report that they are not involved in any sort of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for languages. At the same time, there has been a reduction in the forms of support used by primary schools, with 30 per cent reporting that they have no access to specialist support compared to 23 per cent in 2015. There is evidence of a diminishing reliance on local authority support, peripatetic specialists and commercial organisations, and fewer primary schools say that they rely on a local secondary school to support their languages programmes.

Teachers are working hard to develop quality provision for languages at Key Stage 2, but face a number of obstacles as described above. The referendum vote has added to the uncertainty in many schools about whether languages are important or whether they should be teaching languages other than the three European languages which currently dominate languages education in our schools. Many would also like clearer guidance on how to achieve the outcomes set out in the national programmes of study, as well as greater funding for training and specialist support.

TRANSITION FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

KEY FINDING

There is a wide gulf of understanding between primary and secondary schools, highlighting the need for further training and development.

For a number of years now, the Language Trends reports have provided evidence of pressures and constraints that prevent secondary schools from collaborating with their feeder primary schools,

> "THERE IS A WIDE GULF OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS, HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED FOR FURTHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT.

which would address barriers facing pupils as they move from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. At the same time, it is clear that many primary schools understand that they are not yet meeting the requirements of the Key Stage 2 Programmes of Study, but would welcome support and guidance on how to tackle or improve their school's exclusive focus on other priorities.

Responses to this year's survey demonstrate the very large gap between the expectations of primary schools for their pupils' competences in languages at the end of Year 6 and the actual experiences of secondary schools receiving those pupils in Year 7. For example, while 81 per cent of primary schools say that 'speaking in sentences using familiar vocabulary, phrases and basic language structures' is an expectation they have for all or most of their pupils, only seven per cent of secondary schools say that most pupils arrive in Year 7 with these competences. Similar disparities exist in relation to other competences set out in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

The barriers primary and secondary schools face in working with each other to achieve a smooth transition in languages from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 have been well-rehearsed, but there is little impetus or direction to improve. There is a need for national leadership if resignation and widespread acceptance of the current state of play on both sides are to be overcome, and if the benefits of primary languages are to be carried over into Key Stage 3 and beyond.

LANGUAGES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

KEY FINDINGS

There are some signs of positive developments: some state schools with very low take up for languages in Key Stage 4 have been successful in increasing numbers, stimulated by the EBacc measures, and some 38 per cent of responding state schools are planning for numbers to increase year on year. Against this positive news, there is a significant decline in the number of pupils taking more than one language, particularly in the independent sector

where 45 per cent of schools report a reduction in the number of dual linguists. Given that many schools require staff to be able to offer more than one language, a healthy supply of dual linguists is essential for future generations of language teachers.

In response to the new GCSE specification, the majority of state schools report that they have decided to make one or more changes at Key Stage 3, including reducing language study to a single language and reducing Key Stage 3 to two years to create a 3-year GCSE course.

There is widespread evidence of a continuing decline in take up post-16. While many of the reasons given are the same as those provided by survey respondents in previous years, changes such as the move by schools from four to three A-levels and the withdrawal of AS courses in languages (in nearly one quarter of independent schools and 15 per cent of state schools) are giving further cause for concern.

Financial pressures in the state sector have opened up a substantial difference between the state and independent sectors in terms of whether or not they are likely to employ language assistants despite respondents' views that a language assistant has a marked impact on attainment and motivation.

PROVISION FOR LANGUAGES

The 2016/17 academic year has seen the introduction of new specifications for languages at GCSE and A-level, and this has had implications across all key stages. There is considerable evidence from participants in this year's research of changes which are already taking place in the provision of languages at Key Stage 3 in order to prepare pupils better for their GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4. Indeed, improvement at Key Stage 3 (more time allocation, revised schemes of work or a focus on one language only) is seen by many as key to producing better results at GCSE in years to come. However, improvements which require management decisions or outside engagement (e.g. increases in teaching time, use of Language assistants) are much less commonly reported.

Among the changes being reported, there is also continuing evidence that an increasing number of schools (now 28 per cent) are reducing Key Stage 3 to two years in order to be able to prepare pupils for GCSE over three, rather than two, years. This means that pupils who do not continue with a language once they have chosen their GCSE options at the end of Year 8, miss out on one third of their statutory language time at Key Stage 3.

A small but important minority of respondents express concern that insufficient time is being allocated for languages in Key Stage 3. In the state sector, the tendency to allocate only a short amount of time to languages is associated with higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage. Where schools use fortnightly timetables, the time available is often

> **"THE TENDENCY TO ALLOCATE ONLY A SMALL AMOUNT OF TIME TO LANGUAGES IS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE"**

inappropriately distributed, which teachers feel has a negative impact on teaching and learning. In both sectors, where pupils learn more than one language, this frequently reduces the amount of lesson time allocated to each language per week.

Although some teachers welcome the new specifications, particularly in terms of their content, other aspects are giving teachers cause for concern including the single-tier entry for the new GCSE*. In their responses to our survey, a number of teachers comment that the single tier entry approach to the new GCSE examination disadvantages the middle ability pupil who may not have balanced competency across all four skills.

There is a continuing trend for the number of schools offering Spanish to increase, and for those providing German to decline. German is now taught in Key Stage 3 by fewer than half of state schools. While a greater number and a greater diversity of languages are offered in the independent sector, both independent and state sectors share challenges in respect of language teaching – for example, the shortening of lesson time for languages, the threat to future school exchanges and the diminishing numbers of dual linguists.

TAKE UP

Against a background of increased government emphasis on the EBacc, over one third of state schools (38 per cent) report that they expect the number of pupils taking languages at GCSE to increase year on year. Where schools have already increased numbers for languages at GCSE, the evidence is that these are more likely to have been middle or higher-ability pupils. While some schools have been able to increase the numbers of lower-ability pupils taking a language, schools are more likely to report declines in lower-ability pupils, especially in the independent sector. However, there is evidence that the focus on pupil premium and higher ability pupil premium children in the state sector has had a modest but positive impact in increasing numbers of pupils in these groups taking a language to GCSE.

* The requirement of the new GCSE specification that pupils take all papers at either foundation or higher level.

When it comes to take up for languages at A-level, the EBacc policy is not having any notable impact. Only a small minority (13 per cent) of those schools where numbers for languages have increased at GCSE say that this has also improved take up for languages post-16.

Both sectors have seen a significant decline in the number of pupils studying more than one language. In the independent sector, 45 per cent of schools report declines in the number of dual linguists at GCSE. In the state sector, 37 per cent of schools report such declines. This has a knock-on effect on the numbers studying two languages at AS/A-level, and into university.

Numbers for languages post-16 continue to decline sharply in both the independent and state sectors for the same reasons as those identified in previous years' Language Trends research, namely, the inconsistent and overly rigorous marking/grading of A-level exam papers and the reputation of languages for being more difficult than other subjects and less likely to deliver much needed A* grades. In addition, this year's survey has identified a movement towards structuring the Sixth Form curriculum around three, rather than four A-level subjects. The impact of this change is that languages are often squeezed out as pupils focus on the subjects in which they need to be successful in highly competitive university applications – offers rarely recognise differences in grading across subjects. A further blow to the study of languages at post-16 is the decline in opportunities to study a language to AS level. Our research shows that nearly one quarter of independent schools and 15 per cent of state schools are withdrawing from AS courses in languages.

This year's survey highlights serious social inequality in access to language learning. Schools with higher educational attainment overall are more likely to have higher numbers studying languages. At the other end of the spectrum, pupils in schools with the highest levels of economic disadvantage are more likely to be withdrawn from lessons in Key Stage 3, more likely to be allowed to drop languages after only two years, less likely to be able to study more than one foreign language, and less likely to take a language to GCSE. It is pleasing to note, however, that there is also some evidence from this year's Language Trends survey that economically-disadvantaged schools are more likely to expect numbers for languages to increase in future.

TEACHER SUPPLY AND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Respondents to our survey do not report widespread problems in the area of teacher supply for languages, but the need to increase take up at Key Stage 4 and to improve teaching at Key Stage 3 to prepare pupils more effectively for future GCSE courses means that the recruitment of suitably qualified languages teachers is likely to become more critical in future.

Schools in both sectors already report that they are finding it challenging to recruit language teachers who are able to offer two languages to GCSE and A-level standard. This difficulty most affects lower-attaining schools and those working in more disadvantaged circumstances.

There are big differences between the independent and state sectors in terms of access to subject specific CPD. While teachers in the independent sector enjoy a wide range of training opportunities, in the state sector such opportunities are very limited.

The financial pressures on state schools are having an adverse effect on language teachers' ability to access subject-specific CPD. Although many schools offer generic, in-house CPD, linguists also require subject specific professional development and opportunities to refresh and enhance their subject knowledge. The responses from teachers in the independent sector show that languages-specific CPD is much more readily available and widely accessed.

Large proportions of schools in both sectors rate language assistants highly for their positive impact on pupils' language learning in a wide range of areas, including listening and speaking skills, extending pupils' vocabulary and general understanding of the language, cultural awareness and confidence. However, as a result of financial pressures, state schools are increasingly unable to afford to employ Language assistants from the longstanding programme administered by the British Council. More than half of those state schools who employed them in the past no longer do so, in spite of the fact that they value their support in preparing pupils for GCSEs and A-levels. This has opened up a substantial difference in practice between the state and independent sectors, with 73 per cent of independent schools and just 33 per cent of state schools currently hosting a Language Assistant.

In the aftermath of the vote to leave the EU, language teachers, many of them non-UK EU nationals, are concerned about their own status or that of colleagues, and about the future supply of language teachers from France, Spain and other EU countries. They are also concerned about future access to the European Erasmus+ programme and the threat to opportunities for funding to support training, school links and overseas visits. Teachers also report that the opportunity to spend a term or a year abroad through the Erasmus+ programme is an attractive incentive for many bright young linguists facing A-level and university choices. They are fearful of the impact on take up for languages if these opportunities cease.

CONCLUSIONS

The many hundreds of responses and comments received in this year's research have provided rich quantitative and qualitative evidence. From our analysis of this data we have been able to draw a number of major conclusions, all of which have been discussed and verified by a group of specialist stakeholders.

1.   Disparities in the quality of language teaching provision at Key Stage 2 are unlikely to be addressed unless there is a system-wide approach.

2.   The benefits of language teaching for social inclusion which are seen in Key Stage 2 should be more widely recognised and carried through into Key Stages 3, 4 and above.

3.   Significant changes to Key Stage 3 are under way in preparation for the new GCSE exams.

4.   Although many schools are expecting numbers for languages at Key Stage 4 to increase year on year, teachers are worried that the new GCSE exam will deliver poor results.

5.   There is little sign of an end to the decline in A-level numbers for languages.

6.   Language learning in schools is being greatly affected by the reduction in opportunities to engage with native speakers and experience the culture at first hand.

Although there have been great changes within the wider political and international scene, the issues emerging for language teaching in our schools have changed little from those identified in previous years. Teachers are working extremely hard to improve standards and recruitment to language courses in their schools. They would welcome proactive leadership at national level in order to realise the vision and strategy for languages which is apparent in recent policy changes. Policies and initiatives also need to be appropriately funded as our research this year provides ample evidence that lack of funding is exacerbating many of the issues raised by respondents.

1.   Teaching Schools Council, Modern Languages Pedagogy Review (2016) https://www.tscouncil.org.uk/modern-foreign-languages-report/

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

'Languages are fundamental to nearly every aspect of our lives. They are not only our primary means of communication; they are the basis for our judgements, informing how we understand others as well as ourselves.'[1]

American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

THE LONG-STANDING CHALLENGES

The Language Trends series of national surveys was set up in 2002-2003 with the initial aim of tracking take up and provision for languages in Key Stage 4 from the point when the subject became an optional rather than a compulsory part of the English National Curriculum for 14-16 year olds. Given the evidence that learning another language has a unique role to play in developing cognition, literacy and cultural knowledge, the surveys indicate how well schools are providing for this important area of the curriculum and the challenges they face. The surveys have investigated the background to the pattern of declining entries for GCSE language examinations, the boost to take up when the EBacc was first introduced as a performance measure in 2011, and the reasons why this measure has not produced year-on-year increases. In the last two years, concern about declining numbers for languages has focused on post-16 courses, with a substantial decline reported in both independent and state schools. The surveys have probed the reasons behind this and sought to offer insights for policymakers and all those concerned about the growing numbers of pupils who leave school without being able to read, write or hold a basic conversation in another language.

In most countries now, language learning starts in primary school and for many, the answer to the long-standing problems identified in relation to languages in the secondary curriculum lies in developing high quality language teaching in Key Stage 2[2]. Since 2012, the Language Trends research has also gathered data from primary schools, tracking their progress in developing a successful basis for language learning that pupils can carry over into their secondary education.

NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LANGUAGES: CHANGES IN THE EXTERNAL CONTEXT

Since our last survey, the UK has embarked on a process to readjust its relationships with the rest of the world as a result of the vote to withdraw from the EU. It is not yet known how radical this readjustment will be and how it will affect our relationships with the countries whose languages are most commonly taught in schools, namely French, German and Spanish. A Populus survey conducted following the referendum vote found that around two thirds of respondents (63 per cent) see the ability to speak foreign languages as being essential if the UK is to successfully reach out to other countries.[3] In a similar vein, the University of Cambridge has published a series of blogs on the importance of languages for

post-Brexit Britain, and in Parliament, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages has highlighted some key issues for Britain's language capacity arising from the referendum vote. These include the current practice of recruiting EU nationals to jobs requiring language skills (for example, as teachers of languages) and the importance of the Erasmus+ education programme for supporting exchanges and periods of residence abroad for pupils, university pupils, teachers and trainee teachers.[4] Concerns about the continuing supply of teachers from the EU, not just in languages but in all subjects, have been echoed in press articles.[5] Strong statements about the importance of languages for soft power and for the armed forces have been made on different occasions in Parliament.[6]

The impact of funding cuts and cost increases continues to be felt on post-16 courses, with languages among the subjects worst hit. The most recent survey by the Association of Colleges reports that 39 per cent of colleges have dropped courses in languages as a result of financial pressures.[7]

At the same time, recent DfE guidelines describing the new arrangements for vetting in relation to pupil exchange have accelerated the cessation of many schools' long standing international exchanges and visits programmes which support the development of pupils' language skills and interest in the subject. One teacher participating in this year's research suggests that 'the foreign exchange trip is fast becoming extinct'.[8]

On a more positive note, the future of GCSE and A-level exams in 'smaller entry' languages including, for example, Arabic, Turkish, Greek and Urdu – one of the key questions explored in last year's survey – has now been secured. Education Minister Nick Gibb has made a strong statement of support for languages, highlighting their importance for the business world and their value to pupils.[9] Efforts to explore ways of tackling problems with teacher recruitment and retention have been particularly successful for languages, with the subject showing good results from a pilot project aimed at recruiting 'returners' who had previously left the profession.[10] This project, which also supports candidates who can already offer one language to develop a second, has now been extended into a second round.[11] There has also been a new, national School-Centred Initial Teacher Training hub set up specifically to overcome blockages in the recruitment of new teachers for languages.[12] Responding to an increasing consensus that the UK's future language needs will embrace a wider range of languages than heretofore have been taught in schools, the DfE has set up a Mandarin Excellence Programme, making available £10 million to secondary schools to provide intensive teaching in Mandarin for selected pupils starting in Year 7.[13]

There has been a focus this year on language pedagogy as a solution to the challenges faced by languages. Following on from Ofsted's 2015 report, *Key Stage 3: the wasted years*, which found that achievement was not good enough in just under half of the language lessons inspected, the Teaching Schools Council commissioned a review of modern foreign languages teaching practice.[14] The report noted that, in 2016, only 34 per cent of pupils obtained a good GCSE in a language subject and less than five per cent did so in more than one language. This situation, it stated, is 'damaging to our national interest and bad for pupils'.[15] Drawing on Ofsted evidence that pupils' reluctance to continue with a language in Key Stage 4 is often due to lack of enjoyment or achievement in Key Stage 3, the review focused on language teaching as the key to increasing pupils' interest and success, putting forward 15 recommendations aimed at schools, teachers and teacher trainers. It also recommended that Ofqual and examination boards should undertake a review of grading approaches, particularly at A-level. The report was published just as this year's Language Trends survey was closing, so we have not been able to gather teachers' responses to it.

At the time of writing, the government's stated ambition to see at least 90 per cent of pupils achieving the EBacc has not yet become formal policy. A public consultation was carried out in the summer of 2016, however there has been no statement yet on the results of that consultation or the DfE's response to it. But with failure to achieve a good GCSE grade in a language the most significant obstacle to achieving the EBacc, the issue of enabling greater numbers of learners to do so remains a key concern.

ISSUES FOR THIS YEAR'S SURVEY

The Language Trends survey 2016/17 was designed to explore all the issues referred to in the section above. In particular, issues concerning the EBacc were central to many of the questions included. We aimed to explore to what extent primary schools are laying the basis for higher standards of achievement in languages at the end of compulsory education; whether schools are implementing changes to the languages curriculum in Key Stage 3, and how they are responding to the new GCSE and A-level specifications. In the light of a new international report on instruction time for languages, as well as a recommendation in the Teaching Schools Council review that schools should ideally set aside three hours per week for languages, spread over frequent lessons of no more than one hour's duration, we included a question on the time schools allocate to languages in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4.[16] We asked whether schools are planning for year-on-year increases in pupils taking languages to GCSE, and what challenges this might involve, including the supply and retention of languages teachers.

As in previous years, we aimed to use the data gathered to highlight inequalities in provision for languages between different types of school and schools working in different circumstances. We also sought to draw a clearer picture of the profile of pupils taking languages to GCSE and the extent to which increases or declines affect pupils with different characteristics (e.g. Pupil Premium, English as an Additional Language). Finally, we sought to test the climate for languages following the outcome of the EU referendum by including a specific question on any impact observed by schools at this early stage.

One year ago, the principal findings of the 2015/16 Language Trends survey were:

»   Almost all responding primary schools were providing at least some teaching of languages to pupils throughout Key Stage 2, although some schools were finding it challenging to provide the kind of systematic and consistent language teaching envisaged in the National Curriculum.

»   Although secondary schools were starting to make small modifications to their practice to accommodate pupils' prior learning in primary school, most did not yet see primary languages as a platform from which to improve standards.

»   There was little evidence that schools were gearing up for big increases in numbers taking languages at GCSE as a result of a proposal by the government that the EBacc should be taken by at least 90 per cent of pupils.

»   Although the EBacc had been successful in increasing numbers taking languages at GCSE, it was not a measure that had had any significant spill over impact on take up for the subject post-16.

»   The exam system was seen as one of the principal barriers to the successful development of language teaching and respondents expressed concern that the new, more rigorous and demanding GCSEs and A-levels might exacerbate the situation still further.

This year's survey was designed both to build on these findings and to explore new issues deriving from policy developments both in education and more widely during the past year.

> "WE AIMED TO USE THE DATA GATHERED TO HIGHLIGHT INEQUALITIES IN PROVISION FOR LANGUAGES BETWEEN DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOL AND SCHOOLS WORKING IN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES."

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12.   http://www.nationalmodernlanguages.com/ [accessed 23/2/2017]

13.   https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/schools/support-for-languages/partnerships-courses-resources/mandarin-excellence-programme [accessed 20/2/2017]

14.   https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/.../Key_Stage_3_the_wasted_years.pdf; http://www.tscouncil.org.uk/modern-foreign-languages-report/ [accessed 20/2/2017]

15.   Ibid., p. 5.

16.   European Commission, 'Key Data on Language Teaching in Europe, 2017 edition' https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/images/0/06/KDL_2017_internet.pdf [accessed 8/6/2017]

CHAPTER 2
METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

The Language Trends survey of secondary schools in England has been carried out annually since 2002 to track developments in language provision and take up. From 2012, state primary schools have also been surveyed, making this the fifth annual primary Language Trends survey and the fifteenth Language Trends survey of secondary schools.

This year, for the first time, the British Council assumed sole responsibility for commissioning and publishing the survey, establishing an Advisory Group of stakeholders and experts who were consulted at each stage of the process. The researchers are particularly grateful to the Association for Language Learning, the Independent Schools Modern Languages Association and the Harris Federation for their detailed contributions, and to Bernardette Holmes for leading the discussions.

ANALYSIS OF EXAMINATION DATA

The findings of the survey have been prefaced by a presentation of DfE examination data and trends relating to languages in order to set the responses of schools within a broader context. Entry and achievement figures for public examinations such as GCSE and A-level provide one of the few comprehensive sources of national data on the situation of languages in secondary schools. The data published by the DfE provide a rich source of information from which we have analysed GCSE and A-level entries for languages by region/local authority, by gender and by different types of school. Using longitudinal data, we have also provided information on trends over time in relation to different languages.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires for primary and secondary schools were developed in August 2016 by the researchers in consultation with the British Council and the Advisory Group. These were uploaded to the online survey platform Survey Monkey and trialled in early September 2016.

Primary questionnaire

Questions were based on those also used in the previous Language Trends surveys, in order to track emerging trends. Some questions were clarified or extended in order to explore issues in greater depth – for example, the options for responding to the question on assessment of pupils were made more specific. Three new questions were included. The first of these explored primary schools' expectations for children's achievement in languages by the end of Key Stage 2. Secondly, we asked whether the decision for the UK to leave the EU had had any impact on language learning and thirdly, we asked what benefits teachers had observed from teaching a language to their pupils. To avoid burdening teachers with too many questions, and in order to make room for these new areas of enquiry, some questions from the 2015 survey were dropped.

Questions were designed to explore the extent of provision for languages, which languages are offered, how the teaching of languages is organised and what expertise schools are able to draw on. As in previous years, an important area of enquiry was the extent to which primary schools are in contact with local secondary schools on language issues. More specifically, the following areas were covered:

» Whether the school teaches a foreign language within the curriculum, and if so, how long they have been doing so and whether there is systematic provision for all groups from Years 3 to 6 (i.e. throughout Key Stage 2)

» Which languages are taught in each phase, including Key Stage 1, if any

» How much time is provided for the teaching of languages

» How schools assess and record pupils' progress in language learning

» What outcomes schools expect children to reach in their language learning by the end of Year 6 (based on descriptors in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study)

» What are the main challenges schools face in meeting the National Curriculum requirements for languages

» What types of contact schools have with local secondary schools

» What documentation forms the basis of the languages programme

» Who provides the teaching of languages, and what qualifications staff have in the languages they teach

» What specialist expertise schools are able to draw on in monitoring and developing language provision

» What types of languages specific CPD staff are accessing, and how frequently

» If schools are not providing language teaching, what is the reason for this and whether they have ever done so

» Whether there is extra-curricular provision for pupils to learn a language

» Whether the result of the EU referendum has affected language teaching and learning in respondents' schools and if so, what impact it has had

» What distinct advantages respondents have observed for children in their school starting to learn a new language from age 7.

Secondary questionnaire

As in previous years, the 2016 survey included some questions which were the same or similar to those asked in previous years to maintain longitudinal insights, and some new questions exploring issues of current pressing concern. Among the latter, the survey explored particularly the impact of the EBacc on take up and participation among pupils of different abilities and backgrounds. We also asked specifically whether schools are planning for pupil numbers taking languages in Key Stage 4 to increase year-on-year and whether schools are experiencing difficulties with the recruitment and retention of language teachers. We asked what changes they are making in response to the new GCSE and A-level specifications. In order to explore the extent to which secondary schools' perceptions of pupils' competence in languages at the beginning of Year 7 match primary schools' expectations for their pupils' achievement, we included a question which mirrored that in the primary survey on this topic. As with the primary survey, we included a question about any impact being felt as a result of the EU referendum.

The following topics were explored:

» The range of languages offered in schools at Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4, and post-16 and whether lesser-taught languages are offered as full curriculum subjects or as enrichment

» What types of languages-specific CPD staff are accessing, and how frequently

» How much time is allocated to languages in Key Stages 3 and 4

» Whether the result of the EU referendum has affected language teaching and learning in respondents' schools and if so, what impact it has had

» The extent to which schools are experiencing difficulties with the recruitment and retention of language teachers

» Whether schools host language assistants and how they rate their impact.

In addition, the survey explored the following in relation to the different Key Stages:

Key Stage 3

» Whether all pupils study a language throughout Key Stage 3 and any changes that have been introduced

» What is the starting point of pupils arriving in Year 7 and whether they have been taught a different language in primary school

» How many feeder primary schools respondents have, whether they have contacts with them on language issues, and how they build on pupils' prior learning to ensure continuity and progression from Key Stage 2.

Key Stage 4

» What proportion of the cohort are studying at least one language in Year 10 and Year 11, and what proportion are studying more than one language

» Recent changes in the number and profile of pupils studying a language in Key Stage 4

» Whether schools are planning for year-on-year increases in the number of pupils taking a language in Key Stage 4

» What changes schools are making in response to the new GCSE specifications for languages.

Post-16

» Current school trends in the take-up of languages post-16

» In those schools where numbers for languages at GCSE increased as a result of the EBacc, whether this also led to increased numbers taking a language post-16

» What changes schools are making in response to the new AS/A-level specifications for languages

In both primary and secondary surveys, questions included a mixture of multiple choice and matrix/ rating scale questions, with some free text questions. Many also included comment boxes for respondents to clarify or comment further if they wished. In a final free text question, respondents were given space to raise other issues of concern or to comment freely about other matters relating to language teaching in their school or nationally.

DATA COLLECTION

A sample of 3,000 schools was selected from the population of state-funded mainstream primary schools with pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2, thus excluding infant only and first schools, and schools with less than ten pupils on the roll at Key Stage 2. The sample was selected to be representative by region and performance quintile (based on the average point score as published in the 2015 Primary School Performance Tables).

We sent the survey to all secondary schools and all independent schools who had an available email address. This totalled 2,970 secondary schools and 655 independent schools – both slightly larger samples than in previous years. The responses were monitored against attainment quintile and region to check for representativeness. Middle schools, special schools, and schools with less than ten pupils on the roll at Key Stage 4, were not included.

Invitations to complete the survey were sent out by email: this was the first year in which there was no letter in hard copy sent to schools. The initial email was sent to all schools in the sample in September 2016, addressed to the Head of Languages in the case of the secondary schools and Head Teachers in primary schools. Incoming responses were monitored weekly and a number of reminder emails were sent in waves when the previous email ceased to produce responses. The number of responses received from primary schools was disappointingly low, so invitations were sent to a further sample of 3,000 primary schools, selected to be representative of schools nationally as before. As an incentive to complete the questionnaire, two free places were offered at the Association for Language Learning's annual conference, one for a primary school respondent and one for a secondary school.

RESPONSE RATES

A total of 727 primary schools, 701 state-funded secondary schools, and 146 independent secondary schools responded to the survey, yielding response rates of 12 per cent, 24 per cent and 22 per cent respectively. These response rates compared to 18.5 per cent for primary, 24.6 per cent for state-funded secondary and 26.4 per cent for independent secondary in 2015. Although the response rate from primary schools was lower in 2016 compared to 2015, the number of responses was higher because of the increase in the sample size.

Comparisons of the achieved sample with the national population of schools have been carried out (see Appendix), and the profile of schools responding to the survey shows they are all a very good match with the profile of schools nationally in terms of their geographic location, and broadly representative in terms of other characteristics. In the achieved sample of state secondary schools, schools in the highest performance quintile are over-represented and those in the lowest performance quintile are slightly under-represented. There is a slightly higher representation of converter academies in the achieved sample than in the national base, and slightly lower representation of sponsor-led

academies. Our achieved sample has slightly lower representation from schools in the highest quintile for socio-economic disadvantage (Free School Meals) and slightly higher representation from schools with the lowest levels of socio-economic disadvantage in their pupil population. All these features correlate with higher take up for languages at GCSE and A-level, suggesting that the responses from state secondary schools in this year's survey may slightly over-represent schools doing comparatively well in languages compared to the national picture.

In the achieved sample of independent schools there is a slight under-representation of schools in the second highest quintile for educational performance and slight over-representation of schools in the lowest quintile for educational performance.

The achieved sample of primary schools is a very good match with the profile of primary schools nationally in terms of geographic location, educational performance and socio-economic status. There is a slight over-representation of community schools and schools with high numbers of pupils with English as an Additional Language. Despite these successful efforts to ensure that the responses from primary schools are representative on all these variables, the very low response rate leads us to suspect that the achieved sample is skewed towards primary schools which are more interested or enthusiastic about language teaching than those which have not replied. Emailed responses from some primary schools that did not complete the survey suggest that they were not interested in the subject or not able to answer the questionnaire because there was no one available to do so. In one case, this was because the language teacher was on maternity leave, suggesting that teaching had been suspended in her absence. The statistical information presented in relation to primary schools is therefore likely to paint a somewhat rosier picture of the situation than is the case nationally.

The tables for the sample characteristics are given in the Appendix.

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

Quantitative data

In addition to presenting the quantitative data collected, we undertook the following comparisons and analyses:

» Comparisons with findings from the same questions in previous years

» Comparisons between state-funded secondary schools and independent secondary schools

» Analysis of the responses to some key questions by Free School Meal quintile, by educational performance, and by region in order to detect possible patterns of variation between schools

» Analysis of responses to certain questions by their responses to other questions, again, in order to detect patterns of variation.

Qualitative data

In selecting the quotes from teachers which are presented alongside the quantitative data and in analysing the qualitative responses, we have used the following criteria:

» Quotes which illustrate and contextualise the quantitative findings

» Quotes which explain or provide deeper insights into the qualitative findings

» The frequency with which the issues arising are mentioned. Indications on this are given in the text to highlight whether a comment appeared frequently or whether it was an individual insight

Free text questions were coded in order to provide more exact quantification of the different responses received.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

The initial findings were discussed at an early stage with the Advisory Group who also provided valuable feedback on the first draft and overall conclusions of this report.

CHAPTER 3
EXAMINATION STATISTICS

The data summarised below is based on the latest DfE examination entry figures and cover all GCSE entries for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 and A-level entries for 16-18 year olds in English secondary schools, both state-funded and independent. They include time-series data, either provided by the DfE or held on record by the authors.[17]

GCSE ENTRIES FOR LANGUAGE SUBJECTS

What proportion of pupils sit a GCSE in a language at the end of Key Stage 4?
The proportion of the total cohort sitting a language at GCSE rose by one percentage point between 2015 and 2016. The chart below shows how entries declined rapidly after 2002, coinciding with the change in the 14-19 national curriculum which allowed schools to make modern foreign languages optional for some or all of their pupils. After the introduction of the EBacc as a performance measure in 2011, there was an immediate increase in entries, but this was not sustained and entry levels have stabilised at just under half the cohort taking a language to GCSE.

How does the proportion of pupils taking a GCSE in a language vary?

The very rich data currently published by the DfE shows that behind the headline national figure, there is considerable variation between types of school, and by region, local authority and gender. Female candidates make up 56 per cent of GCSE entries in languages, 44 per cent from male.

While converter academies and free schools have higher than average proportions of pupils taking a language to GCSE, sponsored academies, university technical colleges and studio schools have lower entry levels. Independent schools have lower proportions of pupils taking a GCSE in a language than state-funded schools. Previous Language Trends surveys identified a growing disenchantment with the GCSE exam. This, together with a tendency for early entry, may explain the discrepancy. The time-series data shown in the table confirms that independent schools are increasingly not using GCSE as a means

Figure 1: Proportion of end of Key Stage 4 pupils sitting a GCSE in a language, 2002-2016.
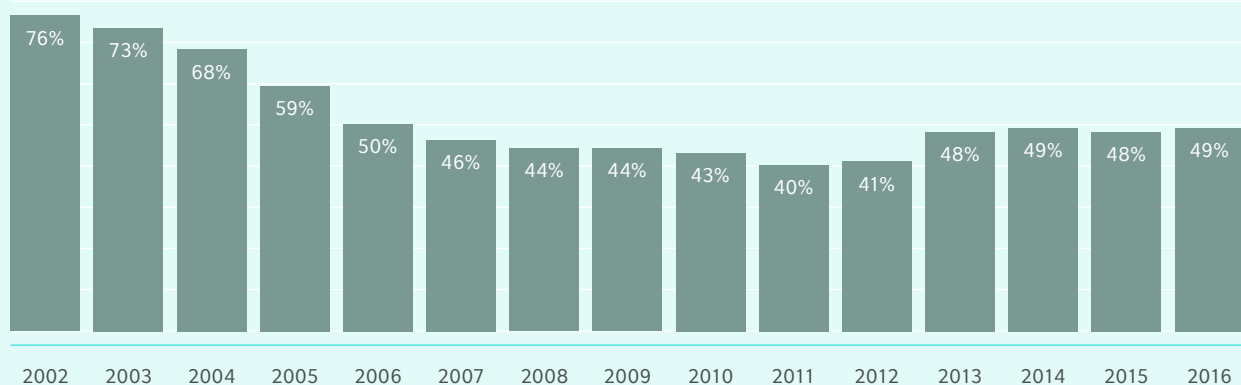
Figure 2: GCSE entries in languages by gender, 2016.

Key
● Boys
● Girls
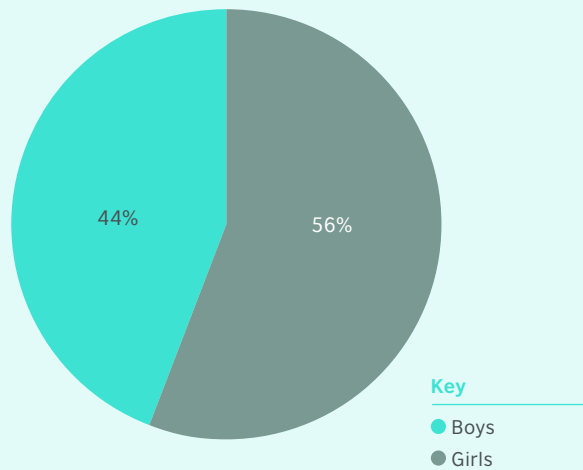
of accreditation for languages at the end of Key Stage 4, though as this report makes clear, this certainly does ot mean that pupils do not study the subject.

Selective schools are much more likely than other types of school to have large proportions of pupils taking a language to GCSE. However, over the past four years, while the overall proportion of pupils taking a GCSE in a language subject has remained fairly constant, there has been a decline of 12 percentage points in the proportion of pupils doing so who attend a selective school. In contrast, in secondary modern schools, a slightly higher proportion of pupils now take a language than four years ago (39 per cent compared to 36 per cent).

Table A: *Proportions of the cohort entering a language GCSE, by type of school*

	All state-funded mainstream schools	Local authority-maintained mainstream schools	Sponsored academies	Converter academies	Free schools*	University technical colleges*	Studio schools*	Independ-ent schools
2016	49%	48%	39%	53%	58%	24%	10%	42%
2015	49%	48%	38%	54%	54%	26%	10%	48%
2014	51%	49%	39%	56%	51%	27%	15%	55%
2013	48%	46%	33%	55%	n/a	n/a	n/a	63%

*Data not available before 2014.

Figure 3: *Proportion of pupils taking a language at GCSE, by selectivity status of school, 2013-2016.*

Key
● 2013   ● 2014   ● 2015   ● 2016
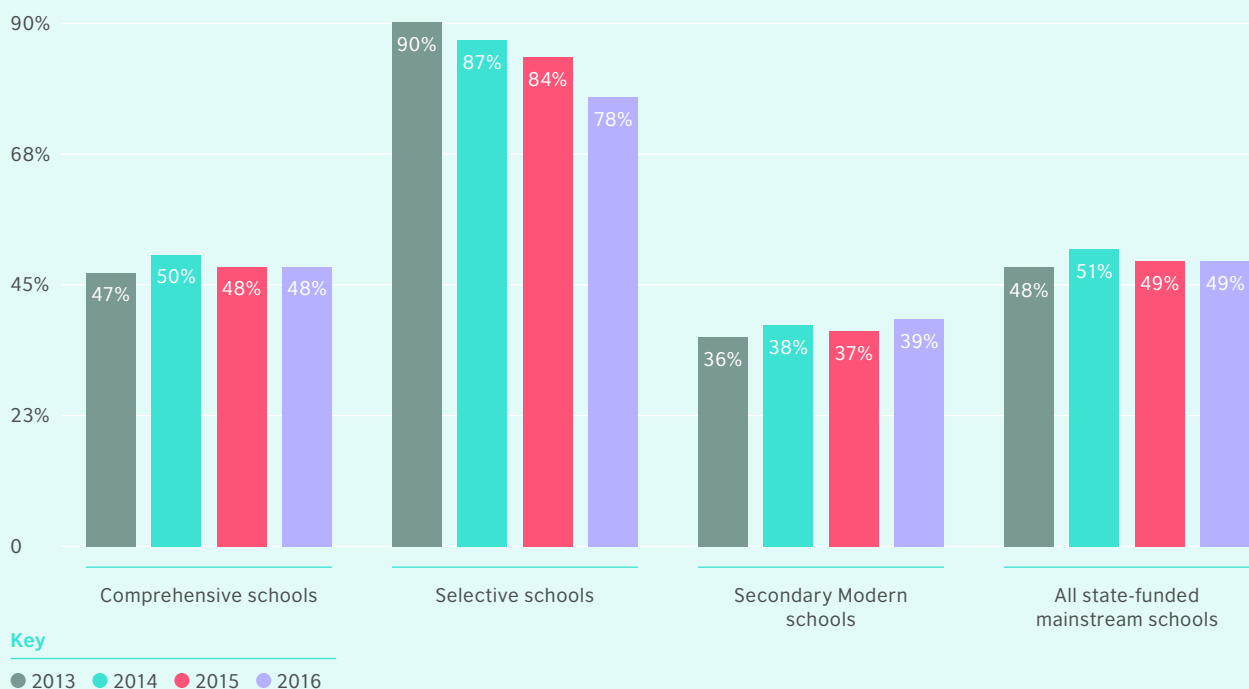
Participation in language learning varies widely by local authority. The Isles of Scilly, in fact, just a single school, has an exceptionally low entry level (13 per cent). In England, three local authorities have participation rates of 30 per cent or less (Middlesbrough, Blackpool and Sandwell), while at the other end of the scale, three London local authorities have more than 70 per cent of pupils sitting a language GCSE (Hammersmith and Fulham, Newham, and Kensington and Chelsea). Local authorities with low participation rates for languages at GCSE also tend to perform poorly on other measures of educational attainment, such as the proportion of pupils achieving a good GCSE in both English and maths.

Table B: Local authorities with the lowest participation rates for languages GCSE, 2016.

Local Authorities	Participation Rates
Isles of Scilly	13%
Middlesbrough	28%
Blackpool	29%
Sandwell	30%
Oldham	32%
Knowsley	33%
Barnsley	33%
Redcar and Cleveland	34%
Isle of Wight	34%
Stoke-on-Trent	37%

Table C: Local authorities with the highest participation rates for languages GCSE, 2016.

Local Authorities	Participation Rates
Hammersmith and Fulham	75%
Newham	75%
Kensington and Chelsea	72%
Barnet	70%
Enfield	70%
Kingston upon Thames	69%
Wandsworth	68%
Brent	68%
York	67%
Southwark	67%
Ealing	66%
Hackney	66%
Sutton	66%

The regional breakdown shows relatively high levels of take up for GCSE languages in London and the South East, and much smaller participation rates in the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber and the Midlands. Moreover, comparison of participation rates by region over the last three years shows that while in London participation rates are increasing, in all other parts of the country participation in languages at GCSE has declined.

Table D: Proportions of pupils taking languages GCSE by region, 2014-2016.

Region	2014	2015	2016
Inner London	62%	64%	65%
London	61%	61%	62%
Outer London	60%	60%	61%
South East	51%	51%	50%
North West	51%	48%	48%
South West	49%	48%	47%
East	49%	49%	47%
West Midlands	47%	46%	46%
East Midlands	49%	47%	46%
Yorkshire and The Humber	46%	45%	44%
North East	45%	42%	43%

How are different languages faring in terms of take up at GCSE?

Over a seven-year period, entries for French have declined by 15 per cent and those for German by 27 per cent. However, entries for Spanish have increased by 50 per cent.

Entries for other languages are on a much smaller scale; however, these have increased over the same period, with the greatest increases seen in Polish (+99 per cent), Arabic (+63 per cent) and Chinese (+41 per cent). Italian has seen a smaller increase of 15 per cent, while numbers for Urdu have declined by 12 per cent. Other languages (not shown) which comprise Bengali, Dutch, Modern Greek, Gujarati, Modern Hebrew, Japanese, Panjabi, Persian, Portuguese, Russian and Turkish, have seen an overall increase of 17 per cent, though this is not consistent across all these languages.[18]

Figure 4: GCSE entries for French, German and Spanish, 2010-2016.

Key
● French   ● German   ● Spanish
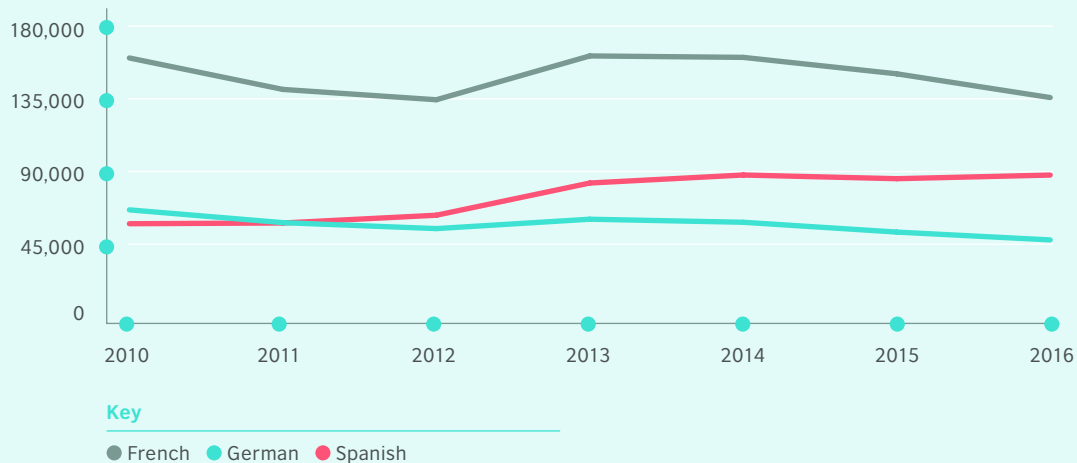
	2010	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
● **French**	160,598	141,749	135,547	161,821	160,955	151,095	136,862
● **German**	65,822	58,299	54,793	60,320	58,520	52,746	48,136
● **Spanish**	58,230	58,681	63,345	82,733	87,553	85,342	87,519

Figure 5: Entries for smaller-entry languages at GCSE, 2010-2016.

Key
● Arabic   ● Chinese   ● Italian   ● Polish   ● Urdu
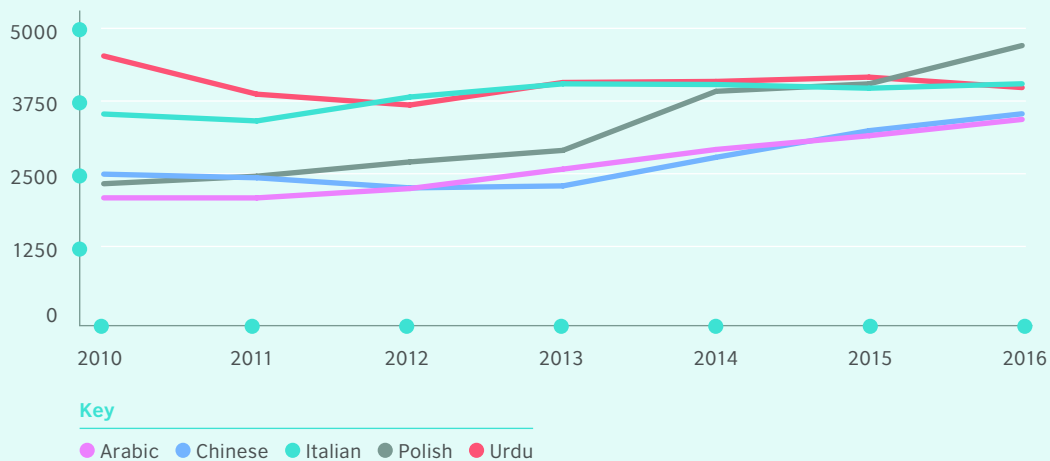
	2010	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
● **Arabic**	2,139	2,138	2,298	2,630	2,966	3,201	3,480
● **Chinese**	2,542	2,480	2,307	2,341	2,830	3,286	3,575
● **Italian**	3,556	3,436	3,851	4,080	4,068	4,004	4,081
● **Polish**	2,377	2,505	2,748	2,944	3,948	4,075	4,726
● **Urdu**	4,550	3,891	3,704	4,093	4,111	4,185	4,005

Figure 6: A-level language entries, 1996-2016.
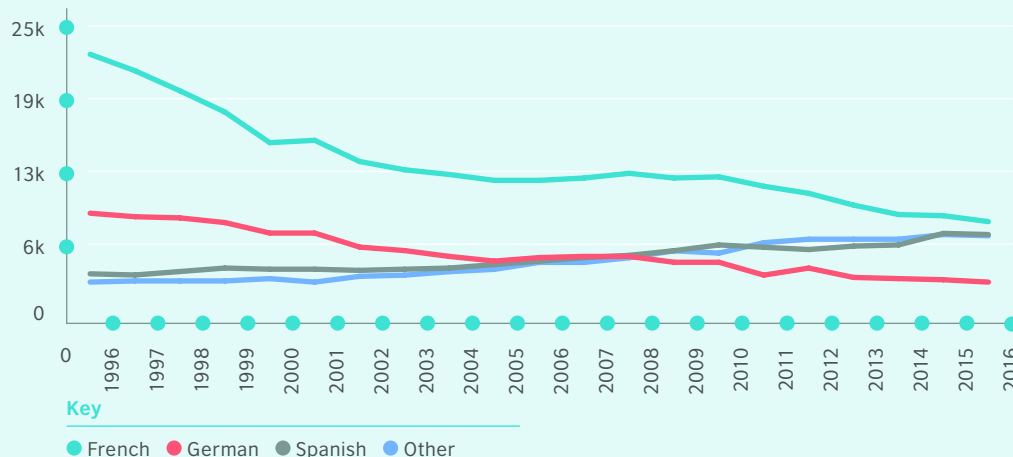
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
French	22.7	21.3	19.6	17.8	15.2	15.4	13.6	12.9	12.5	12
German	9.3	9	8.9	8.5	7.6	7.6	6.4	6.1	5.6	5.2
Spanish	4.1	4	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.9
Other	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.7	3.4	3.9	4	4.3	4.5

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
12	12.2	12.6	12.2	12.3	11.5	10.9	9.9	9.1	9	8.5
5.5	5.6	5.6	5.1	5.1	4	4.6	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.4
5.2	5.5	5.7	6.1	6.6	6.4	6.2	6.5	6.6	7.6	7.5
5.1	5.1	5.5	6.1	5.9	6.8	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.5	7.4

A-LEVEL ENTRIES FOR LANGUAGE SUBJECTS

Latest figures

The DfE reports that there were 26,796 entries for A-level modern language subjects in Summer 2016. This represents a decline of around one third (32 per cent) since 1996 and a decline of 3 per cent from the previous year (2015). In contrast to the previous trend, which had shown French and German in steep decline, but increasing numbers for Spanish and other languages, there were falls in numbers of candidates for Spanish and for other languages between 2015 and 2016.

How are A-level language entries distributed by language?

French accounts for about one third of language entries (32 per cent), with Spanish rapidly also approaching one third of entries. German accounts for just 13 per cent of entries and other languages 27 per cent. The charts below show how the share of language entries between languages has shifted since 1996, when French and German together accounted for more than three quarters of all entries.

In the 'other languages' category, Chinese accounted for the largest number of entries in 2016, followed by Russian, Italian and Polish. Other languages comprise Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Modern Greek, Gujarati, Modern Hebrew, Japanese, Panjabi, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish.

Figure 7: Distribution of A-level entries by language, 2016.
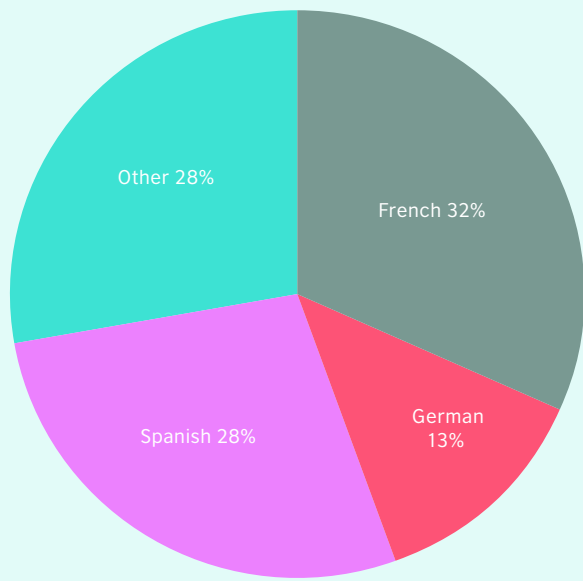
French 32%
German 13%
Spanish 28%
Other 28%

Figure 9: Distribution of A-level language entries by language, 1996.

French 57%
German 24%
Spanish 10%
Other 9%

How are A-level language entries distributed by language?

French accounts for about one third of language entries (32 per cent), with Spanish rapidly also approaching one third of entries. German accounts for just 13 per cent of entries and other languages 27 per cent. The charts below show how the share of language entries between languages has shifted since 1996, when French and German together accounted for more than three quarters of all entries.

In the 'other languages' category, in 2016 Chinese accounted for the largest number of entries, followed by Russian, Italian and Polish. Other languages comprise Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Modern Greek, Gujarati, Modern Hebrew, Japanese, Panjabi, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish.

How are A-level language entries distributed by gender?

Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of entries for A-level languages come from female candidates. The bias towards female candidates is most marked in French (68 per cent) and Spanish (66 per cent) and less marked in German (61 per cent) and other languages (59 per cent).

Figure 10: Distribution of A-level language entries by gender, 2016.

Males 36%
Females 64%

Figure 8: share of entries for languages categorised as 'other', 2016.

Chinese 33%
Italian 11%
Polish 11%
Russian 14%
Other 32%
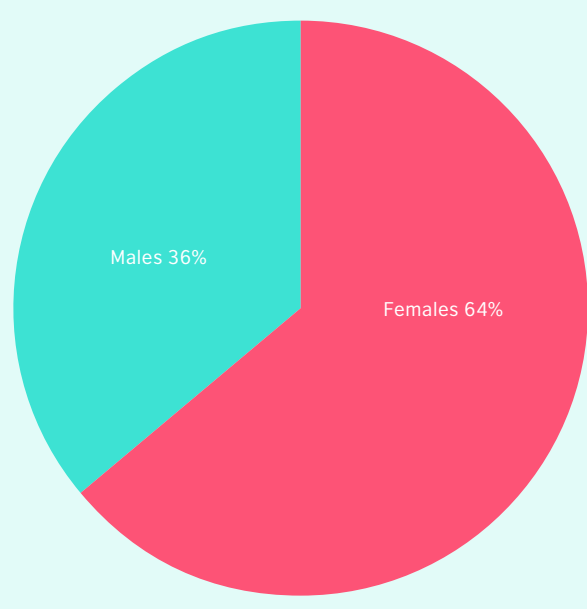
How are A-level language entries distributed by type of institution?

Half of all entries for A-level languages come from state-funded schools. Nearly one third (32 per cent) of candidates are from independent schools and 18 per cent from Sixth Form Colleges (SFC) and Further Education Colleges (FE). These proportions are similar to those recorded in previous years and highlight the disproportionate contribution of the independent sector, which accounts for only 18 per cent of the post-16 cohort, to language teaching at this level.[19]

Figure 11: Distribution of A-level language entries by type of institution, 2016.
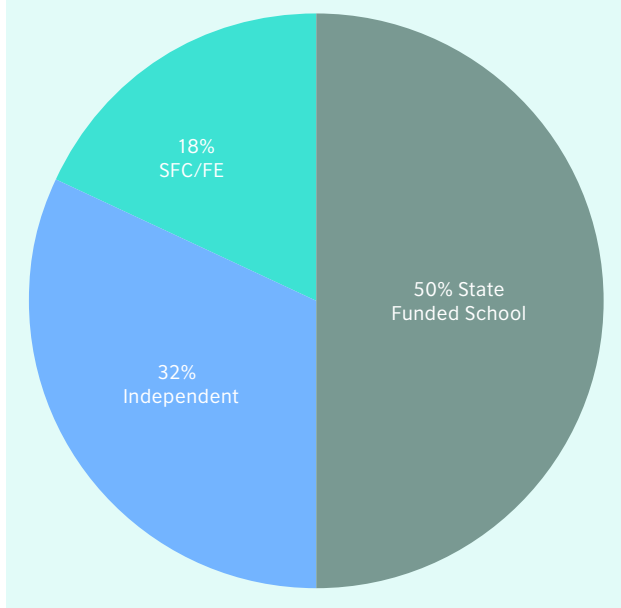
The bias towards the independent sector as a source of A-level language entries is most marked in the category 'other languages', for which candidates from independent schools outnumber those from the state sector, accounting for 44 per cent of entries. The skew towards the independent sector is less marked for French (29 per cent), German (26 per cent) and Spanish (27 per cent).

Figure 12: Distribution of A-level language, entries by institution type and language 2016.

Key
● State Funded School ● Independent ● SFC/FE
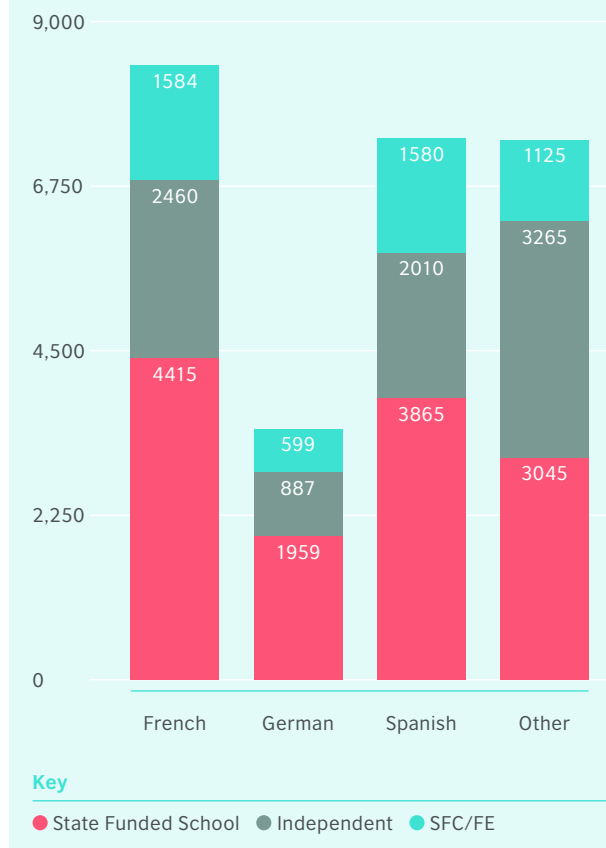
How are A-level language entries distributed by local authority and region?

Entries for A-level languages are skewed towards London and the South East, with the North East showing as a particularly 'cold spot' for languages at A-level, accounting for only three per cent of the total. Local authority level data shows that there is one local authority, Knowsley in the North West, where there were no A-level candidates for languages in 2016. The number of candidates in South Tyneside (North East), Barnsley (Yorkshire and the Humber), and Portsmouth (South East) was in single figures only. In London and the South East, Barking and Dagenham has an exceptionally low number of candidates for languages, just nine for French and six for other languages in 2016.

Figure 13: Distribution of A-level language entries by region, 2016.

Key
- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- East of England
- Inner London
- Outer London
- South East
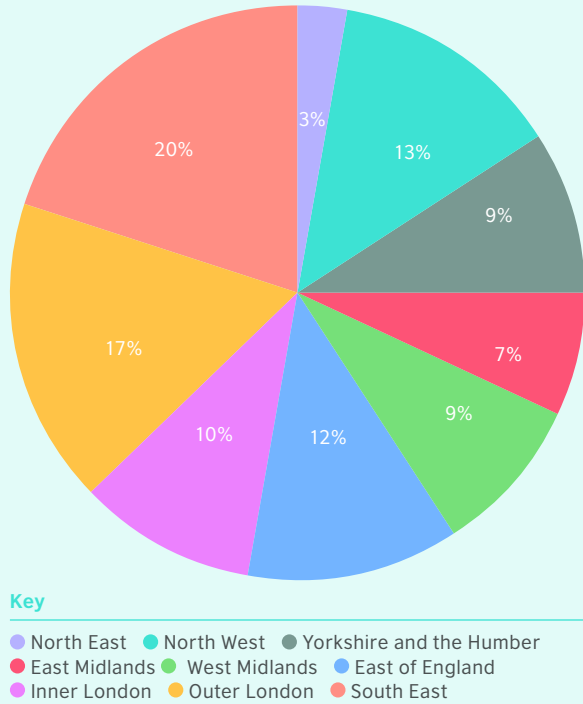
KEY POINTS

» Just under half the cohort (49 per cent) took a language subject at GCSE in 2016. Entry rates were higher than average in free schools and converter academies, among girls, and in London and the South East.

» The regional disparity in entry rates for languages is growing. In inner London, 65 per cent of the cohort now take a language at GCSE, whereas in the North East only 43 per cent do so.

» There have been significant changes in the share of language entries over the last 20 years. In 1996, French and German accounted for 81 per cent of entries; this is now only 45 per cent. However, the decline in entries for A-level languages is now affecting Spanish and other languages.

» The independent sector accounts for 32 per cent of A-level language entries.

» A-level languages entries are heavily skewed towards females, who account for 64 per cent of the total.

Figure 14: Distribution of A-level language entries by region and language, 2016.
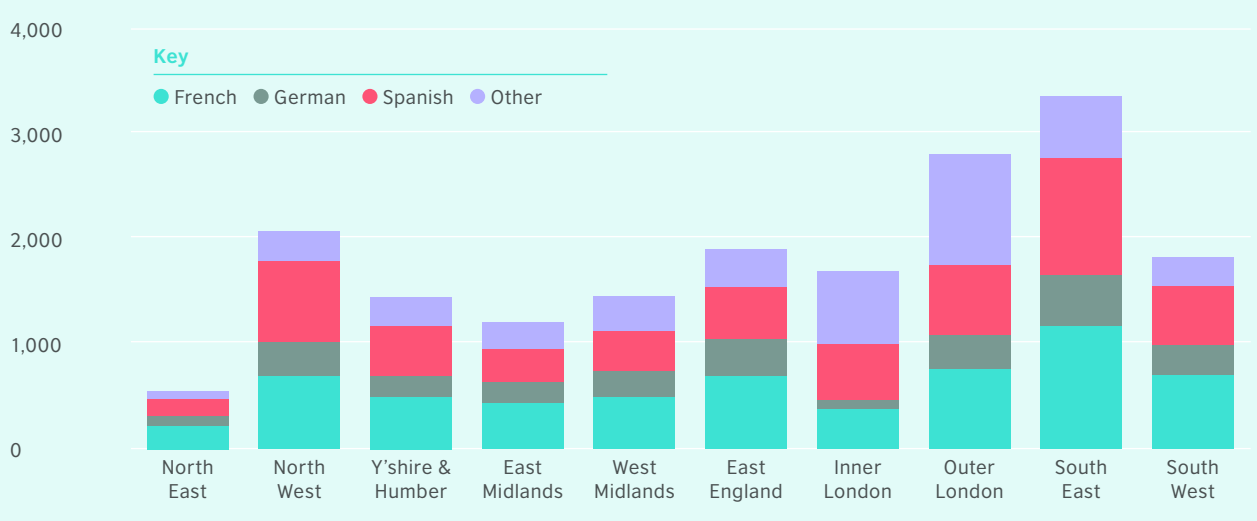
Key
- French
- German
- Spanish
- Other

	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	Inner London	Outer London	South East	South West
French	221	689	493	429	488	688	377	751	1163	700
German	94	323	200	201	246	342	81	321	475	275
Spanish	157	773	467	307	371	494	533	665	1111	567
Other	81	280	281	257	335	362	682	1045	582	265

17. Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England, 2015-2016, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2015-to-2016 [accessed 9 March 2017]; A-level and other 16-18 results 2015-2016, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results-2015-to-2016-revised [accessed 9 March 2017].

18. The DfE has not published comparable time-series data broken down for these smaller-entry languages. However, data for the past three years provided by the DfE shows that Portuguese, Russian and Turkish have increased numbers, while numbers for Bengali and Persian are on a downward trend. Numbers for the other languages are fluctuating.

19. Independent Schools Council figures.

CHAPTER 4
LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

This chapter covers provision for languages – which languages are taught, how much time is dedicated to language teaching and how schools are meeting the challenges of the new National Curriculum for languages in Key Stage 2. We also consider teachers, their training and qualifications, and the wider context for developing language teaching.

PROVISION FOR LANGUAGES

What proportion of primary schools teach a modern or ancient language?

More than 99 per cent of responding schools say that they teach a modern or ancient language within the curriculum. Only six schools out of the 727 which responded say they do not. Of these, only one has never taught a language. Two have ceased language teaching provision because of lack of staff and one because of other curriculum priorities. One school which has previously taught a language but no longer does so comments:

'The finances, lack of expertise and pressure on performance targets all impact on our decision'.

Figure 15: Proportion of responding primary schools which teach a modern or ancient language, 2012-2016.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
97%	95%	99%	100%	99%
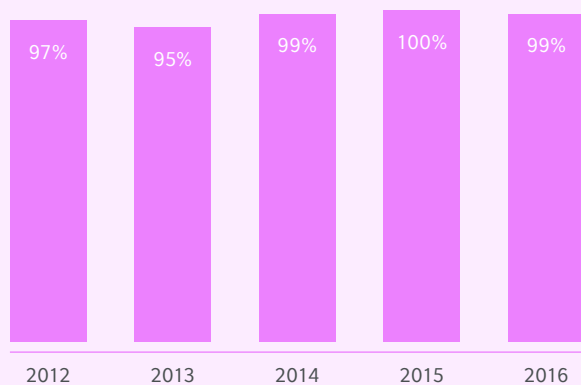
This year's responses confirm that almost all schools that respond to our survey are teaching a language. Although our sample is a large one, it is very possible that the results are not a completely accurate reflection of the national picture, since schools that do not teach a language are less likely to respond to our survey. The relatively low response rate this year could suggest that enthusiasm for primary languages is waning. Some of the comments received tend to confirm this picture. Following an unusually small number of responses in the initial weeks of the survey, we increased the number of schools invited to complete the questionnaire in order to achieve a viable sample (Chapter 2: Methodology). In consultation with our Advisory Group, we have concluded that it is likely that the respondents to our survey are likely to be more representative of those schools which are most enthusiastic about language teaching in Key Stage 2, and less representative of others which may give the subject lower priority.

How long have primary schools been teaching a language?

Almost 60 per cent of schools now have more than five years' experience in teaching languages at Key Stage 2. The free comments from respondents to this year's survey provide rich evidence of a long experience with languages, for example:

'The school has taught languages for more than 10 years.'

'Firstly by a non-specialist, for the past three years by a languages specialist.'

'We have been teaching Spanish to children from Reception up to Year 6 for at least ten years, and have had a close link with a school in Mijas [Spain] for about the same length of time.'

Figure 16 shows the evolution of responses to this question over the three years in which languages have been formally part of the Key Stage 2 curriculum. As might be expected for an initiative with its roots in the National Languages Strategy which ran from 2002 to 2010, there is an increase in the number of schools in this year's survey who say that they have been teaching a language for more than five years, and correspondingly fewer who say that they have started doing so more recently. There is very little qualitative evidence of schools having only started to teach languages relatively recently. However, many respondents do comment that their provision is still patchy:

'We've been teaching French in Key Stage 2 for about six years. However, it has been hit and miss without any significant coherence.'

'French has been taught across Key Stage 2 for a number of years but without a rigorous coverage and progression of skills and knowledge.'

A significant number of respondents also comment that their provision has become more consistent or more formal over the last three years:

'French has been taught at our school for a long time however, it is not until recently that we have been teaching it more formally rather than just discretely.'

'We have always taught small amount of French, but started properly when the new 2014 curriculum came in.'

Not all schools with a significant history of language provision report that this has improved, as the following respondents explain:

'When languages started more than ten years ago it was taught throughout the school and now it is not so widely taught.'

'It's so frustrating to see what has been built up over a number of years wither away.'

The reasons given by those primary teachers who report a decline in language teaching are the difficulty of fitting everything into a crowded curriculum and the recent prioritisation of literacy and numeracy over all other subjects.

Do all pupils in Years 3-6 learn a modern or ancient language within the normal timetable?

This question was included to ascertain whether some schools are still in the process of introducing language teaching and whether there is systematic coverage throughout Key Stage 2. More than 95 per cent of responding schools say that they teach a language to all pupils from Years 3-6. The small number which do not is split between schools that are working towards providing teaching for all Key Stage 2 pupils (17 schools) and those that are not (15 schools).

The qualitative evidence provided by respondents reveals some of the challenges which schools have experienced in developing a systematic approach to the teaching of languages across Key Stage 2. These include the following examples:

'For the last two years, it has been taught by a specialist whereas before that it was on the curriculum but often ended up not being taught as class teachers (many with very low skills in the language) were in charge of their own lessons.'

'We began teaching languages more than five years ago and chose Spanish as our language. This required a great deal of extra work for the staff to begin to tackle this language for themselves and then to develop lesson plans. Three years ago we decided to swap to teaching French as more staff felt comfortable with this and many in our family of schools were teaching French.'

'Spanish was taught in Key Stage 2 until around two years ago. The teacher moved into another role and language teaching stopped until September 2016.'

Figure 16: When schools introduced the teaching of a modern or ancient language.

Key
● 2014
● 2015
● 2016

We have just started this term: 12%, 1%, 1%
1-2 years ago: 9%, 15%, 12%
3-5 years ago: 28%, 27%, 27%
More than 5 years ago: 51%, 56%, 60%
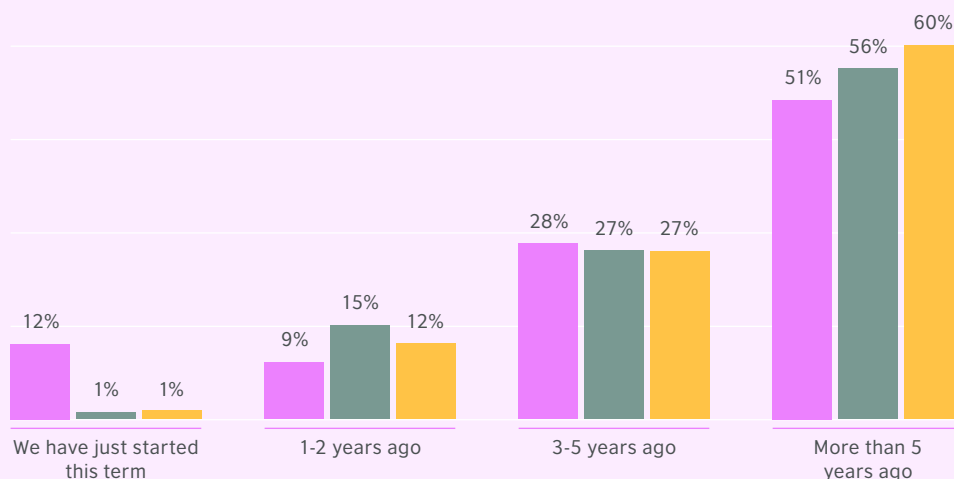
Do schools also teach a language in Key Stage 1?

When asked which languages, if any, are taught in Key Stage 1, 38 per cent of respondents report teaching at least one language. This continues a downward trend: responses to the same question in previous years showed that 42 per cent of schools were teaching a language in Key Stage 1 in 2015 and 53 per cent in 2013.

In spite of this decline, a number of respondents feel strongly about the additional benefits that come from pupils starting to learn a language in Key Stage 1:

'The earlier it is started the more the children are receptive to it. Children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) often find it liberating to be starting at the same point as others.'

'The impact of Key Stage 1 Spanish is massive. Having seen pupils now coming to Year 3 having had two years of Spanish is so encouraging when I hear their confidence, phonics ability and passion for languages.'

'I feel it should be compulsory for all children to learn languages from the beginning of their schooling, at age four or five.'

Where schools do teach a language in Key Stage 1, it is likely to be in the form of a very minimal introduction. There is evidence that 'teaching a language', particularly for this key stage, can mean anything from a systematic introduction to incidental sensitisation or an optional extra, as the following comments illustrate:

'All classes from Reception to Year 6 have a one hour French lesson every week.'

'We start the curriculum early in Year 2 as we understand that with the pressures of the Year 6 curriculum it is harder to fit in regular language lessons.'

'Key Stage 1 provision has just begun, with key words being taught in preparation for Key Stage 2.'

'The languages teacher is introducing some phrases to her Year 2 class.'

'Latin is taught incidentally to Key Stage 1 through liturgy, prayer and music e.g. Taizé chants.'

'At Key Stage 1 there is an offer of a French club after school.'

WHICH LANGUAGES ARE TAUGHT?

Main languages taught

French remains the language most commonly taught in primary schools, followed by Spanish, and then German and Chinese (Mandarin). It is notable that almost as many primary schools now teach Chinese as German. The following comments illustrate that the language is being offered to all pupils:

'We offer Mandarin from Foundation Stage 2 to Year 6'

'We have an amazing provision that is provided by the Chinese government as they fund over 90 per cent of the costs to have a qualified Chinese teacher to come to the UK to teach my children. It is a shame that language funding and development is not considered as important in the UK and especially primary schools.'

Figure 17: Languages most commonly taught in primary schools (NB some schools teach more than one language), 2016.
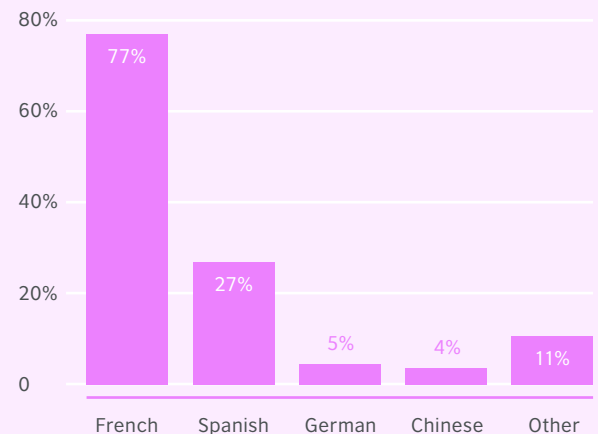
From the survey responses there is considerable qualitative evidence of schools having changed the language they teach in recent years as a result of staff capabilities in particular languages or because of the availability of resources, including specialist teachers. The following comments are examples of some of the changes which have occurred:

'We taught German as two of the teachers studied it at degree level. This year we changed to Spanish as it is better resourced, more staff have knowledge and it's more widely spoken and taught.'

'French was introduced ten years ago and taught by an outside provider throughout the school. This year, Spanish is being taught instead by one of the teachers, as the school can no longer afford to pay for a specialist language teacher.'

'From 2014 we have taught Mandarin as the MFL of choice with a specialist teacher. Previously, Spanish was taught by a local high school teacher.'

'We started by teaching French but now teach Mandarin. We have been teaching this for four years in collaboration with Southampton University.'

Other languages taught

Around one in ten schools teaches one or more less-commonly taught languages, often in combination with French or Spanish. Latin is the most widely taught 'other' language with two per cent of schools saying that they teach it. However, teachers' comments suggest that it may not always be as a full subject for all:

'Latin as a club for some children from Key Stage 2'

Figure 18: Languages less commonly taught in primary schools (note change of scale from previous chart), 2016.
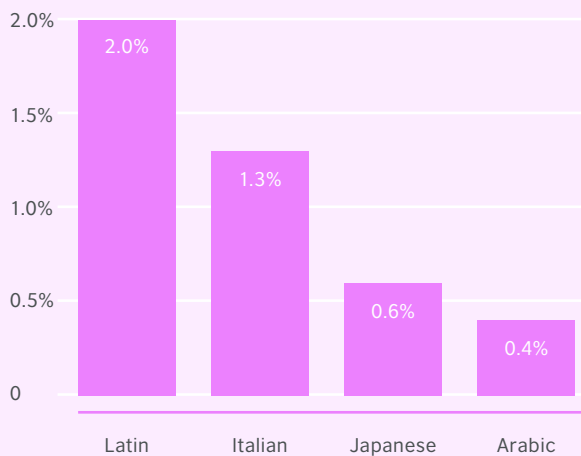
One school in our sample teaches Russian and another Portuguese, but none are teaching Urdu or Ancient Greek, the other languages presented on the prompt list. Two schools have applied a broad interpretation of 'modern or ancient languages' in the Key Stage 2 curriculum:

'Cornish, taught as an introduction to language learning, as well as part of our local cultural identity.'

'English (TESOL-type sessions) to address the needs of beginners arriving from abroad.'

A number of teachers comment on which languages they think primary schools should be teaching. A small sample of these views include:

'Ancient language teaching is elitist and unnecessary. Children should learn languages that they can apply in the workplace and beyond.'

'The languages taught are to match the local high school curriculum but have no relevance to the 91 per cent of EAL children in the school.'

'As a school with a provision for deaf children we would like to have had the option to teach British Sign Language as our language.'

What proportion of schools teach more than one language?

15 per cent of schools report that they teach more than one language, though this may not mean that individual pupils or class groups learn more than one language. However, there is evidence of pupils being given the opportunity to try a range of other languages in addition to that being taught in planned curriculum time. This is most often done through extra-curricular clubs, assemblies or taster sessions as the following examples show:

'Key Stage 2 children also have one "taster" language session a year in a language of the class's choice.'

'We also hold languages days when we explore other languages through stories, etc.'

'French is taught as part of the curriculum. We also offer extra-curricular clubs in Latin, Japanese, German, Spanish and Swedish.'

Trends in languages taught

In *Figure 19* we have combined this year's responses with data from previous years' surveys to show the evolution of languages taught in primary schools across a five-year period. The main trend to note is the steady increase in the number of schools teaching Spanish, while other languages have remained relatively stable in terms of their incidence nationally.

The qualitative evidence indicates that the key drivers behind the choice or change of language by schools are the availability of suitably qualified staff, the skills base of current teaching staff, and funding. There is evidence of difficulty in this area vis à vis German – existing classroom teachers rarely have German in their skills portfolio and schools report finding it very difficult to recruit teachers of German.

Figure 19: Trends in languages taught by primary schools, 2012-2016.
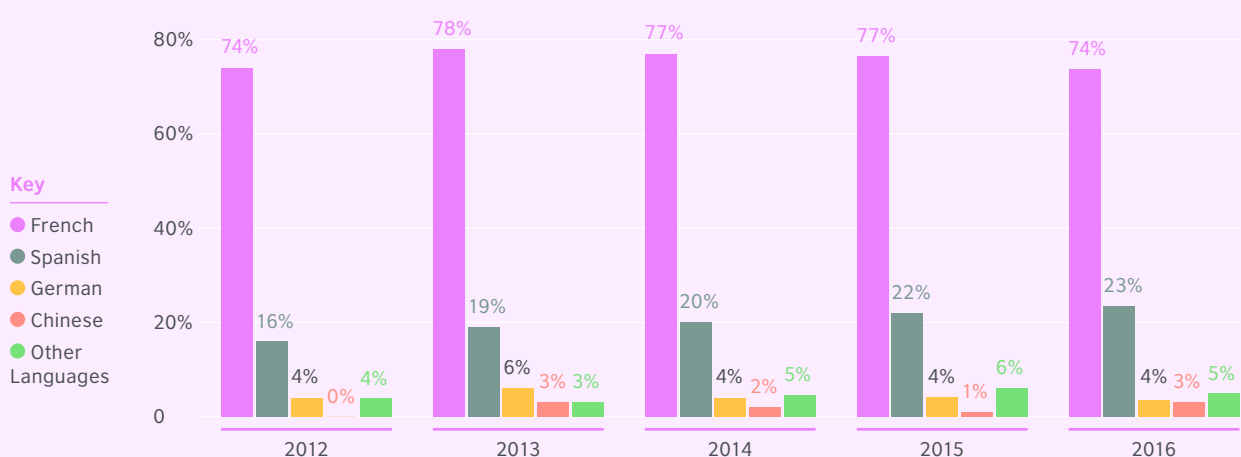
NB. Figures for other languages in 2012 and 2013 may be slightly under-stated since there was not a separate category for 'Other' in those surveys.
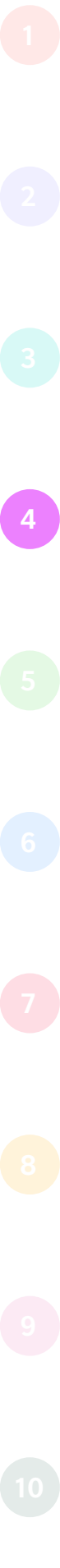
On the other hand, the Han Ban-funded programme makes it quite easy for primary schools to access Chinese native speaker teachers at no expense to themselves.[20]

TIME ALLOCATION FOR LANGUAGES

Respondents were asked how many minutes per week, on average, are provided for the teaching of languages.

In Key Stage 2, a large majority of schools (78-80 per cent) dedicate between half-and one-hour per week to languages. In Years 3 and 4, a small majority of schools (55 per cent) allocate between 30 and 45 minutes. Around one in ten schools set aside more than an hour per week, a proportion which increases slightly for Years 5 and 6. However, about one in ten schools are not providing even the minimal 30 minutes language tuition per week in Key Stage 2. These pupils are unlikely to be reaching the expected levels of competence in another language by the end of primary school.

Table E: Time allocation for teaching languages, 2016

	Less than 30 minutes	30-45 minutes	More than 45 minutes but less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	More than 2 hours
Key Stage 1	33.8%	12.7%	3.8%	2.5%	0.3%
Years 3/4	9.4%	54.5%	25.5%	9.7%	0.7%
Years 5/6	9.3%	49.2%	28.9%	11.8%	0.7%

The qualitative evidence on time allocation for languages provided by respondents to this year's survey reveals that in many schools languages occupy only a marginal place in the Key Stage 2 curriculum:

'Often spread over the terms, e.g. Autumn 1 and 2 and Spring 1 we teach some Key Stage 2 classes. We then swap with other classes for Spring 2, Summer 1, Summer 2. No consistent weekly classes.'

'All pupils in Years 3 to 6 should officially be taught French 45 minutes a week, but in fact the provision is patchy and much depends on the confidence of teachers and the demands of other areas of the curriculum/special activities, which often mean French lessons are not done.'

'The teaching of languages is one of the first subjects to be dropped when there are constraints in the timetable. Also, many teachers are aware of their lack of subject knowledge, so will shy away from teaching Spanish if they can.'

'At the moment, we only teach languages once a term.'

'Year 6 is currently not learning any languages.'

'It is taught as part of our Creative Curriculum in the afternoons, if at all.'

A number of respondents indicate that it is relatively common for schools to condense their language teaching time into shorter, more irregular periods as a way of freeing up the timetable for other subjects and priorities. Some examples of this practice are as follows:

'Children receive 40-minute lessons for half of each term.'

'Year 3 has been squeezed out to an occasional 20 minutes due to timetabling, which means languages specialist cannot teach.'

'Year 6 language lessons are often blocked and take place after SATS in May.'

It is difficult to see how such an approach to teaching a language can support effective learning which can subsequently be carried through to Key Stage 3. Other respondents, however, have found ways of overcoming these obstacles and report regular timetabled lessons in languages throughout Key Stage 2:

'Portuguese lessons for 50 minutes a week in each class across the school.'

'Exactly 45 mins on a weekly basis.'

'Year 3 to 6 have an hour's lesson each per week.'

Is there any relationship between the time allocation for languages and the socio-economic status of the school?

We looked at teaching time in Years 5 and 6 in relation to Free School Meal (FSM) quintiles, to gauge the relationship between time allocation and socio-economic status in primary schools. *Figure 20* shows that as the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for FSM increases, so does the proportion of schools within that quintile which teach less than 30 minutes of languages per week in Years 5 and 6. For example, 13 per cent of High FSM schools teach for less than 30 minutes, compared to only 7 per cent of low FSM schools, although there is some variation in between. The general correlation between FSM data and languages teaching time becomes complicated at the highest quintile of FSM data, as high FSM schools have a relatively high proportion (28 per cent) of schools teaching between 45 minutes and 1 hour. It is the middle high FSM schools that give the least teaching time to languages overall.

Overall, schools that teach languages for less than 30 minutes per week are more likely to have higher levels of FSM. This would confirm data from previous research which shows that at least some of the disparities between schools in provision for languages are associated with social disadvantage. The 2014/15 Language Trends survey found that schools with high proportions of pupils eligible for FSM were more likely than those in more privileged circumstances to have only just started teaching a

Figure 20: Year 5 and 6 languages time per week by Free School Meals quintile 2016.

Key

- None
- Less than 30 mins
- 30-45 mins
- More than 45 mins but less than an hour
- 1-2 hours
- More than 2 hours

	None	Less than 30 mins	30-45 mins	More than 45 mins but less than an hour	1-2 hours	More than 2 hours
Low FSM		7%	46%	32%	13%	2%
Middle low		3%	52%	33%	11%	
Middle	1%	12%	46%	27%	13%	1%
Middle high		12%	55%	22%	11%	
High FSM		13%	47%	28%	11%	1%
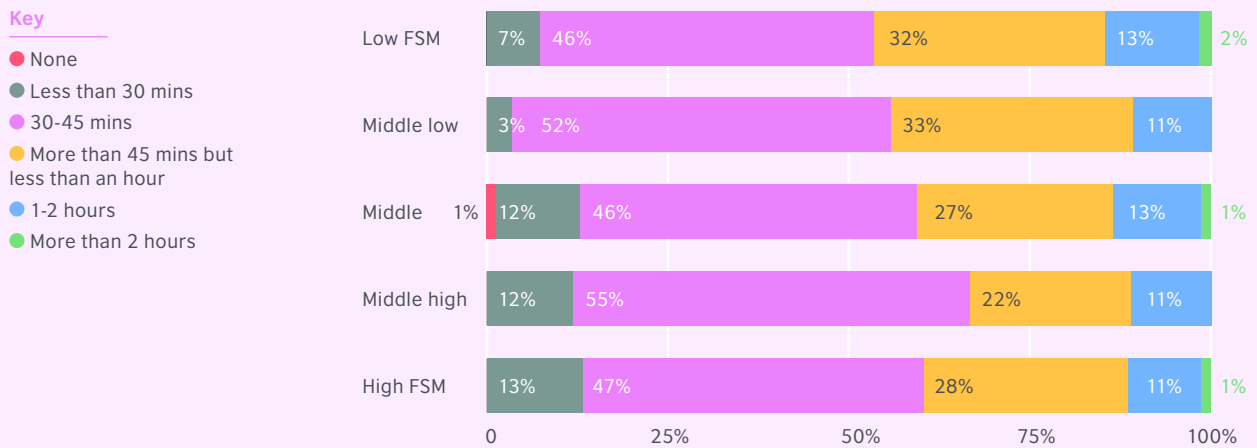
language in September 2014[21]. We also found that these schools were least likely to have systems in place for monitoring and assessing pupil progress in language learning[22].

Is there any relationship between time allocation for languages and the school's overall educational attainment?

There is a positive relationship between attainment quintile and time spent on languages. The higher the attainment quintile of the school, the more time they are likely to spend on languages. However, we do not know the direction of this relationship.

Overall, schools that teach languages for less than 30 minutes per week are more likely to have lower levels of attainment.

Figure 21: Year 5 and 6 languages time per week by attainment quintile, 2016.

Key

- None
- Less than 30 mins
- 30-45 mins
- More than 45 mins but less than an hour
- 1-2 hours
- More than 2 hours

	None	Less than 30 mins	30-45 mins	More than 45 mins but less than an hour	1-2 hours	More than 2 hours
Low attainment		12%	52%	27%	8%	1%
Middle low	1%	10%	55%	26%	9%	
Middle		9%	50%	25%	16%	1%
Middle high		8%	47%	30%	14%	1%
High attainment		8%	43%	36%	11%	1%
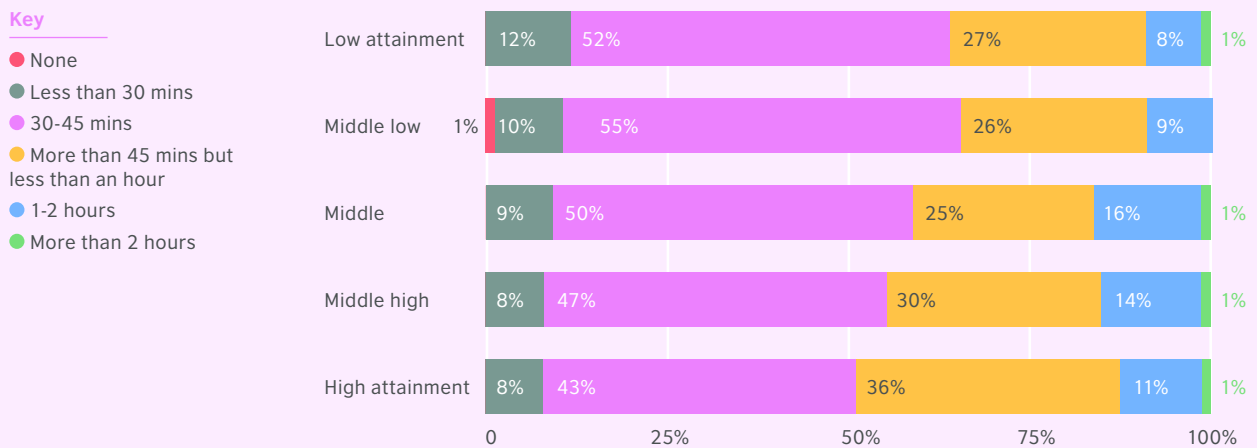
PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND THE NEW NATIONAL CURRICULUM

What are the main challenges for schools in meeting the National Curriculum requirements?

This question has been asked in each of the three annual Language Trends surveys which have taken place since a modern or ancient language was made part of the statutory Key Stage 2 curriculum in September 2014. As shown in *Figure 22*, fewer schools now report that they worry about accessing training: just 12 per cent compared with 27 per cent in 2014. Schools also say that they are less worried about improving staff language proficiency and that they are marginally less worried about finding suitable teachers and about funding and resources. These responses may be an indication that initial concerns about staff expertise have been assuaged as the new subject has become a settled part of the curriculum. Finding sufficient curriculum time emerges once again as the most pressing concern, even more so than in previous years.

The qualitative evidence provided by respondents in their answers to this question sheds further light on the pressures experienced by schools in developing high-quality language teaching:

'Spanish is currently taught by one teacher (fairly fluent Spanish speaker). If/when her role changes (possibly end of this school year), the amount of time/understanding/preparation that will be needed by class teachers to undertake Spanish seems very out of proportion with the half-hour learning that the children get. Class teachers are currently not confident and not keen about teaching Spanish themselves.'

'Being able to follow up dedicated lessons during the week.'

'We need a budget in order to teach the subject properly. The subject leader, a class teacher, needs to be released and this is not always possible.'

Figure 22: Challenges reported by schools in meeting the National Curriculum requirements for modern languages, 2014 to 2016.

Finding sufficient curriculum time
- 63% (2014)
- 58% (2015)
- 69% (2016)

Boosting staff expertise and confidence*
- 56% (2014)
- 45% (2015)
- 48% (2016)

Improving staff languages proficiency
- 49% (2014)
- 46% (2015)
- 35% (2016)

Funding and resources
- 28% (2014)
- 25% (2015)
- 24% (2016)

Finding enough suitably qualified teachers
- 23% (2014)
- 19% (2015)
- 19% (2016)

Accessing training
- 27% (2014)
- 19% (2015)
- 12% (2016)

We do not experience any particular challenges
- 10% (2014)
- 9% (2015)
- 10% (2016)

Not applicable
- 4% (2014)
- 2% (2015)
- 2% (2016)

Achieving buy-in from parents and/or governors
- 2% (2014)
- 1% (2015)
- 1% (2016)

Key
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

* NB in previous years the question was phrased slightly differently, with separate options for 'confidence' and 'expertise', shown here as a composite figure.

Figure 23: Documentation underpinning schools' language programmes, 2016.

Key
- Commercial schemes of work
- DfE Programme of Study for Modern Languages
- Schemes of work developed by the local authority
- Schemes of work developed by my school
- Key Stage 2 Framework
- Freely-available schemes of work
- Other (please specify)
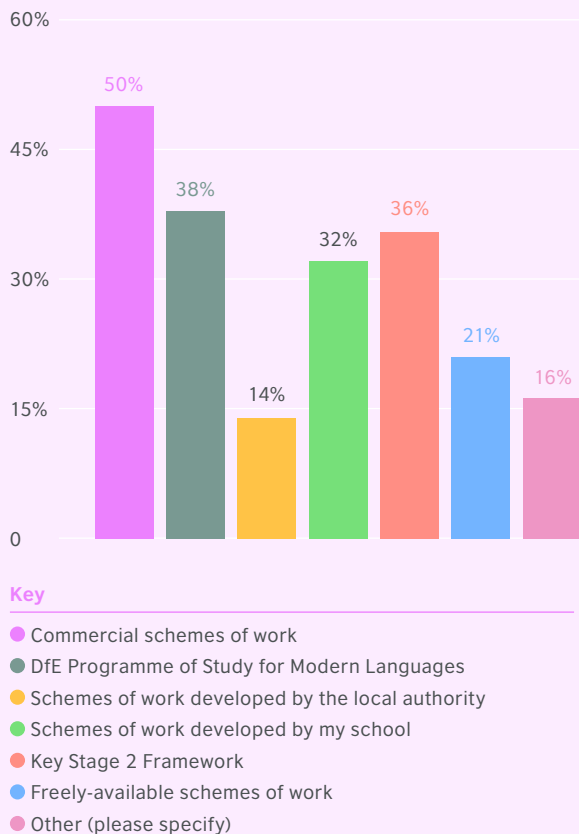
Respondents also cite a number of other reasons why they find the National Curriculum requirements challenging. The main two are the low priority given to languages within the school, and the insufficient detail about assessment and year objectives in the National Curriculum requirements:

'Although now statutory, I think the subject is still seen as not very important.'

'Raising the profile of languages is a challenge as other curriculum subjects take priority.'

'Another huge challenge is not really having specific examples of the end of year requirements. Are we doing OK, pushing too hard or expecting too little?'

'Finding manageable ways of assessing and recording pupil progress in languages.'

'The curriculum is very vague, so are the expected outputs or assessment models.'

Some respondents comment that many of their pupils are also learning English or have SEN, which impacts negatively on their ability to achieve the expected outcomes of the National Curriculum, for example:

'We are a very multi-lingual school already. Learning to speak English is a priority for many of our children (who may already speak two other languages). Learning French can seem a bit irrelevant to staff and children.'

'Children being taken out of French for other interventions is very frustrating. Sometimes, some pupils do not have French for the entire year.'

What documentation do schools use to underpin their language programmes?

Figure 23 shows that around half of schools use commercially-available schemes of work, more than one third use the DfE Programmes of Study, and a similar proportion use the Key Stage 2 Framework, developed as part of the National Languages Strategy 2002-2010. Around one in five schools use schemes of work which are freely-available to download (there is some overlap between these categories as respondents were able to tick as many options as they wished).

To what extent do schools assess and record pupil progress in language learning?

Responses from previous years' surveys showed that around one third of schools did not assess or monitor pupil progress in language learning. This year, in order to understand practice in greater detail, a menu of approaches was included in the survey from which schools were asked to choose one. From the responses shown in *Figure 24* it can be seen that while around 18 per cent of schools do not record or assess pupil progress at all, a slightly smaller percentage do keep group records of progress. The two percentages equate to 35 per cent of schools, approximately the same percentage as those who, in previous years, said they did not assess or monitor progress. We do not know whether, in past surveys, schools which only recorded group progress reported that they did not monitor or assess pupils at all, or whether there has been an increase in record-keeping. The responses from other schools show that formal assessments of each child's language learning are not common in primary schools. Only around one in eight schools (12.5 per cent) do this. It is much more common to undertake some kind of informal assessment, and nearly half of schools report that they do this. Because the question in this year's survey was different from that asked in previous years, it is not possible to say whether this represents an improvement on past practice, but the figures do provide a more nuanced understanding of current practice in primary schools in relation to assessing pupil progress in language learning.

The qualitative data reinforces the picture that many schools have adopted, or are in the process of developing, informal assessment processes to assess pupils' language learning, for example:

'The scheme we use has tick list "I can do" sheets but assessment is not formalised properly as yet.'

'We do informal assessment related to criteria and expectations set out in Key Stage 2 Framework.'

Figure 24: Approaches to assessing and recording pupil progress in languages (NB. 3.8 per cent selected 'Other'), 2016.

Key
- We don't assess or record pupils' progress in languages
- Individual pupils are not assessed but group records are kept of progress in language learning
- Informal assessment of each child
- Formal assessment of each child

18%
17%
48%
13%

0   13%   25%   38%   50%
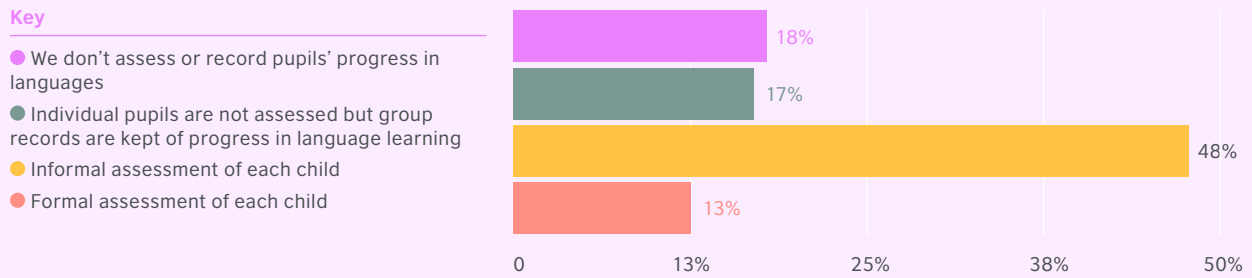
'At the end of Year 6, we have an informal profile of effort and attainment for each child which is passed on to the secondary school as well as used for reports to parents.'

'This is something that our school is beginning to explore. When we introduce this I believe it will mostly be through informal assessment of each child.'

'We are trialling individual informal assessment and group records to track progress to see which is most manageable and most meaningful'

Qualitative evidence from respondents whose schools do not yet have systems in place to monitor or assess pupil progress in languages shows that schools are grappling with a variety of challenges. In some cases, schools have resourcing difficulties, for example:

'We are looking at a way to assess children but with one teacher and nearly 300 children it is a rather large task.'

'This is something I will be looking into in the future. We need to ensure the teaching is embedded and to a good standard first.'

Other respondents report that their schools have either had to prioritise 'core' subjects, leaving little spare capacity for languages or that they are having to focus first on embedding recent changes to the National Curriculum, for example:

'We were working towards this, but the significant curriculum changes in other areas have impacted on the time available for assessing languages. This is an area for us to develop.'

'The current educational climate means teachers struggle to assess core subjects at the required depth.'

'We are currently looking at manageable ways of assessing pupils' progress in language learning.'

In one case, national guidance which no longer cites levels has impacted on a school's ability to assess learning:

'This is currently under review following the removal of levels, when we did formally assess each child.'

Where schools are still struggling to offer pupils consistent and regular classes in a language, they may feel that it is premature to be establishing assessment systems:

'We are looking at introducing the Languages Ladder, but not until French is being taught more frequently.'

Many other respondents describe their position on assessment systems for primary languages, or the monitoring of pupil progress, as 'work in progress' or aspirational. The free responses from teachers provide rich qualitative evidence of schools recognising that their current method of assessment needs to be improved or that they need to take measures to monitor or assess pupil learning in languages.

Some schools have found a solution to assessment which works for them:

'We use a framework of transferrable skills across the curriculum, including languages, and the children are assessed against this.'

'This has been an area of development over the last few years. We have statements for each year group and will informally assess each child against the criteria to decide whether they are on track at the end of the year. We also use some short formal assessments, e.g. a five to ten minute independent writing opportunity or an online quiz.'

Others have settled on approaches which target certain groups of pupils as the most manageable means of assessing learning progress:

'Three children from each Key Stage 2 class are monitored as a sample group.'

'More in depth assessment happens for Year 6 to aid the transition to Year 7.'

The responses to this question were analysed according to the socio-economic status of the school, using the proportion of pupils eligible for FSM as a proxy. There is a statistically significant relationship between schools with high FSM (top two quintiles) and not assessing progress in languages. However, within schools that do assess languages, high FSM schools are more likely to assess formally than lower FSM schools. These findings are also statistically significant. (See *Figure 25*).

Figure 25: How and whether schools assess pupil progress in language learning by socio-economic indicator, 2016.

Key
- ● Formal assessment of each child
- ● Individual pupils are not assessed but group records are kept of progress in language learning
- ● Informal assessment of each child
- ● We don't assess or record pupils' progress in languages
- ● Other

Low FSM	11%	12%	58%	15%	4%
Middle low	13%	18%	52%	10%	7%
Middle	7%	14%	53%	25%	2%
Middle high	16%	24%	37%	22%	2%
High FSM	19%	21%	37%	18%	4%

(Axis: 0, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%)
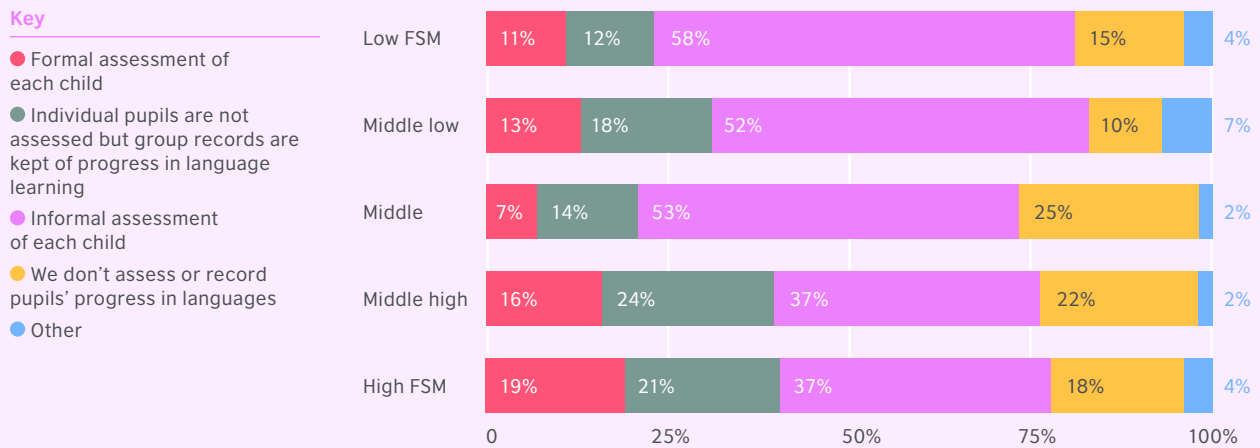
TEACHERS, THEIR TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

How is language teaching provided?

The responses to this question were almost identical to those gathered in the 2015 survey. They show that just over one half of primary schools employ a specialist languages teacher, either as a member of school staff (35 per cent) or coming in from outside on a part-time basis (16.3 per cent). Class teachers carry out the main work of teaching languages, either alone or supported by a specialist language teacher or a language assistant. The number of schools employing Teaching/Language assistants is very low at 4.8 per cent. This compares with 6 per cent in 2015.

There is no significant difference in provision between upper and lower Key Stage 2, except for a very marginal tendency to use specialist teachers rather than class teachers in Years 5 and 6.

Comments from respondents to this year's survey confirm the widely varying profile of those contributing to the teaching of languages, including teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants, senior managers and volunteers. In some cases, teachers are supported by pupils from local schools or universities, or even remotely from abroad:

'Upper Key Stage 2 teachers are supported by university language pupils.'

'We currently have six Year 12 pupils from the local grammar school teaching Spanish in Year 2.'

'Year 3/4 are taught remotely by a native Mandarin Chinese speaker based in Beijing.'

Figure 26: Models of provision for language in upper and lower Key Stage 2, 2016.

	Years 5-6	Years 3-4
By a specialist member of staff and class teachers	6%	6%
By a specialist teacher who is a member of staff	29%	28%
By class teachers in conjunction with Language assistants/Teaching assistants	5%	5%
By an external specialist and class teachers	5%	4%
By an external specialist	11%	10%
By class teachers	38%	40%
Other/Not applicable	6%	6%

Key
- ● Years 5-6
- ● Years 3-4
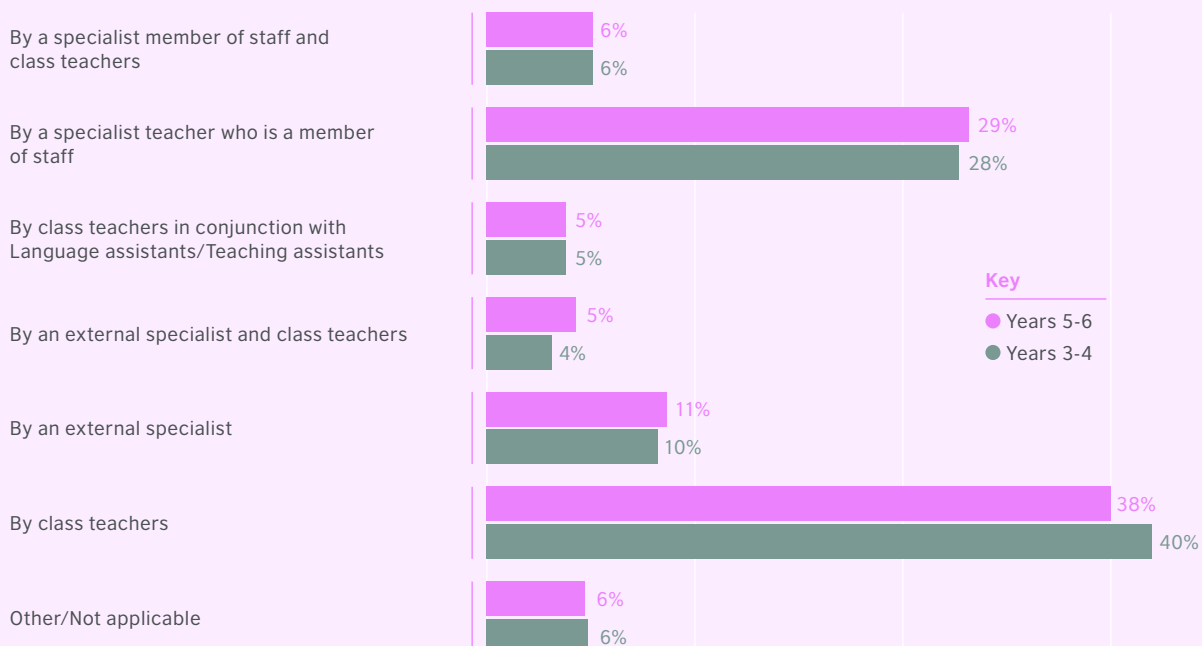
It is perhaps a little surprising that there are no comments at all which show that schools are drawing on the existing language skills of parents or from within the local community to support pupils' exposure to the language being taught.

What qualifications do teachers hold in the languages they are teaching?

In order to ascertain the level of linguistic expertise available to primary schools, we asked about the highest level of qualification held by teachers in the language(s) being taught. The responses show that nearly half of schools have a member of staff who is a native speaker or who has a degree in the language (16.1 per cent plus 30.3 per cent = 46.4 per cent), and another 25.7 per cent have members of teaching staff with an A-level or equivalent in the language. This means that just over one quarter of schools (28 per cent) have to rely on staff with low levels of linguistic competence, GCSE or below.

Figure 27: Highest language qualification held by teachers in responding schools, 2016.
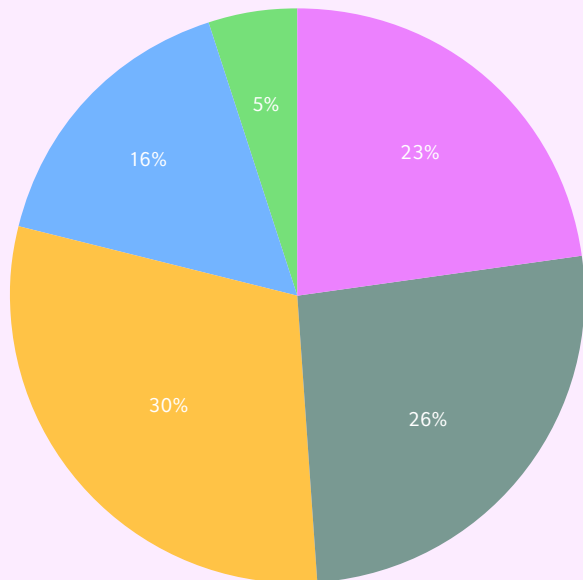
Key
● GCSE or equivalent   ● A-level or equivalent
● Degree or equivalent   ● Native speaker or near bilingual
● None have any of the above

A comparison of the responses to this question over three years shows that there has been a modest but identifiable improvement in the expertise of staff employed as language teachers in primary schools: in 2014, some 31 per cent of staff had a GCSE or less and 42 per cent had a degree level qualification or were bilingual. Seen in conjunction with the responses below on primary schools' involvement in CPD for languages, this evidence suggests a tendency towards recruitment rather than training as a means of improving staff language expertise.

Table F: Highest language qualification held by teachers in responding schools, 2014-2016

|	2014	2015	2016
GCSE or equivalent	20%	21%	23%
A-level or equivalent	28%	27%	26%
Degree or equivalent	27%	29%	30%
Native speaker or near bilingual	15%	16%	16%
None have any of the above	11%	7%	5%

Where a language is taught by class teachers rather than by a specialist, some schools struggle to identify a language which works for all teachers or to make effective use of the language skills they do have within their teaching complement:

'Our teachers and staff speak a range of languages, so choosing one which we all had some knowledge of was difficult. For example, I am fluent in German but no other members of staff have spoken German since school and most don't have GCSE German. Others speak Somali or Arabic, but those who don't tend to not have any knowledge of the language.

'French was chosen as it was felt that everybody has basic knowledge of French. We are continuing to work on our subject knowledge.'

'Our near bilingual speaker does not teach languages. The highest qualification that the class teachers who teach languages have is GCSE or equivalent.'

Other schools do not have any staff with a high level of language skills and are concerned that this may have an adverse effect on the pupils' learning. For example:

'The majority of staff have no more than GCSE languages and this is reflected in the accuracy of pronunciation despite the resources provided and their best efforts.'

Some respondents point out that language qualifications in themselves do not necessarily mean that a teacher is able to teach the language to their pupils as the following examples show:

'The teacher who is qualified to this level has few oral skills as the language has not been used since school days.'

'We have several teachers who are qualified but lack the confidence to teach.'

However, others have found innovative and rewarding ways to engage their teaching staff to the benefit of both staff and pupils:

'Our teaching staff are engaging with the CPD provided by the Goethe Institut, viewing it as an opportunity to learn a language as well as being able to teach it.'

What specialist expertise do schools draw on in monitoring and developing their language teaching?

Respondents were given a menu of options and invited to tick all those which were relevant to them. Responses highlight a disparity between the 36 per cent of schools that have an on-site specialist as a member of staff, and the 30 per cent that do not have access to any specialist expertise at all. Relatively few say that they receive support from the Association for Language Learning (ALL) or from universities: these two options were not included in a similar question asked in 2015.

A comparison with the 2015 survey responses (not shown) provides evidence of a diminishing reliance on local authority support, peripatetic specialists and commercial organisations (ten per cent, eight per cent and eight per cent respectively in 2015). Slightly fewer primary schools also say that they rely on a local secondary school (21 per cent in 2015). This means there has been a reduction generally in support used by primary schools, with 30 per cent now saying they have no access to specialist support compared to 23 per cent in 2015.

Respondents give the following examples of the external expertise they draw on in developing and monitoring their language provision:

'The Chair of Governors is a retired languages teacher and he advises us.'

'In the North West, our primary languages hub, funded by the DfE-funded primary languages hub, the Primary Languages Network, run by Janet Lloyd, former local authority primary consultant for Warrington. Buying into the network gives us high quality local training, a VLE website with scheme of work and lots of resources to help with our teaching.

'We have cluster meetings at this school, attended by about 25 other primary schools, to share good practice and innovation.'

'There are three language specialists delivering lessons across three schools in our academy. We plan together and share resources. We have attended ALL language conferences.'

In a small number of cases, the 'specialist expertise' which schools mention seems only marginally appropriate to the task of developing the subject within the Key Stage 2 curriculum:

'A volunteer comes into school to run an after-school club.'

Respondents from schools that are not fortunate in having expertise on hand give details of their circumstances:

'We are currently in the process of seeking any individuals from our school community who could come in and aid our language learning.'

'We have no access to specialist expertise beyond the one teacher who has an A-level qualification.'

'Language teacher just does everything.'

'Until recently we had a specialist teacher and secondary school support but are now relying on normal teaching staff and training that we are applying for.'

Figure 28: Expertise which schools draw on in monitoring and developing language teaching (multiple answers permitted), 2016.

Key

- A member of staff who is a specialist language teacher
- A peripatetic specialist language teacher
- An external consultant
- External AST/SLE/Local authority adviser
- Commercial organisation
- Support from a local secondary school
- Support from a university
- Support from the Association for Language Learning
- None - we do not have access to any specialist expertise
- Other
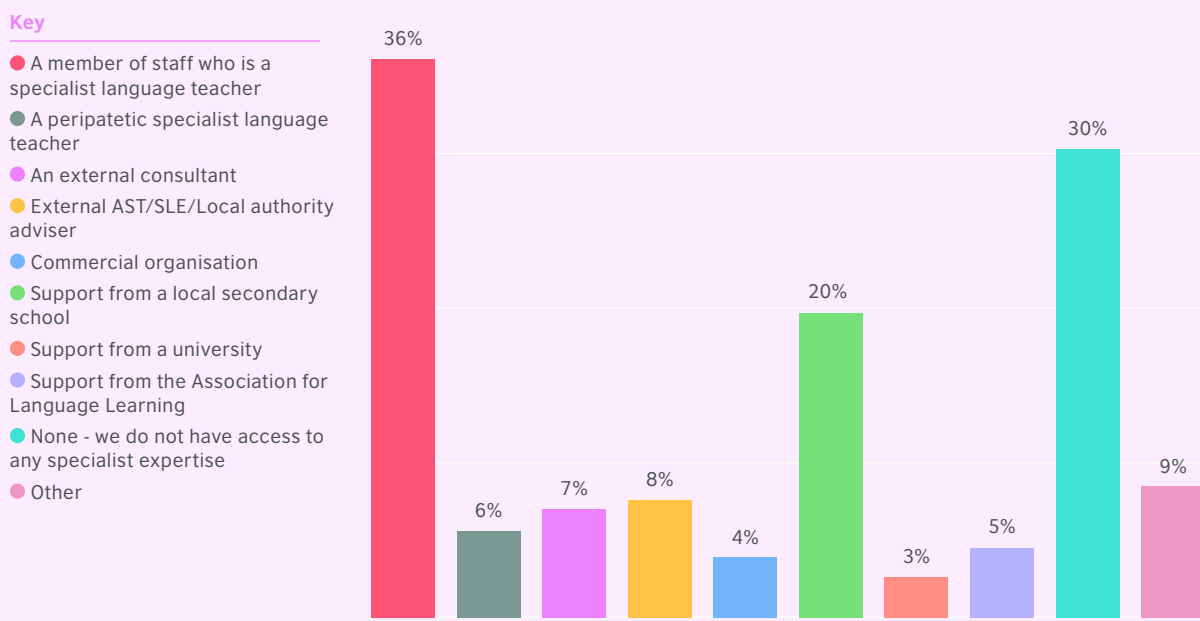
What types of CPD for languages do teachers take part in?

A small majority of schools (53 per cent) take part in network meetings with other local primary schools either regularly (14 per cent) or, more commonly, occasionally (39 per cent). Participation in CPD for languages is very low with very small numbers taking part in any sort of regular professional development activity. A comparison with figures from previous years (not shown) indicates a broadly similar pattern. There has been an increase since last year in the proportion of schools saying that they never take part in any kind of CPD for languages. Nearly a quarter (24 per cent) say they have no involvement with any of the CPD options shown, compared to 14 per cent in 2015.

The most frequent source of funded training identified by respondents is the EU Erasmus programme:

'As part of the Erasmus project we will be providing CPD opportunities for our teachers to learn languages abroad.'

'We are currently in the middle of an Erasmus+ funded immersion course programme sending six staff to France.'

'CPD is provided every two to three weeks by the Goethe Institute (the provider visits our school for 1.5 hour training sessions).'

Others struggle to access either training or the funding which would enable them to refresh their skills and enhance their subject knowledge:

'There has been no language CPD offered in our county for about six years.'

'It has been very rare this year that a course has been available for my French teacher to attend.'

'We did attend network meetings until funding was withdrawn from the local authority.'

'We would like CPD but funding for training is not available.'

A small number of respondents report that they have made their own arrangements for CPD, with mixed results, for example:

'Two years of lessons in my own time and expense.'

'One teacher tried doing a Spanish evening class but had to give up due to work overload.'

'As a specialist teacher, I provide most of my CPD by travelling abroad independently!'

THE WIDER ISSUES FOR PRIMARY LANGUAGES

What advantages have teachers observed for children as a result of starting to learn a language from age seven?

This question invited free text responses which have been coded to give the percentages quoted.

The great majority (88 per cent) of respondents are very clear about the advantages to their pupils of beginning to learn a language at the age of seven. Some also express the view that it would be better for pupils to begin learning a language at the age of four or five. Respondents offer the following reasons to support their belief in the advantages of starting the teaching of a language at age seven with some teachers mentioning more than one:

Figure 29: types of CPD undertaken by staff teaching languages (multiple answers permitted), 2016.
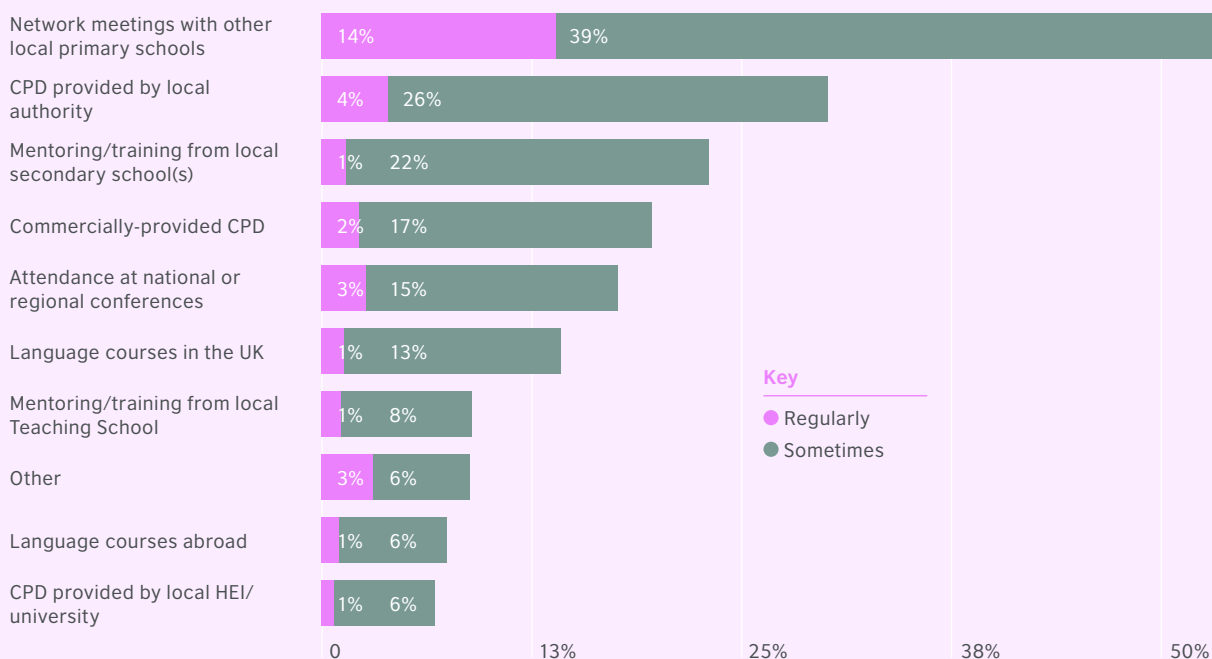
Impact on pupil confidence

Some 28 per cent of respondents comment that starting to learn a language at a young age greatly boosts pupil confidence and that this is particularly important at the point of transfer to secondary school as pupils already have the ability to speak and write in simple sentences and have sound skills in the language which they can build on. Younger pupils are enthusiastic and very comfortable with taking risks which is important when trying out a new piece of language in class. Three respondents comment that they have received favourable feedback from their feeder secondary schools which have received competent linguists into Year 7 and some even report that their pupils have gone on to take their language GCSE early achieving A/A* grades.

'They have a foundation to build on in secondary school and are more confident in either, continuing with the language they have been learning, or are familiar with similar structures in the new language. They should also be aware of the importance of communicating with people in a global context.'

'Local secondary schools have commented on how well prepared our children are when entering secondary school with the knowledge and understanding of French.'

Understanding about the world

Languages bring the world into the school and foster a greater awareness and understanding of other cultures as well as helping pupils develop a knowledge of global issues and an appreciation of what it means to be a global citizen. Some 14 per cent of teachers commented on this particular advantage of pupils starting to learn a language at the age of seven. The following is a small selection of their comments:

'Enjoyment and learning of all abilities regardless as to whether they find other subjects tricky, links with schools in Mexico and Spain, cultural understanding, understanding global issues.'

'A wider knowledge of a country other than theirs. A cultural understanding they wouldn't otherwise have had.'

'We see it as a key part of being a good global citizen and develops transferrable skills across the curriculum.'

Cognitive benefits

Thirteen per cent of teachers responding to this question highlight the benefits of learning a new language at an early age for supporting literacy in English, particularly phonics and grammar. Another seven per cent of respondents confirm that young children find it easier to learn vocabulary and mimic pronunciation, making them good language learners. The fact that they lack the inhibitions often seen in older children also means that that are more willing to take risks with language learning:

'Application of grammar. Improved oracy skills.'

'Learning French has encouraged children in our school to think more about the grammar, spelling and sounds of their English.'

'Supports understanding etymology of words and sentence construction and grammar in pupils' first language.'

'Children tend to learn a language better at a younger age in comparison to those trying to learn a language in later life.'

Benefits for SEN or lower ability pupils

Some respondents (four per cent) comment on the fact that languages are a great 'leveller' as all pupils start a language from scratch and those already struggling with core subjects such as maths or English can often excel at languages. The initial focus on developing oral skills can also be beneficial to pupils who are reluctant writers or those who have different learning styles and who respond well to a practical, applied learning style common in early language tuition:

'When we start teaching French in Year 3, as many as 99 per cent of the children are on an even level as it is completely new learning. I find that the lower ability children take to languages quickly. Learning another language also helps them make links with their English.'

'The first thing that comes to mind is pupils with special needs who love the subject and thrive in a situation whereby they are starting at the same level as everyone else.'

Inclusivity for EAL pupils

Three per cent of respondents comment that pupils who are already bilingual in English and a language other than English frequently excel at learning a third language when they might be struggling with other school subjects. With all pupils starting from a zero point regardless of the language they speak otherwise, learning a new language can aid inclusiveness as well as help native English speakers to appreciate the challenges some of their peers have faced in learning a new language.

'We have a high number of EAL pupils, many of whom start with little or no English. They are some of our most successful language learners and so teaching a language provides them with an opportunity to 'shine'.'

'Our English children gain a new respect for the EAL children when they see how hard they have to work just so that they can get through the everyday things.'

'EFL (English Foreign Language) children are boosted by their transferable skills.'

'It helps EAL pupils in particular to feel at the same level with other pupils, and sometimes more able and advanced than others.'

No benefits

In spite of the many positive views of early language learning expressed by teachers, some ten per cent of respondents do not see any advantage in pupils beginning to learn a new language specifically at age seven. While it is possible that some respondents misinterpreted the question in the survey and assumed they were being asked whether age seven was a uniquely propitious age at which to begin language learning, as opposed to age five or age eight, it is also evident that some respondents feel that the curriculum is too crowded for sufficient, effective language teaching to take place, or that language teaching in their primary schools is too sporadic for any potential advantage to be realised. One respondent also comments that teachers' own poor language skills can be negative models for young learners and have an adverse impact on their success in language learning at a later stage in their education. A few respondents also believe that they need to focus first on teaching English to those pupils who join the school with very little English and that teaching such pupils a third language confuses them. Some examples of respondents' comments are as follows:

'Great idea - but unfortunately the curriculum is so overstretched it is hard to do.'

'I believe lack of expertise from staff actually puts children at a disadvantage because moving forward they will have to unlearn poor pronunciation and grammar.'

'Children are already learning another language from parents/grandparents and getting confused learning French, Mandarin, English and mainly Polish.'

'No advantage as children are not exposed to language as much as is needed.'

Has the result of the referendum to leave the EU had any impact on language learning in primary schools?

More than nine out of ten schools responding to this question say that the decision has not had any impact, or at least, not yet. Of those that say there has already been an impact, the majority (30 respondents) say that this has been negative. Some 12 respondents report that there has been a positive impact, though from their comments it is evident that by 'positive impact' they very often mean making the languages teaching team more determined than ever to promote their subject to pupils and parents.

The main concerns of teachers in respect of the EU referendum outcome are in respect of future access to funding, specialist teachers and school links, all of which are vital for dynamic language programmes in schools. A few examples of teachers' comments on their concerns are as follows:

'We are concerned about the future availability of specialist native language teachers.'

'We currently receive funding from the Erasmus+ scheme to send teachers on residential language courses in France and Spain to improve their confidence. We are not sure whether this will continue in the future.'

'Our link with twinned school in Caen has been affected. This school now wishes to teach German rather than English!'

'We are concerned about maintaining our exchange programme if we cannot access an Erasmus grant - as some of our pupils are from poorer backgrounds and require extra funding to travel on such exchanges.'

Some respondents report that the decision to leave the EU has had a demoralising effect on language departments and teachers, particularly where they are already struggling to establish a place in a crowded curriculum and where languages are often seen as less important than other subjects:

'Not being a member of the EU in the future will restrict career opportunities for those with language skills so learning a language is not viewed as being as important.'

'It has dented morale.'

A small number of teachers comment on the negative atmosphere created for languages in schools, with some parents suggesting that their children need no longer learn a language or pupils and teachers being fearful about their future should EU citizens be asked to leave the UK, for example:

'Some parents feel that teaching a modern foreign language, e.g. French or Spanish is irrelevant.'

'A few parents had told their children they wouldn't have to learn French now that we 'weren't in Europe anymore'.'

'One or two children have questioned the need for language learning now we're 'out'.'

'There has been a less welcoming feel across the community towards the teacher who is an EU citizen.'

'Specialist teacher might be leaving country.'

However, some 12 respondents see the EU referendum result as an opportunity to raise the profile of languages and comment that they are more determined than ever to ensure that the UK has the language skills it will continue to need to remain an important and active player in world affairs, for example:

'It has galvanized staff to keep on teaching French, to remind children that they are part of a global community; not to be isolationists.'

'Even more effort being put in to widening the children's experiences.'

'It has raised the priority of language learning in our school. We are starting to forge links with the local secondary school and a primary school in France.'

One teacher sums up the uncertainty many others also express by seeking an endorsement from government of the value of languages in education and clearer guidance on which languages the country is likely to need once it is no longer a member of the EU:

'I think the negative result has caused the feeling that languages are even less important than previously. A government push on language teaching would be beneficial. Additionally, as the language taught is not specified, it is difficult to know whether we are providing sufficiently for the children.'

KEY ISSUES FOR RESPONDENTS

Respondents to the survey were given the opportunity, in a final question, to comment freely on any issues relating to languages nationally or in their school which had not already been covered. While many respondents report that their Key Stage 2 pupils greatly enjoy learning a language and that young children are able to learn languages easily, there are a number of issues which teachers working in a wide variety of different locations and circumstances flag up in responding to this year's survey. The first of these concerns the growing numbers of pupils with EAL who attend primary schools across the country:

Pupils with EAL

Many teachers raise issues relating to pupils with EAL. Their comments highlight the difference between those who arrive in school with competence in another language in addition to English, and newly arrived children from other countries who still have very little English. Respondents reporting on the former say that the experience of learning a new language for pupils who already have another language and English is very positive and they excel, whereas for the latter group, the teaching of a new language as well as English can be distracting and

confusing. Their comments draw attention to the insufficiency of categorising both sets of pupils as 'EAL':

'The vast majority of our children are EAL and learning English is difficult for them and a priority for us as teachers. Another language is confusing for newly arrived children. '

'By starting the teaching from Early Years Foundation Stage we have boosted engagement, enjoyment and comfort in learning. Most of our children (approximately 80 per cent) speak at least one language other than English at home, so they are mostly already familiar with learning another language.'

Quality, standards and consistency of approach

A second but significant issue which is of concern to the majority of primary teachers responding to this question is the fact that many primary schools are not yet in a position to provide regular, consistent, high quality language teaching which will ensure that pupils joining secondary schools in Year 7 are proficient enough in another language to enable secondary teachers to build on four solid years of structured language teaching. Primary teachers are aware that provision in their sector is patchy:

'Although teaching languages is now officially part of the national curriculum, some schools still do not teach it or at best do the absolute bare minimum'

One of the reasons why primary teachers believe that the teaching of languages at Key Stage 2 is not yet achieving its full potential or the expectations of secondary schools is the fact that languages are not seen as a priority subject by primary schools and their leadership teams. Languages all too frequently lose out as a result of the pressure on primary schools to obtain good SATs results in literacy and maths, against which they are measured and there is little appreciation among teaching colleagues and senior leadership teams of the benefits of languages for literacy and for learning across the curriculum:

'Languages are looked on as something of a 'poor relation' in our school, and now in Years 5 and 6 they are not regarded as that important.'

'Languages should be more of a priority in the curriculum and greater links should be made between language learning and a greater understanding of English grammar and the evolution of language.'

'The status of languages in schools is disappointing. Languages are usually used as Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA) so the teachers can have a break and lessons are very quickly cancelled if anything else comes up. OFSTED should put more emphasis on good language teaching and schools should be forced to respect the teaching time. An exam at the end of Year 6 in the line on SATs will definitely help to raise the profile of languages in the country.'

Primary languages teachers envisage three ways in which this rather negative picture of Key Stage 2 languages could be radically improved. First and foremost, they see the provision of a greater amount of curriculum time as essential if the real progress in learning is to be achieved and if the expected outcomes in the Programme of Study are to be achieved. However, as the following comments show, it is extremely difficult to accommodate all the subjects and requirements of the primary curriculum and languages face stiff competition from other important subjects such as maths and English:

'We want to do more, but we are restricted on time. There are only so many hours in the day and so many subjects to cover in the primary curriculum which is a shame as children are able to learn languages much more easily when they are younger and they really enjoy it as well.'

'With the pressure of the new expectations in literacy and numeracy, this subject is getting squeezed out of the curriculum.'

'I feel it is an important skill to have but it is becoming increasingly difficult to fit this in.'

A great many primary schools still rely on classroom teachers to teach languages in Key Stage 2 and many of them feel inadequately prepared to teach a subject in which they have no training and possibly few skills to draw on from their own secondary education as these comments show:

'More class teacher training for languages is needed.'

'I'm worried about what will happen if the language specialist leaves the school - will the children be left with no or inconsistent language teaching? Nationally, it would be beneficial for all teachers to learn a language as part of their teacher training.'

Funding

There are a number of comments about the need for funding which could be used for resources, the training of classroom teachers or the provision of specialist teachers. This would go a long way to raising the standard of primary language teaching across the board and ensuring that pupils start their secondary education with a sound foundation in language learning:

' The quality of learning is dependent on the quality of the teacher therefore for our school it is important that we employ a language specialist. However, this adds an additional cost to our staffing budget.'

'I would like to see more funding made available by the government for teaching languages in order to have more support from specialist teachers. It is hard to motivate teachers who are unconfident about teaching languages and have little time to teach it.

'Difficult when there is little funding and as a teacher who has no training in that language it is hard for me to meet the expectations set by the government.'

> **"PRIMARY LANGUAGE TEACHERS SEE THE PROVISION OF A GREATER AMOUNT OF CURRICULUM TIME AS ESSENTIAL IF THE REAL PROGRESS IN LEARNING IS TO BE ACHIEVED"**

Need for guidance

Finally, there is a plea from many teachers for greater guidance emanating from the centre to provide a clear framework for expectations and how to achieve them:

'There is not enough guidance available.'

'I feel that it is essential to teach languages in primary schools but would like to see more guidance from government and more time given rather than expecting poor class teachers to ' just get on with it' as there is a danger of enthusiasm being lost and wrong things taught.'

'I am very concerned about the lack of strategy at a local authority and government level. The government needs to show strategic leadership in order to counter 'national laziness' in language learning.'

KEY POINTS

A large majority of respondents express whole-hearted commitment to primary languages, with many also stating that it should start earlier in Key Stage 1. Language teachers have observed benefits for children which include improvements in their confidence and understanding about the world, as well as cognitive benefits, including the application of grammar. However, there is still insufficient recognition within the wider school community of the contribution of language learning to general literacy.

» Language teaching in primary schools is becoming more firmly embedded. Nearly two-thirds of responding primary schools have more than five years' experience in teaching the subject.

» There has been a modest but identifiable improvement in the expertise of staff employed as language teachers in primary schools: in 2014, 31 per cent of staff had a GCSE or less (now 28 per cent) and 42 per cent had a degree level qualification or were bilingual (now 46 per cent). The improvement in staff expertise appears to have been achieved through recruitment rather than training as involvement in languages-specific CPD is low. Nearly a quarter of schools are not involved in any sort of CPD for languages.

» There has been a general reduction in the forms of support used by primary schools with 30 per cent now saying they have no access to specialist support compared to 23 per cent in 2015. There is evidence of a diminishing reliance on local authority support, peripatetic specialists and commercial organisations and fewer primary schools also say that they rely on a local secondary school.

» Funding pressures are behind many of the problems primary schools face in developing quality provision for languages.

» There continues to be a great disparity in provision with one in ten schools not providing a minimal 30 minutes per week language teaching. Schools that teach for less than 30 minutes per week are more likely to have higher levels of FSM, and lower levels of educational attainment generally.

» The continuity and regularity of language lessons is being squeezed in many schools where language lessons take second place to other priorities.

» Formal assessments of each child's language learning are not common in primary schools. Only around one in eight schools (12.5 per cent) do this.

» The UK's decision to leave the EU is a concern to respondents in terms of the perceived negative impact on opportunities for funding to support training and school links and also on the future recruitment of native speaker teachers. The referendum vote has added to the uncertainty in many schools about whether they are working along the right lines and many would like clearer guidance.

20.   Chinese National Office for the Teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language.

21.   Board and Tinsley, Language Trends 2014/15, British Council/CfBT Education Trust, 2015, p.38.

22.   Ibid., p. 48.

CHAPTER 5
FROM KEY STAGE 2 TO KEY STAGE 3

Both the primary and the secondary surveys included questions on transition and transfer from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 in relation to language learning. We wanted to explore in particular the match between primary schools' expectations for their pupils' learning at the end of Key Stage 2, and secondary schools' perceptions of their pupils' starting points at the beginning of Key Stage 3. This chapter presents the responses from both primary and secondary schools, with the aim of achieving a better understanding of the dynamics and constraints on both sides and a comparison of perspectives.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

To what extent do primary schools expect pupils to reach the outcomes expected in the National Curriculum Programme of Study by the end of Year 6?

The new National Curriculum Programme of Study for Modern Languages for Key Stage 2 provides basic descriptions of the levels children are expected to reach in various aspects of language learning by the end of Key Stage 2. Although the descriptions are very brief in comparison with earlier guidelines set out in the previous Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages, they have been understood as rigorous and challenging.[23] We selected descriptions of four key areas of language learning from the Programmes of Study document and asked schools to what extent they regarded each of these as realistic and attainable for their pupils.

The responses, shown in *Figure 30* below, show that the majority of schools believe that most pupils will achieve the expected outcomes in all four areas. Speaking is the area in which most schools are confident that their pupils will achieve the expected outcomes, and grammar the area in which the least number of schools are confident. Only one per cent of schools think that the expected outcomes for reading and speaking are unrealistic, this increases to three per cent for 'describing people, things and actions orally and in writing' and seven per cent for grammar – all very small proportions.

Figure 30: Primary schools' expectations of pupil outcomes, 2016.

	We expect all, or almost all	We expect most	We expect some	Not realistic
Understand basic grammar, key features and patterns of the language and how to apply these	14%	44%	35%	7%
Describe people, things and actions orally and in writing	21%	48%	28%	3%
Read carefully and show understanding of words, phrases and simple writing	23%	53%	23%	1%
Speak in sentences using familiar vocabulary, phrases and basic language structures	31%	50%	17%	1%

Key
- We expect all, or almost all, pupils to achieve this
- We expect most pupils to achieve this
- We expect some pupils to achieve this
- This is not a realistic expectation for our pupils

A number of respondents who express confidence in the likelihood of their pupils achieving the outcomes set out in the National Curriculum Programme of Study express concern about inadequate transition arrangements with local secondary schools and the adverse effect this can have on pupils who have had good quality and consistent language teaching throughout Key Stage 2, for example:

'Greater input and links with secondary schools would be invaluable. Our standards are rising, they must also as children still seem to be repeating too much in Year 7.'

'There is a need to change expectations at secondary school. However, as I am the only school to meet these, pupils go back to reciting colours and numbers rather than their being used as the starting point.'

In their comments, many respondents are cautious about their pupils being able to achieve the desired outcomes in all four areas. A wide variety of reasons is given. In some cases, respondents state that pupils at the end of Year 6 will not have studied the language for four years, for example:

'Our current year 6 have only learnt some French for a year, therefore not all children will be expected to speak in sentences by the end of this academic year.'

'We expect to be achieving this from July 2020, this being the time when our first cohort of pupils who started learning French in Year 1 will finish their primary phase schooling.'

For others, the teaching of a language is focused much more heavily on oral skills:

'Our current focus is on oral, not written Spanish.'

'We put more emphasis on describing orally than in writing.'

At least one respondent states that their school is at odds with the requirement to teach one language throughout Key Stage 2 and provides language tuition in the following way:

'We try to give a variety of languages at our school. We are more concerned with children being 'happy' with exploring language and finding out about other countries so that going forward they will be happy to give any language a try.'

A number of respondents cite SEN as a reason why pupils may not achieve the expected outcomes, for example:

'We are currently looking at the attainment gap for SEN with languages, but this is challenging as they can be in interventions during the time when languages are being taught.'

One respondent whose school teaches Mandarin is cautious about their pupils achieving the expected outcomes because:

'Mandarin is a very difficult language and this Year 6 is the first year group to have learnt it for four years.'

Lack of parental support is a further reason given by a small number of respondents for why the expected outcomes may not be achieved:

'Lack of knowledge at home to support further learning.'

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

What are the perceptions of secondary schools as regards the starting point of pupils arriving in Year 7, in terms of their language competences?

This question was constructed to mirror the question put to primary schools in relation to their expectations for pupil outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2. The responses therefore provide rich data for comparison with those from primary schools set out above, and help to clarify the logistical problems which secondary schools face in trying to cater for prior language learning.

As many as 20 per cent of state schools find that most pupils (i.e. more than half) arrive having been taught a different language in primary school and a further 39 per cent find that some pupils (more than five per cent but less than half) have learnt a different language. Only 13 per cent find that all pupils have been taught the same language that they will learn in secondary school. Independent schools find themselves in a similar situation, though with slightly differing proportions.

There is a notable difference between state and independent schools in terms of the language competences of pupils arriving in Year 7 who have already been taught the same language they will learning in the secondary phase. Around 30 per cent of independent schools say that most pupils arrive being able to read and understand at a basic level, whereas this is the case in only five per cent of state schools. Although a slightly greater number of state schools say that most pupils arrive with speaking competence rather than with reading competence (seven per cent compared to five per cent), more than a quarter of independent schools say that their pupils arrive with speaking competence. The vast majority of state secondary schools say that only a few pupils at most arrive with any of the linguistic competences identified from the Key Stage 2 programmes of study. This is of concern given that the majority of primary schools say they expect all or most pupils to achieve these outcomes.

The overwhelming majority of state secondary school respondents express dissatisfaction with the levels of language competences of pupils entering Year 7. The qualitative evidence which state school respondents provide falls broadly into three categories:

» Those who comment that primary school language teaching provision is patchy and inconsistent, producing pupils with widely differing levels of linguistic competence;

Figure 31: Starting point of pupils arriving in Year 7, state secondary schools, 2016.
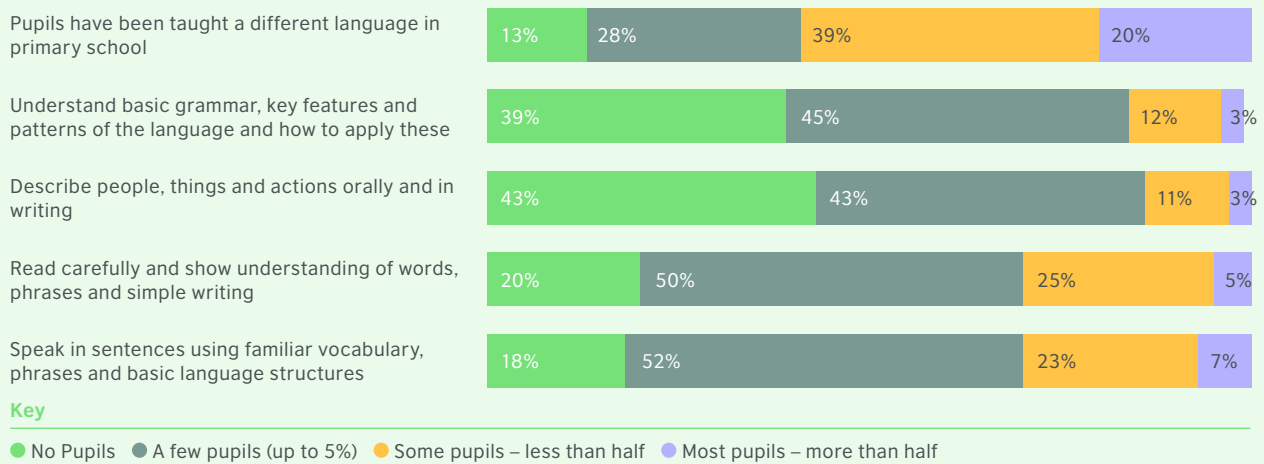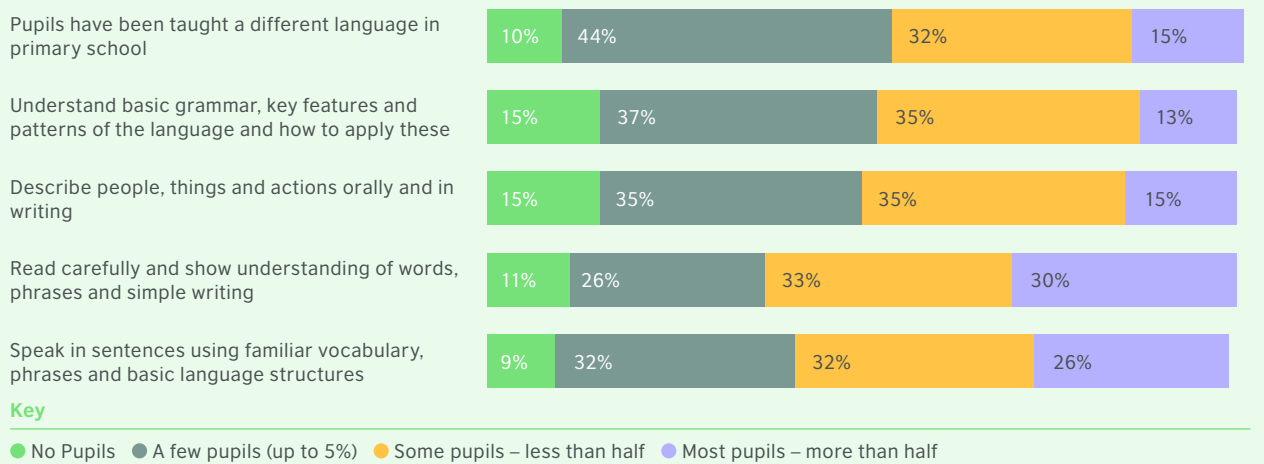
	No Pupils	A few pupils (up to 5%)	Some pupils – less than half	Most pupils – more than half
Pupils have been taught a different language in primary school	13%	28%	39%	20%
Understand basic grammar, key features and patterns of the language and how to apply these	39%	45%	12%	3%
Describe people, things and actions orally and in writing	43%	43%	11%	3%
Read carefully and show understanding of words, phrases and simple writing	20%	50%	25%	5%
Speak in sentences using familiar vocabulary, phrases and basic language structures	18%	52%	23%	7%

Key

● No Pupils ● A few pupils (up to 5%) ● Some pupils – less than half ● Most pupils – more than half

Figure 32: Starting point of pupils arriving in Year 7, independent schools, 2016,

	No Pupils	A few pupils (up to 5%)	Some pupils – less than half	Most pupils – more than half
Pupils have been taught a different language in primary school	10%	44%	32%	15%
Understand basic grammar, key features and patterns of the language and how to apply these	15%	37%	35%	13%
Describe people, things and actions orally and in writing	15%	35%	35%	15%
Read carefully and show understanding of words, phrases and simple writing	11%	26%	33%	30%
Speak in sentences using familiar vocabulary, phrases and basic language structures	9%	32%	32%	26%

Key

● No Pupils ● A few pupils (up to 5%) ● Some pupils – less than half ● Most pupils – more than half

» Those who believe that the entire system of primary languages introduced in 2014, is not working;

» Those who express the view that pupils coming into Year 7 do not demonstrate the competences set out in the outcomes of the National Curriculum.

Comments exemplifying these three perspectives are shown below:

Inconsistency of provision

'Primary languages appears to have had no significant impact on languages in Year 7. Provision is too varied and patchy. There seem to be more pupils who have had no primary languages provision whatsoever.'

'Feeder primary schools are not consistent in the teaching of languages and teach different languages. Although we teach Spanish, French and German and give pupils an opportunity to try each one, they are often at totally different levels which makes teaching very challenging.'

'Provision in feeder primary schools is very patchy. Some have one hour a week from reception and others seem to only be taught sporadically or not at all. There is no consistency of languages being offered.'

Failure to implement policy effectively

'It is hard to spot the difference between those who have studied the language at primary and those who have not. Primary provision is poor.'

'Language teaching in primary schools is very limited. For example, pupils just do the register in French. Also, languages are taught in primary schools by non-specialists and pronunciation is often an issue.'

'We have over 50 feeder schools into a cohort of 120, so the position varies each year. Our perception is that knowledge and understanding of another language (usually French) is less well-embedded now than three years ago.'

National curriculum aspirations not being met

'Most know key words and basics like numbers and greetings, but cannot communicate in full sentences nor do they know simple grammar.'

'Pupils arrive with a very mixed experience of language learning. It is mostly French or Spanish but rarely do they show any competence in the language beyond knowledge of a few words. Any kind of proficiency in writing is almost non-existent.'

'Often primary schools change language each year – i.e. a year of French, then the next year Spanish – so language learning is never in depth.'

'Very few pupils (sometimes none) come from primary school with any knowledge of French other than isolated items of vocabulary and set phrases to introduce their name and greet people. They do not have any knowledge of basic grammar.'

Just one respondent feels that the language competences of pupils joining Year 7 has improved as a result of primary languages being made statutory in 2014:

'Pupils arrive with more knowledge of French and all study French and German in Year 7. So they have more knowledge of French and the vast majority are arriving with more confidence about tackling a new language.'

Many independent respondents are fortunate in that there is a junior school attached to the secondary school, enabling secondary phase language specialists to ensure that the primary languages programme provides pupils with a solid preparation for secondary school, for example:

'Half the pupils will come from our junior school and will have been taught French since Year 3 (and now Mandarin since Reception), and half our pupils come from other junior schools where not much French was taught and no Mandarin.'

'Pupils from our own junior school are taught French there and have a good basic knowledge on joining the senior school. Pupils from other feeder primary schools know varying amounts of French.'

'Pupils generally arrive knowing some French, especially if they attended our junior school. Of those who come from other primary schools, experience of French is mixed and mostly based on oral practice and with very little knowledge of writing or grammar.'

A number of respondents from the independent sector comment that pupils coming into Year 7 from the independent primary sector start with a reasonable grounding in a language, whereas pupils joining from the state sector have received only patchy and inconsistent language teaching, often from non-specialists, making the teaching of language in Year 7 very difficult:

'The position is patchy. There is no consistency across primary schools in terms of what language they teach or how much or how rigorously it is taught. I think it is a complete waste of time personally – they need to be taught properly by specialists or not at all.'

'The primaries are really not preparing them at all unless they are independent schools.'

'Since we are independent we have many different feeder primary schools in addition to our own junior school. These differ from year to year and the language provision is very varied. Boys entering Year 7 have vastly differing experiences of language learning which makes transition very tricky.'

One respondent from the independent sector even comments:

'We are encouraging our main feeder school to do less as they have arrived quite demotivated. It sounds odd but it's true.'

EXPECTATIONS

How do the expectations of primary schools for their pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 compare with the perceptions of secondary schools?

Figure 33 compares the proportion of secondary schools saying that 'no' or 'most' of their pupils arrive with the competences identified from the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Programme of Study, with the proportion of primary schools saying that they expect 'no' or 'most' pupils to achieve these competences by the end of Key Stage 2. The results show that there is a very large gulf between the expectations of primary schools and the actual experiences of secondary schools. For example, while 81 per cent of primary schools say that 'speaking in sentences using familiar vocabulary, phrases and basic language structures' is an expectation they have for all or most of their pupils, only seven per cent of secondary schools say that most pupils arrive in Year 7 with these competences. There are similar disparities in relation to the other competences. Even taking into account that primary schools' responses are about expectations to aim for rather than current reality, the gulf is very wide and there are few indications of a determination to bridge it through training or year on year improvements. It may also be a problem of a difference between primary and secondary schools in interpreting the descriptors in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. These are very broad and with little additional guidance available, primary schools may be interpreting them over-optimistically, especially if they have little specialist expertise in language assessment.

> **"THERE IS A VERY LARGE GULF BETWEEN THE EXPECTATIONS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCES OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS."**

Figure 33: Primary schools' expectations and state secondary schools' perceptions of pupil language competences, 2016.

Key

- ● Speak in sentences using familiar vocabulary, phrases and basic structures
- ● Read carefully and show understanding of words, phrases and simple writing
- ● Describe people, things and actions orally and in writing
- ● Understand basic grammar, key features and patterns of the language and how to apply these
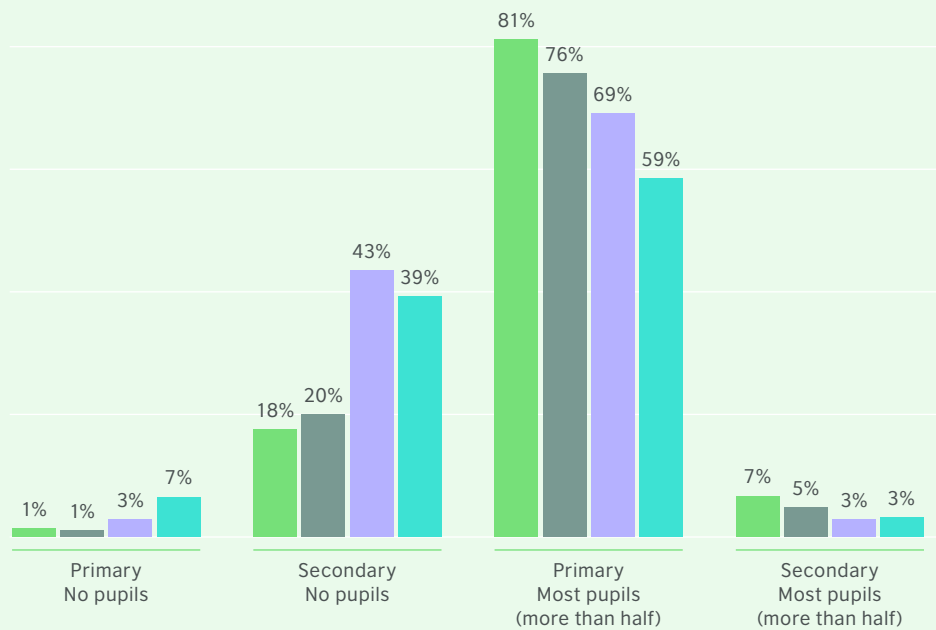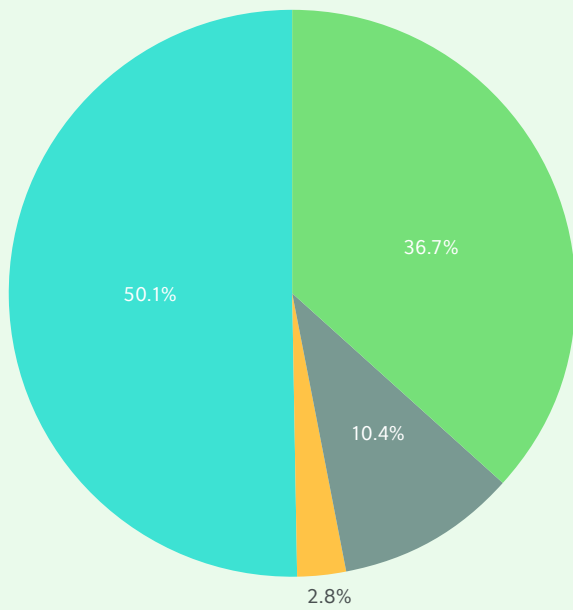

Figure 34: Contacts primary schools have with language departments of receiving secondary schools, 2016.

Key

- ● With one secondary school
- ● With some secondary schools
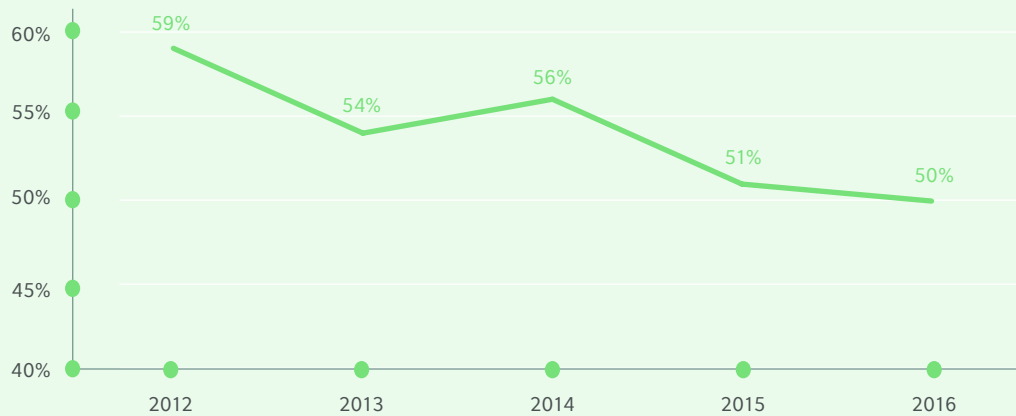- ● With all receiving secondary schools
- ● None

Figure 35: Primary schools with contacts with secondary schools, 2012-2016.

NB. In 2012 respondents were asked whether they had 'formal' or 'informal' contacts with their local secondary schools. The figure for 2012 reflects 40 per cent with formal contacts and 19 per cent with informal contacts. In the other years, schools were asked if they had any contacts at all.

CONTACTS BETWEEN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Do primary schools have contacts with their local secondary schools in relation to language learning?

Almost exactly half of responding primary schools have some contact with secondary schools in their area, and half do not. The majority of those contacts are with just one secondary school, though around one in ten primary schools have contacts with more than one secondary school. These findings are almost exactly the same proportions as be identified in the 2015 survey, in which 49 per cent of primary schools had no contacts at all and 38 per cent had contacts with just one school. The 2015 survey identified a trend towards diminishing contact between primary and secondary schools and this appears to be confirmed by this year's findings.

What types of contact do primary schools have with secondary schools in relation to language teaching?

The responses to this question show that the most common form of contact between primary and secondary schools is the informal exchange of information on language teaching. This is the case for 23 per cent of responding schools (46 per cent of those with any sort of contact). Just over one third of primary schools take part in networking meetings which involve local secondary schools. Other forms of contact are relatively rare, including the formal exchange of data on pupil progress at the point of transfer, which is practised by fewer than one in ten primary schools.

A small number of respondents provide further evidence of formal links with local secondary schools and examples of activity aimed at supporting a smooth transfer for Year 6 pupils to Year 7:

'A secondary language teacher teaches Year 6 and I teach Years 3, 4 and 5.'

Figure 36: Types of contact primary schools have with local secondary schools (multiple answers permitted) Base: all schools, 2016.

We exchange information on language teaching informally	23%
We take part in network/cluster meetings	17%
We provide data on pupil progress in language learning at the point of transfer	9%
A local secondary school provides language teaching in my school	8%
We take part in cross-phase observations	4%
We exchange information on language teaching informally	3%
We collaborate in planning units of work in languages	3%
We plan language lessons together	2%
A local secondary school provides our Scheme of Work	2%
We plan CPD sessions together	2%

NB. The option 'other' was ticked by 17 per cent of respondents. However, this has been excluded from the chart as many respondents then used the box for making general comments rather than giving further details.

'Last year, I took part in a joint project with a local secondary school and primary schools. We focused on using phonics to teach English in primary schools and how this skill could be transferred to languages teaching. We observed each other teach, wrote reports and ran a workshop to share our findings and resources with other local languages teachers.'

'We plan and deliver a transition unit for Year 6 together.'

'The school is part of a partnership (one upper school and 14 primaries). Together, we share CPD, resources etc.'

Where there is contact between secondary and primary schools in respect of language teaching, it is more often than not in the form of some kind of annual event, such as a festival or competition, or language focused classroom contact between pupils from the secondary schools and their primary school peers. The following comments provide some examples of such arrangements:

'We collaborate with a local high school to implement their "peer learning" scheme, where groups of Year 8 pupils plan and deliver a workshop in French once every half term to our Year 5 pupils. We discuss topic areas in advance.'

'They have taken part in our language days, e.g. running a French cafe.'

'Year 5 attends a languages/PE day once a year'

'Language leaders (high school pupils) visit our school to deliver some language lessons approximately three times per year.'

A number of respondents report that they used to have closer contact with a local secondary school in the past – a trend that was also noted in previous Language Trends surveys. This was usually in the form of meetings or support from a secondary language teacher but such contact has now ceased due to a change in the secondary school's priorities or because of a lack of funding, for example:

'We had weekly visits from language specialists from two local secondary schools but due to budget cuts and rescheduled timetables, their support was withdrawn.'

'We did take part in network meetings when local secondary schools had Language College status, but these have not happened since funding was withdrawn for Language College status.'

'A local secondary school was running a network group for primaries until last year but no long seems to be doing so.'

Other respondents comment on efforts and plans to improve the collaboration between secondary and primary schools in the area of languages in the future, for example:

'We plan to be providing data on pupil progress at the point of transfer in the near future.'

'We have only just made contact and are looking as to what we can/need to do. The above list will help me greatly!'

'We are just about to set up communications between our primary school and local secondary schools. We have not yet established how we will be able to collaborate with each other.'

> **"WHERE THERE IS CONTACT BETWEEN SECONDARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN RESPECT OF LANGUAGE TEACHING, IT IS MORE OFTEN THAN NOT IN THE FORM OF SOME KIND OF ANNUAL EVENT, SUCH AS A FESTIVAL OR COMPETITION"**

In previous years' surveys, a very similar proportion of schools said that they exchanged information informally, and the more intensive forms of contact such as planning language lessons and CPD were similarly practised by very small numbers of schools. However, there has been a notable change in the propensity of secondary schools to provide training or language teaching in primary schools. In 2013, 19 per cent of primary schools were being provided with language teaching by their local secondary schools. This had dropped to 14 per cent in 2015 and is now barely half that proportion at eight per cent. Similarly, in 2013, seven per cent of primary schools said that their local secondary school was providing training for their languages teachers. This dropped to six per cent in 2014 and 2015 and now stands at two and a half per cent. A smaller proportion of primary schools now say that they take part in networking or cluster meetings, 17 per cent down from 22 per cent in 2015 and 2014.
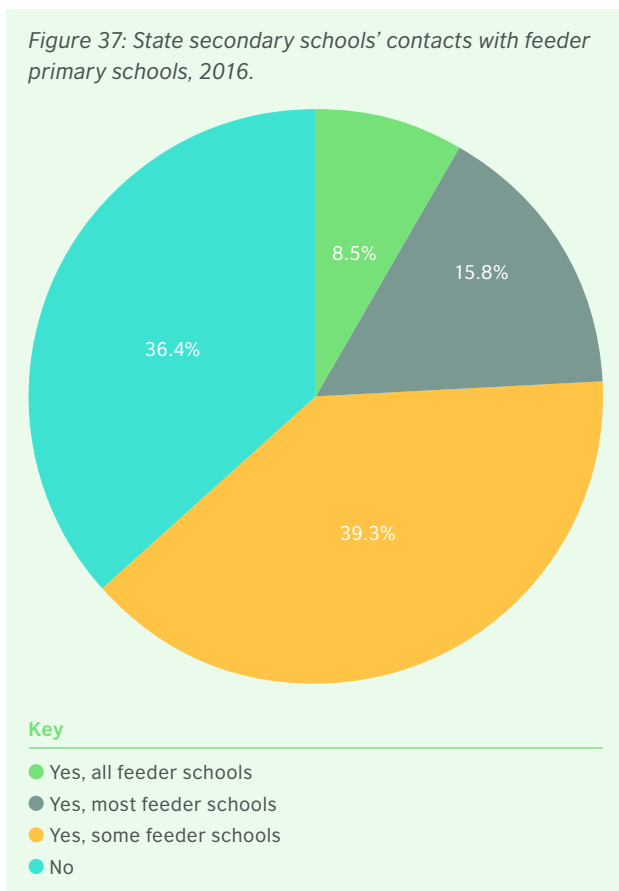
Do secondary schools have contacts with their local primary schools on languages?

The responses from secondary schools to the same question as that which was put to primary schools show that it is more common for secondary schools to have contacts with primary schools than vice versa. This is not surprising given that the total number of primary schools in England is vastly greater than the number of secondary schools. While only half of primary schools say they have contacts with secondary schools on language matters, nearly two thirds (64 per cent) of secondary languages departments say they have some contact with primary schools. *Figure 37* shows the proportions for state schools.

Figure 37: State secondary schools' contacts with feeder primary schools, 2016.

8.5%
15.8%
36.4%
39.3%

Key

- Yes, all feeder schools
- Yes, most feeder schools
- Yes, some feeder schools
- No

We have not included a graphic for the independent sector, where the same proportion (64 per cent) have at least some contacts with primary schools. However, in the independent sector this proportion contains more schools which have contacts with just 'some' feeder primary schools (54 per cent), with smaller proportions of independent schools having contact with 'most' or 'all' of their feeder schools (six per cent and five per cent respectively), compared to the state sector. This is no doubt because many independent schools recruit from a much wider geographical area (including overseas), and others have junior departments with which they may work exclusively

Secondary school respondents to previous surveys have commented on the logistical difficulty of maintaining contact with large numbers of feeder

schools. In this year's survey we therefore asked how many primary feeder schools secondary schools served. The responses show that, in both the independent and state sectors, fewer than one in five schools serve a small enough number of feeder schools (between one and five) to reasonably allow them to maintain contacts with all of them.

Table G: Numbers of feeder primary schools from which state and independent schools receive pupils, 2016.

Number of feeder schools	State	Independent
Between 1 and 5	18.4%	19%
6–10	35.6%	31.7%
11–20	19%	27.5%
More than 20	27%	21.8%

State secondary respondents providing further comments on their links with primary feeder schools describe a variety of experiences. A very small number of schools clearly have well established, successful links but these are most often in instances where the number of feeder schools is small or where schools are part of an Academy trust, partnership or alliance making collaboration between schools easier. The following are some examples of successful collaboration at teacher level between secondary and primary schools:

'Sharing resources. Pyramid meetings, training on what to do and schemes of work.'

'We have set up a primary link group and we meet termly. Our languages teacher is working in four schools and delivering superb lessons that are consonant with our approach at secondary. We do this through our Trust partnership.'

'Across the region we have primary collaboration meetings on a termly basis.'

'The small number of schools (five) in our CELL [Centre of Excellence in Leadership of Learning] meet at least biannually to discuss latest developments, develop strategies (including transition lessons in Year 7) and share resources.'

A few other state school respondents describe successful collaboration at pupil level, for example:

'In Year 9, we have language leaders who teach one lesson in the target language in primary school each term. It's working well.'

'We sometimes send Year 9 pupils in to help with language days in primaries. We invite primary schools in once or twice a year to have languages workshops based on a theme, for example, German Easter, French Christmas, Bastille Day.'

Reinforcing the overall thrust of the quantitative data from the survey, many state respondents report that they have poor links with their primary feeders. This can be for a number of reason including the large numbers of primary feeders:

'We asked for a breakdown of the topics they cover

at Key Stage 2 so that we could build on that at Key Stage 3. Unfortunately, there are too many feeder schools (more than 45) and we were unable to use the information effectively.'

'Though there is contact with all of our catchment feeder schools, we are gaining an increasing number of pupils from a wider area out of catchment, up to 20 different schools.'

'We do not have time to work with feeders now. There are too many.'

In other cases, the reasons are time and funding constraints:

'We used to coordinate the work of our major feeder schools, but this provision has been cut. We now have very little contact with them.'

'We used to have a primary liaison member of the department but the role disappeared due to timetable constraints.'

'Limited time and resources at our end. Lack of interest at theirs.'

Some respondents grumble that they have attempted to establish contact but that the response from primary schools has been poor, for example:

'The feeder primary schools have rarely in the past responded to our offers of help, support or training and have ignored our requests about what we'd like to see Year 6 pupils being taught'.

'Schools are not interested in feedback or training from our school or staff. Training has been provided but only three staff have attended from 13 feeder schools. SOL [Scheme of Learning] etc. supplied but generally ignored. Primary school focus continues to be on the subjects they are accountable for, e.g. English, maths, science.'

'All our main partner primaries have been offered support and have been invited to meetings but only very few took advantage of the support. The head teachers say "languages are not a priority".'

Responses from the independent sector differ from those in the state sector, largely because many independent secondary schools have their own junior schools. This greatly facilitates collaboration between phases as the following examples show:

'We are a 3-18 school with the majority of Year 6 pupils staying on for secondary so we are also able to manage the language provision in the primary section of the school. It would be good if we had more input in other feeder schools.'

However, secondary schools in the independent sector can also find planning for transition difficult given the much wider area from which pupils transfer. The following comments show some of the situations they face:

'We don't have enough time to develop these links. We don't have enough time to do anything properly.'

'We have a junior school and pupils do tasters of all four languages we offer over the four years of Key Stage 2. However, because of large numbers of pupils coming from other schools we are unable to have continuity in learning (and as, for example, Spanish is taught in Year 3, then pupils have forgotten most of what they learned by Year 7).'

'We work with our junior school. We don't work with other feeder schools as we have no idea where pupils might come to us from.'

BUILDING ON PRIOR LEARNING

What arrangements do secondary schools have to build on pupils' prior learning in Key Stage 2?

Following on from the previous question, secondary schools were asked what arrangements they put in place to ensure continuity and progression in language learning for pupils arriving in Year 7. See *Figure 38* comparing practice in state and independent schools shows that:

» State schools are less likely than independent schools to have particular arrangements for this, and are less likely to be able to cater for pupils continuing with the same language they learned in Key Stage 2. In the independent sector, more than half of schools ensure that all, or almost all pupils are able to continue with the same language and 23 per cent have a policy that all pupils begin a new language. This is sometimes as a second foreign language, as this example shows:

'All pupils continue with French, which they have been learning in Key Stage 2 and they all start Spanish (which very few have seen in primary).'

» There is remarkably infrequent information exchange with primary schools at the point of transfer in both sectors (21 per cent of independent schools, 12 per cent of state schools).

» Independent schools are much more likely to group pupils by ability or by prior experience of learning the language (32 per cent, compared to only eight per cent in the state sector), although around a quarter of schools in both sectors test pupils on entry.

» A preferred method, in both sectors, for catering for different levels of prior competence is through differentiated classroom activities.

» Schools in both sectors have adapted their Key Stage 3 schemes of work to cater for pupils' prior learning.

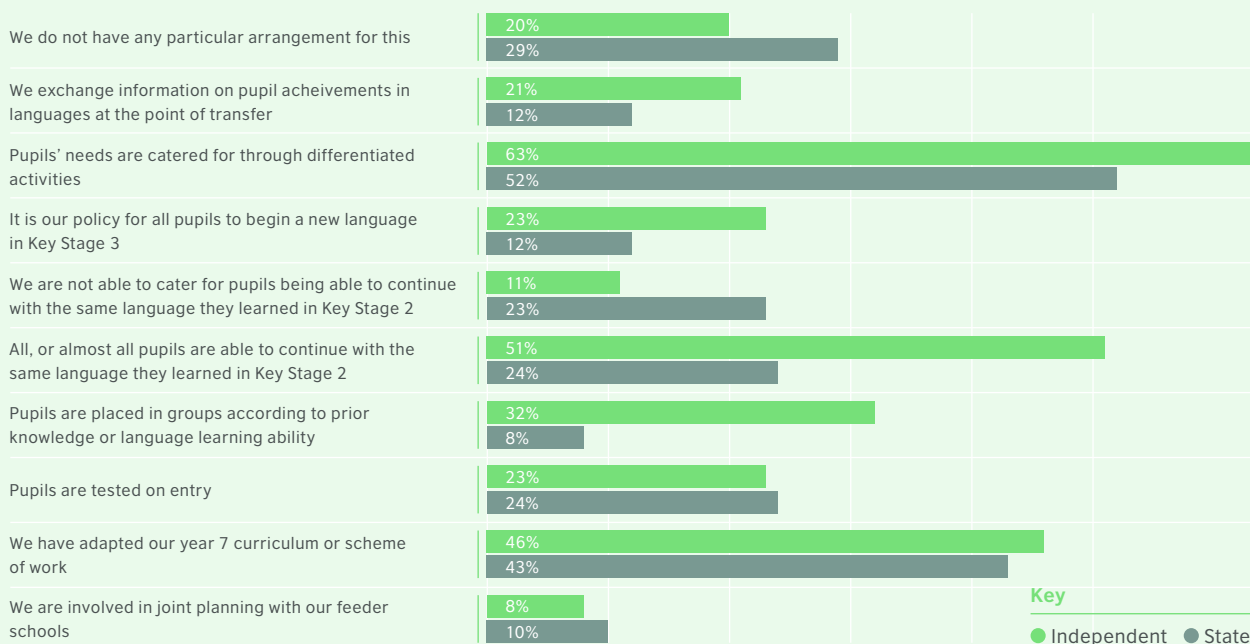» Very few schools in either sector are involved in joint planning with their primary feeder schools.

Figure 38: Arrangements in secondary schools to build on pupils' prior learning in Key Stage 2 (multiple answers permitted), 2016

Arrangement	Independent	State
We do not have any particular arrangement for this	20%	29%
We exchange information on pupil acheivements in languages at the point of transfer	21%	12%
Pupils' needs are catered for through differentiated activities	63%	52%
It is our policy for all pupils to begin a new language in Key Stage 3	23%	12%
We are not able to cater for pupils being able to continue with the same language they learned in Key Stage 2	11%	23%
All, or almost all pupils are able to continue with the same language they learned in Key Stage 2	51%	24%
Pupils are placed in groups according to prior knowledge or language learning ability	32%	8%
Pupils are tested on entry	23%	24%
We have adapted our year 7 curriculum or scheme of work	46%	43%
We are involved in joint planning with our feeder schools	8%	10%

Key
● Independent ● State

These findings are very similar to those in previous years, with some indication that more state schools are starting to put at least some arrangements in place to cater for pupils' prior experience of language learning: 71 per cent compared to 66 per cent in 2015.

The qualitative evidence which illustrates and supports the findings above is presented separately for state and independent schools:

State sector

A small number of respondents describe the arrangements they have put in place to take account of pupils' prior learning of languages in Key Stage 2:

'We are planning to be more involved with our feeder schools. Our classes are mixed ability and taught in form tutor groups. Some continue with the same Key Stage 2 language, some do not. It just depends on which house pupils are in, whether they learn French, German or Spanish. We have adapted our schemes of work to start pupils at a higher level in Key Stage 3, even though there is still inconsistency with the level of progress at Key Stage 2.'

'We have adapted our Year 7 scheme of work to start French from scratch as pupils have been taught such an array of languages and content that they cannot cope with a scheme of work which tries to build on this. We have tried it. Problems arise as the primaries do different languages and don't bother telling us what they have done or changed and also the teachers' level of language is so poor in some cases that pupils need to start again to learn correctly.'

'We try to differentiate activities. We have tried to ascertain pupils' experiences at primary schools via an audit in the first few weeks.'

However, most express difficulties in making such arrangements and cite factors such as patchy provision for languages at Key Stage 2, the wide variety of languages taught by primary feeder schools, and the fact that pupils are placed in sets in Year 7 based on their academic ability in maths and English rather than languages. The following comments are a sample of some of the responses received:

'The language that pupils come with is so varied and does not make any real difference to their learning that, at present, we have no special arrangements.'

'We teach mixed-ability form groups from Year 7 which are composed in relation to pastoral needs. The number of feeder schools is too big to be able to cater for prior language learning.'

'Pupils are put into groups based on English and maths ability. Prior language learning is not considered.'

'There are too many feeder schools to be able to cater for continuity with the languages already studied by the pupils at Key Stage 2. Language learning provision is very varied between all of the feeder schools. We have also yet to see any significant impact on the pupils' knowledge/ability at the start of Year 7 after studying a language at Key Stage 2.'

A small number of respondents report that they assess pupils' prior learning as they start in Year 7, for example:

'Pupils are not set until October half term. We do a test in the language as well as a languages aptitude test to assess all pupils' ability to cope with language structures as well. Many pupils who have not done much in the way of languages at primary school have the opportunity to do well at this.'

'*Year 7 now take two languages, one hour per week of each and schemes of work are adapted to give them the foundations in both rather than specialism in one. Pupils are grouped mainly according to their baseline tests at the start of Year 7 and then they sit baseline assessments in the first few weeks to assess their specific language ability and their progress paths set accordingly (so they are not just based on maths and English levels). Due to high volumes of French and Spanish taught in primary, we try to combine at least one of those languages with German so that it gives them the chance to learn a language from different language families.*'

Others have devised more informal methods of ascertaining prior learning:

'*Pupils have filled a Languages Passport for us to assess how much language they know.*'

'*We have devised a "global discovery course" whereby we celebrate the diverse languages pupils have studied at the very start of Year 7 so none feel disadvantaged at the start of their languages career.*'

The majority of respondents from the state sector say that they are unable to allow pupils joining in Year 7 to continue with a language they have previously learned. Some of the reasons for this are as follows:

'*As the languages department, we have no say in where the children are placed or in what forms and they are randomly 50/50 split between French and German. Many have done Spanish in primary school which we do not offer here. This does not seem to make much difference as the level they reach at the end of Year 6 is extremely basic and we start afresh.*'

'*With so many feeder schools and so many different language arrangements, continuity is an issue.*'

'*Unfortunately, due to the number of feeder schools that we have and all the different languages that are taught at primary level, from Japanese to Spanish, we cannot physically accommodate for pupils to be placed in groups according to the level already achieved in primaries.*'

Some respondents are able to offer pupils a choice of language in Year 7 but say that the majority prefer to begin a new language, for example:

'*Due to the sheer variety of languages learnt, we decided to go with a language which would be new to all pupils in order to maximise interest and engagement, while still benefitting from the language learning skills which the pupils have acquired.*'

'*Pupils are given a choice as to what language they want to learn. Pupils who have done one language at Key Stage 2 often decide to start a new language all together. Hence teaching needs to start from scratch, instead of building on prior knowledge.*'

'*Unless they express a preference to continue with the language they learnt, pupils are randomly assigned a language. Many choose to change from the language learnt as they want a fresh start or they were taught badly.*'

At least one respondent reports that their secondary school is committed to the teaching of a particular language and, therefore, cannot take into account what is being taught in their primary feeder schools:

'*We cannot modify our teaching staff depending on the number of pupils that have studied one language or another at primary school. We are determined to preserve languages such as German that are not taught at primary. If we were to continue building on the language they studied at primary school, German would disappear from our curriculum and possibly Spanish too.*'

Independent sector

Respondents in the independent sector are more likely to provide qualitative evidence of language learning in Key Stage 2 being built on in Key Stage 3, though the most common reason given is the fact that at least half of the Year 7 cohort have come up from the school's own junior school, for example:

'*All pupils study French, as that is what they have usually learned at Key Stage 2 and many continue with us from our prep school; differentiation is used to cater for this. We also have very small class sizes so those who have no previous knowledge of French can quickly catch up. All pupils, unless it is felt they would struggle with learning a second foreign language, study Spanish as well in Year 7. This is mostly new to all pupils*'.

'*We have a strong relationship with our junior school and have worked together on which languages are offered in Years 3 to 8.*'

'*Although pupils can continue with their Key Stage 2 language (usually French), many opt to start a different one in Year 7.*'

A significant number of respondents also comment that pupils in Year 7 all begin one or two new languages in addition to continuing with the language they learned in Key Stage 2:

'*All pupils begin or continue with French and start Mandarin and Latin in Year 7.*'

'*As we have French, German and Spanish in Year 7, pupils are able to do a language/languages they are familiar with, as well a starting a new one/new ones.*'

Respondents from the independent sector also describe a variety of different measures for accommodating prior learning and ensuring that all pupils reach similar levels of competence to their peers, for example:

'*Most of our Year 7 pupils have come from our own primary department, although they joined the school at varying points during Key Stage 2. Pupils who are new to the school at the beginning of Key Stage 3 join their class (we have one class per year group). Over the past two years, primary pupils have had 30 minutes language teaching per week without any reinforcement during the rest of the week and learning has been superficial. Pupils who join the*

school after the beginning of Key Stage 3 receive additional support from the class teacher.'

'We run a lunchtime class throughout the autumn of Year 7 for girls with no French and we assign them one of our language leaders to buddy them.'

'Pupils are tested on Modern Hebrew on entry to the school to establish their previous knowledge and are then set accordingly. In French, pupils are taught in mixed-ability sets but work is differentiated and pupils with prior knowledge are given extension tasks to complete.'

'We teach phonics and basic grammar (gender, articles, pluralisation) in all languages in our Year 7 carousel, so all pupils start to think like linguists, no matter what their previous experience of modern languages in their previous schools. We find that, even if a child arrives with a certain confidence in the language they have studied, it is impossible to tell the previously experienced from the utter beginners after about six weeks of lessons (four x 40 minutes/week).'

FURTHER COMMENTS FROM PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Both primary and secondary schools are aware of the problem of inconsistency of provision at Key Stage 2 and the need to address this:

'Some feedback I have had from our catchment area secondary school in that our pupils are really good at languages and are (for the most part) further ahead than pupils from other schools. This puts the secondary school in a position of having to start from the basics in Year 7 which then creates an air of 'boredom' for the children who already left primary school excelling in languages.' (primary)

'There is a need for consistency across first and primary schools so that middle and secondary schools roughly have all children at a similar level. Children's language skills vary immensely.' (primary)

'There is a massive issue with primary school language provision – they have all been learning different languages or taught by non-specialists, so pupils come in with a negative attitude as it's been taught badly!' (secondary)

A number of different solutions are suggested to the issue of providing children with continuity between primary and secondary school:

'All Key Stage 2 children should have the option to experience a number of languages prior to secondary to help them make an informed choice.' (primary)

'Primary languages - pupils should either have to study French or Spanish and follow a scheme of work which would then feed into secondary schools' schemes of work.' (secondary)

> ## "BOTH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE AWARE OF THE PROBLEM OF INCONSISTENCY OF PROVISION AT KEY STAGE 2 AND THE NEED TO ADDRESS THIS"

A number of secondary school respondents highlight the importance of improving in the teaching of languages at Key Stage 2 if expectations later in Key Stages 4 and 5 are to be met:

'The introduction and interest of languages needs to be engaged at a younger age. Key Stage 2 pupils need to have fun with the culture, be exposed to the language on a regular basis and have the opportunity to learn other subjects such as maths or geography at a language. These opportunities will give those children the ability to express themselves and communicate with each other in the target language.' (secondary)

'I am very concerned about the drop in pupils learning languages nationally, and the lack of value placed on language learning in primary – more investment should be given to ensure a consistent approach to language learning at Key Stages 1 and 2 so that we can build on all of that in Key Stage 3 instead of having to start at the beginning to cater for all pupils.' (secondary)

Respondents in both sectors are aware of the inter-dependence of primary and secondary schools when it comes to training sufficient numbers of teachers:

'Can we train enough primary school teachers with a GCSE in languages when it was only an option when they were at school? Are there enough of them out there with this profile? Similarly, it is a great idea to have a Key Stage 2 Languages Framework, but there are very few links between primaries and secondaries due to time constraints on both sides. Also, the fact that so many local feeder primaries teach different languages and at different levels means the provision is again inconsistent.' (secondary)

'The confidence of staff is a definite issue and many younger teachers opted out of languages before GCSE level when they were at school, which leaves a hole in possible provision.' (primary)

'*KEY POINTS*

» There is a wide gulf in understanding between primary and secondary schools regarding the learning outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2. In order to ensure that pupils can build on their prior learning when they move from Year 6 to Year 7, there is a need for further guidance and training.

» The inconsistency and apparent lack of rigour with which the Key Stage 2 Programmes of Study have been implemented so far in primary schools continue to be a barrier to smooth transition into Key Stage 3.

» For a number of years now, secondary schools have reported that they are working under pressures and constraints which do not allow them to work with their feeder primary schools in order to help address this. These constraints have already been well rehearsed in previous reports.

» Primary schools often understand that they are not yet meeting the stated requirements, but there is little impetus or direction to improve and a concern with other priorities which prevents this from being addressed.

» There is a sense of resignation and acceptance in both educational phases which makes it unlikely that the situation will improve without external stimulus.

23.   DfE, National Curriculum in England. Language Programmes of Study, 2013: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-languages-progammes-of-study

CHAPTER 6
PROVISION FOR LANGUAGES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

This chapter presents data on which languages are taught in each sector at each Key Stage, the time allocated for languages in the curriculum, and changes to provision that schools have implemented recently in response to the new curriculum and examination specifications.

LANGUAGES TAUGHT

Which languages do schools teach in Key Stage 3?

Traditionally, the main languages taught in English schools have been French, followed by German and then Spanish. Other languages are taught much less frequently and often not as full curriculum subjects and we discuss the situation of these in a separate section below.

Main languages taught

Each of the three main languages (French, Spanish and German) are provided more frequently in the independent sector than in state schools. The gap between state and independent provision is particularly noticeable in the case of German, now taught in Key Stage 3 by fewer than half of state schools.

Although the survey findings tell us if the school offers more than one language, it did not ask whether pupils learn more than one language at Key Stage 3; the following comments illustrate that in at least some schools, this is the case:

'All pupils do two languages at Key Stage 3 and choose one to GCSE/IGCSE.'

'Pupils all do French and then choose a second language between Spanish and Italian in Years 7-9.'

'All pupils do Chinese in Years 7 and 8 and they choose options at the end of Year 8. They can do two languages out of Spanish, French or Chinese.'

As a proportion of schools in the state sector, Spanish overtook German in 2009 and had already done so in the independent sector by 2007, the earliest date for which comparable figures are available.[24]

Figure 39: Main languages taught in Key Stage 3, independent and state schools (multiple answers permitted), 2016.
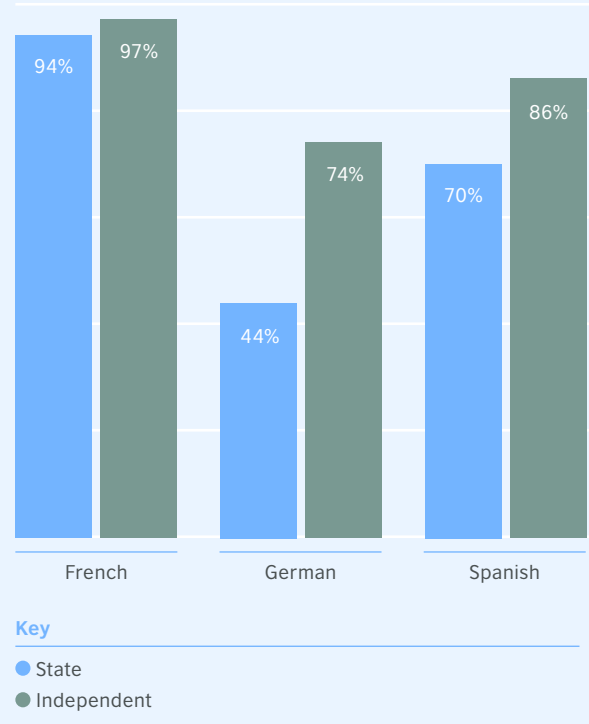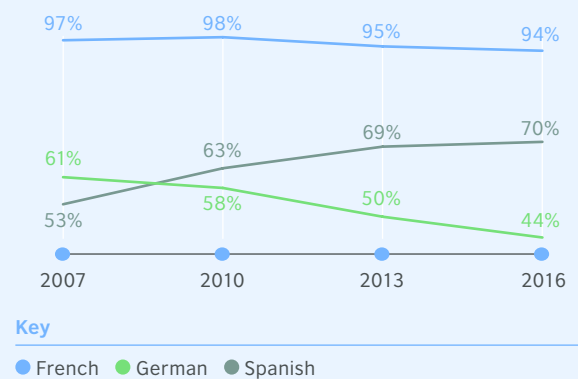
Key
- State
- Independent

Figure 40: Proportion of state schools teaching French, German and Spanish in Key Stage 3, 2007-2016.

Key
- French
- German
- Spanish

Other languages

Other languages are taught by very small percentages of schools. We asked if they are provided as full curriculum subjects in Key Stage 3, or as extra-curricular options. Other languages listed are taught as curriculum subjects in Key Stage 3 more frequently in the independent than in the state sector. The most significant disparity between the sectors relates to the offer of ancient languages, with nearly two thirds (59 per cent) of independent schools but only four per cent of state schools teaching Latin as a curriculum subject at this level. There is also a significant disparity in the provision of Chinese: around one in five independent schools teach this language in Key Stage 3 compared with six per cent of state schools. Where state schools do offer Chinese in Key Stage 3, it is more likely to be as enrichment rather than as a full curriculum subject.

Many respondents report offering pupils the opportunity to take exams in heritage languages, in some cases from as early as Year 7, although they do not provide tuition. A small number of respondents say they offer all pupils the chance to learn languages other than French, German and Spanish:

'*Mandarin and Latin are offered as after school clubs at Key Stage 3.*'

'*Chinese to all pupils in Key Stage 3 following a six-seven-week rotational block*'.

'*Russian is very strong in our school. It is offered as a choice alongside Spanish in Year 8 and it is offered all the way up to A-level in the curriculum.*'

'*All Year 7 take either Japanese or Chinese. Latin is an option (alongside French, German and Spanish from Year 8). All pupils therefore study one non-European and one European language. Groups are all mixed-ability and contain between 26 and 32 pupils.*'

Figure 41: Other languages taught in Key Stage 3, independent and state schools (multiple answers permitted), 2016.
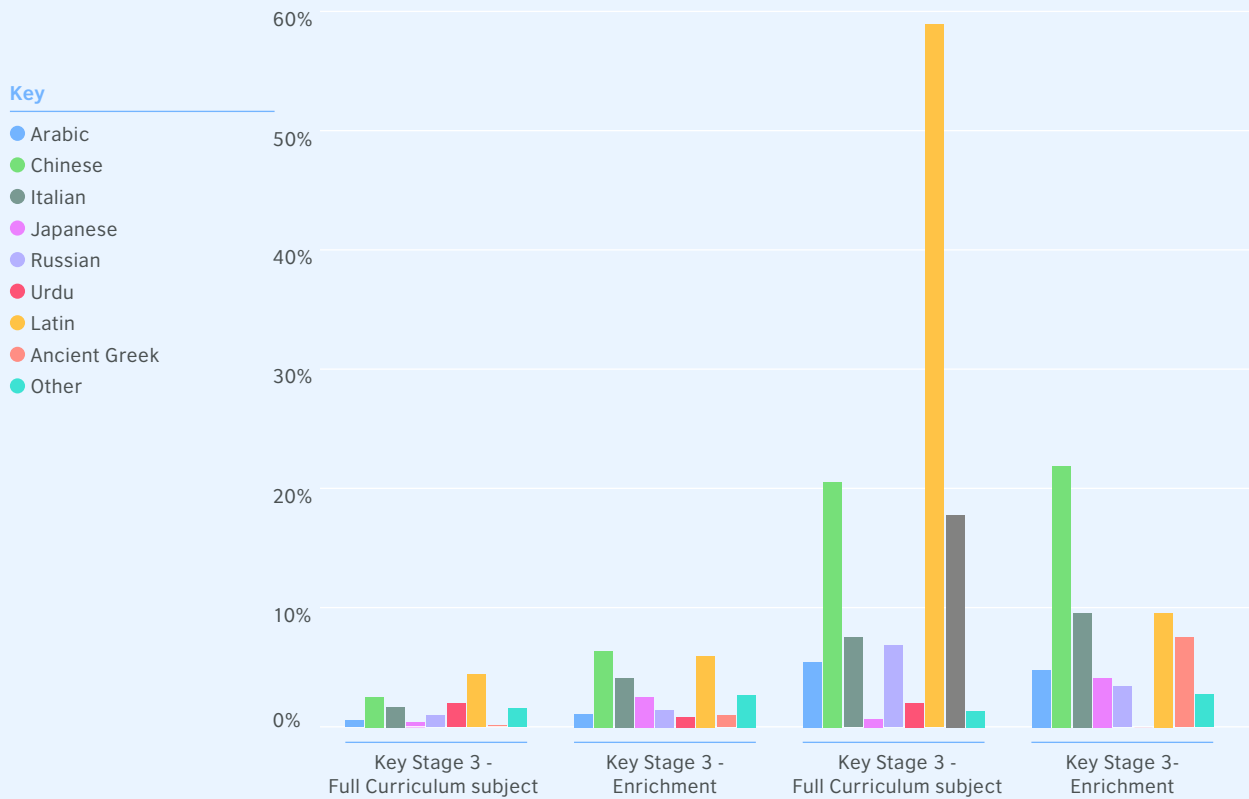
	Key Stage 3 - Full curriculum subject	Key Stage 3 - Enrichment	Key Stage 3 - Full curriculum subject	Key Stage 3 - Enrichment
	State		Independent	
● Arabic	0.6%	1.1%	5.5%	4.8%
● Chinese	2.6%	6.4%	20.5%	21.9%
● Italian	1.7%	4.1%	7.5%	9.6%
● Japanese	0.4%	2.6%	0.7%	4.1%
● Russian	1.0%	1.4%	6.8%	3.4%
● Urdu	2.0%	0.9%	2.1%	0.0%
● Latin	4.4%	6.0%	58.9%	9.6%
● Ancient Greek	0.1%	1.0%	17.8%	7.5%
● Other	1.6%	2.7%	1.4%	2.7%

Figure 42: Main languages taught in Key Stage 4, state and independent schools, multiple answers permitted, 2016.

Which languages do schools teach in Key Stage 4?

Main languages taught

The pattern of provision for the main languages in Key Stage 4 is almost exactly the same as in Key Stage 3, with provision for each of the languages being more widespread in the independent sector than in the state sector. The percentages of schools in both sectors offering Spanish and German are slightly higher in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3.

The trend seen in Key Stage 3 for the proportion of state schools offering Spanish to increase, and those offering German to decline, is also evident in Key Stage 4. Since 2007, th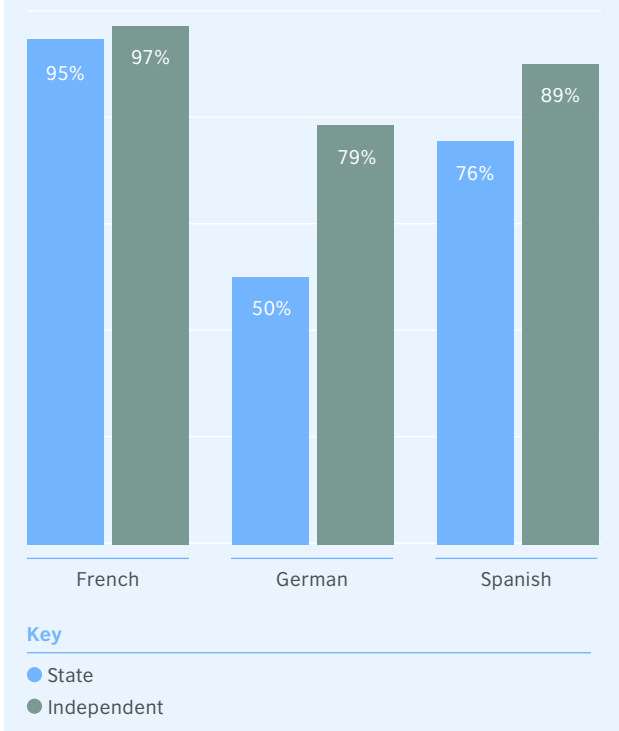e proportion of state schools offering German at Key Stage 4 has declined to 50 per cent from 62 per cent, while the proportion offering Spanish has grown from 56 per cent to 76 per cent. The trend is also noticeable, though less marked, in the independent sector, where it appears to be easier for schools to maintain provision for small numbers.

Responses about the main European languages being taught in Key Stage 4 show many schools making changes, not only to the particular languages they teach but also regarding how many of the three main European languages are offered to pupils for study at Key Stage 4:

'French is being phased out due to its increasing difficulty and poor results.' (state)

'We have introduced a choice of language into Year 9,

so all three languages are now represented.' (state)

'We started introducing Spanish to Year 9 last year. We have been squeezed for hours though so can only afford one hour of Spanish a fortnight.' (state)

'We recently phased out German after having taught it at Key Stage 3/4 and Key Stage 5. This was not because of a lack of popularity – it was a very popular subject with pupils. It was deemed that this was an area for "financial" streamlining.' (state)

'We have reduced from two languages being compulsory to just one in order to increase progress.' (independent)

Other languages taught

Data on other languages taught by schools in Key Stage 4 show:

As in Key Stage 3, provision in Key Stage 4 (leading to GCSE qualifications) is more widespread in the independent sector than in the state sector, with particular disparities showing up in the opportunities to learn ancient languages, Chinese and Italian. The only exception is Urdu, which is more commonly offered in the state sector, along with other languages which fall outside the tick list provided in the survey. Respondents mention Polish, Bengali, Portuguese, Dutch and other languages, almost always relating to 'home languages' of pupils. In both sectors, patterns of 'enrichment' or extra-curricular provision in the different languages are difficult to read from the quantitative data.

A small selection of comments from respondents about the teaching of languages other than the three main European ones is as follows:

'We have also introduced Mandarin Chinese to address the decreasing appetite for German.' (independent)

'German and Russian have moved up to Year 9. We have introduced Chinese at Year 9.' (independent)

'This will be the last year for Latin. The new GCSE makes it impossible for us to cover the whole course in two years - very sad.'

Figure 43: Other languages taught in Key Stage 4, state and independent schools, multiple answers permitted, 2016.
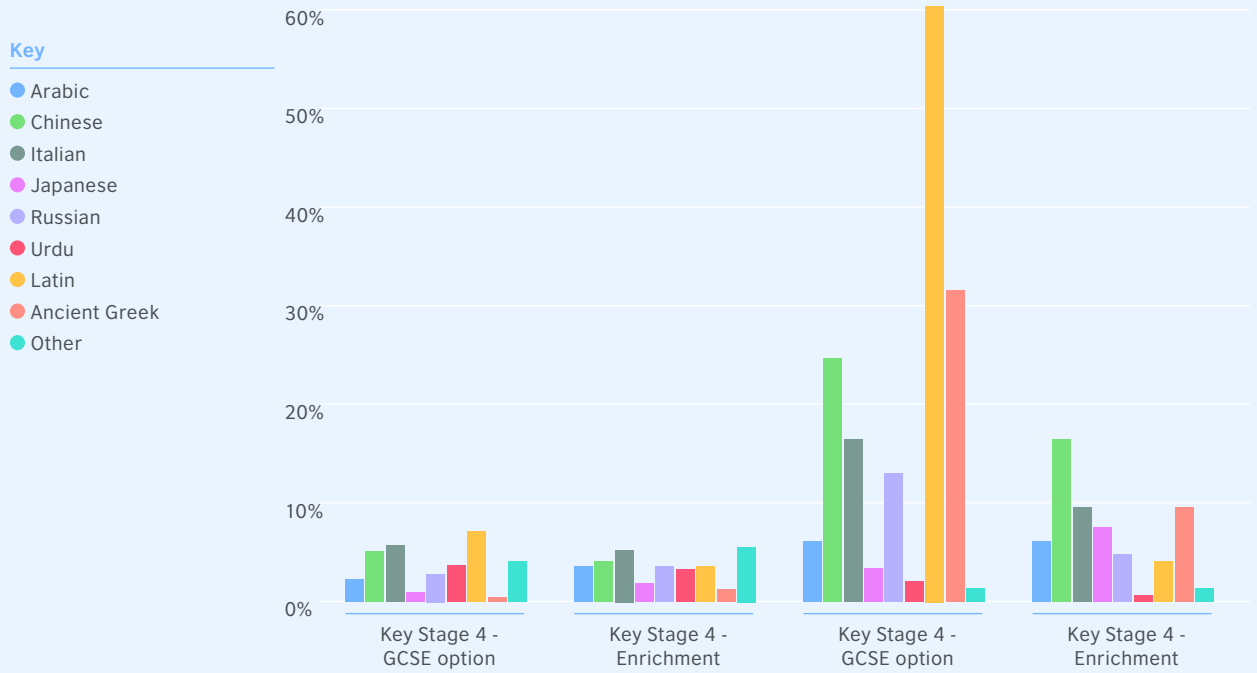
	Key Stage 4 - GCSE option	Key Stage 4 - Enrichment	Key Stage 4 - GCSE option	Key Stage 4 - Enrichment
	State		Independent	
Arabic	2.3%	3.6%	6.2%	6.2%
Chinese	5.1%	4.1%	24.7%	16.4%
Italian	5.7%	5.3%	16.4%	9.6%
Japanese	1.0%	1.9%	3.4%	7.5%
Russian	2.9%	3.6%	13.0%	4.8%
Urdu	3.7%	3.3%	2.1%	0.7%
Latin	7.1%	3.6%	60.3%	4.1%
Ancient Greek	0.4%	1.3%	31.5%	9.6%
Other	4.1%	5.6%	1.4%	1.4%

Which languages do schools teach post-16?

Two-thirds of state schools (65 per cent) and more than nine out of ten independent schools (91 per cent) cater for post-16 pupils. The percentages presented in this section are derived from a base of the number of schools with post-16 provision, not the total number of responding schools. As many as 52 state schools in our sample, equivalent to 12 per cent of those with post-16 pupils, do not offer any of the three main languages at this level. There were just two independent schools out of 127 with post-16 provision not offering either French, German or Spanish at this level.

Main languages

The pattern of provision for French, German and Spanish in schools with post-16 provision is very similar to that at Key Stages 3 and 4. Comparison with figures from previous years confirms the trend lower down the school of German shrinkage and Spanish expansion.

Comments from state sector respondents illustrate the continuing fragility of provision and variations from year to year:

'Post-16 varies yearly due to numbers and whether the school has the funds to run the courses. Next year, we are following the three A-level model and think we may face losing classes.'

'We have re-introduced A-level French after a few years with no uptake.'

'The numbers in the Sixth Form for Spanish have dropped, as a consequence of the new changes in languages and the policy of the school to do just three subjects in the Sixth Form.'

'We have reduced hours for French and German at Key Stage 5 due to lower numbers of pupils.'

'French and German at Key Stage 5 are being taught jointly with the other comprehensive school in town. Spanish is being phased out (despite its popularity and good results) due to funding cuts and a staff reduction process.'

The only comments provided by respondents working in the independent sector about languages at post-16 are that they teach languages post-16 as part of the IB and not as A-levels:

'We teach all three languages to IGCSE and International Baccalaureate (IB). We do not enter pupils for the GCSE or A-level. This has been the case for the last five years.'

Figure 44: Post-16 provision for French, German and Spanish, independent and state schools with post-16 pupils, multiple answers permitted

Key
- State
- Independent
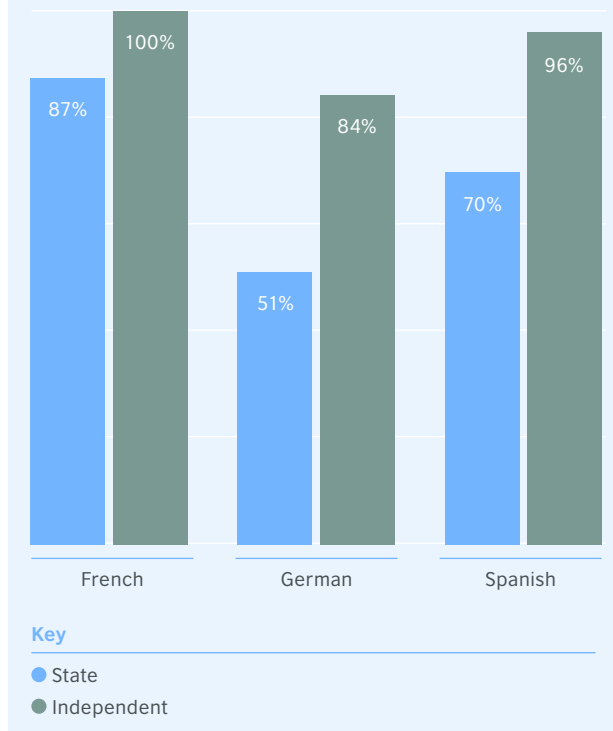
Other languages

As might be expected, the pattern of provision for other languages post-16 mirrors that offered lower down the school. Looking at trends over time (data held on file since 2007), opportunities to learn Italian, Russian and Japanese as A-level options have declined in the state sector, whereas provision for Chinese, Latin and Arabic has remained stable. Japanese A-level has also declined in the independent sector, whereas provision for Chinese and Latin appears to have grown considerably. However, these indications must be treated with caution because of the small number of schools involved, leading to possible biases in the sample from year to year. This is especially the case for the independent sector, where percentages are based on 127 schools with post-16 provision.

Respondents' comments illustrate different ways in which schools incorporate these lesser-taught languages into their offer:

'Latin is taken as an option in Year 8. Up to 20 pupils take it to GCSE and up to five at A-level.'

'We offer GCSE and A-level for native speakers for Urdu, Persian, Italian and Arabic.'

'Russian: short course to start after Christmas in support of a post-16 history trip to Russia.'

'Russian is taught from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 5 and Latin is taught at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5'

Figure 45: Post-16 provision for other languages, independent and state schools with post-16 provision, multiple answers permitted, 2016.

Key
- Arabic
- Chinese
- Italian
- Japanese
- Russian
- Urdu
- Latin
- Ancient Greek
- Other

	Post-16 - AS/AL option	Post-16 - enrichment	Post-16 - AS/AL option	Post-16 - enrichment
	State	State	Independent	Independent
Arabic	2.1%	1.2%	2.4%	5.5%
Chinese	3.3%	5.8%	26.8%	18.9%
Italian	4.0%	4.2%	23.6%	18.1%
Japanese	1.4%	1.4%	3.1%	8.7%
Russian	2.1%	2.6%	16.5%	14.2%
Urdu	2.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.8%
Latin	5.1%	3.0%	62.2%	1.6%
Ancient Greek	0.0%	0.9%	32.3%	3.1%
Other	2.6%	1.9%	2.4%	1.6%
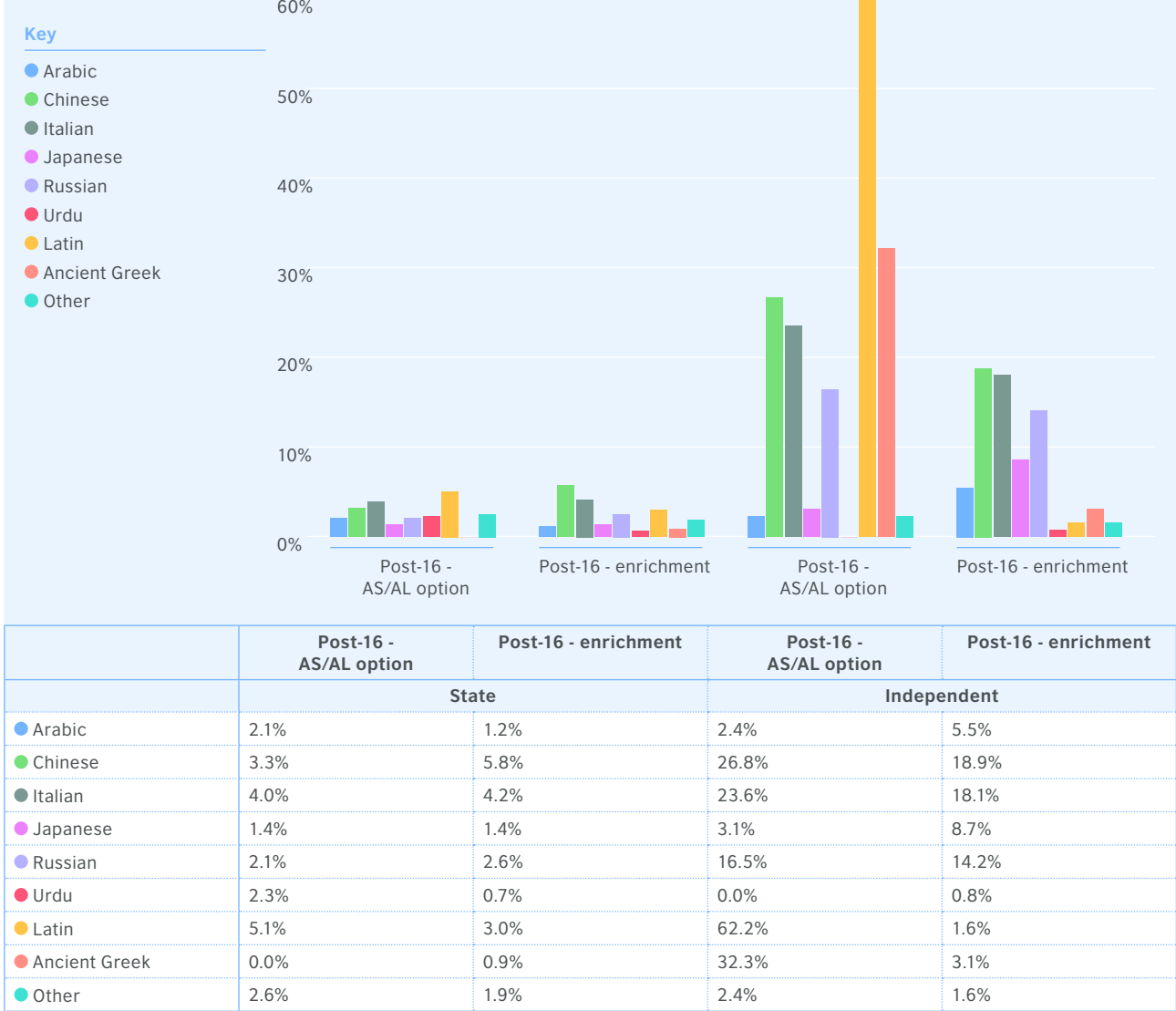
TIME ALLOCATED

How many hours are allocated to language teaching per week in Key Stage 3?

In the 2015 survey, a reduction in lesson time for languages was the most commonly-reported change made by schools in Key Stage 3. This had happened in 25 per cent of state schools and 23 per cent of independent schools. The 2016 survey therefore asked how many hours schools now allocate to language teaching per week. The pattern emerging is broadly similar for both independent and state sectors, with two thirds of state schools and half of independent schools offering between two and three hours of language tuition per week. However, independent schools show greater divergence from the norm, with 21 per cent reporting less than two hours and 28 per cent more than three.

The Teaching Schools Council has recently recommended that, ideally, schools should be offering three hours' teaching per week and certainly schools offering less than two hours are unlikely to

Figure 46: Hours allocated to language teaching in Key Stage 3, independent and state sectors, 2016.

Key
- <2 hours
- ≥2 – <2.5 hours
- ≥2.5 – <3 hours
- ≥3 – <4 hours
- 4≥ hours
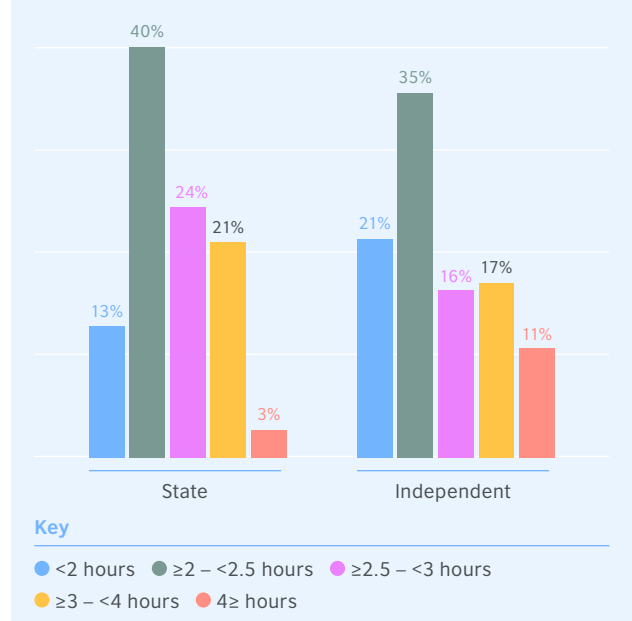
be offering pupils sufficient opportunity to acquire a solid basis of language competence.[25] An analysis of the extent to which this is associated with social disadvantage can be found on the next few pages.

State schools

Many of the respondents from the state sector who provided qualitative evidence on this topic comment on the fact that their pupils receive less than two hours of language tuition per week in Key Stage 3, for example:

'Throughout Key Stage 3 they have three hours altogether for two languages for sets One to Five and set Six focuses on one language but only has one hour per week.'

'We offer two and a half hours a week split between French and Spanish.'

Many state that their school runs a fortnightly timetable and that this can have an adverse effect on the regularity with which language classes take place, for example:

'Poor timetabling. Two-week cycle, so often five lessons in one week then one in the other.'

'Three hours over two weeks. Sometimes all three hours fall in the same week.'

Other respondents reveal that their school provides tuition in more than one language at Key Stage 3 but that the impact of teaching more than one language is that each one receives a smaller amount of tuition time than would have been possible if only one language were taught. Some examples of comments are as follows:

'At the beginning of the academic year (until Christmas), all pupils have four language lessons per week. From January onwards, high-achieving pupils study both German and French in parallel, so they only get two lessons of each, but they will still have a total of four lessons per week.'

'We have a fortnightly timetable: three hours per language per fortnight.'

'Year 7 - three lessons of either French or German. Year 8 - as for Year 7 apart from the top sets who have 2 + 2 lessons as they start Spanish. Year 9 - two lessons of the first language and one of the second language.'

Many respondents describe a situation in which pupils receive a different amount of language tuition in each of Years 7, 8 and 9. However, there is no evidence of a pedagogical rationale supporting decisions about which of the three years receives more time for language learning. Some examples of comments are as follows:

'Two hours in Year 7, three in Year 8, two in Year 9.'

'Two hours a week in Years 8 and 9; three hours a fortnight in Year 7.'

'Five hours per fortnight for Year 7, four for Year 8, three for Year 9.'

Independent sector

Comments from respondents working in the independent sector do not differ greatly from those of their state sector peers. Many teachers describe pupils receiving less than two hours per week of language tuition:

'Three hour lessons per fortnight. This means that we can have a very long gap between learning.'

Some of those dedicating a longer time to language study explain how this works:

'Two hours of French, two hours of Spanish, one hour of Latin.'

'Language allocation includes compulsory Latin: so 240 minutes per week in Years 7 and 8 and 320 minutes per week in Year 9.'

'Three hours per language, so three hours per week in Year 7 and six hours per week minimum in Years 8 and 9 (nine hours if they do three languages).'

Although many schools in the independent sector provide pupils in Key Stage 3 with language tuition in a greater number of languages than is usual in the state sector, sometimes this means that pupils receive a smaller amount of tuition per week in each of the languages that they are learning:

'Three lessons of 35 minutes for French and the same for German (six 35 minute lessons spread across ten days).'

'Three half hour slots for French or Spanish and a one hour slot for Latin or Mandarin (the majority of pupils do French or Spanish plus Latin or Mandarin Chinese).'

'Year 7 = two languages and Latin on two lessons each per week, lasting 45 minutes. Year 8 = a choice of two languages on three lessons per week (45 minutes each) or three languages on two lessons per week each.'

How many hours are allocated to language teaching per week in Key Stage 4? (for pupils taking GCSE or equivalent)

This question was last asked in the 2013 Language Trends survey and the results are reflected in *Figure 47* on the next page. Comparing 2013 data with the figures from this year's survey, it is possible to identify a slight tendency for state schools to increase the amount of time available for languages at GCSE: only five schools in our sample, less than one per cent, now set aside less than two hours per week, and 26 per cent offer more than three. State schools are more likely than independent schools to set aside a longer time for languages (more than two and a half hours).

Figure 47: Hours allocated to language teaching in Key Stage 4, independent and state sectors, 2013 and 2016.
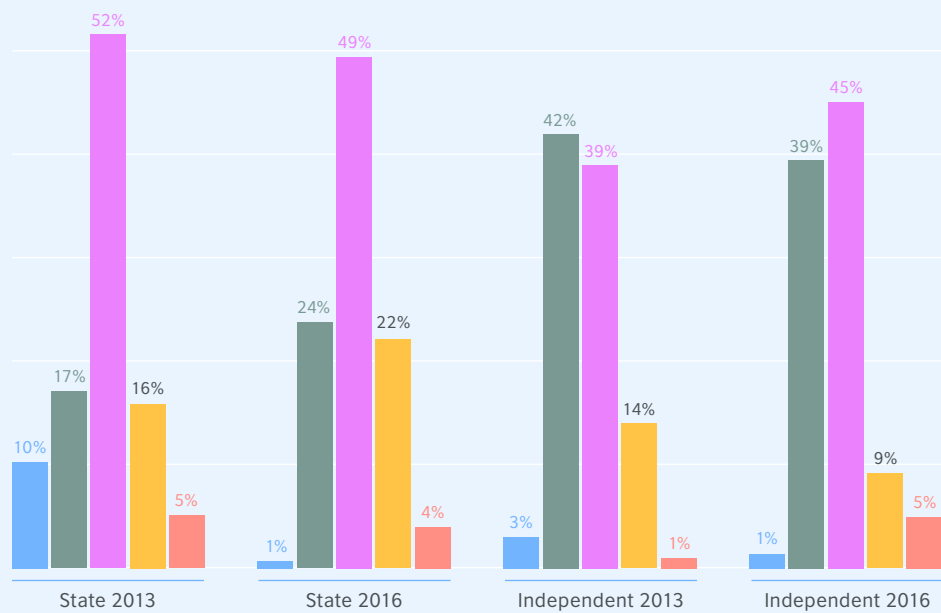
The qualitative evidence provided by teachers responding to this question shows great variety, without any evident pattern, both in the time allocation for languages at Key Stage 4 as well as in the way the time is allocated across the timetable.

Is a very short time allocation for languages (less than two hours per week in Key Stage 3) associated with disadvantage in the state sector?

When the time allocated to languages in Key Stage 3 is compared to relative disadvantage as measured by FSM quintile, there is a statistically significant association between disadvantage and a shorter time being allocated to language learning. Comparing schools that offer 'two hours or more' against those which offer 'less than two hours' showed a statistically significant relationship between schools in the high and low FSM quintiles. In other words, schools with higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage are more likely to dedicate less time to language learning.

Table H: Time for languages in Key Stage 3, by FSM quintile of school, 2016.

Number of schools by FSM quintile					
	A (High)	B	C	D	E (Low)
<2 hours	23	16	19	15	13
≥2 – <2.5 hours	63	60	51	40	55
≥2.5 – <3 hours	13	29	33	43	46
≥3 – <4 hours	13	15	22	37	54
4≥ hours	1	1	3	6	7

CHANGES TO PROVISION

What changes have schools made recently to provision for languages in Key Stage 3?

The responses to this question confirm the findings from other questions in this year's survey, which are fully detailed in *Figure 48*. The responses show:

» An increase in the number of state schools reducing Key Stage 3 to two years (28 per cent, up from 24 per cent in 2015)

» A greater tendency to reduce, rather than increase, lesson time for languages

They also confirm findings from the 2015 survey that:

» The tendency to include sets of pupils who have previously not learned a language is greater than the tendency to introduce restrictions which exclude them.

» Disapplication from language learning is increasing in independent schools but decreasing in state schools: while in the state sector one in five schools say that disapplication is now affecting fewer individual pupils, in independent schools 11 per cent say that more pupils are now being disapplied.

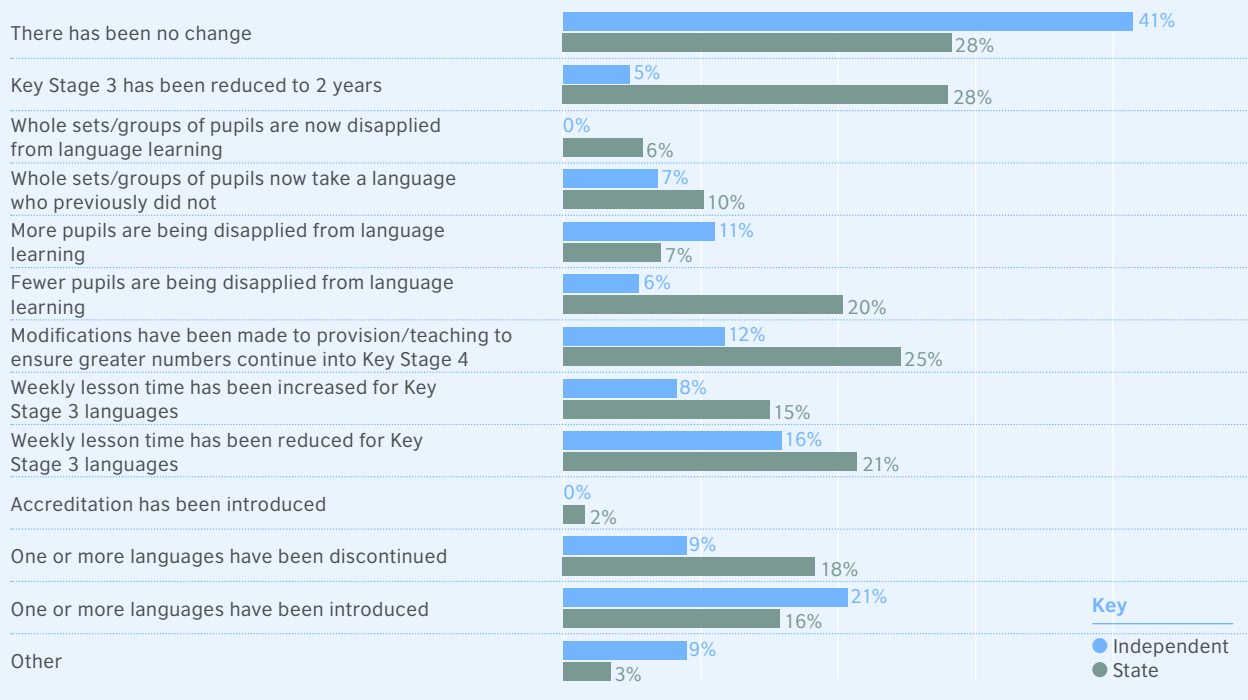» While there is a tendency to reduce time for languages, some schools in both sectors are increasing it.

Figure 48: Recent changes to Key Stage 3 provision for languages, state and independent schools. 2016.

	Independent	State
There has been no change	41%	28%
Key Stage 3 has been reduced to 2 years	5%	28%
Whole sets/groups of pupils are now disapplied from language learning	0%	6%
Whole sets/groups of pupils now take a language who previously did not	7%	10%
More pupils are being disapplied from language learning	11%	7%
Fewer pupils are being disapplied from language learning	6%	20%
Modifications have been made to provision/teaching to ensure greater numbers continue into Key Stage 4	12%	25%
Weekly lesson time has been increased for Key Stage 3 languages	8%	15%
Weekly lesson time has been reduced for Key Stage 3 languages	16%	21%
Accreditation has been introduced	0%	2%
One or more languages have been discontinued	9%	18%
One or more languages have been introduced	21%	16%
Other	9%	3%

Key
● Independent
● State

Comments from respondents shed further light on these findings as follows:

Reduction of Key Stage 3 to two years

This can be framed rather as an increase in Key Stage 4 to three years, a measure schools are taking in order to cater for the new GCSE:

'We now run a three-year GCSE and therefore Key Stage 3 has reduced to two years'.

'The pupils now choose their options for GCSE at the end of Year 8 so not all pupils have to take languages in Year 9.'

'All pupils in Years 7 and 8 study a language. In Year 8, pupils opt to study or to drop a language in Year 9.'

Reductions and increases in lesson time for languages

Respondents comment that reductions in lesson time for languages have had detrimental effects, as follows:

'We have had to reduce the number of hours dedicated to languages due to timetable and curriculum changes. This has meant that we are no longer able to offer dual language options to pupils.' (state)

'We find the pupils are not as confident as before as we only see them three times over two weeks. This is having an impact on the number of dual linguists and A-level linguists.' (independent)

However, where lesson time has increased, this has been welcomed:

'All changes in this school have been positive. Weekly lesson time for Key Stage 3 has more than doubled from 50minutes per week to two hours.' (state)

'Pupils now have an extra hour per fortnight in Year 7 and an extra hour per week in Years 8 and 9.' (state)

The reduction in opportunities to study a second foreign language is not necessarily seen as negative, if it means that the same amount of time is available to concentrate on just one language:

'Languages have been consolidated. Previously, time was split between French and German. Now, we have the same time to focus on one of the two more fully.' (independent)

Disapplication and re-inclusion of pupils

Respondents provide examples of pupils who are withdrawn from language lessons, but then subsequently reincorporated, as follows:

'If pupils' level of English is very low, then they don't study a language at Key Stage 3. However, due to a reduction of budgets and closure of whole classes, we are finding that pupils who have not been given the opportunity to do a language before are now doing it alongside pupils who have already studied it for one, two or three years.' (state)

'ESOL has been introduced for some pupils, meaning that their languages provision has reduced at Key Stage 3, but is phased in again in Years 8 and 9.' (state)

One lengthy comment from an independent school explains the pressure to remove pupils from language classes if they are not succeeding:

'At GCSE, languages are still supposed to be compulsory in our school but many tutors encourage the dropping of a language when a pupil is struggling.

'Once the suggestion has been made, it is difficult to change a child's perception (and their parents' perception as well). Dyslexia is often also cited as a reason for a child not being able to take another language. Crucially many pupils don't see languages as important and they resent being 'forced' to study them. So it has a knock-on effect on our results. As we are increasingly under pressure to get results, we are less inclined to keep our disaffected, less able pupils and sadly are starting to encourage them to give up.' (independent)

Changes in languages offered

One comment from an independent school provides an example of attempts to combat reductions in numbers for German:

'International pupils with no background in another language (except for English, which is taught as an additional language) have been introduced to German in Year 9 in an attempt to boost numbers for this language in GCSE.'

Changes in response to Key Stage 4 performance measures

A number of respondents comment that their school has made changes at Key Stage 3 in order to improve their standing in the EBacc or Progress 8 performance measures. These changes include reducing Key Stage 3 to two years in order to give pupils longer to prepare for GCSE, increasing timetable slots for languages and introducing revised schemes of work which are more closely linked to GCSE requirements in Key Stage 4. The following comments are a sample of those we received:

'Pupils in Years 7 and 8 now have three hours of languages per week. This allows for deeper

"MANY TUTORS ENCOURAGE THE DROPPING OF A LANGUAGE WHEN A PUPIL IS STRUGGLING."

grammatical instruction alongside more focused speaking and listening work. At Key Stage 4, cohorts of pupils are targeted and directed to study EBacc subjects, including languages. This has more than doubled uptake in Year 10.'

'Pupils have a fairly open options process, as they are now expected to take an EBacc option as part of Progress 8, so we increasingly find a wider range of abilities in each GCSE group, including middle or lower-ability pupils who would never have previously considered a language.'

'We now run a three year GCSE and therefore Key Stage 3 has been reduced to two years. The majority of pupils now follow EBacc and need languages to complete bucket 3. The amount of hours given to languages on the timetable has not changed.'

NEW GCSE SPECIFICATIONS

What changes are schools making in response to the new GCSE specifications for languages?

In the 2015 survey, we asked what changes schools were intending to make to accommodate the changes to the GCSE examinations. In this survey,

Figure 49: Changes to language teaching in the light of new GCSE examinations, state and independent schools, multiple answers permitted, 2016.

	Independent	State
Use of new resources	64%	85%
None, we have little scope for further improvement	14%	4%
More effective transition from Key Stage 2	9%	15%
Change/realign Scheme of Work in Key Stage 3	61%	85%
Boost independent learning/homework	41%	63%
Increase involvement in language clubs/extra-curricular activities	26%	21%
Increased use of FLAs/mentors to support pupils	16%	15%
Increase time allocation for languages in KS4	4%	9%
Increase time allocation for languages in KS3	3%	10%
Other	22%	6%
Not sure yet	11%	5%

Key
● Independent
● State

we asked what changes are in the process of being implemented. In 2015, 73 per cent of state schools said that they intended to change their teaching methods or approaches. In this year's survey we changed the question to explore the extent to which this means changes to the scheme of work in Key Stage 3. More than 85 per cent of state schools now say that they are realigning or making changes to the scheme of work in Key Stage 3, and a similar proportion say they are using new resources. Two thirds are also seeking to boost independent learning by pupils. These three areas represent changes to classroom practice which are within the gift of the languages department to implement. Changes which require management decisions or outside engagement such as increases in teaching time, the use of language assistants or liaison with primary schools are much less common. Only a very small number of state schools state that they have no room for further improvement or have not yet decided what steps might be necessary to respond to the new exams.

Respondents provide interesting evidence through their comments about the kind of changes they are putting in place or the constraints which are making changes difficult. In the state sector, the majority of respondents focus either on the different approaches they are implementing or on changes they are making/have made which impact directly on Key Stage 3, for example:

'More teaching in the target language in both Key Stages.'

'More speaking activities started in Key Stage 3 (role plays), more translation, GCSE style reading and listening in class and in end of term assessments.'

'We have introduced massive focus on grammar from Year 7.'

'Instead of doing two languages in Key Stage 3, and then having a choice in Key Stage 4, all pupils are now allocated a language in Key Stage 3 and they continue to study this language into Key Stage 4 – so no choice.'

'New-style GCSE type assessments have been introduced in Key Stage 3 in both French and Spanish.'

A number of schools are focusing their changes on the introduction of new resources or on developing pupils as independent learners:

'We have bought the Kerboodle resource and offered it free of charge to all pupils studying languages.'

'We are piloting digital and online resources.'

Some respondents are clear about the changes that need to happen but require the support of others to make them happen, for example:

'We have purchased new materials for Key Stage 3 but limited time means skills and topics are not covered to an appropriate depth or have time to be embedded. As we have a three year Key Stage 4, pupils in Year 9 should have started GCSE work in line with other

subjects. However I have refused to start this at this point and am cramming Key Stage 3 work as, so far, they have only had one year of French on one lesson per week. I want more Key Stage 3 time but am unsure if this will be given.'

'We already do a lot of independent learning and homework. We are planning a greater focus on grammar and skills. There is no question of increased curriculum time or language assistant support.'

A common response describes an inability to make desired changes due to funding constraints, for example:

'We feel we are expected to push languages and really sell it to our pupils but there is little support offered or available to us. We still have staffing restrictions and this is a huge issue in terms of increasing the uptake as we do not have the staff to meet the additional demand and there are no plans to change this.'

'New resources cost money and schools have none. We are adapting old specification textbooks to the new specification. In addition, publishers are now not publishing teachers' guides which more or less forces schools/customers into buying online resources like Kerboodle which are expensive.'

'Financial constraints mean we cannot develop languages as we would like. The emphasis is put on improving maths and English at our school. We have re-written the scheme of work for languages and we encourage sixth formers to do language clubs with the lower years.'

Of particular concern to many state sector respondents are the funding cuts which have seen them no longer able to make use of language assistants to provide pupils with the opportunity for spontaneous oral practice with a native speaker:

'No money to be able to hire language assistants at Key Stages 4 or 5. Cuts in the school budget mean new resources are also difficult to purchase.'

'Unfortunately, we have lost our language assistants for financial reasons, which is a major upset. It was described by the school as a 'nice-to-do thing that we can no longer afford'. Consequently, we see more and more staff giving up their own time after school hours to make up for it and support pupils.'

'We have lost all our funding for language assistants and have no mentoring from pupils from local universities as they seem to be in short supply and only work on Wednesdays.'

Further findings on language assistants are included in the next chapter.

Respondents from the independent sector are more likely to say that they are not making changes because they work towards different accreditation:

'We teach IGCSE, so the new GCSE is largely irrelevant (other than Pearson Edexcel feeling the need to tinker with IGCSE in the light of the new 'national' GCSE

specification changing.'

'We are currently sticking with the IGCSE to avoid the new GCSE.'

'We have already been doing IGCSE for several years and so our courses are already rigorous.'

However, some independent schools are making changes as the following sample of comments shows:

'As yet, we have not made a decision to move back to the GCSE. We abandoned GCSE for IGCSE four years ago. However, we have changed our schemes of work and assessment at Key Stage 3 to include more challenge, translation, explicit grammar and a broader range of reading sources. We include this at Key Stage 4 to meet the requirements of the new linear A-level.'

'We will hopefully be able to split our two French sets of over 20 into three when they get to Year 11 – we are looking into language assistants for extra help with speaking exams.'

'We have introduced a bigger emphasis on translation in homework and class and cultural resources.'

'We plan to make more use of language assistants to practise speaking.'

'We are moving to IGCSE.'

A small number of constraints to change as well as limiting external issues are occasionally described by independent respondents:

'We would like more teaching time. However, many subjects are feeling the same time pressure, so this will not be possible. The introduction of new GCSE and A-level specifications at the same time has also left us a little short on resources due to cost. This is putting additional pressure on teachers to 'create' relevant resources.'

'We would like to increase the time allocation in either Key Stage 3 and/or Key Stage 4, but it will not be possible due to the number of other subjects that need to be included too. Priority is given to English, maths and science.'

NEW AS/AL SPECIFICATIONS

What changes are schools making in response to the new AS/AL specifications for languages?
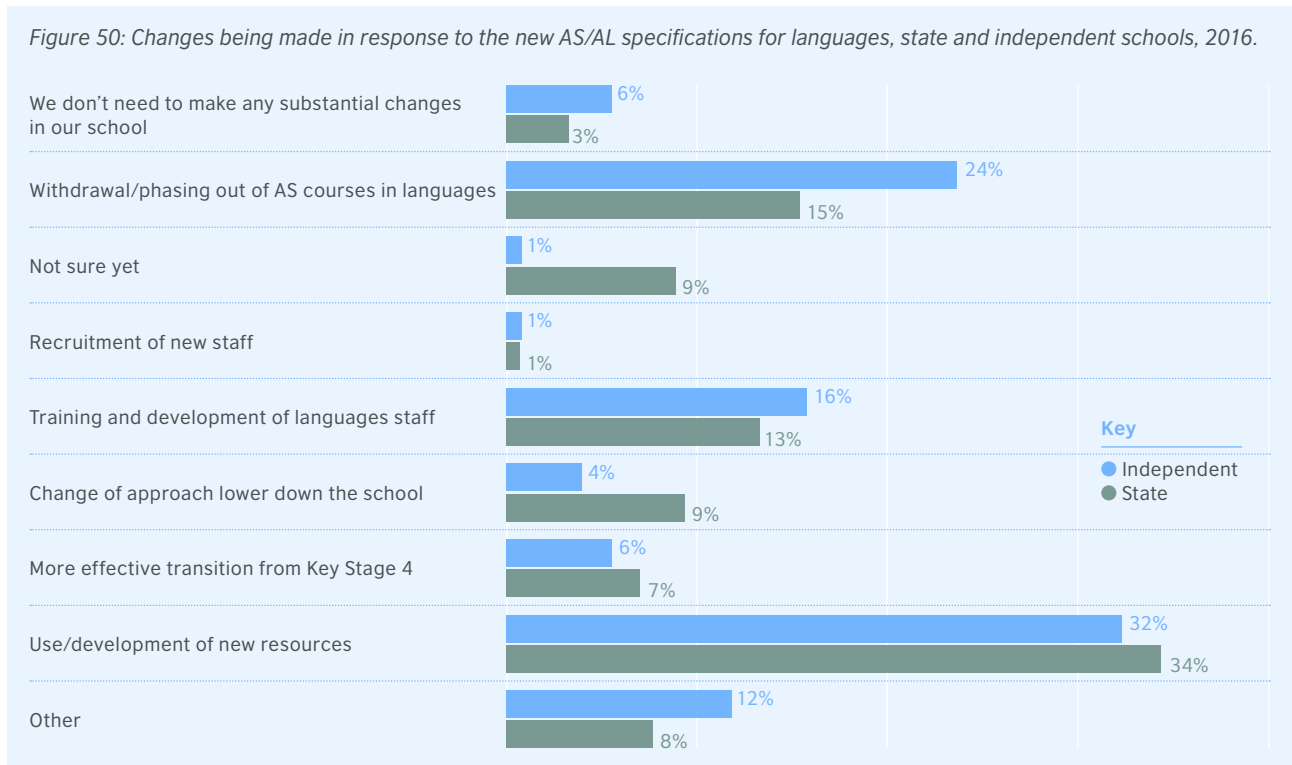
Only a very small minority of schools in either sector feel there is no need to make any substantial change to adapt to the new specifications. Around one third in both sectors say they will be developing and/or using new resources. Other changes, such as recruiting new staff or making alterations further down the curriculum, are being implemented by smaller numbers of schools. The most significant finding is that nearly one quarter of independent schools and 15 per cent of state schools say that they will be withdrawing AS courses.

Comments show that some schools are making a number of simultaneous changes in response to the new AS/AL specifications, including withdrawing from AS courses, training and developing staff to be able to teach the new AL specification, and investment in new resources:

'New resources, no AS exams, training and development of staff via webinar and local training meetings.'

'We are using new resources for the A-level teaching, but are also developing existing staff by getting them to attend training courses for Key Stage 5 and by sharing materials.'

In addition to the above, some schools also say that

Figure 50: Changes being made in response to the new AS/AL specifications for languages, state and independent schools, 2016.

	Independent	State
We don't need to make any substantial changes in our school	6%	3%
Withdrawal/phasing out of AS courses in languages	24%	15%
Not sure yet	1%	9%
Recruitment of new staff	1%	1%
Training and development of languages staff	16%	13%
Change of approach lower down the school	4%	9%
More effective transition from Key Stage 4	6%	7%
Use/development of new resources	32%	34%
Other	12%	8%

Key
● Independent
● State

they are working to improve transition between Key Stages 4 and 5 or making changes to the curriculum lower down the school, for example:

'Changing our approach lower down the school, new resources and withdrawal of AS.'

'We are also changing approach to Key Stages 3 and 4, training staff and creating new resources.'

KEY POINTS

> ## "MORE LANGUAGES, AND A GREATER DIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES, ARE OFFERED IN THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR BUT BOTH INDEPENDENT AND STATE SECTORS SHARE CHALLENGES IN RESPECT OF LANGUAGE TEACHING."

» There is a continuing trend for the number of schools offering Spanish to increase, and for those providing German to decline. German is now taught in Key Stage 3 by fewer than half of state schools. More languages, and a greater diversity of languages, are offered in the independent sector but both independent and state sectors share challenges in respect of language teaching.

» A small but important minority of respondents are very concerned about insufficient time being allocated for languages in Key Stage 3. In the state sector, the tendency to allocate only a short amount of time to languages is associated with higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage. In both sectors, where pupils learn more than one language, this frequently reduces the amount of lesson time allocated to each language per week. On fortnightly timetables, the time available is often inappropriately distributed, which teachers feel has a negative impact on teaching and learning.

» An increasing number of schools (now 28 per cent) are reducing Key Stage 3 to two years in order to be able to prepare pupils for GCSE over three years. This means that pupils who do not continue with a language once they have chosen their GCSE options miss out on one third of their statutory language time at Key Stage 3.

» Teachers are implementing changes to classroom practice in response to the new GCSE specifications and performance measures; however, improvements which require management decisions or outside engagement (e.g. increases in teaching time, use of language assistants) are much less common.

» Improvement at Key Stage 3 (more time allocation, revised schemes of work or a focus on one language only) is seen by many as key to producing better results at GCSE in years to come.

» Nearly one quarter of independent schools and 15 per cent of state schools say they are withdrawing AS courses in languages.

24. Data from annual Language Trends surveys from 2003 to 2016 is accessible at http://www.alcantaracoms.com/research/
25. Teaching Schools Council, Modern Foreign Languages Pedagogy Review, 2016, p. 3.

CHAPTER 7
## TAKE UP FOR LANGUAGES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

This chapter looks at pupils' language learning journeys from Key Stage 3 upwards, focusing on practices in different schools to excuse pupils from languages or allow them to drop the subject. It presents data on the changing profiles of pupils studying languages in Key Stage 4, the impact of the EBacc and Progress 8, and whether schools are planning to expand numbers taking a language in the future. It also continues to explore the fragile position of languages post-16, which was a key finding from last year's survey.

KEY STAGE 3

Do all, or almost all pupils, study at least one language throughout Key Stage 3?

The survey asked whether there are groups of pupils (as opposed to individual exceptions) who do not study a language in Years 7 to 9. This happens in seven to eight per cent of state schools in Years 7 and 8, but in 29 per cent of schools in Year 9. In contrast, in the independent sector, it is rare for whole groups to be removed from language learning in Years 7 and 8, and even rarer in Year 9. There is evidence from previous years' surveys that the practice of effectively reducing Key Stage 3 (understood as Years 7 to 9) to two years i.e. Years 7 and 8 only, is growing (see also section in previous chapter on changes to Key Stage 3 provision). In 2015, the proportion of state schools removing pupils from language learning in Year 9 was 26 per cent.[26] Although the question was asked in a slightly different way before 2015, schools show a clear tendency over the past few years towards increasing exclusion of pupils from language learning from Year 9 onwards.

Figure 51: Schools in which groups of pupils are excluded from languages in Key Stage 3, state and independent, 2016.
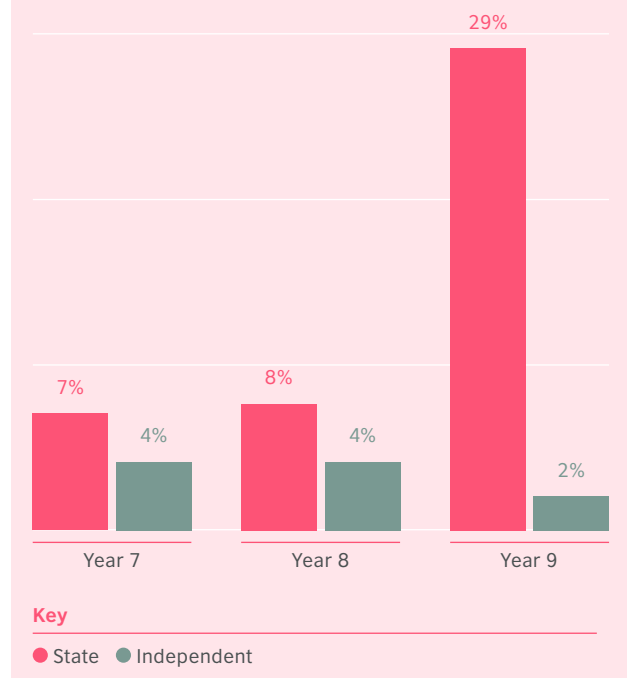
The qualitative data from respondents provides evidence of the reasons why pupils are sometimes excluded from learning a language in Key Stage 3. These include pupils with Special Educational Needs or those who need to learn English in order to access the rest of the school curriculum. The following

comments illustrate some of the different situations in schools:

'Hearing impaired or ASD [Autistic Spectrum Disorder] pupils who would not cope in lessons. Pupils who are having an alternative provision as their behaviour is stopping others from learning in the classroom.'

'Pupils requiring additional literacy / numeracy / SEND [Special Educational Needs and Disability] support'

However, in many cases, the pupils taken out of languages are simply of lower ability:

'The bottom sets are disapplied in Year 9 to allow for extra maths, English and science.'

'They follow a core skills course instead. These are our least able pupils who have been taken out of various subjects, but most commonly French, to receive extra support.'

'The division of pupils into sets, as well as a lack of resources and staff, makes it hard to provide language tuition for all pupils in Key Stage 3.'

'In the past, the nurture group used to learn a language at a basic level and complete the AQA ELC [Entry Level Certificate] award. This no longer happens and only the weakest pupils are taken out of languages to do extra literacy work.'

Although a number of respondents from state secondary schools report that no pupils are excluded from learning a language, the amount of time provided for language learning to those pupils requiring additional academic support may be reduced, for example:

'Pupils in the learning support groups receive extra literacy, but this includes some culture or language lessons.'

'Because all our Year 8 and 9 pupils study three languages at the same time, occasionally we adjust the timetable for pupils with Special Educational Needs or who really struggle with the workload and allow them to drop a language in Year 9 and only carry on with two.'

In the independent sector, it is more common for all pupils to be required to study at least one language in Key Stage 3, for example:

'All pupils do one; some might struggle with two or three so are allowed to do one language only.'

'All pupils without exception take a language in Key Stages 3 and 4.'

'Pupils take three modern languages in Year 7. Some might drop a language because they spend a session receiving special learning support from the Learning Enrichment team.'

But some independent schools do take pupils out of language lessons for similar reasons to schools in the state sector, for example:

'SEN issues: dyslexia, workload in general.'

'Some pupils need additional support with English instead of a language.'

'Time used to focus on extra English or maths.'

The qualitative data also provides extensive evidence of schools reducing Key Stage 3 to two years in order for GCSE courses to be covered in three years (Years 9 – 11), meaning that those pupils who opt not to study a language to GCSE level are only receiving two years of language tuition instead of the three envisaged by compulsory language learning at Key Stage 3. This issue is discussed in the previous chapter.

KEY STAGE 4

What proportion of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are studying a language?

The chart below shows the distribution of schools banded according to the proportion of their pupils studying a language in Year 11. Slightly under half (49 per cent) of state schools have more than 50 per cent of their pupils studying a language, while just under a quarter (24 per cent) have fewer than 25 per cent of the cohort taking a language. There is a strong contrast with the independent sector, where almost all schools (91 per cent) have more than half of their Year 11 pupils studying a language, and for the vast majority (85 per cent), this is more than three quarters of pupils. There is a significant disparity between the proportion (one in four) of state schools which have very low take up for languages in Year 11 (fewer than a quarter of pupils) and the tiny proportion (four per cent) of independent schools which are in this situation.

In order to investigate whether the situation in state schools is improving as a result of the 'EBacc for all' policy, we also asked schools to band themselves with regard to take up for languages in Year 10. The responses show that there are fewer schools in each of the lowest bands for take up, meaning that the proportion of state schools with less than 25 per cent take up has dropped from 24 per cent in Year 11 to 19 per cent in Year 10: this may mean that some schools with very low take up have, over the last year, been successful in encouraging more pupils to study a language. However, at the other end of the scale, the proportion of state schools approaching the aspiration for 90 per cent take up (with 75 per cent or more of pupils taking a language) has hardly changed (24 per cent in Year 10 as compared to 23 per cent in Year 11).

Figure 52: Take up for languages in Year 11, state and independent schools, 2016.

Key
● State
● Independent
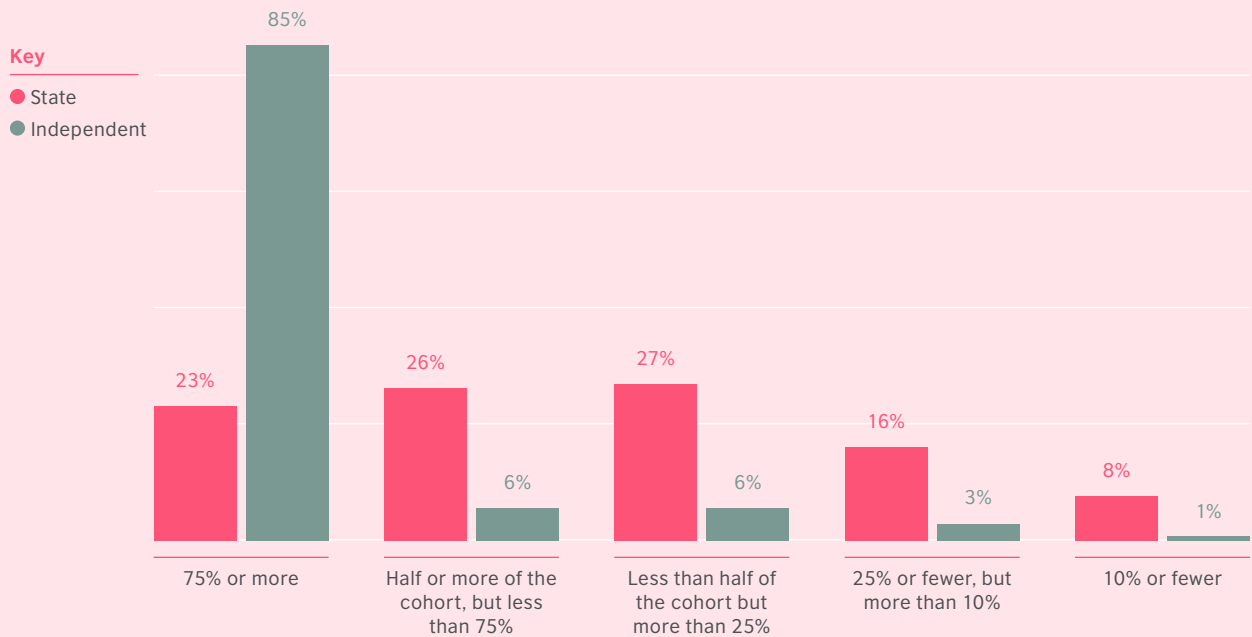
Figure 53: Take up for languages in Year 10, state and independent schools, 2016.

Key
● State
● Independent
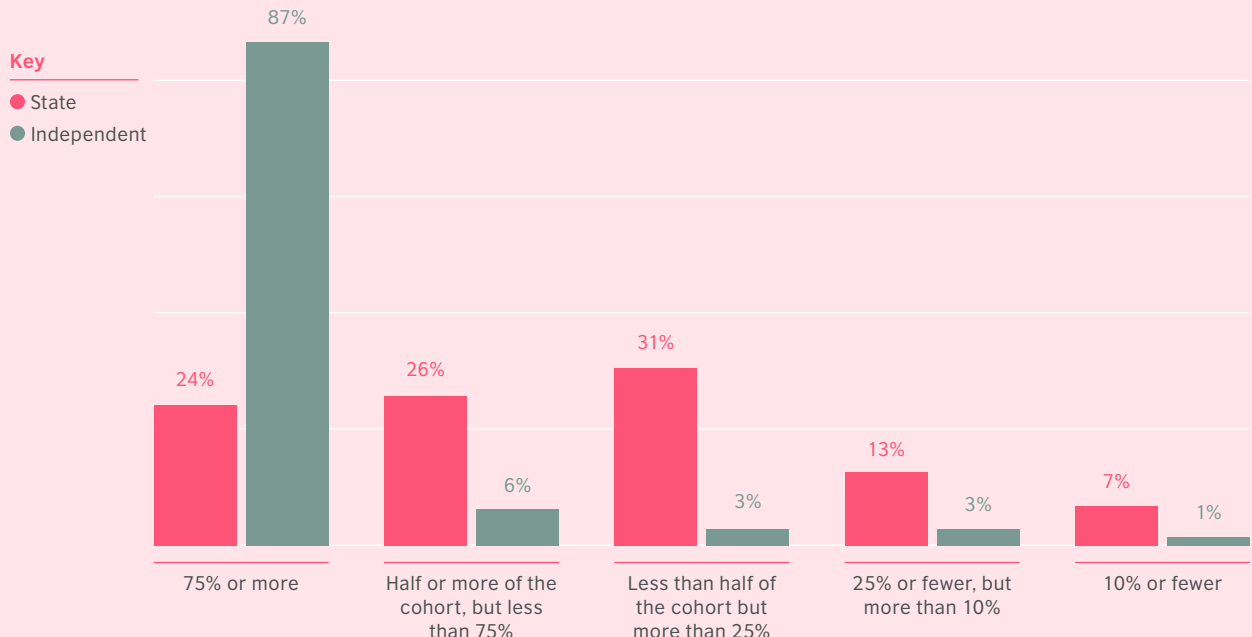
Comments from respondents show that some of the improvement noted above between Years 11 and 10 is, at least in part, a response to the prospect of 'E-Bacc for all':

'It was not yet compulsory to pick a language so the uptake and motivation from pupils were low.'

However, a larger number of schools comment that the improvement had more to do with schools moving away from early entry GCSE in Years 9 or 10:

'Only Year 10 currently study a language due to the previous one-year GCSE provision.'

Schools comment that the effect of the early GCSE in languages meant that pupils were less likely to opt to study a language at Key Stage 5 because they would have had a gap in their language tuition:

'Until this year, languages GCSEs were taken one year early in Year 10. This has then led to a dramatic fall of uptake in Year 11 (and subsequently in Key Stage 5).'

Some respondents report that languages at Key Stage 4 are compulsory for all pupils, for example:

'In order to meet the DfE requirements for 90 per cent of pupils to study the EBacc, we have made it compulsory for all but a few of our pupils to study a language to GCSE level.' (state)

'In the next three years, we will probably make it compulsory again for pupils to choose one of the two languages offered.' (state)

Respondents' comments provide further details of the varied ways in which pupils are selected and/or guided in their GCSE choices, and highlight the differences between the state and independent sectors:

State

'100 per cent of pupils do Spanish or French or both.'

'The school cohort is approximately 630. I have a Year 10 class of eight, and a Year 11 class of 11.'

'Half of the year group are preselected, but they can opt out.'

'Some pupils attend intervention lessons instead of languages.'

'French is compulsory for all pupils.'

'Languages are optional in our school and there is no EBacc pathway to encourage more pupils to take French at Key Stage 4.'

Independent

'100 per cent of Year 10 pupils study at least one language'.

'All our pupils study at least one language. It is a prerequisite for the IB.'

'We disapply those we think would fail.'

'Pupils are expected and encouraged to take at least one language at GCSE but not forced.'

'The majority of our pupils study at least one language, but because our school has approximately 30 per cent international pupils, they study English as a second language instead of any other language.'

What changes have there been in the number and profile of pupils taking a language in Key Stage 4?

This question provides very rich data on changes in the profile of pupils taking a language in Key Stage 4 over the past three years. The findings are shown separately for state and independent schools.

State schools

» The national picture appears more or less stable, with the proportion of state schools reporting overall increases in numbers taking languages in Key Stage 4 over the last three years almost exactly balanced by those reporting decreases (27-28 per cent in each case).

» Schools report increases in numbers across the ability range but although more than a quarter (26 per cent) of schools report increases in the number of lower ability pupils taking a language, this is balanced by a larger proportion of schools reporting declines among this group. Fewer schools report declines in middle-and higher-ability pupils taking a language.

» More schools are reporting increases than decreases in the numbers of pupils taking a language who are a) in receipt of the pupil premium; b) higher ability pupil premium pupils; c) have English as an Additional Language.

» More schools are reporting decreases than increases in the numbers of pupils taking a language who have Special Educational Needs.

» More than one third of schools (37 per cent) report declines in the numbers of pupils studying more than one foreign language.

Independent schools

» The overall picture is one of declining numbers, although this only affects one in five schools: 21 per cent report declines in numbers taking a language at Key Stage 4, compared with six per cent reporting increases.

» There is a significant decline in dual linguists: 45 per cent of schools have seen declines in the numbers of pupils studying more than one language, compared to only nine per cent reporting increases.

» Where independent schools have seen declines in numbers, this has affected all groups and all abilities, with the exception of pupils with English as an Additional Language, where more schools have seen increases than declines in numbers.

» Declines in numbers have particularly affected lower ability pupils and those with Special Educational Needs – more than a quarter of independent schools now have fewer of these pupils taking a language in Key Stage 4 than in the recent past.

Figure 54: Changes in the profile of pupils taking a language at Key Stage 4, state schools, 2016.
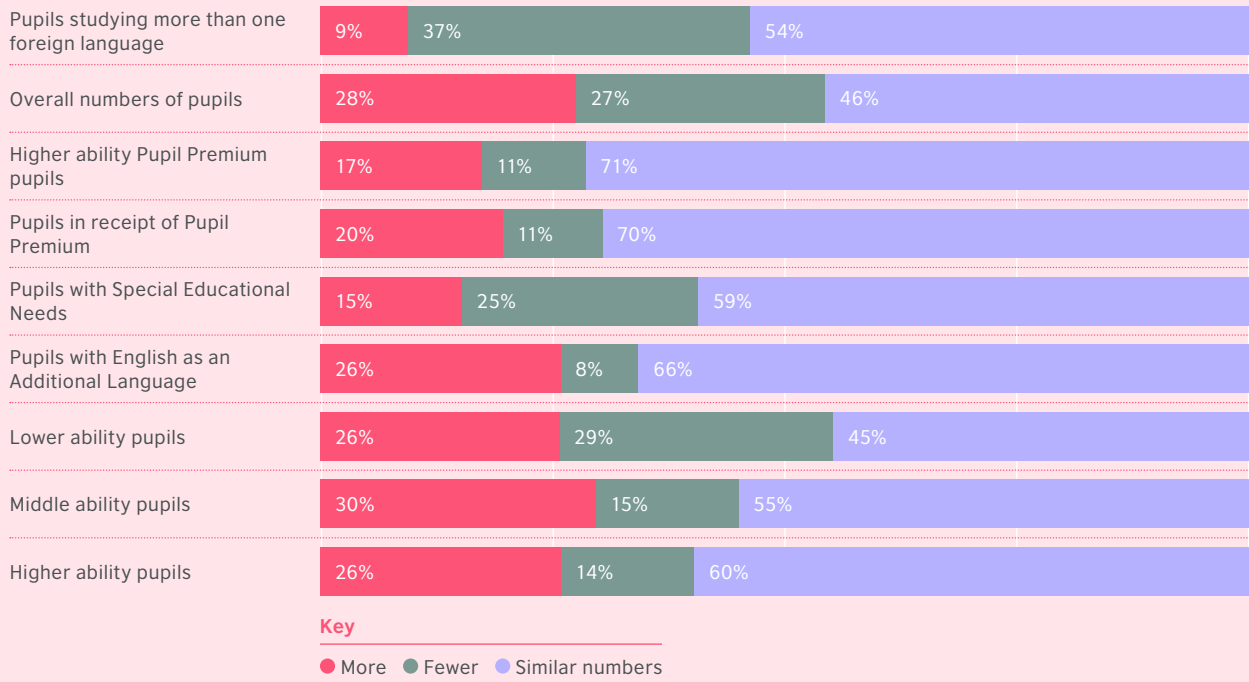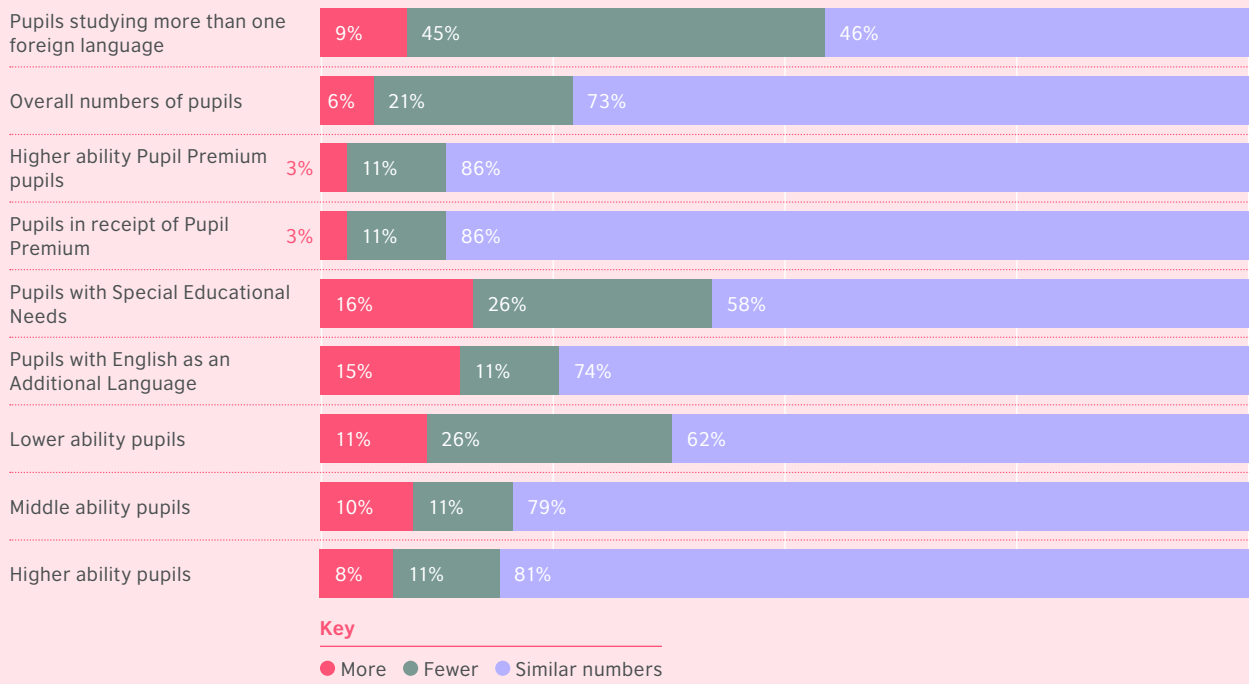
	More	Fewer	Similar numbers
Pupils studying more than one foreign language	9%	37%	54%
Overall numbers of pupils	28%	27%	46%
Higher ability Pupil Premium pupils	17%	11%	71%
Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium	20%	11%	70%
Pupils with Special Educational Needs	15%	25%	59%
Pupils with English as an Additional Language	26%	8%	66%
Lower ability pupils	26%	29%	45%
Middle ability pupils	30%	15%	55%
Higher ability pupils	26%	14%	60%

Key
● More ● Fewer ● Similar numbers

Figure 55: Changes in the profile of pupils taking a language at Key Stage 4, independent schools, 2016.

	More	Fewer	Similar numbers
Pupils studying more than one foreign language	9%	45%	46%
Overall numbers of pupils	6%	21%	73%
Higher ability Pupil Premium pupils	3%	11%	86%
Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium	3%	11%	86%
Pupils with Special Educational Needs	16%	26%	58%
Pupils with English as an Additional Language	15%	11%	74%
Lower ability pupils	11%	26%	62%
Middle ability pupils	10%	11%	79%
Higher ability pupils	8%	11%	81%

Key
● More ● Fewer ● Similar numbers

Comparison of state versus independent sectors

» Although the overall trend in the state sector is towards a modest increase (i.e. more schools reporting increases than declines), there is nonetheless a higher proportion of schools in the state sector reporting declines than in the independent sector (27 per cent compared with 21 per cent).

» There has been a significant decline, in both sectors, in the numbers of pupils studying more than one language (37 per cent in the state sector and 45 per cent in the independent sector). This is discussed further below.

» The focus on Pupil Premium and higher ability Pupil Premium children in the state sector has had some impact in increasing numbers of these pupils taking a language in Key Stage 4.

» Lower ability pupils and Special Educational Needs pupils are less likely than in the past to be taking a language in both independent and state sectors.

'We used to be a languages college and all pupils had to do a language at Key Stage 4 using NVQ, which were enjoyed by the majority, but now they no longer count. Languages have not been part of the curriculum for the last three years and Key Stage 4 numbers have dropped significantly.' (state)

> **"WE USED TO BE A LANGUAGES COLLEGE AND ALL PUPILS HAD TO DO A LANGUAGE AT KEY STAGE 4 USING NVQ, WHICH WERE ENJOYED BY THE MAJORITY, BUT NOW THEY NO LONGER COUNT."**

» There is a tendency in both sectors for more pupils with English as an Additional Language to be taking a language in Key Stage 4.

The qualitative evidence in this year's survey suggests that schools which have seen overall numbers for languages increase are likely to have introduced some form of compulsion:

'We have seen a slow increase by a couple of percentage points per year. This year, languages will become a compulsory element at Key Stage 4 again and only a very few will be disapplied.' (state)

'All pupils have to do one language.' (independent)

In contrast, schools with free choice, where there is little emphasis on the EBacc, struggle to recruit:

'Languages are perceived as too difficult, therefore pupils prefer to choose subjects that they are most likely to do better in.' (state)

'Limited options and no EBacc focus in school mean that a language is not a priority.' (state)

Schools which have had high take up in the past report difficulties maintaining this:

'We traditionally have a high proportion of pupils who opt for languages. However, our guidance on how imperative it is to take the EBacc route has softened in the last three years to ensure that individual guidance on each pupil's current performance and their suitability to study and pass languages at GCSE is given prior to GCSE options. We found that pupils who struggled immensely got to near the end of the course and, at times, withdrew as they needed to focus on core subjects and were failing languages at F/E grades.' (state)

Respondents comment in some detail on the impact of changes on different groups of pupils. Of particular note is the evidence from this year's responses to our survey that pupils of middle and lower ability are being put off from taking a language in both the independent and state sectors. Pupils, their parents and school management have different motivations for wanting to see pupils achieve the maximum number of high grade passes at GCSE. Because it is notoriously difficult to achieve the highest grades in languages, and even a grade B is seen by many as a 'fail', teachers from both sectors comment that pupils of middle and lower ability are very often discouraged from attempting a language GCSE.[27] To counter this, there is also some qualitative evidence, though only from the state sector, of efforts being put in place to encourage greater numbers of lower ability pupils to take a languages GCSE in future. A selection of respondents' comments on the impact of changes in their schools on different groups of pupils is shown in *Table I* on the following page.

Table I: Comments on changes in the profile of pupils taking a language at Key Stage 4, state and independent schools, 2016

	State	Independent
High ability pupils - increase	'Pupils are eager to choose a language for GCSE.' 'EBacc pupils are heavily guided towards continuing with a language.'	'All pupils expected to take a foreign language, so higher ability pupils will all continue to learn a language at Key Stage 4.' 'All our pupils are of higher ability. Mandarin Chinese and German have increased numbers, French has fewer but is still the second most popular language.'
High ability pupils - decrease	'No change, languages are obligatory for all in Key Stage 4.' 'We encourage pupils who we feel will benefit and who want to study languages. We are a popular subject.' 'We have seen an increase in the number of pupils of this ability range as they seem to be enjoying studying languages more than in the past.'	n/a
Middle ability pupils - decrease	'The pupils are put off by the reputation of languages being seen as a difficult subject – this is not helped by the new GCSE specifications for which the content (not the format of the exam) is incredibly difficult.' 'Restrictions in combinations available in GCSE pathways have resulted in a decrease.'	'Quite a number of mixed-ability pupils start the Key Stage 4 course but drop the language if they think they won't get a top grade.'
Lower ability pupils - increase	'All pupils now receive the same amount of teaching time in languages and more are encouraged to study it further.'	n/a
Lower ability pupils - decrease	'It is difficult to provide for these pupils properly as they are taught in mixed-ability groups.' 'The new specification doesn't currently cater for them and needs urgent adjustment.' 'As we are a selective school, there is a belief among pupils that anything less than grade B at GCSE is a "fail". Language grades are always a half grade lower on average than other subjects, so fewer weak (or less diligent) pupils opt for languages.'	'The new GCSE means that we are "disencouraging" weaker pupils.' 'More pupils are being allowed to drop it now.'
EAL pupils	'We have a small number of EAL pupils but many are engaged in language learning and are very able at it.' 'With more EAL pupils in school, we have seen an increase in numbers at GCSE – with good success rates!' 'EAL pupils have an idea about how languages work and use this skill well.'	'Often, the EAL pupils are in a better position to learn a language – they have higher cognitive skills.'
SEN pupils	'Languages are not usually a popular subject with SEN pupils.' 'Pupils are often guided towards "suitable" courses. Some may have been disapplied at Key Stage 3 and so do not choose a language at Key Stage 4.' 'The new specification doesn't currently cater for them and needs urgent adjustment.' 'Languages are compulsory for all at Key Stage 4.'	'None, they find it difficult to learn vocabulary and grammar.' 'I arrange for all to do a language, including pupils with dyslexia - sometimes they find Russian or Mandarin Chinese more accessible.'
Pupil premium pupils	'Pupil Premium pupils are supported with free materials and do well in languages in our school.' 'Very few Pupil Premium pupils appear to opt for a language despite our efforts to make it accessible.'	n/a

What is the main reason for these changes?

Respondents from both state and independent schools provide rich qualitative evidence on the reasons for changes, either increases or decreases, in the numbers of pupils studying languages at Key Stage 4 in their schools. In the state sector, the EBacc and Progress 8 have been key drivers of change. Both sectors mention that the quality of teaching, efforts to promote the subject and a high profile of languages within the school have been effective in increasing numbers. Similarly, both sectors are affected by factors such as the perception of difficulty, timetabling, and an external environment in which languages are seen to be less important than some other subjects. Respondents in the independent sector also credit an increase in pupil numbers for languages with improved teaching and successes in raising the profile of languages in the school. However, it is only independent respondents for whom a main reason for change is a decrease in take up as a result of fewer pupils taking two languages.

Main reasons for increasing pupil numbers

Those teachers responding to this year's survey who report that pupil numbers for languages are increasing in their schools cite three main reasons for this positive development. The first reason given is a combination of good teaching as well as improvements which some schools have made to language teaching at Key Stage 3, for example:

'Good, motivational teaching and good exam results.'

'Improved standard of teaching, increase in the number of options for Key Stage 4 pupils from three to four, more inclusive approach (all encouraged to take a language),'

'More positive engagement with languages at Key Stage 3 and pupils are starting to see the benefit more clearly of studying a language at GCSE.'

'We have also worked hard at Key Stage 3 to capture pupils' attention, increase the challenge and give them more confidence to tackle languages at GCSE.'

The EBacc is the second reason given by the vast majority of teachers for an increase in the numbers of pupils taking a language. The following comments are a small sample of those we received in this year's survey:

'Pressure from the school for more pupils to study a language at GCSE in order to bring up EBacc numbers.'

'EBacc means more middle ability pupils are opting for a language who otherwise wouldn't have chosen a language.'

The third reason credited by respondents for increasing the numbers of pupils taking a language is that of positive school leadership and a more intensive internal marketing of languages to pupils and their parents. The following comments are examples of the responses we received:

'Many pupils are on pathway one and therefore don't have a choice – however, due to the promotion of languages around school, the change in teaching styles and the information that pupils are receiving earlier about the EBacc and careers/universities, more pupils are deciding to take a language.'

> ## "PUPILS BELIEVE THEY SHOULD TAKE TRIPLE SCIENCE OVER LANGUAGES AS THEY CLASH ON THE OPTIONS BLOCKS."

'Hard work in Year 9 at recruitment, by using outside speakers and holding promotional events.'

'Increase in numbers at GSCE is only due to encouragement from the senior leadership team and pupils being "guided" into languages'

Main reasons for decreasing pupil numbers

The qualitative evidence from this year's Language Trends survey also shows that many teachers in both the state and independent sectors are witnessing a decline in the numbers of their pupils who are choosing to take a language at GCSE. A small minority report numbers decreasing as a result of the EBacc and Progress 8, for example:

'The government obsession with English, science and maths and the weighting on this especially with the new Progress 8 scale. Pupils believe they should take triple science over languages as they clash on the options blocks.'

Some schools have restructured Key Stage 4 to allow a greater share of curriculum time for English and maths, core subjects for both the EBacc and Progress 8 measures, thereby leaving less time available for the study of languages. A small number also comment that the lack of alternative accreditation to GCSE has deterred pupils from studying a language as some pupils preferred the more practical nature of courses leading to NVQs and similar qualifications. However, the majority of teachers reporting declining numbers give three main causes. The first encompasses the difficulty of languages compared to other subjects available for study and a reduction in the number of options from which pupils preparing for their GCSEs have to choose, for example:

'The pressure to achieve higher grades has reduced our cohort. Particularly as languages are perceived as difficult.'

'Languages are perceived as hard and this is not helped by new specifications and the lack

of government focus on the need for linguists. Ultimately languages should be compulsory at GCSE.'

'Pupil perception of languages as a difficult option, and the drop from four option subjects to three.'

'Languages are seen as difficult and are not valued. It's a lose-lose situation.'

Pupils' experience of language study at Key Stage 3 plays a very influential role in whether or not they subsequently take the subject at Key Stage 4 and many respondents comment on issues which negatively affect pupil numbers at Key Stage 4, including inadequate time allocation, poor preparation for Key Stage 4 and a negative overall experience. Some examples of the comments received are as follows:

'Poor allocation of time given to languages at Key Stage 3 (Years 7 and 8) which means pupils lack confidence.'

'Staff instability – some pupils have had nine teachers in Key Stage 3. They're fed up as their experience of languages has been negative.'

'The Key Stage 3 scheme of work did not meet the needs of the Key Stage 4 syllabus.'

In previous years, the Language Trends research has reported on the poor appreciation that British society in general has for the immense benefits of languages. This year's survey is no exception and many teachers comment that the decline in pupil numbers for GCSE languages which they are experiencing is the result of apathy and misunderstanding about languages and the valuable role they play for individuals as well as the nation as a whole. Below is a small selection of some of the comments received this year:

'Pupils are disengaged towards languages lessons and do not see the point in learning another language – this has been become more pronounced given the post-Brexit climate.'

'Lack of parental understanding of and support for the study of languages.'

'Lack of emphasis by government on the importance of language learning.'

'The new GCSE is harder. Being a fee-paying school, parents increasingly ask for their children to be removed from languages.'

'Languages are perceived as being difficult, parents think sciences are more useful, English speakers are more reluctant to learn other languages.'

What proportion of pupils are studying more than one language in Key Stage 4?

Independent schools are much more likely than state schools to have pupils studying more than one language, and more likely to have larger numbers of pupils doing so. This is likely to account for the sector's higher representation in language undergraduate degree courses.

Comments from respondents highlight the reasons for the recent decline in numbers of dual linguists:

State

'Our double language accelerated group of 30 boys has been discontinued due to the changing demands of the new GCSE. The numbers doing two languages to GCSE will fall from 30 in 2017 to 0 in 2018.'

'We are asked to offer/deliver a second language out of hours.'

'Due to Ebacc requirements studying more than one language is in decline.'

'Year 9 pupils used to have four options for GCSE, now they only have three so we have fewer dual linguists.'

Figure 56: Proportions of pupils studying more than one language in Key Stage 4, state and independent schools, 2016.

Key
● State
● Independent

Category	State	Independent
Most - more than half	2%	11%
Some - less than half but more than 5%	12%	54%
Just a few pupils - 5% or fewer	62%	30%
None	24%	4%
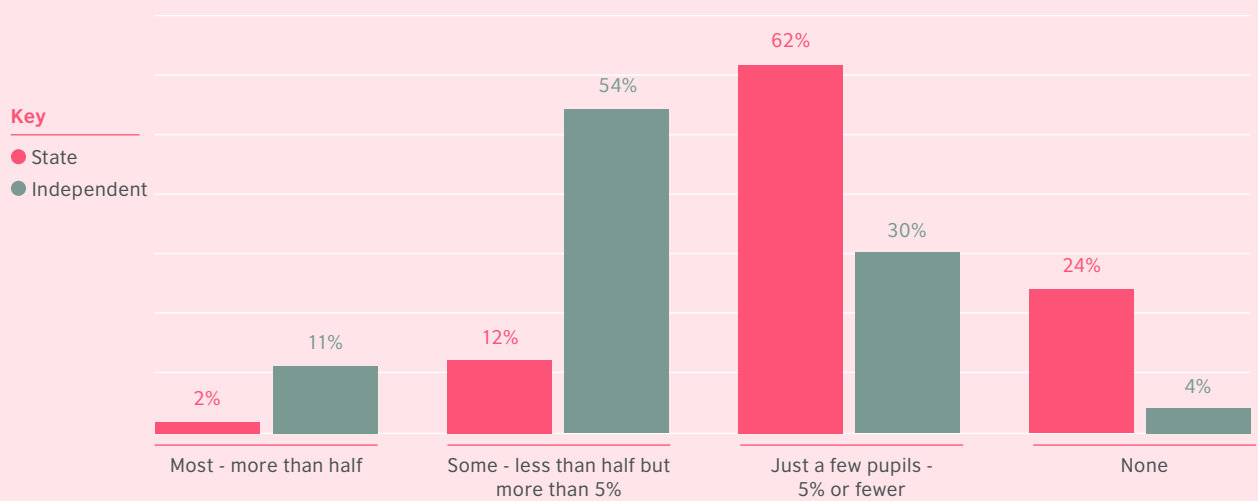
Independent

'The provision of our school curriculum has changed and so the option to study a second foreign language has been reduced.'

'It often clashes with other popular subjects such as PE and drama.'

'We have fewer dual linguists due to pressure on pupils to do science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).'

'There is not enough time in the curriculum for a second language at Key Stage 3 so pupils don't feel confident enough to continue to GCSE level unless they are very able linguists.'

'There is a range of exciting (and easier) options and current GCSEs don't encourage able linguists to choose more than one language (one is a core subject).'

'There is a growing perception that they only need to do one language.'

'Free choice in Year 9 has reduced dual linguists.'

The issue of studying two languages at the same time is important to respondents in both sectors. However, in the state sector, the issue is often one of trying to develop dual linguists by teaching two languages in the time that would previously been available for the study of one language. In the independent sector, where the study of two or more languages is still more common, the need for two languages is strongly expressed as teachers attempt to halt a decline in numbers opting to do languages at GCSE and A-level. The following two examples show the different positions in each sector:

'I believe very strongly in the importance of offering two languages, but we are all finding it hard to deliver two languages in the hours previously allocated for one. Imagine if history and geography had to share five hours per fortnight, there would be an outcry; and yet in many schools language teachers are endeavouring to deliver two different languages in that amount of time, sometimes in less (four hours per fortnight in one of our neighbouring schools). This is going to have a negative effect on results, especially with the new, tougher GCSEs.'' (state)

'Studying two languages is the key to success. Three hours a week per language reinforces all language skills and our pupils achieve 90 per cent A*/A grades at GCSE in two or three languages.' (independent)

Is there an association between high educational attainment and take up for languages in Key Stage 4?

We analysed take up for languages in Key Stage 4 by the school's attainment quintile (state schools only) and found that, for both Year 10 and 11, the relationship between attainment quintile and proportion studying at least one language is extremely statistically significant. In other words,

schools with higher educational attainment overall are more likely to have higher numbers studying languages; however, the direction of the relationship could be either way.

Schools with higher attainment overall are more likely to have a significant number of pupils studying more than one language. This relationship is extremely statistically significant when schools with five per cent or fewer pupils studying more than one language are compared with schools with more than five per cent in this category. However, once again, the direction of this relationship between language uptake and overall attainment is unclear. *Table J* below shows state schools only.

Table J: Numbers of pupils learning more than one language in Key Stage 4, state schools by attainment quintile, 2016.

	Number of schools, by attainment quintile				
	A (Highest performing)	B	C	D	E (Lowest performing)
Just a few/no pupils - 5% or fewer	111	117	131	118	102
Some - less than half but more than 5%	50	17	6	4	7
Most - more than half	6	2	3		2

Is economic disadvantage associated with low take up for languages?

We took the responses to the various questions in the survey relating to take up for languages and analysed them according to the FSM profile of the school population (state schools only). This produced the following findings:

» Schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for FSM are less likely to have all pupils studying at least one language at Key Stage 3. Quintiles A and B (high FSM), compared to C, D and E (low FSM) produced statistically significant differences in all three year groups, and most significantly in Year 9.

» Schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for FSM are far less likely to have pupils studying at least one language in Year 10, and similarly for Year 11. For both Year 10 and Year 11, the results are extremely statistically significant when quintiles A and B (high FSM) are compared to C, D and E (low FSM), split by the 50 per cent mark for uptake of at least one language. The relationship between the proportion of pupils studying more than one language in Key Stage 4 and the socio-economic profile of the school is extremely statistically significant. Only 97 state school respondents say that more than five per cent of their Key Stage 4 pupils

Table K: Schools' expectations regarding future take up of languages, by Free School Meal quintile, 2016.

	A - High FSM	B	C	D	E - Low FSM	Total
We expect numbers in our school to remain fairly constant	38	52	50	71	102	**313**
We are planning for numbers to increase year on year	53	50	51	51	47	**252**
We expect numbers to fluctuate	19	13	15	14	17	**78**
We expect to see numbers for languages decline in our school	3	4	6	5	6	**24**
Blanks	7	9	12	9	6	**43**
Total	**120**	**128**	**134**	**150**	**178**	**710**

are studying more than one language. Of these 97, sixty-eight are from the two lowest FSM quintiles, quintiles D and E.

In sum, pupils in schools with the highest levels of economic disadvantage are more likely to be withdrawn from lessons in Key Stage 3, more likely to be allowed to drop languages after only two years, less likely to be able to study more than one foreign language, and less likely to take a language to GCSE. This is in addition to our finding in the previous chapter that a shorter time allocation for languages is associated with higher levels of social disadvantage (see *Table K*).

Schools with higher levels of social disadvantage are less likely than other schools to expect their numbers for language to remain constant over the next three years in the light of the government's aspiration as regards 90 per cent participation in languages at GCSE, and of those expecting change, more are expecting increases than declines or fluctuations.

ARE SCHOOLS PLANNING FOR INCREASED TAKE UP OF LANGUAGES IN KEY STAGE 4?

In light of government aspirations for 90 per cent of pupils to take a language to GCSE as part of the EBacc, we asked whether schools are expecting to see numbers rise in Key Stage 4 over the next few years. Although nearly half of state schools (47 per cent) expect numbers to remain fairly constant, over one third (38 per cent) are planning for numbers to increase year on year. Very few expect to see numbers decline further, although 12 per cent expect

Figure 57: Whether schools are expecting increases in take up for languages in future years, state and independent schools, 2016.
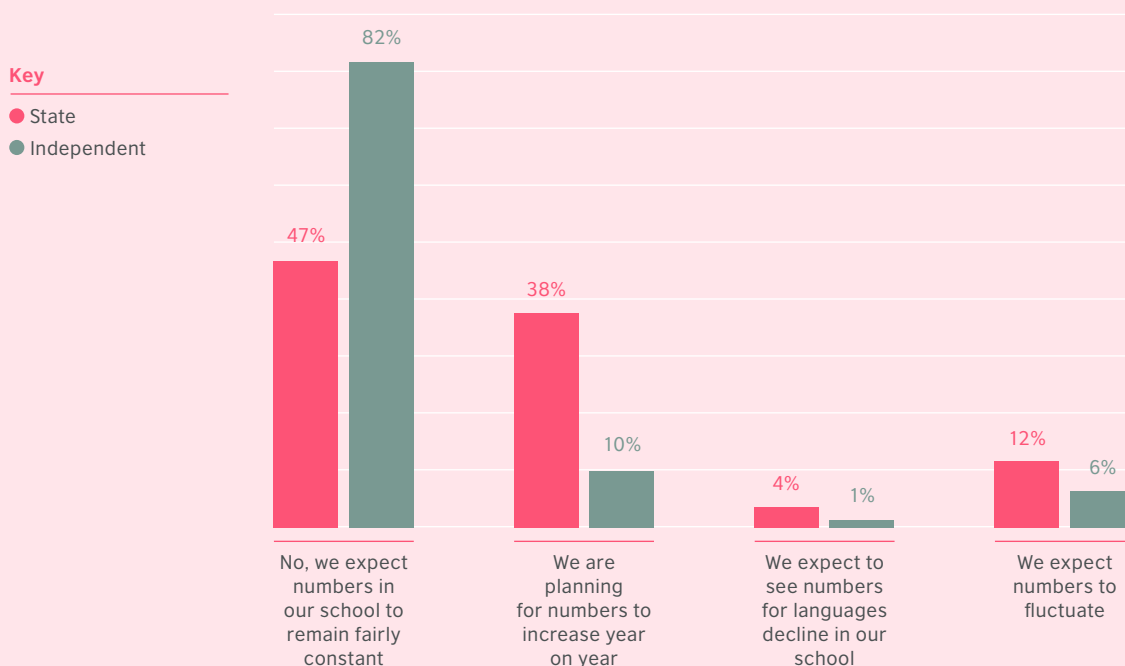
Table L: Expectations regarding future Key Stage 4 take up of languages by existing take up state schools, 2016.

	We expect numbers in our school to remain fairly constant	We are planning for numbers to increase year on year	We expect numbers to fluctuate	We expect to see numbers for languages decline in our school
75% or more	39.9%	10.3%	5.1%	29.2%
Half or more of the cohort, but less than 75%	27.8%	25.4%	23.1%	16.7%
Less than half of the cohort, but more than 25%	21.1%	40.9%	35.9%	16.7%
25% or fewer, but more than 10%	7.0%	15.5%	25.6%	16.7%
10% or fewer	4.2%	7.9%	10.3%	20.8%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

there to be fluctuations from year to year.

We hypothesised that many of those state schools which expected numbers to remain constant might be those which already had high take up, and further analysis of the data confirms this. While three quarters of schools which already have more than 75 per cent of their pupils taking a language expect numbers to remain stable, half of those where less than 50 per cent of the cohort take a language are planning for numbers to increase year on year. The other half do not expect numbers to increase consistently or at all. Where schools already have more than half the cohort taking a language (but less than three quarters) they are more likely to expect numbers to remain stable than to be planning for increases.

These findings are further confirmed in the comments such as the following:

'We have a policy based on the principle that "those that can (cope with studying a foreign language) do" which means that approximately 80 per cent of each cohort continue a language to GCSE level.'

Many respondents make the point that their school prefers to achieve or work towards a high percentage of pupils taking a languages GCSE through encouragement and good teaching rather than compulsion and that they would be reluctant to change this approach:

'We are innovating with the delivery and the introduction of Mandarin Chinese. We will still be encouraging but not compelling the pupils to do a language'.

'If and when the numbers increase it will be due to good teaching and sound pedagogical rationale, not government initiatives.'

'We expect numbers to increase but to around 50 to 60 per cent of cohort not 90 per cent.'

'Unless we are forced to make languages compulsory we would like to continue with our current policy as, on the whole, the pupils enjoy languages and are motivated to do well. We have had good results. If 90 per cent is forced upon us then we will implement the changes straight away.'

Those respondents who expect to see an increase in numbers at GCSE, frequently comment that they expect this increase to happen as a result of improvements at Key Stage 3:

'We are planning curriculum changes to improve provision of a second language in Key Stage 3 which we hope will improve numbers and allow more time for consolidation of the first language.'

'We are planning on changing our Key Stage 3 structure in order for pupils to study one language but really well so as to increase confidence and engagement rather than them doing just three hurried lessons a fortnight.'

'As we increased teaching time in Key Stage 3, we feel most of our pupils are better prepared for GCSE study than their predecessors, who had to learn two languages in the time we now devote to one.'

Those who are not so optimistic about the future of languages comment that they expect numbers to fluctuate or decline in the future for the following reasons:

'That target has already been met in our school. If anything, we would anticipate numbers to fall in the future though. The new GCSE specification is much more demanding, and imposed target grades for pupils are very ambitious.'

'There is a focus on raising attainment at core subjects to the detriment of languages.'

Responses from the independent sector paint a different picture since the majority already achieve or exceed government targets for pupils taking a language at GCSE. The small number of respondents from independent schools who expect numbers

taking a GCSE at languages to decrease in future say:

'I do think though that fewer pupils will be drawn to languages in post-Brexit Britain.'

'The new GCSE is difficult and many may be put off, particularly those taking a second language.'

'Strong competition with other subjects at Key Stages 4 and 5. Languages are perceived as more demanding on pupils' time and more effort than other subjects.'

POST-16

What changes have schools experienced in take up for languages post-16?

Schools were asked to indicate whether, over the past three years, numbers for languages post-16 have increased, decreased or remained stable. They were also able to indicate whether language subjects have been withdrawn or new ones introduced.

Changes in the overall numbers of pupils taking a language post-16

While 40 to 42 per cent of schools report no significant change in take up for languages post-16, the overwhelming majority of the remainder report decreases in numbers leading, in 14 per cent of state schools, to subjects being dropped by the school. However, a small number of both state and independent schools report increases in numbers, and even, in the state sector, new language subjects

are being introduced. These increases may be as a result of languages being withdrawn in certain schools and provision becoming concentrated in a small number of hub schools offering courses to individual pupils from across a wide catchment area. Two of this year's respondents comment on the unsatisfactory nature of this arrangement:

'Minimum numbers are required to make running a post-16 course viable for funding. This is disastrous for us, so no A-level French in Year 12 this year. We have had to go to a consortium model, but even with four schools we can't get high enough numbers.'
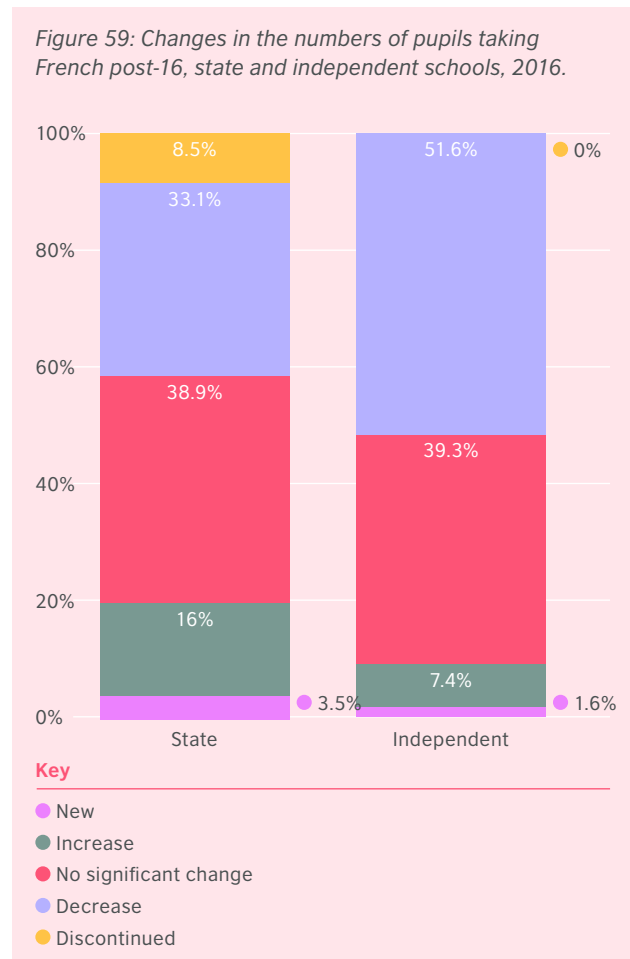
'Shared provision with another Sixth Form College 30 miles away. Teaching is shared so pupils take a taxi to the other place and vice versa.'

Figures 59 – 61 show which languages have been most affected and where.

French

Drops in pupil numbers for French AS and A-level have affected both sectors, but have been particularly severe in the independent sector, with more than half (52 per cent) of independent schools reporting falling numbers.

Respondents comment that French is becoming less popular and that they struggle to recruit enough pupils to run courses:

Figure 58: Changes in the overall numbers of pupils taking a language post-16, state and independent schools, 2016.

Key
- New
- Increase
- No significant change
- Decrease
- Discontinued

Figure 59: Changes in the numbers of pupils taking French post-16, state and independent schools, 2016.

Key
- New
- Increase
- No significant change
- Decrease
- Discontinued
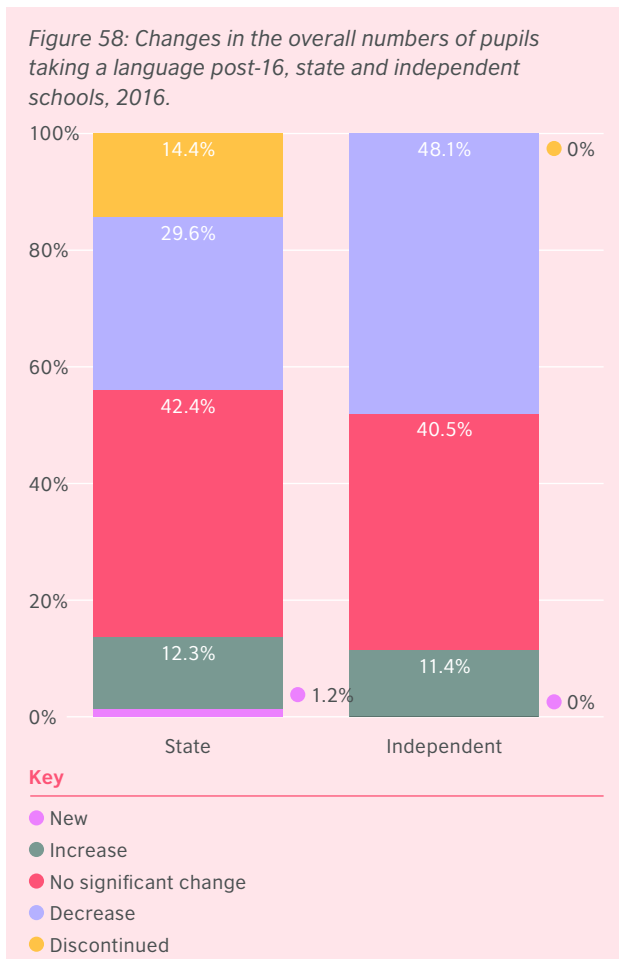
'French is not as popular at GCSE, so numbers have tailed off post-16.'

'We have been told that we will not be able to continue with A-Level languages if we don't recruit at least ten pupils. This puts French and German in danger for 2017-18.'

'During the last five years, we have not had sufficient pupil take up of French to run a French A-level course, other than every two years. Some of our most academic pupils go to local grammar schools in the Sixth Form. French is considered a harder A-level and pupils do not want to run the risk of lower grades. It remains to be seen whether we will have better success with Spanish A-level which started in Year 12 this year with a cohort of eight pupils.'

German

The impact of the decline in numbers for German post-16 has been even more severe than it has for French in that it has led to more schools dropping the subject. Nearly one in five state schools which previously offered the subject report that German has been discontinued at AS/A-level, and another 28 per cent report declines in numbers. In independent schools, the decline in German has been less extreme than that for French, but nonetheless it is a significant concern for the UK's language capability.

Despite the gloomy national picture, some respondents comment that efforts to reverse the decline in numbers for German are bearing fruit:
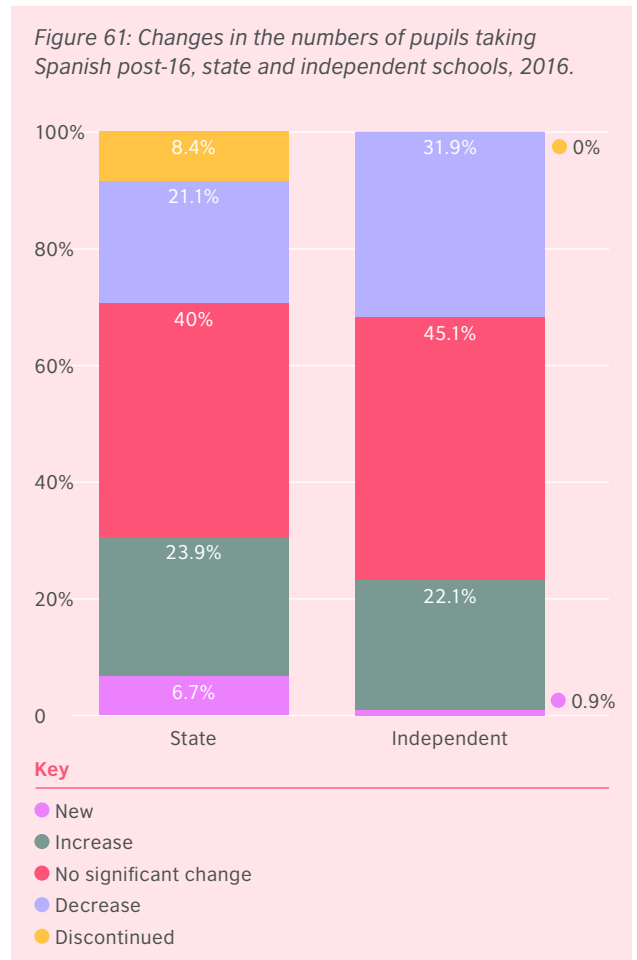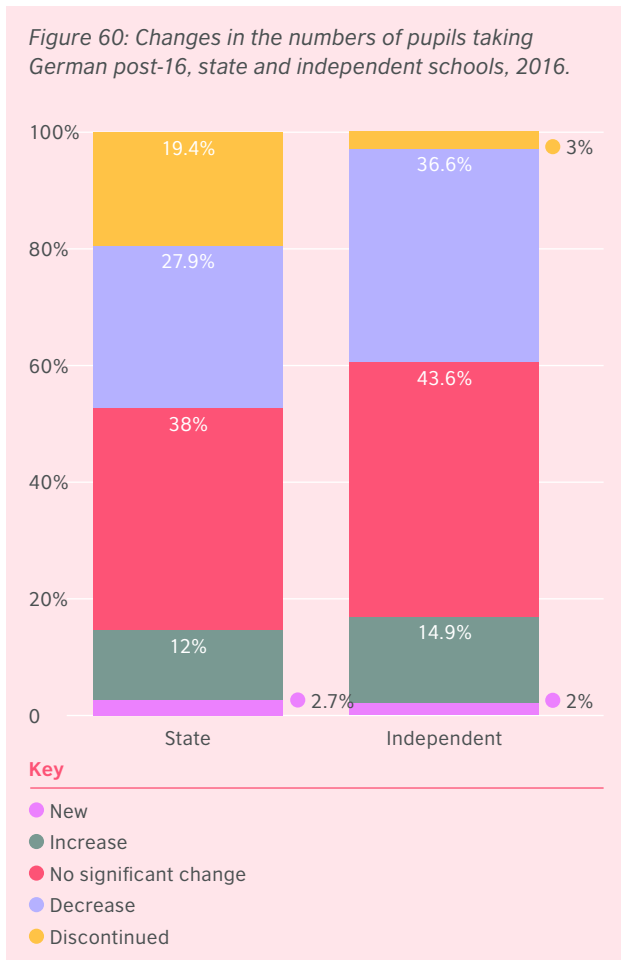
'An accelerated group introduced six years ago produced a talented, motivated GCSE group, six of whom carried on to A-level. This followed a number of years with no A-level German pupils.'

'Better teaching at Key Stage 4 German has resulted in a higher uptake from boys in Key Stage 5.'

'Fewer pupils in French lower down the school means only two pupils at AS level this year. We have seen a big increase in German – 17 at AS level last year. Reason: good teaching.'

Spanish

Spanish is the only language where the proportions of schools seeing an increase in pupil numbers come anywhere near balancing those where numbers are declining. In the state sector, the number of schools which have discontinued the language or seen decreases in numbers, subtracted from those which have introduced the subject or increased numbers, gives a net impact of plus one per cent. However, nearly a third of independent schools have seen declines for Spanish at post-16, while just under a quarter have seen increases.

Figure 60: Changes in the numbers of pupils taking German post-16, state and independent schools, 2016.

Key
- New
- Increase
- No significant change
- Decrease
- Discontinued

Figure 61: Changes in the numbers of pupils taking Spanish post-16, state and independent schools, 2016.

Key
- New
- Increase
- No significant change
- Decrease
- Discontinued

Table M: Numbers of schools reporting changes in pupil numbers for lesser-taught languages post-16, state and independent schools, 2016.

	New		Increase		Decrease	
	Independent	State	Independent	State	Independent	State
Arabic	3	5	3	2	1	1
Italian	3	4	8	7	9	3
Japanese	1	1	2	1	1	0
Chinese	5	2	10	2	5	2
Russian	0	2	4	2	5	3
Urdu	0	2	0	4	1	5
Latin	1	4	3	1	12	7

Respondents' comments on Spanish at post-16 confirm that although it is the healthiest of the three main languages, there is no room for complacency:

'Spanish has been offered for the first time at Key Stage 5 as this has now rolled through from Key Stages 3 and 4.'

'In Spanish, numbers are now very high due to excellent GCSE results and new excellent teachers in the department who took the pupils in Year 10 and 11.'

'Spanish was popular this year as a fourth AS Subject. Insufficient pupils voiced an interest in continuing with French so it has not been offered to Year 12. We are concerned that Spanish will decline with pupils only having the option of studying three subjects next year.'

The situation for the three languages in both sectors is summed up in this comment from an independent school respondent:

'The number of pupils choosing to study a language at A-Level has shifted from French and German into Spanish. However, because of the curriculum model adopted by the school, which only allows pupils to choose three A-Levels in Year 12, the number of pupils choosing a language at A-Level has dropped significantly. Recruitment for German is so low that we may need to consider whether it is viable to teach this in the future.'

Other languages

Where other languages are concerned, changes cannot be reported in percentages because of the small numbers of schools involved. However, raw figures show a very strong overall pattern of declining numbers in all languages in both sectors except for Chinese in the independent sector. It was noted in the previous survey that this is a result of increases in Chinese native speaker pupils in the sector, although we have no comments to corroborate that in this year's survey. Italian is managing to hold its own in the independent sector as a result of three schools introducing it as a new language and others reporting that numbers have increased.

Changes in the numbers of pupils taking more than one language post-16

Underlying the declines in numbers taking individual languages at post-16 is a tendency for fewer pupils to study more than one language at this level. This is no longer even a possibility in 15 per cent of state schools and more than a third of independent schools have seen reductions in the number of dual linguists in the Sixth Form. The reasons for this are the decline in numbers taking two languages further down the school (especially in the state sector), the increasing tendency to take three rather than four subjects post-16, and the risk of poor grades:

'Double linguists are in decline as A-level languages are perceived as more difficult to get top grades and, so two languages can affect university choices'.

'Fewer pupils took two languages at GCSE last year and the drop in German results at GCSE in 2016 meant pupils just chose one language when they had been considering two.'

'Languages are seen as hard, with lower exam results compared to other subjects. There are no longer any dual linguists at Key Stage 4 wanting to continue to study at Key Stage 5.'

"IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS, THE DECLINE IN GERMAN HAS BEEN LESS EXTREME THAN THAT FOR FRENCH, BUT NONETHELESS IT IS A SIGNIFICANT CONCERN FOR THE UK'S LANGUAGE CAPABILITY."

Figure 62: Proportions of schools reporting changes in the numbers of pupils taking more than one language post-16, state and independent schools, 2016.

Key
- ● New
- ● Increase
- ● No significant change
- ● Decrease
- ● Discontinued
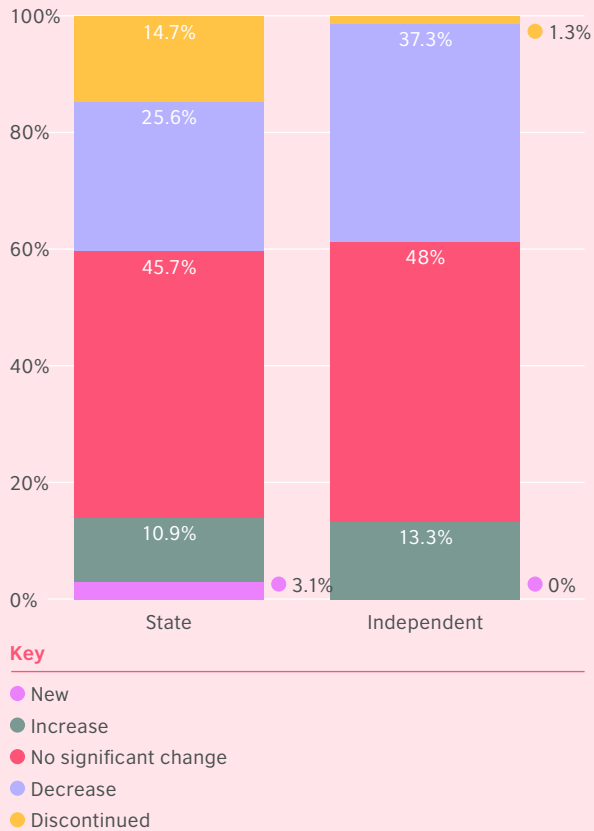
Where schools have seen increased numbers for languages in Key Stage 4, has this also resulted in increases post-16?

There were 240 state schools in this year's survey that had experienced recent increases in take up for languages at GCSE. Of these, 13 per cent of schools say that this has spilled over into improved take up post-16, but nearly half (48 per cent) say this is not the case. The rest, 39 per cent, say it is too early to judge. *Figure 63*, comparing the same responses from previous years' surveys, shows that the proportion of schools that identify a positive impact has gone down over a four-year period. The proportion of schools that say there has been no impact has declined considerably since last year's high of 61 per cent, but it is nonetheless higher than the two previous years. In the latest survey, it appears that teachers are more inclined to 'wait and see' than to say definitively that there has been no impact.

The great majority of respondents in both the state and independent sectors provide qualitative evidence of a decline in numbers for both Key Stage 4 and post-16. Two respondents who sum up the comments by many of their peers state the following:

'Many pupils with A/A* GCSE grades still refuse to opt for Key Stage 5 languages, opting instead for traditional subjects like English, history, maths or sciences, always citing that languages are just too hard at A-level.'

'We struggle to keep our best linguists as they wish to become doctors and require the sciences at A-level. The introduction of the new A-level, reducing options to three subjects, has affected us all – removing languages as the fourth option which previously they would have chosen as a subject they enjoyed, as opposed to a subject they needed.'

Figure 63: Whether increases in take up at Key Stage 4 have also improved take up post-16, state schools that have increased take up for GCSE, 2013-2016.

Key
- ● Yes
- ● No
- ● Too early to say
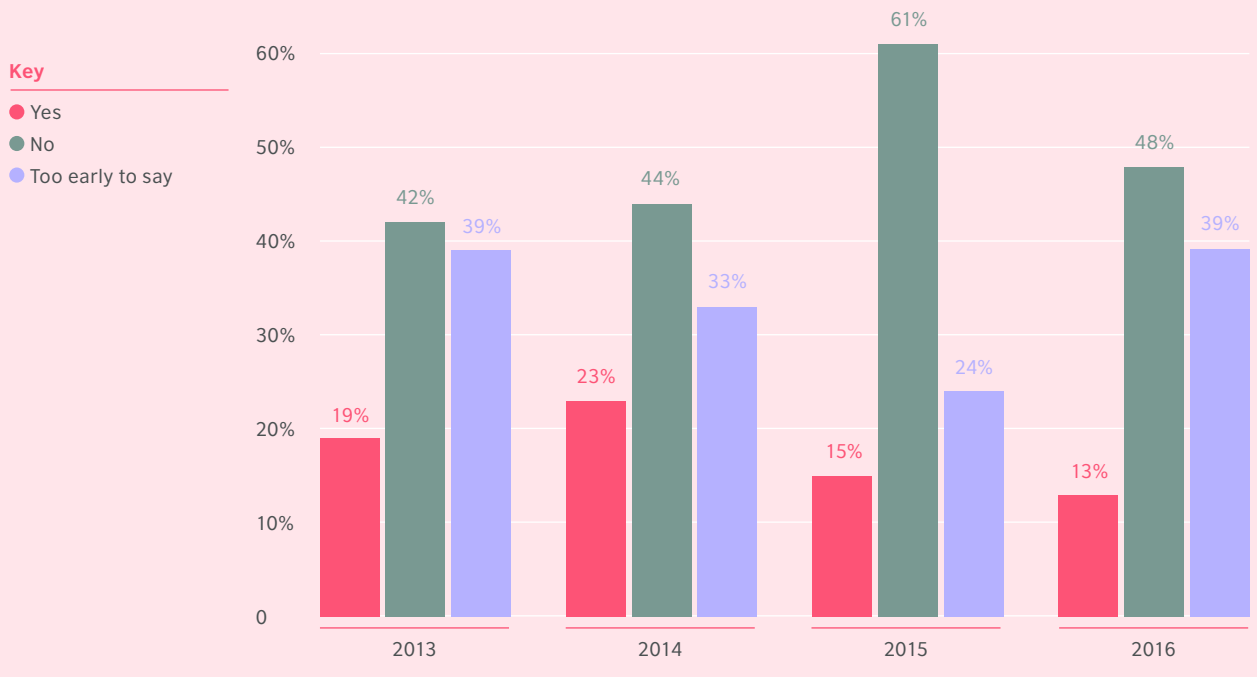
Very few respondents (found only in the state sector) comment on increases in post-16 pupils for languages in their schools:

'*Spanish is very popular and has been taught to the top half (ability wise) of the school as a dual language for the past five years. This has been followed by a significant increase at Key Stage 5.*'

'*The Sixth Form Colleges that we feed into have good numbers selecting a language A-Level from the groups we teach.*'

'*Setting and trips have increased uptake post-16.*'

Please see chapter nine for further discussion of post-16 issues.

KEY POINTS

»   The move to a three-year GCSE course in an increasing number of schools is designed to provide a basis for more pupils to take the subject in the expectation of achieving good grades. However, it has a negative impact for pupils who do not continue as it means that these pupils are being deprived of one third of their statutory language time at Key Stage 3. Schools show a clear tendency over the past few years towards increasing exclusion of pupils from language learning at the beginning of Year 9 onwards – 29 per cent of state schools now allow all or groups of pupils to drop languages after only two years.

»   Disapplication continues to be widespread for particular groups of pupils in Key Stage 3 who are taken out of languages in order to do more literacy, maths or EAL. Given budget and staffing constraints, these pupils are sometimes put back into the languages classes in Years 8 and 9.

»   In the light of an increased government emphasis on the EBacc, over one third of state schools (38 per cent) expect numbers for languages to increase year on year.

»   Where schools have increased numbers for languages at GCSE, these are more likely to have been middle or higher ability pupils. Lower ability pupils in both sectors are less likely than in the past to be taking a language to GCSE. However, the focus on Pupil Premium and Higher Ability Pupil Premium children in the state sector has had some impact in increasing numbers of these pupils taking a language to GCSE.

»   Schools with higher educational attainment overall are more likely to have higher numbers studying languages.

»   Schools prefer encouragement and development of good teaching rather than compulsion as a way of increasing take up.

»   There has been a significant decline, in both sectors, in the numbers of pupils studying more than one language. In the independent sector, 45 per cent of schools report declines in the number of dual

> "THE COMPARATIVE DIFFICULTY OF A-LEVEL EXAMS IN LANGUAGES, UNSATISFACTORY MARKING OR GRADING, AND FINANCIAL PRESSURES ON SCHOOLS MEAN THAT SMALL GROUPS ARE INCREASINGLY UNVIABLE. "

linguists at GCSE and in the state sector, 37 per cent. This has a knock-on effect on the numbers studying two languages at AS/A-level.

»   There is a serious level of social inequality in access to language learning. Pupils in schools with the highest levels of economic disadvantage are more likely to be withdrawn from lessons in Key Stage 3, more likely to be allowed to drop languages after only two years, less likely to be able to study more than one foreign language, and less likely to take a language to GCSE. However, there is some evidence that economically-disadvantaged schools are more likely to be expecting numbers for languages to increase in future. In Key Stage 3, a shorter time allocation for languages is associated with higher levels of social disadvantage.

»   Numbers for languages at post-16 continue to decline sharply in both sectors, for the same reasons identified in previous years: the comparative difficulty of A-level exams in languages, unsatisfactory marking or grading, and financial pressures on schools mean that small groups are increasingly unviable. Added to this, this year's survey has identified a movement towards structuring the Sixth Form curriculum around three, rather than four A-level subjects, with languages often being the subject which is squeezed out.

»   The EBacc policy is not having any notable impact on take up for languages at A-level. Only a small minority (13 per cent) of those schools where numbers for languages have increased at GCSE say that this has also improved take up for languages post-16.

26.   Language Trends 2015/16, p. 89.
27.   http://www.all-london.org.uk/archive/severe_grading.htm [accessed 8/6/2017]

CHAPTER 8
LANGUAGE TEACHER SUPPLY AND TRAINING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

This chapter looks at the opportunities language teachers have for Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and at questions of teacher supply and retention in languages. We also consider the role of language assistants in supporting the development of pupils' language skills and interest in the subject.

CPD

What level of involvement do teachers have in CPD for languages?

The quantitative responses to this question presented below are discussed in comparison to findings from the 2015 survey, with state and independent schools shown separately.

State schools

Once again, internally-organised CPD remains the most frequent source of professional development for language teachers and the form of CPD which involves most members of the department, most often. However, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of schools saying that they 'never' undertake this type of CPD, from ten to 14 per cent. Slightly more than half of state schools now say that Teaching Schools Alliances are a factor in providing CPD for language teachers, up from 45 per cent in 2015. The internet as a source of professional development is also increasing in popularity. The use of online courses and webinars is up by six per cent compared to 2015, and online forums/social media by a modest two per cent. Local authorities and universities are playing less of a role, down six per cent and ten per cent respectively. Six schools in the sample (including one independent school) say that they never take part in any form of CPD for languages. These schools are geographically dispersed and represent a diverse spread of

Figure 64: Types, extent and frequency of CPD undertaken by language teachers, state schools, multiple responses permitted (percentages rounded for clarity of presentation), 2016.
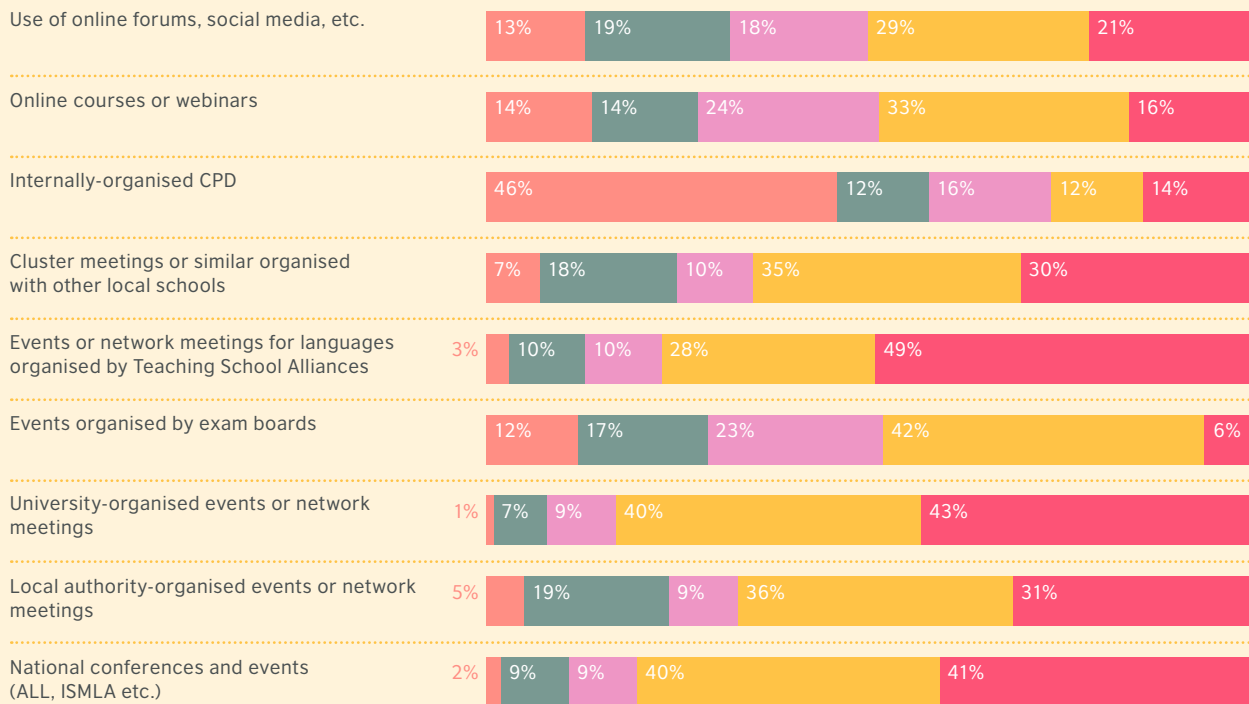
Key
- Regular involvement – most members of dept
- Regular involvement – some members of dept
- Occasional involvement – most members of dept
- Occasional involvement – some members of dept
- None

circumstances in relation to academy status, attainment, deprivation and proportions of pupils with EAL.

Comments from state sector respondents on their experiences of CPD include the following:

Externally-provided CPD

'We encourage all faculty members to attend different types of CPD and share in faculty development time.'

'Princes Teaching Institute is the best provider for subject knowledge CPD. We are involved as a department with them and attend some CPD which boosts our knowledge and provides a wealth of ideas that other CPD does not.'

Online CPD

'Much of our CPD is online these days, which is positive. Twitter and various blogs regularly provide us with inspiration and discussion points. I would bemoan the fracture of local authority networks due to the academisation of the local area. I have worked in areas before with local clusters and I have found this to be very useful.'

'We are regular users of MFL Secondary Matters on Facebook.'

Cluster meetings

'Cluster meetings or similar organised with other local schools and headed by an independent languages advisor who used to work for our local education authority.'

'Strong links exist between our link schools abroad and staff maintain these, with visits to our partner schools. We always consider this good CPD and used to be involved in yearly Comenius projects to sustain and build our partnerships. Now the funding has been reduced these are harder to sustain.'

However, the majority of respondents who comment say that time and funding constraints mean that there is little or no opportunity for subject specific CPD or the chance to share experiences with peers working in other schools:

'Due to budget cuts, financial restrictions and cover costs, places on external courses are severely restricted.'

'We do what we can in our own time but there is no funding for CPD. We have very heavy teaching loads and we are under a lot of pressure. Funding is dire and the school has a targeted agenda of whole school development which leaves little time for subject based CPD.'

'I wish we could do more but our school believes that "courses are not the only way" and that we need to prioritise in-school CPD.'

No state school respondents mention exam board training in their free text responses.

Independent schools

As may be expected, independent schools report a much lower level of involvement for training purposes with local authorities and Teaching School Alliances than state schools do – only a little over a third of independent schools in each case. They also tend to be less involved in cluster meetings with local schools, though more than half do have occasional involvement. However, independent schools have a much greater level of involvement with universities (more than three quarters, compared to just over half of state schools), they are more assiduous in their take up of exam board training for languages, more regular attendees at national events for languages and, as identified in last year's survey, they tend to make greater use of the internet for languages CPD. In both the independent and state sectors, the use of the internet for this purpose has increased in the last year. (See *Figure 65*).

Independent school respondents provide no qualitative evidence of time or financial constraints on CPD. On the contrary, the comments received indicate active and frequent participation in CPD, for example:

'Our department is eager to learn and to be aware of everything that is going on in languages. We always attend every single meeting or CPD event that is useful for us.'

'Members of the department regularly attend INSET, e.g. meetings organised by exam boards or by private national providers.'

TEACHER SUPPLY AND RETENTION

What is the situation regarding teacher supply and retention in languages?

Respondents were asked to select, from a four-point scaled menu of descriptors, the option which best describes the circumstances in their school. Over two thirds of independent schools and over half of state schools report no problems with the supply of high quality teachers, for example:

'We are lucky that we are an 'outstanding' school and recruitment of high-quality teachers has not been difficult. We are a strong team and we achieve very good results.'

'No problems at present though supply and maternity cover is very hard to come by.'

However, 29 per cent of independent schools and 30 per cent of state schools report difficulties in the supply or retention of high-quality teachers in some languages. Comments from respondents to our survey show that this issue affects both Spanish and German, and where two languages are required:

'We have two non-specialists currently teaching the Spanish GCSE (both are specialist French teachers).'
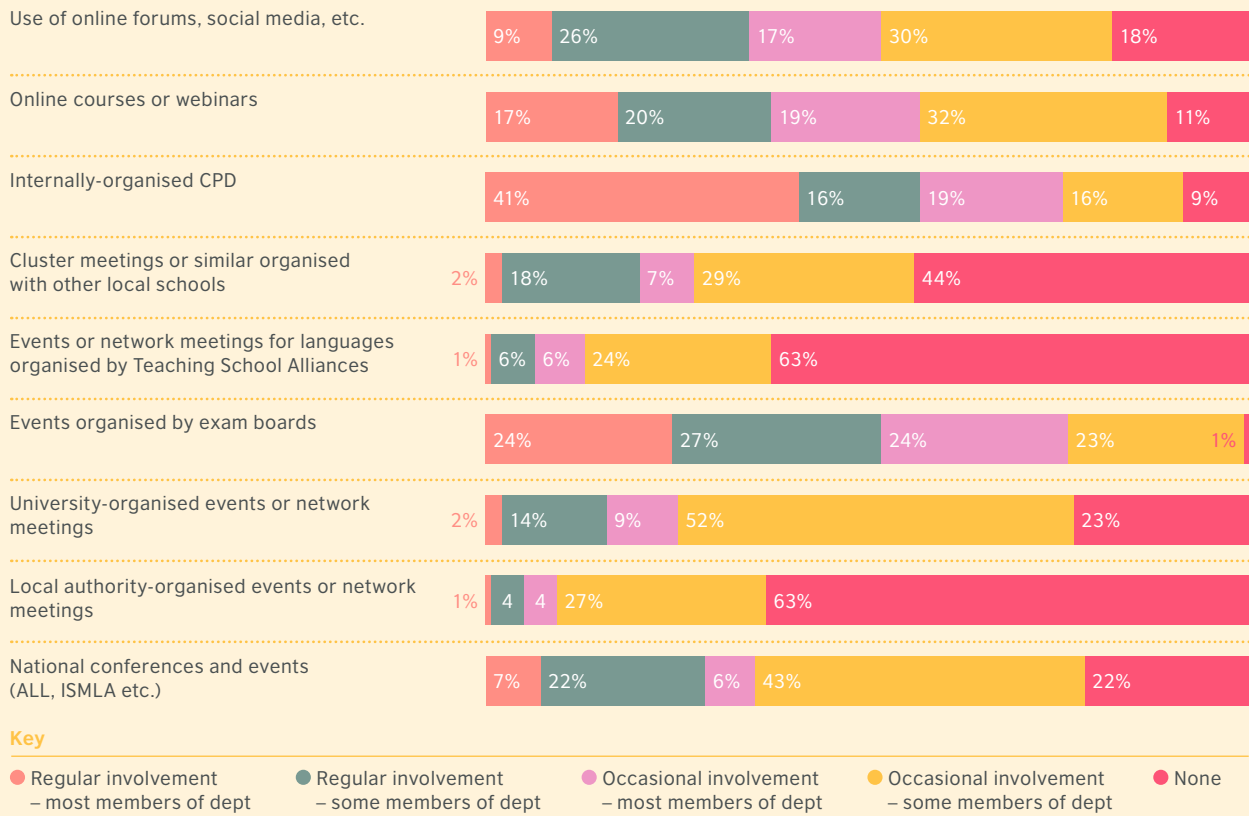
'We lost two teachers last year and it was very hard

Figure 65: Types, extent and frequency of CPD undertaken by language teachers, independent schools, multiple responses permitted (percentages rounded for clarity of presentation), 2016.

	Regular involvement – most members of dept	Regular involvement – some members of dept	Occasional involvement – most members of dept	Occasional involvement – some members of dept	None
Use of online forums, social media, etc.	9%	26%	17%	30%	18%
Online courses or webinars	17%	20%	19%	32%	11%
Internally-organised CPD	41%	16%	19%	16%	9%
Cluster meetings or similar organised with other local schools	2%	18%	7%	29%	44%
Events or network meetings for languages organised by Teaching School Alliances	1%	6%	6%	24%	63%
Events organised by exam boards	24%	27%	24%	23%	1%
University-organised events or network meetings	2%	14%	9%	52%	23%
Local authority-organised events or network meetings	1%	4	4	27%	63%
National conferences and events (ALL, ISMLA etc.)	7%	22%	6%	43%	22%

Key

- Regular involvement – most members of dept
- Regular involvement – some members of dept
- Occasional involvement – most members of dept
- Occasional involvement – some members of dept
- None

to recruit high-quality replacements. It is hard to find staff who can teach two languages up to GCSE and almost impossible to find staff who can do two languages to A-level. This has timetabling implications and less flexibility within the department.'

'We consistently had problems finding good German teachers, which is partly why German has been dropped from the curriculum.'

More serious teacher supply problems in languages are affecting 13 per cent of state schools and four per cent of independent schools:

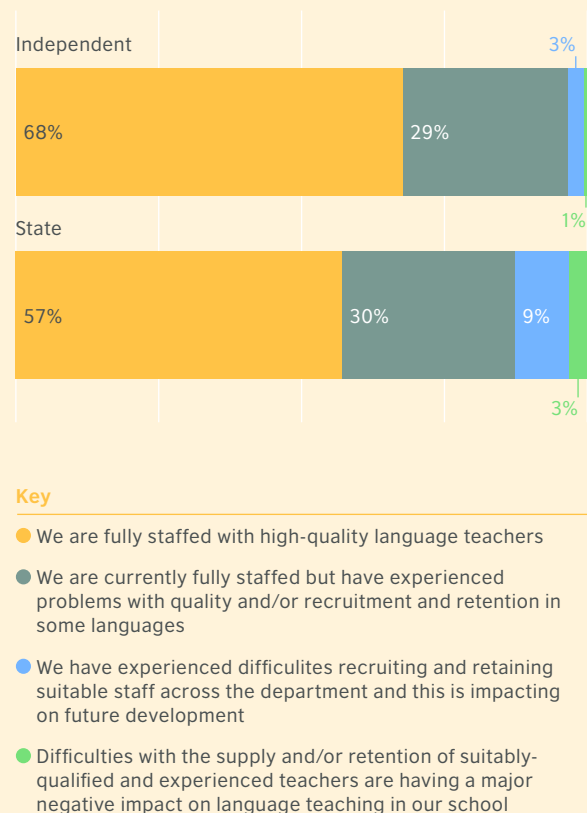'Finding staff who can teach A-A* GCSE and A-level has proven to be VERY difficult. We had gaps for two years.'

'This is a major issue for us. 50 per cent of the department is on long-term supply,'

There is also evidence of concern about the future supply of language teachers:

'The stigmatising of EU migrants in the media is not going to help recruitment, and languages sections at universities are closing down, so I am extremely worried about future recruitment.'

'The dearth of language graduates willing to go into teaching is beginning to bite. Anecdotally, there is seldom a spread of candidates from which to choose when vacancies come about.'

Figure 66: Teacher supply and retention in languages, state and independent schools, 2016.

Independent	68%	29%	3% / 1%
State	57%	30%	9% / 3%

Key

- We are fully staffed with high-quality language teachers
- We are currently fully staffed but have experienced problems with quality and/or recruitment and retention in some languages
- We have experienced difficulites recruiting and retaining suitable staff across the department and this is impacting on future development
- Difficulties with the supply and/or retention of suitably-qualified and experienced teachers are having a major negative impact on language teaching in our school

Which types of schools are experiencing most difficulties with teacher supply and retention (state schools only)?

In order to answer this question, we split the four-point scale into schools which say they are fully-staffed in languages (answers one and two) and those that are having difficulties (answers three and four), and analysed them by socio-economic disadvantage (FSM) and by educational attainment.

Socio-economic disadvantage

In terms of socio-economic disadvantage, the FSM quintile that has the most difficulty with supply and retention is quintile B – the second highest. This is statistically significantly different from the average; however, the general trend is that schools with lower FSM have less difficulty with teacher supply and retention. This reflects a general trend across all subjects in relation to social disadvantage.[28] One reason why quintile A appears to have slightly less difficultly than quintile B might be that schemes such as Teach First specifically target schools in low-income areas in their placement of trainees and quintile A could be receiving more interventions in this area.

Table N: Difficulties with supply and retention of language teachers, by socio-economic disadvantage, state schools, 2016.

	Experiencing difficulties	Fully staffed
A (high FSM)	18.9%	81.1%
B	20.2%	79.8%
C	13.9%	86.1%
D	8.7%	91.3%
E	6%	94%
All schools	12.8%	87.2%

Educational attainment

Schools with higher attainment are less likely to experience difficulties with the supply and recruitment of language teachers: 20 per cent of schools in the lowest-attainment quintile are not fully staffed and have reported difficulties, in comparison to seven to eight per cent the highest-attainment quintile. This is statistically significant. However, the direction of this relationship is not clear: schools with lower attainment may struggle to attract teachers, and this may also therefore affect attainment.

Table O: Difficulties with supply and recruitment of language teachers, by educational attainment, state schools, 2016.

	Experiencing difficulties	Fully staffed
A (high attainment)	7.5%	92.5%
B	7.5%	92.5%
C	11.7%	88.3%
D	20.2%	79.8%
E	20.4%	79.6%
All schools	12.8%	87.2%

Given that the profile of our survey respondents is slightly skewed towards higher-attaining and less disadvantaged schools, it is likely that our findings may underestimate the extent to which schools nationally are experiencing teacher supply and retention difficulties in languages.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS

Do schools employ language assistants?

This question was designed to explore the role of Language Assistants recruited from abroad through the British Council's programme and other native speakers who are employed by schools to assist with language teaching.[29]

The survey found a substantial difference between state and independent schools in terms of current practice. While 72 per cent of state schools and 78 per cent of independent schools have experience of hosting language assistants, more than half of the state schools which previously employed one or more language assistants no longer do so. This means that while nearly three quarters of independent schools provide these additional learning opportunities for pupils, only one third of state schools do so.

The principal reason why schools report that they no longer host language assistants is the result of financial constraints and cuts to school budgets. A sample of responses received are as follows:

'We do not have the funds for a language assistant now, which we would love to have as they have helped immensely.'

'They were usually shared due to the cost, so became hard to place them where you wanted them in the timetable. In the end there was little impact so we had to save the cost.'

'The school used to have four language assistants but we have not been able to have any for the past two years due to lack of funding. The school can't afford to pay for them which has been a massive blow to the department as they were a fantastic asset and made a big difference in the pupils' speaking skills.'
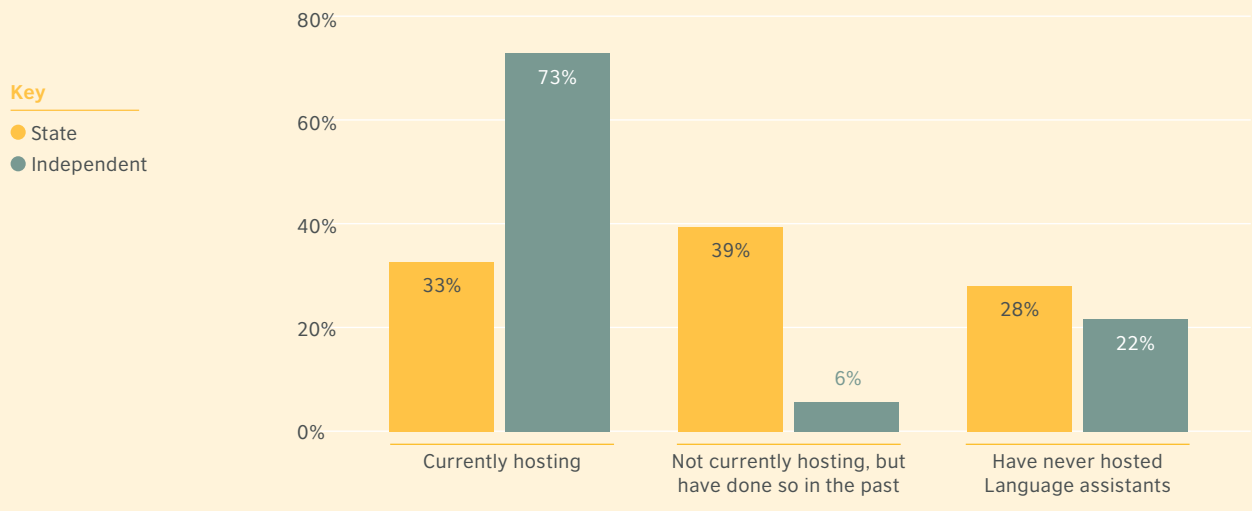
Figure 67: Whether schools host, or have ever hosted, Language assistants, state and independent schools, 2016.

Key
● State
● Independent

Do schools regard language assistants as beneficial?

Schools with experience of hosting language assistants, either currently or previously, were asked to rate their impact on various matters including skills, enthusiasm and take up. *Figure 68* show substantial disparity between independent and state schools, explicable by the higher proportion of state schools no longer hosting assistants which answered the question. Nonetheless, the impacts recorded are impressive in range as well as in intensity.

Seventy per cent of independent schools and 47 per cent of state schools say that language assistants have a high impact on pupils' confidence in using the language. Teachers in both sectors agree that their highest impact is on listening and speaking skills (62 per cent and 46 per cent respectively). Large proportions of schools also say that language assistants have a high impact on extending pupils' vocabulary and general understanding of the language as well as on the cultural awareness of the pupils concerned. Just under one third of schools (in both sectors) also identify high impact in terms of cultural awareness within the wider school. More than half of independent schools say that language assistants have a high impact on enthusiasm and motivation for language learning and, although this figure drops to 37 per cent in state schools, almost all responding state schools say that language assistants have at least some impact on pupils' enthusiasm and motivation. Independent schools are much more likely than state schools to note a high impact on exam grades but again, very few schools in either sector say that language assistants have no impact at all in this area. It is significant that the area where language assistants are deemed to have the least impact is on take up. Large proportions of schools in both sectors say they have no impact at all in this area. This is significant, since the areas where they are deemed to have a significant impact – pupil confidence and general grasp of the language – are being seen as the key to boosting take up.[30]

Many respondents to this year's survey comment on the value of having a native-speaking language assistant working as part of the school's languages department. A sample of the comments received are as follows:

'Our language assistants are always being asked to produce exemplar materials and model answers for our pupils at GCSE and A-level. They add real value to language teaching and learning.'

'The language assistants provide very valuable support and particularly support strong speaking skills.'

'My concern about the loss of our language assistants links to the future availability of language teachers in Britain. As a French native, I came to Britain as a Language Assistant 20 years ago and I am now Head of Languages and Assistant Principal in the same school. Paired up with a Brexit, which is likely to reduce the number of people interested in becoming languages teachers in Britain, I am very concerned about future staffing.'

'We couldn't go on without them. Due to the limited amount of lesson time, their input during the lessons and lunch/after school sessions is invaluable.'

Other respondents comment that the impact of their language assistants is particularly high in Key Stage 5, where they are predominantly used. Many of the same respondents also comment that the role of the language assistant is more limited and therefore less effective in other Key Stages, for example:

'We use our language assistant primarily for the Sixth Form, so the impact lower down the school is limited.' (independent)

'They are very effective with Key Stage 5 pupils in small groups working on grammar as well as cultural areas and confidence in speaking.' (state)

Some respondents make the point that the value of language assistants depends very much on the individual and how well or not they are suited to the

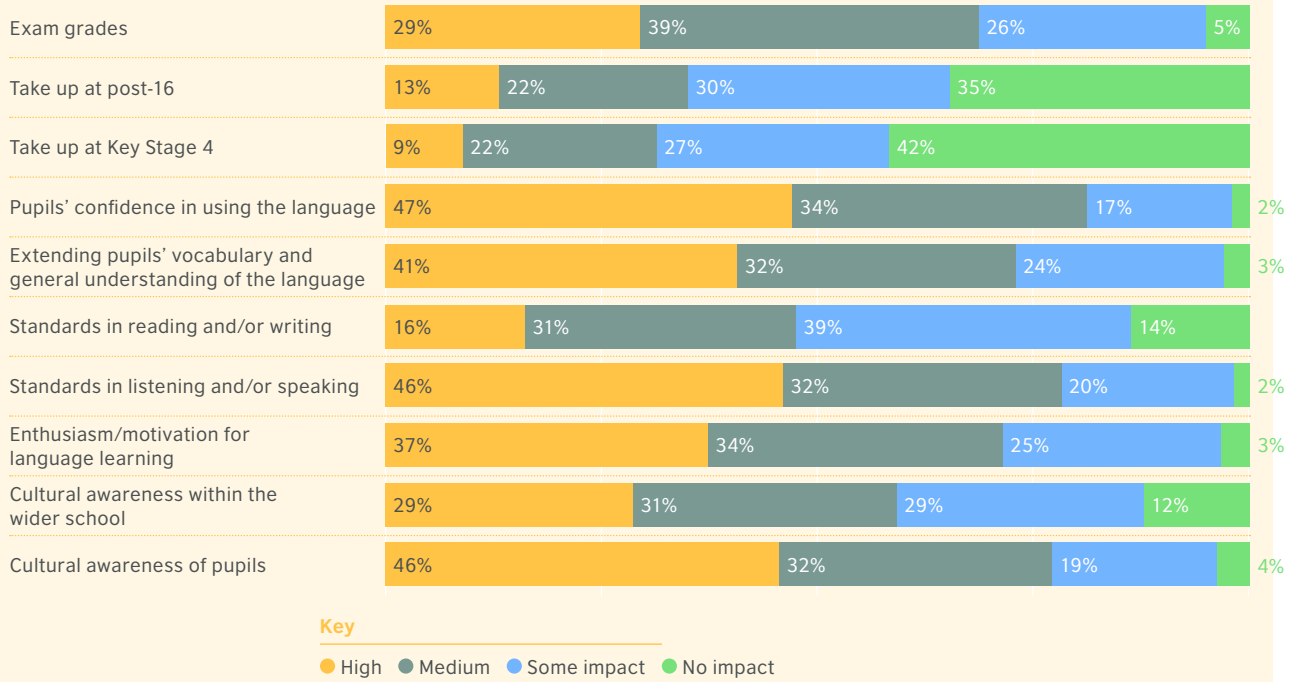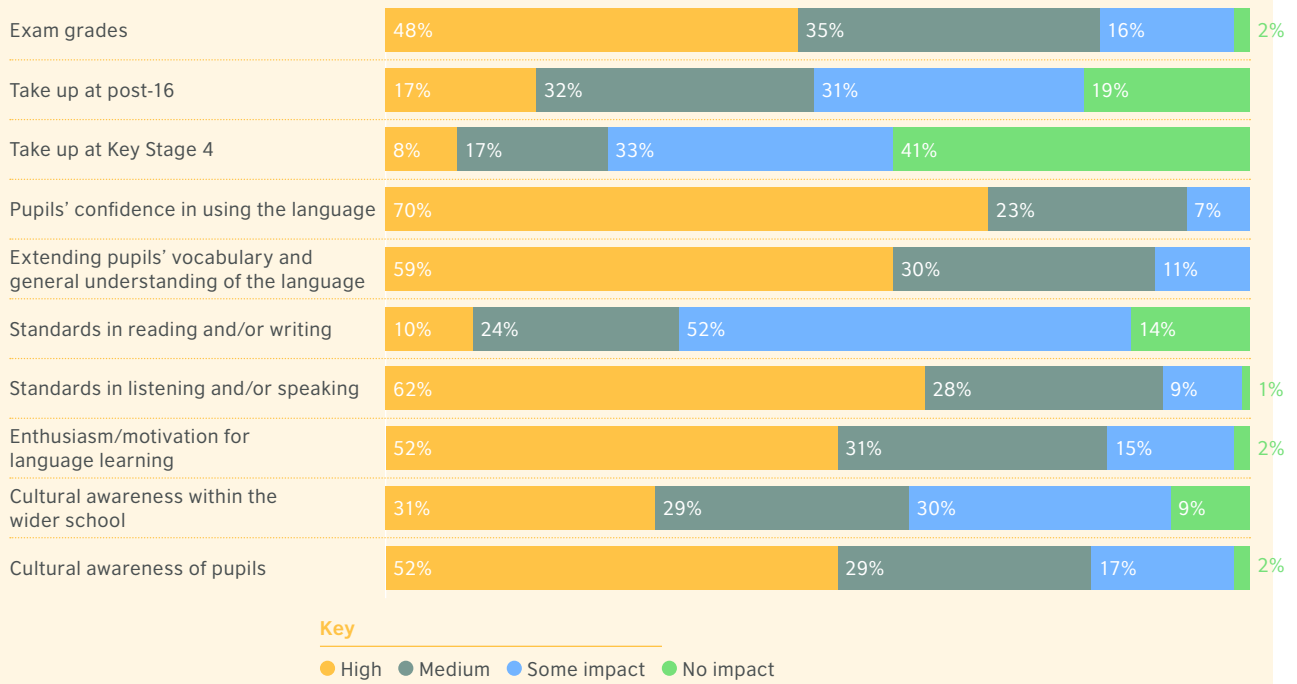Figure 68: Impact of language assistants, state schools, 2016.

	High	Medium	Some impact	No impact
Exam grades	29%	39%	26%	5%
Take up at post-16	13%	22%	30%	35%
Take up at Key Stage 4	9%	22%	27%	42%
Pupils' confidence in using the language	47%	34%	17%	2%
Extending pupils' vocabulary and general understanding of the language	41%	32%	24%	3%
Standards in reading and/or writing	16%	31%	39%	14%
Standards in listening and/or speaking	46%	32%	20%	2%
Enthusiasm/motivation for language learning	37%	34%	25%	3%
Cultural awareness within the wider school	29%	31%	29%	12%
Cultural awareness of pupils	46%	32%	19%	4%

Key
● High ● Medium ● Some impact ● No impact

Figure 69: Impact of language assistants, independent schools, 2016.

	High	Medium	Some impact	No impact
Exam grades	48%	35%	16%	2%
Take up at post-16	17%	32%	31%	19%
Take up at Key Stage 4	8%	17%	33%	41%
Pupils' confidence in using the language	70%	23%	7%	
Extending pupils' vocabulary and general understanding of the language	59%	30%	11%	
Standards in reading and/or writing	10%	24%	52%	14%
Standards in listening and/or speaking	62%	28%	9%	1%
Enthusiasm/motivation for language learning	52%	31%	15%	2%
Cultural awareness within the wider school	31%	29%	30%	9%
Cultural awareness of pupils	52%	29%	17%	2%

Key
● High ● Medium ● Some impact ● No impact

role, for example:

'It depends on the quality of the assistant and why they have decided to work as an assistant (e.g. wanting to work with young people).'

'We have not had a proper language assistant for many years as the school will no longer pay for one and we also found that some assistants were more of a problem than a help at times. It was a bit hit and miss.'

'The effect of a language assistant greatly varies depending on the individual.'

Given the financial constraints facing schools, many have tried to reduce the cost of employing a language assistant by sharing one with another school, but respondents comment that the reduced number of hours then available to the school means that the impact of the language assistant is also much reduced, for example:

'We are only allowed one Language Assistant contract which means we share with another school our French and German Assistants. They offer too few hours to make a real impact.'

A number of respondents in both the state and independent sectors have identified other ways to provide the services previously provided by Language Assistants linked to the British Council administered programme. These include using locally based volunteers such as pupils, parents or members of the local community, or recruiting native speakers into long-term formal roles within the school, for example:

'We have a language assistant who is one of the parents and French.' (state)

'We have interns who are seeking work experience, rather than language assistants, but they are extremely helpful.' (state)

'We have a language assistant, but she is a permanent member of staff and not a native speaker. She boosts confidence and is able to work with small groups across the ability range.' (state)

'We have permanent language assistants who are experienced in examining too.' (independent)

'We have established colleagues who are native speakers, employed to do this role – not yearly placements from universities.'

Schools report that these offer them a greater guarantee of quality, flexibility and continuity.

KEY POINTS

»   Access to CPD in the state sector is very limited due to the financial pressures on schools. Many schools offer generic, in-house CPD but linguists do not have access to subject-specific professional development or opportunities to enhance and refresh their subject knowledge. CPD is much more enthusiastically accessed in the independent sector.

»   Respondents to our survey do not report widespread problems in the area of teacher supply for languages, however, the need to increase take up at Key Stage 4 and to improve teaching at Key Stage 3 to prepare pupils more effectively for future GCSE courses means that the recruitment of suitably-qualified languages teachers is likely to become more critical in the future. Current teacher supply problems disproportionally affect lower-attaining schools and those working in more disadvantaged circumstances. Schools in both sectors do report finding it increasingly difficult to recruit quality language teachers. This is particularly the case for teachers able to offer two languages to GCSE and A-level standard.

»   State schools are increasingly unable to afford to employ language assistants and more than half of those that employed them in the past no longer do so. This has opened up a substantial difference in practice between the state and independent sectors (73 per cent of independent schools currently host a language assistant, whereas only 33 per cent of state schools do so).

»   Large proportions of schools in both sectors rate language assistants highly for their impact on pupils' language learning in a wide range of areas including listening and speaking skills, extending pupils' vocabulary and general understanding of the language, cultural awareness and confidence.

"THE NEED TO INCREASE TAKE UP AT KEY STAGE 4 AND TO IMPROVE TEACHING AT KEY STAGE 3 TO PREPARE PUPILS MORE EFFECTIVELY FOR FUTURE GCSE COURSES MEANS THAT THE RECRUITMENT OF SUITABLY-QUALIFIED LANGUAGES TEACHERS IS LIKELY TO BECOME MORE CRITICAL."

28.   https://educationdatalab.org.uk/2016/04/social-inequalities-in-access-to-high-quality-teachers/

29.   It is clear from the comments relating to this and the following question that respondents are referring to language assistants recruited from a range of sources; we are not able to distinguish which relate specifically to the British Council programme.

30.   Teaching Schools Council, Modern foreign Languages Pedagogy Review, 2016.

CHAPTER 9
ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR TEACHERS OF LANGUAGES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

As in previous years, many respondents use our survey to comment on issues of perennial concern, including the observation that pupils regard languages as more difficult than other subjects and that this perception is endorsed by the continuing harsh and unpredictable marking of languages exams at both GCSE and A-level.

However, there are a small number of specific issues which are of acute, rather than ongoing, concern this year. These are the increasingly insurmountable obstacles to school exchanges and visits, the new specification for languages GCSEs and A-levels, the change from four to three A-levels being introduced by many schools, and the drive by schools to excel in performance tables. A frustration with an apparent commonplace apathy towards language study, the impact of the EU referendum and the challenges of declining funding in schools are also high on the list of teachers' concerns. Each of these issues is covered in greater detail in this chapter.

WHAT ISSUES ARE LANGUAGES TEACHERS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT?

Respondents to the survey were given the opportunity, in a final question, to comment freely on any issues relating to languages nationally or in their school which had not already been covered. We have grouped the comments received by topic and also attempted to order them according to importance (based on the frequency with which a topic appeared and the strength of the view expressed). Responses are included from both sectors, with no significant difference noted between those received from the independent or the state sector.

Difficulties in organising exchanges and trips

Teachers in both sectors who have traditionally made effective use of international school exchanges and visits to give their pupils a vital first-hand experience of a language and culture report on a number of issues which are making these trips and exchanges extremely challenging to run. The most recent obstacle is a change in child protection regulations and the interpretation of these regulations in the guidance for schools published by the DfE. A very large number of respondents to our survey have taken the opportunity to comment on the difficulties that the new guidance is causing, for example:

'Recent government changes which require us to DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check host families has meant that we have cancelled our French exchange.'

'School exchanges are becoming difficult to maintain due to the paperwork and necessary checks – it feels like everything is done to stop us from organising exchanges. Not helpful.'

'We have been told that we may no longer run our very well-established school exchanges to France and Germany due to changes in the safe-guarding recommendations. The exchange visits have been taking place for six years and have been very successful – it is a tragedy that this type of visit will have to come to an end because of inflexible legislation.'

'The wording around school exchanges on the statutory safe-guarding document from September 2016 is unclear. We have interpreted that exchange

families in the UK do not need to be DBS checked. Our German, French, Japanese and Ukrainian counterparts are not asking for this and our pupils' families understand we can't do DBS checks on the families abroad. We must support school exchanges as much as possible for tolerance and understanding between countries and cultures. The senior management team do not value languages or the importance of these trips over others.'

'With recent changes to the requirement for all parents taking part in an exchange to have a CRB check, we anticipate that it will be more difficult to encourage families to take part, and it will be more difficult to organise.'

Other respondents comment on the growing reluctance of parents and pupils to receive others into their home or to be accommodated in the home of someone they don't know, for example:

'Pupils (and parents) are not keen on the idea of a school exchange and staying with unknown people. School trips abroad do not attract the numbers to make them viable. Pupils are getting fewer opportunities to practise the language for real purpose, rather than just in the classroom.'

'Exchanges don't happen – parents don't want children staying in unknown houses.'

Other issues adversely affecting the organisation of exchanges and trips with a focus on language learning include costs and time pressures:

'We find it increasingly difficult to keep exchanges going. Pupils are losing their appetite for these types of trips.'

'We are continuing to lead exchange trips at our school, however, they are becoming more difficult due to costs, accountability and time away from the classroom.'

'Administration of and risk involved in trips are deterring staff from getting involved in them.'

'We are struggling to get foreign trips passed – pressure on time and reluctance to allow pupils days off.'

Despite this, in some schools attractive foreign trips are being organised for other areas of the curriculum, and these compete with opportunities focusing on languages:

'We feel language trips are being squeezed out by sports tours and other "exotic" trips.'

'School exchanges and trips are proving harder to organise due to necessary child protection measures and, more recently, terrorism concerns. Competition from trips to do touristy things in New York, expensive ski trips, etc. make them hard to sell too.'

> **"RESPONDENTS COMMENT ON THE GROWING RELUCTANCE OF PARENTS AND PUPILS TO RECEIVE OTHERS INTO THEIR HOME OR TO BE ACCOMMODATED IN THE HOME OF SOMEONE THEY DON'T KNOW."**

The new specifications for languages GCSE and A-level

Respondents are unhappy about many aspects of the new specifications for GCSE and A-level. Many express the view that it has not been helpful to introduce both new specifications at the same time:

'The new courses are a step too far and we should have started with a new GCSE and then had a new A-level, as opposed to having both in the same year.'

'It is a joke to have two exam classes' syllabi changing at the same time. It is a joke that books and schemes of work were not ready before May-June for teaching in September.'

Others comment that they find the content of the new courses and exams too difficult for their pupils and they fear that pupils will be put off from opting to study a language:

'The new GCSEs are academically demanding and the topics covered are incredibly difficult (and irrelevant) for 14-16 year olds to access. While we try to keep our lessons interesting, the topics prescribed by GCSEs are potentially turning pupils off languages and lack real depth. Our lower school pupils are generally well motivated, but I fear that the current GCSE syllabus might turn pupils off languages.'

'The new GCSE and A-level are ridiculously hard and will, I believe, be the final nail in the coffin for languages. The demands are such that my near-native pupils are struggling and my normal pupils have huge difficulties.'

'The new GCSE is ridiculously hard. We are expected to get four levels of progress in my school based on English. This is very challenging target for the pupils and for staff to be measured against.'

'The new GCSE specifications and, to a lesser extent A-level, are going to be severely detrimental to the uptake of languages at Key Stage 4 and post-16. The GCSE courses in particular are ridiculously hard. The situation is very worrying.'

The lack of resources and publications to support the new course, as well as lack of central guidance with regard to assessment and monitoring, is also criticised by many respondents. The following are a sample of the comments we received:

'I am appalled at the lack of information and resources published to support us in delivering the new curriculum.'

'It is quite surprising to see the lack of resources and publications to support the new Key Stage 4 curriculum, especially support for assessment and grading'.

'The new A-level specifications have not been introduced well. Resources should have been ready long before the start of the new term.'

'There has been far too little information regarding reformed courses. The specifications are clear but there are few or no exam papers and no suggested grade boundaries, meaning it is impossible to support and monitor progress of current Year 10 and 12 without "guessing".'

'A-levels and GCSE grading mean our top-performing pupils see a language as a difficult option which could have a negative impact on applications for top universities. We are worried about the impact of the linear A-level on numbers for Year 12. It has been very frustrating having to prepare for the new Key Stage 3 (life after levels), the new GCSE specifications and the new A-level all at the same time and these have meant significant costs to the department. There is a sense among colleagues I speak to from other schools that this period of transition is going to be very difficult and we feel quite unsupported by the DfE'.

The requirement of the new GCSE specification that pupils sit all papers at either foundation or higher level ('single tier entry') is a significant obstacle for some teachers who comment. They say that the fact that pupils are not able to sit the different skills papers at different levels according to their strengths or weaknesses in each individual skill disadvantages pupils of middle or lower ability. Respondents say that the new exam works only for more able pupils, often from middle class backgrounds, or those who are clearly only able to tackle the foundation level. A sample of the comments received on this topic are as follows:

'I am concerned that the new Key Stage 4 specifications for languages requiring a single tier of entry for all examinations are prejudicial to our subject at a time when single tier of entry has been relaxed with other subjects (e.g. English). Although we welcome the end of controlled assessments and the emphasis on spontaneity, creativity and real language learning, we do not see why the single tier of entry was required at a time when the examination is going to be even more testing than before. Untiered examinations where pupils can achieve their best in each paper would have been fairer to all pupils while still maintaining the highest new standards.'

'The new specification has made the exams even more difficult as pupils can no longer mix tiers, which would have been a great thing for boys who naturally have strong skills in one area and are weak elsewhere.'

'There is also a huge disparity between foundation papers and higher papers. Maybe they should introduce an intermediate paper to bridge the gap between foundation and higher.'

Respondents also comment that the structure and content of new exams are more demanding for weaker candidates:

'Complex structures are now required for even weaker candidates and all instructions in the exam are in the target language.'

'My biggest concern is how low-ability learners are going to cope with the linear exams.'

The reduction from four to three A-levels and the withdrawal of AS courses

The majority of respondents commenting on A-levels see the study of languages at post-16 in decline and feel frustrated in their efforts to address the causes of this. In addition to the concerns expressed above, they also mention moves to reduce the number of A-levels a pupil takes from four to three, which they fear will hit recruitment for languages:

'We fear that we may have to drop two or even all our languages at Sixth Form level. The demands on language learners are too great, and the reduction to three A-levels for most learners means that languages will be squeezed further still. If a pupil wants a career in science, he/she will study three science-based subjects; there is no scope left for a widening of their curriculum with a language.'

'We have seen a small rise in A* grades at A-level. We are very concerned that a return to doing three A-levels will have a very bad impact on numbers taking languages at post-16.'

'The withdrawal of AS and the reduction to three A-levels could finish us off, given the extreme importance attached by pupils/parents to science and maths.'

Funding

Teachers report on a number of challenges and pressures created by funding cuts to schools. The following comments are all from state schools:

'The government says 90 per cent of pupils should study languages but we need to have proper funding to be able to deliver good-quality teaching of languages and give the pupils opportunities to put into practice their language skills. There is very little funding and this year, for the first time, we have not been able to buy the new GCSE book to support the new course.'

'Larger class sizes are having an enormous impact on our way of teaching. Work level in general is still a big issue. I have scaled back trips in Key Stage 3 due to excessive workload. I have no budget for materials this year, so have had to prioritise textbooks over listening materials, workbooks etc. We battle on!'

'An increasing number of schools can no longer afford language assistants when they are a real asset to the teaching and learning of languages.'

'The lack of funds to hire a language assistant has had some negative impact on exam results.'

'Money is the big problem. We no longer have language assistants. The spotlight along with associated stress and pressure is now on us again as a result of Progress 8, but we need more money for new resources and assistants.'

Performance tables

Many teachers comment that the pressure on schools to achieve targets related to Progress 8 and the EBacc militates against the uptake of languages since schools are likely to encourage pupils not to take languages as they are seen as difficult subjects in which to achieve the top results in exams:

'The focus on the EBacc and inclusion of this in Progress 8 really does not help to promote or recruit into languages.'

'The biggest issue we face is that schools are caught between wanting pupils to choose the best subjects for them, and needing them to get the best results. Statistically, pupils will usually do worse in languages than in any other subject, i.e. a pupil who has all Bs and one grade C is most likely to get the C in languages. Our school is therefore hesitant to encourage a pupil to take any subject where they are less likely to achieve their minimum expected GCSE grade. In this respect, Progress 8 has had a very negative impact on languages.'

> **"THERE IS STILL TOO MUCH OF AN ISSUE OF ADULTS BEING IGNORANT ABOUT THE SUBJECT AREA AND WEARING THEIR MONOLINGUISM AS A BADGE OF PRIDE."**

'Our senior leadership team is more interested in Progress 8 and, as languages is one of the most difficult GCSEs to achieve a C grade in, they prefer pupils to study more "softer" subjects.'

'The government needs to provide guidance on levels of attainment, rather than leaving each individual school to guess at how to create an effective target-setting model.'

'It's a shame that languages are still seen as a second-class subject, despite being part of the Progress 8 subjects. In terms of timetable allocation, staff and resources, languages are at the end of the queue after maths, English and science.'

Wider perceptions of languages

Many teachers responding to our survey comment on difficulties in encouraging the take up of languages in schools as a result of wider society's apathy or antipathy towards languages and the failure of the government, media and influential public bodies to counter this. The following two comments summarise the views expressed by many of this year's respondents:

'I think that the public perception of the value of languages as a subject really needs to be worked on. Our Year 7s are really positive about it, and so are our Year 10s, generally. However, there is still too much of an issue of adults being ignorant about the subject area and wearing their monolinguism as a badge of pride.'

'The government needs to support language learning. It is important that pupils have the ability to learn other languages and acquire the skills associated with learning a language (e.g. memory improvement, grammar understanding, being able to communicate, like the rest of Europe, in another language). Languages are important to create a sense of community and, above all, communicate.'

Many respondents also comment on the adverse impact on languages in schools caused by the outcome of the recent referendum in which the UK voted to leave the EU. This topic is covered in some depth in the following section.

Has the result of the recent referendum on leaving the EU had any impact on language teaching?

Respondents are divided as to whether the result of the recent referendum on leaving the EU has had, or is likely to have, an impact on language teaching. Many say they have seen no adverse effect to date and that they are working harder than ever to emphasise the value of language learning to their pupils, for example:

'We consider that it is even more important to be able to study and speak another language as pupils need to be able to compete for the future in so many different ways now with their European cousins.'

'Pupils are still happy learning languages at this school. Thankfully the EU referendum has had little or no impact.'

'We held our own referendum in school: 84 per cent voted Remain. Our pupils feel very positive about Europe and our European partners. It has had no effect on our language teaching, other than to spur us on.'

However, some 20 per cent of those responding to this year's survey report a number of ways in which the result of the referendum has had a negative impact in their school. The first is on secondary teachers themselves, many of whom are EU citizens and are now concerned that they may have to leave the UK, for example:

'We employ quite a lot of EU nationals and some are considering leaving to go back to their home countries. This would be detrimental for staff recruitment and finding candidates who can teach A-level.'

'Panic and worry amongst our native-speaker teaching staff.'

Some report that they have seen a negative impact on their pupils and parents, with many questioning the point of continuing to study languages. Some examples of their comments are as follows:

'As a school in one of the main areas that voted for an exit from the EU there has been a recent negative impact on pupil perception of the need to learn a foreign language.'

'Negative attitudes have hardened in some cases. We have tried hard to emphasise the increased need for languages as a response to Brexit. There has been a big increase in racist incidents e.g. pupils and staff being told to go home.'

'The attitude towards languages has worsened very slightly. Some pupils have professed that it is pointless to learn European languages following Brexit.'

'For the first time since we started running visits to Spain seven years ago, we have failed to recruit enough pupils (we only needed ten) to run the trip. One parent said there wasn't the need for her son to go, as it wasn't important anymore.'

A number of respondents report that their pupils are now concerned that if they continue to study languages, they will find themselves unable to take advantage of programmes such as Erasmus and Comenius to develop their skills as linguists when they are at university and work, for example:

'It has created a lot of uncertainty amongst staff who are from continental Europe. It has sent out a dreadful message that undermines the value of learning a language and it has made pupils worry that previous Erasmus programmes and opportunities for working and studying abroad will be taken away.'

'Many pupils are concerned about taking languages post-16 as they are worried the Erasmus grant will not be available for them in university to work abroad.'

On this particular issue a number of teachers express concern that the reduction in opportunities to travel abroad to study or to work may further reduce take up at Key Stage 4 and 5 in the future.

KEY POINTS

»   The future of exchanges and trips, which give pupils first-hand experience of language and culture, is being severely threatened by current guidelines on DBS regulations, as well as issues such as funding and an increasing reluctance by parents and pupils to host or stay with 'strangers'.

»   Teachers have a number of concerns relating to the new specifications for GCSE and A-level. These include the lack of supporting guidance and resources, the fact that they were introduced concurrently, and concerns over the level of difficulty. Teachers fear that the single tier entry for the new GCSE will disadvantage pupils of middle ability.

»   Teachers in both the independent and state sectors believe that the move by schools from four to three A-levels will mean fewer pupils opting to study a language post-16.

»   The withdrawal of schools from offering AS courses and examinations in languages is seen as a further blow to recruitment to post-16 languages courses.

»   A drive to excel in performance tables means that schools are inclined to discourage pupils from taking languages, since it is more difficult to achieve the highest grades in languages and pupils find them too hard.

»   Funding issues across the state sector mean that schools are struggling to resource language study adequately.

»   Apathy towards languages and the impact of the EU referendum vote are presenting schools with real challenges in areas key to language learning.

"FUNDING ISSUES ACROSS THE STATE SECTOR MEAN THAT SCHOOLS ARE STRUGGLING TO RESOURCE LANGUAGE STUDY ADEQUATELY."

CHAPTER 10
CONCLUSIONS

This year's Language Trends survey has come at a time when, following the historic decision to leave the EU, there is fierce discussion and debate about the UK's place in the world and the importance of our relationships with other countries. Languages and intercultural understanding are implicitly at the heart of this debate.

The 2016/17 Languages Trends Survey has been able to gather rich quantitative and qualitative data from teachers of languages in both primary and secondary schools (both independent and state-maintained) across England, not only about their professional practice and the implementation of policies in their schools, but also about issues such as take up, exams, pupil and parent attitudes to languages, and how these are affected by external events and changing climates of opinion. The considerable administrative demands of attainment targets and performance tables, in addition to classroom teaching, and preparation of pupils for new public exams mean that teachers are busier than ever before and have very little time in which to provide answers to detailed surveys such as this. We are extremely grateful, therefore, to the many hundreds of teachers across the country who have made time to contribute to our research with invaluable responses and comments. This report is only possible because of their input.

As in previous years' research, teachers in both primary and secondary phases comment on the pressures they face to meet national performance targets, while at the same time having to work constantly to market their subject with school leaders, with parents and with pupils. Once again, they report that the value of languages is poorly understood and that languages fare badly in comparison with the perceived importance of maths, science and English. Respondents to our survey report that the result of the EU referendum and the media coverage of this have added to a perception that languages are unimportant.

Although it is early days in the implementation of the UK's decision to leave the EU, 20 per cent of secondary school respondents to our survey already report a negative impact. EU nationals form an important part of the language-teaching workforce, and have increasingly been filling the gap left by the declining numbers of British nationals studying languages to A-level, at university, and then going from there into the teaching profession. Following the outcome of the referendum they and their colleagues fear that they may no longer be welcome to live and work in this country. Many schools also express serious concerns about future teacher recruitment since the pool of 'home grown' teachers is already insufficient to meet demands. In primary schools where language teaching is not yet strongly established, the survey reveals a sense of uncertainty about the future and a need for reassurance and guidance that the efforts staff are making are along the right lines. There is a sense of polarisation, with teachers in those schools where languages are already strong determined to maintain

and develop provision, while others feel that the subject is being further marginalised and its value negated.

A further threat to language teaching in schools emerging from the outcome of the referendum is the likely negative impact on opportunities for funding to support training, school links and overseas visits. In a climate where schools find themselves under severe financial pressure and unable to afford traditional forms of Continuing professional development, enterprising schools have been able to access professional training opportunities and funding through the EU Erasmus+ programme. These opportunities have enabled many teachers to refresh their subject knowledge and to develop links with schools in other countries, from which the whole school benefits. The prospect of opportunities to study abroad through the Erasmus+ programme leading to longer-term employment possibilities is also an attractive incentive for many bright young linguists facing A-level and university study choices. Teachers report that pupils who might otherwise have opted to study languages at post-16 are now questioning whether or not this is a wise choice given the UK's planned departure from the EU.

In the twelve months since the publication of our previous Language Trends report, secondary schools have seen considerable upheaval with the introduction of the new specifications for languages GCSEs and A-levels. The new specifications have had a trickle-down effect on Key Stage 3, as well as new schemes of work for Key Stages 4 and 5 and the development of new resources to prepare pupils adequately for the challenges of the new exams. Responses to the new A-levels include reducing the number of subjects taken from four to three and ceasing to offer AS exams, which no longer count towards the new two-year linear A-level.

Funding is an issue of growing concern for teachers in the state sector, with many secondary schools reporting that they are no longer able to employ language assistants or to purchase new resources. Financial pressures are also bearing down on opportunities for teachers to undertake Continuing Professional Development.

From the wealth of data and evidence we have been able to assemble from all the teachers who responded to this year's survey, we have drawn together six major conclusions covering languages education in English schools:

1. Disparities in the quality of language teaching provision at Key Stage 2 are unlikely to be addressed unless there is a system-wide approach

The vast majority of primary school respondents express whole-hearted commitment to teaching languages at Key Stage 2 and, in many cases, to beginning the teaching of languages in Key Stage 1. Some 60 per cent of primary schools now have more than five years' experience of language

> **"THE SHORT TIME AVAILABLE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IS FREQUENTLY FURTHER REDUCED TO ACCOMMODATE OTHER PRIORITIES."**

teaching, and there are some excellent examples of outstanding provision which could form the bedrock on which many others could build. However, the gulf between the 'best' primary schools and those where the development of language teaching seems to have been put on the back burner is still very wide, and there is evidence that at least some of the disparity between schools is related to socio-economic circumstances. Issues such as a lack of funding for training, the relatively low profile of languages compared to 'core' subjects, and a minimal time commitment for the subject – all conspire to produce a picture in which many primary schools are struggling to achieve the expected national outcomes by the end of Year 6 when pupils move to secondary school.

There is a small improvement in the language expertise of language-teaching staff which seems to have been achieved through the recruitment of specialist staff rather than training existing classroom teachers. As many as a quarter of primary schools report that they do not provide any languages-specific professional development for their classroom teachers.

The short time available for language learning in primary schools is frequently further reduced to accommodate other priorities. Where language lessons are suspended or delivered on an ad hoc, irregular basis this is unlikely to support effective learning.

The evidence from this year's survey suggests that the multi-faceted value of languages is still under-estimated by school leaders and others and that schools are inclined to focus on those subjects which are tested and prioritised by government at the expense of providing pupils with a wider, balanced education.

As long as language teaching in primary schools ranges from outstanding, structured teaching which provides pupils with a solid foundation of language skills from which to develop further from Year 7 onwards, to irregular, informal teaching of isolated words and phrases, secondary teachers, with their many feeder schools, will find it impossible to take pupils' prior learning into account and inevitably will be inclined to start from scratch. For a smooth transition to Key Stage 3 to take place, it is important

that action is taken to ensure that there is greater consistency and rigour in the implementation of Key Stage 2 programmes for languages than has been the case hitherto. Responses to our survey reveal that many primary schools understand that they are not yet meeting the stated requirements but that there is no impetus or direction to improve. Many teachers would welcome more detailed guidance on the expected Year 6 outcomes, how to achieve them and how to assess them.

2. The benefits of language teaching in Key Stage 2 for social inclusion should be more widely recognised and carried through into Key Stage 3 and beyond

Although there are vast disparities of provision between primary schools across the country, within individual schools primary language teaching is often an important force for social inclusion. Teachers describe the many ways in which languages benefit all pupils and are particularly articulate on the benefits of languages to those of lower ability or those who already have another language. Pupils who may be struggling with other school subjects are frequently seen to excel at language learning, which in turn develops their self-confidence and standing with their peers.

However, once children progress to secondary school, this commitment to the benefits of language learning for all pupils is quickly lost. Pupils who are deemed to require additional support with English and maths are frequently withdrawn from language classes in Key Stage 3. This leaves them unable to catch up and effectively debars them from obtaining the EBacc.

The social inequality in access to language skills observed between primary schools is even more evident at secondary level. While independent

> "IF THE QUALITY OF PRIMARY LANGUAGES PROVISION WERE DEVELOPED MORE CONSISTENTLY, THERE IS HUGE POTENTIAL FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION TO CONTRIBUTE MUCH MORE WIDELY TO SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ADDRESS SOME OF THE INEQUALITIES WHICH EXIST IN THIS SUBJECT."

schools offer a wider range of both modern and ancient languages, make plentiful use of language assistants and provide widespread opportunities to learn more than one language, in the state sector such provision is rare. However, there is also evidence that languages in independent schools are increasingly vulnerable and more research is needed to understand this issue better. Pupils in schools with high levels of economic disadvantage are more likely to be withdrawn from lessons in Key Stage 3, more likely to be allowed to drop languages after only two years, less likely to be able to study more than one foreign language, and less likely to take a language to GCSE. A shorter time allocation for languages in Key Stage 3 is also associated with higher levels of social disadvantage.

Secondary schools have much to learn from educators in primary schools, who identify a wide range of benefits from language learning which are often lost or overlooked once pupils move to secondary school. If the quality of primary languages provision were developed more consistently, there is huge potential for language education to contribute much more widely to social inclusion and address some of the inequalities which exist in this subject and, because of its importance in the EBacc, have a knock-on effect on pupils' overall educational attainment.

3. Changes are under way at Key Stage 3 in preparation for the new GCSE exams

Key Stage 3 is has become a focus for action as teachers seek to prepare pupils for the demands of the new languages GCSE. Many schools have recognised the need to begin the preparatory process earlier and to make changes to the way languages are taught at Key Stage 3, with an eye on improving GCSE results in the years to come. Many report that they are revising schemes of work, some that they are increasing the time allocation, and others that they are opting to focus on one language only rather than allowing pupils to study two languages or more from the beginning of Key Stage 3.

The new specifications also appear to have reinforced a tendency to increase the GCSE preparatory period to three years. As many as 28 per cent of state secondary schools say that they have reduced Key Stage 3 to two years in order to be able to focus for three full years on GCSE preparation. This most frequently means that pupils are selecting their subjects for GCSE at the end of Year 8 rather than at the end of Year 9 and are, therefore, dropping the subjects they have chosen not to study at the age of 13. While the move to a three-year GCSE course is aimed at providing a more solid foundation for greater numbers of pupils to take the subject in the expectation of achieving good grades, it has a negative impact for pupils who do not continue beyond Year 8 as it means that such pupils

are deprived of one third of the statutory period for language study at Key Stage 3.

Another change being introduced by many schools at Key Stage 3 is the narrowing of language study to a single language. While focusing on a single language (rather than splitting the timetable allocation for languages across two languages) can help ensure that sufficient study time is provided for progress in the language to be made, it also has the adverse effect of reducing the number of potential dual linguists developing their skills through Key Stages 4 and 5, and on to higher education. This year's survey shows that there has been a significant decline, in both independent and state sectors, in the numbers of pupils studying more than one language with 45 per cent of independent schools and 37 per cent of state schools reporting declines in the number of dual linguists at GCSE.

4. Although many schools are expecting numbers for languages at Key Stage 4 to increase year on year, teachers are worried that the new GCSE exam will deliver poor results

It is pleasing to see that more than a third of state schools (38 per cent) say they are expecting the numbers of pupils studying a language to GCSE to increase year on year as they strive to boost the numbers of pupils achieving the EBacc. Where schools have already increased numbers, these are more likely to have come from middle-or higher-ability pupils: lower-ability pupils in both state and independent sectors are now less likely than they were in the past to be taking a language to GCSE. However, the evidence from this year's survey suggests that economically-disadvantaged schools are more likely to be expecting numbers for languages to increase in future.

Against this positive background, teachers report that many aspects of the new specifications for the GCSE are a real cause for concern. While the great majority are pleased to see the removal of controlled assessments, many express concern at the difficulty of the new examination and the single-tier approach now used by exam boards is seen as disadvantaging pupils who are of middle ability. While lower-attaining pupils can enter all papers at Foundation level, teachers say that middle-ability pupils, who may have variable capability in each of the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking, will be handicapped and likely to perform less well. They fear that poor results in the new GCSE will deter future cohorts of pupils from choosing a language at Key Stage 4.

Teachers are addressing the challenges of the new GCSE specifications by implementing changes to classroom practice that are within their control (e.g. new schemes of work, new resources and a more explicit focus on grammar). However, in other areas such as timetabling, training, and budgets (especially for engagement outside the classroom), school management support will also be necessary in order to achieve the desired improvements.

5. There is little sign of an end to the decline in A-level numbers for languages

The Modern Languages Pedagogy Review has described the decline in uptake for languages at A-level as being 'of disastrous proportions'. [31] This year's survey provides little evidence of a turnaround. As in previous years, teachers from both the independent and state sectors cite severe and unreliable marking of exam papers, financial pressures on schools and small, unviable groups as some of the reasons for the decline. Furthermore, the EBacc policy, which it was hoped would increase the rate of take up for languages at Key Stage 5, is not having any notable positive impact on the numbers of pupils opting to study a language at A-level. Our research this year provides evidence of a number of new factors which are further accelerating the decline, or very likely to do so in the future.

> "TEACHERS FEAR THAT POOR RESULTS IN THE NEW GCSE WILL DETER FUTURE COHORTS OF PUPILS FROM CHOOSING A LANGUAGE AT KEY STAGE 4."

The first of the new factors contributing to the decline in pupil numbers for languages Post-16 is the move by schools in both the independent and state sectors from four to three A-levels. The qualitative evidence from our survey suggests that this practice is becoming quite widespread. Teachers believe this will result in fewer pupils opting to study a language at Post-16 since, in many cases, a language is chosen as the fourth A-level, combined with a trio of sciences or humanity subjects, possibly to enhance a university application. Those pupils wishing to study sciences at university will need to ensure that all three of their A-level choices are sciences to be assured of an offer in a highly-competitive environment.

The second new factor adversely affecting Post-16 languages is the introduction of the two-year linear A-level course which is also bringing about the withdrawal of AS courses in nearly one quarter of independent schools and 15 per cent of state schools. Schools see this as a further blow to efforts to recruit sufficient numbers for language courses at Post-16.

There is a critical need for the many bodies involved to come together to address the crisis in A-level languages and ensure that the country has a vibrant and sustainable supply of linguists to meet the future economic and diplomatic needs of the country. This is particularly urgent in a post-Brexit environment, where the UK's international relationships with a wide range of countries will be important for our future wealth and stability. The impact of the decline in numbers taking languages at A-level will be felt in the years to come in shortages of UK-educated linguists entering the language teaching profession, and needs to be urgently reversed.

> **"LANGUAGE STUDY IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE AN EXCLUSIVELY CLASSROOM-BASED SUBJECT, STARVED OF THE AIR OF EXPERIENCES WHICH GIVE PUPILS AN OPPORTUNITY TO USE THE LANGUAGE THEY HAVE LEARNT TO ENGAGE WITH THE WIDER WORLD."**

6. Language learning in schools is being greatly damaged by the reduction in opportunities to engage with native speakers and experience the culture at first hand.

For decades, school exchanges and trips abroad organised by school languages departments have provided pupils with valuable first-hand experience of the language and culture being studied in the classroom. More often than not, they have presented pupils with their first taste of using another language in a real context and have not only given pupils a tremendous boost of confidence but inspired future learning and a love of the language. These are now threatened by a number of factors, including funding and the reluctance to allow pupils out of school because of the demands of other courses. There also appears to have been a cultural shift in which teachers note a growing reluctance on the part of parents and pupils to host 'strangers' in their home or for pupils to be accommodated with unknown families abroad. Inventive teachers appear to be managing successfully to offer trips based on carefully selected youth hostels and in other subjects, schools provide opportunities to travel abroad for, e.g. sports trips. However, it is the DfE

guidelines on new DBS regulations which are proving to be a serious blow for school exchanges and trips, with a huge number of teachers commenting that well-established, long running programmes of exchanges and visits are having to be abandoned because of the guidelines.

At the same time, funding issues are severely limiting the employment of native-speaker language assistants in state schools, individuals whose impact is highly rated in a wide range of areas including listening and speaking skills, extending pupils' vocabulary and general understanding of the language, cultural awareness and confidence. Given the limitations on school trips abroad, the role of language assistants would seem ever more vital in providing a model of authentic language in someone closer to pupils' own age, opportunities for them to learn about cultural and current affairs, and practise using the language themselves.

The effect of all these factors is that language study is becoming more and more an exclusively classroom-based subject, starved of the air of experiences which give pupils an opportunity to use the language they have learnt to engage with the wider world – the sort of experiences which provide a sense of purpose and enjoyment. These issues must be tackled if language learning is to thrive again in our schools, since the subject cannot survive in a bubble.

Our overall conclusion is that, although there have been great changes on the wider political and international scene, the issues emerging for language teaching in our schools are very much those identified in previous years. Many teachers are working extremely hard to improve standards and recruitment to language courses in their schools, and would welcome concerted action on an increased scale in order to ensure that the many positive aspirations in current government policy are successfully implemented.

31. Teaching Schools Council, Modern Foreign Languages Pedagogy Review, 2016, p.7

APPENDICES

RESPONSE PROFILES

Secondary State Schools					
Response Rate					
	Base	Sample*	Response	Response Rate	
Secondary	3048	2970	701	23.6%	
* Sample differs from base due to availability of school email addresses					

Response Profile					
Region	**Base raw**	**Base %**	**Sample raw**	**Sample %**	**Response raw**	**Response %**
East Midlands	259	8.5%	250	8.4%	60	8.6%
East of England	340	11.2%	326	11.0%	78	11.1%
London	424	13.9%	421	14.2%	93	13.3%
North East	147	4.8%	143	4.8%	37	5.3%
North West	439	14.4%	429	14.4%	108	15.4%
South East	471	15.5%	460	15.5%	108	15.4%
South West	303	9.9%	300	10.1%	71	10.1%
West Midlands	371	12.2%	357	12.0%	82	11.7%
Yorkshire and the Humber	294	9.6%	284	9.6%	64	9.1%

Performance Quintile	**Base raw**	**Base %**	**Sample raw**	**Sample %**	**Response raw**	**Response %**
A - High	607	19.9%	599	20.2%	168	24.0%
B	609	20.0%	592	19.9%	143	20.4%
C	610	20.0%	598	20.1%	145	20.7%
D	609	20.0%	592	19.9%	129	18.4%
E - Low	613	20.1%	589	19.8%	116	16.5%

School Type	**Base raw**	**Base %**	**Sample raw**	**Sample %**	**Response raw**	**Response %**
Academy Converter	1352	44.4%	1343	45.2%	360	51.4%
Academy Sponsor Led	606	19.9%	574	19.3%	113	16.1%
City Technology College	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%
Community School	508	16.7%	491	16.5%	100	14.3%
Foundation School	234	7.7%	228	7.7%	57	8.1%
Free Schools	19	0.6%	19	0.6%	3	0.4%
Studio Schools	17	0.6%	16	0.5%	0	0.0%
University Technical College	15	0.5%	15	0.5%	0	0.0%
Voluntary Aided School	260	8.5%	251	8.5%	60	8.6%
Voluntary Controlled School	34	1.1%	30	1.0%	8	1.1%

Free School Meal Eligibility Quintile	Base raw	Base %	Sample raw	Sample %	Response raw	Response %
High	605	19.8%	593	20.0%	119	17.0%
Middle-High	601	19.7%	576	19.4%	126	18.0%
Middle	613	20.1%	600	20.2%	132	18.8%
Middle-Low	613	20.1%	596	20.1%	147	21.0%
Low	614	20.1%	605	20.4%	177	25.2%
No data	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

English as an Additional Language Quartile	Base raw	Base %	Sample raw	Sample %	Response raw	Response %
High	753	24.7%	738	24.8%	170	24.3%
Middle-High	761	25.0%	737	24.8%	163	23.3%
Middle-Low	765	25.1%	748	25.2%	190	27.1%
Low	767	25.2%	747	25.2%	178	25.4%
No data	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

ABOUT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Teresa Tinsley established and developed the Language Trends series of surveys which have charted the health of languages in various sectors of education since 2002. As well as producing and analysing information on the situation of languages in English secondary schools, the surveys have also covered provision for community languages across the UK, and language learning in Further and Adult Education. Formerly Director of Communications at CILT, the National Centre for Languages, Teresa founded Alcantara Communications in 2011 and since then has undertaken policy-focused research on languages for the British Academy and the British Council, as well as CfBT Education Trust. Her work for CfBT included an international review of primary languages, Lessons from abroad, as well as the Language Trends reports from 2011 to 2015.

Kathryn Board, OBE, was Chief Executive of CILT, The National Centre for Languages from 2008 and in that role worked with specialists and a wide range of educational institutions to provide advice on educational policy related to the teaching of languages as well as on initiatives aimed at increasing language learning across the UK. Before joining CILT, she spent 30 years working for the British Council in a number of international and management roles. She also led for Education Development Trust (formerly CfBT Education Trust) on the development of a Languages strategy and the delivery of a number of national projects to support language teaching in English schools. Now partially retired, she continues to work on research projects where she can bring in her expertise. Kathryn speaks Spanish, German and Dutch and is currently working hard on improving her Arabic.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IMAGES

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