

Primary Languages Entitlement

Every child should have the opportunity throughout Key Stage 2 to study a foreign language and develop their interest in the culture of other nations. They should have access to high quality teaching and learning opportunities, making use of native speakers and elearning. By age 11 they should have the opportunity to reach a recognised level of competence on the Common European Framework and for that achievement to be recognised through a national scheme. The Key Stage 2 language learning programme must include at least one of the working languages of the European Union and be delivered at least in part in class time.'

page 15 National Languages Strategy, 2002

Ofsted's view of Primary Languages 2008/09

General

- Increasing number of schools have introduced languages into more than 1 year group
- French most taught language
- Languages taught between 30 and 60 minutes
- Progress to entitlement improved from half of schools to two thirds
- More schools have class teacher teaching languages
- Provision improved with just over half of schools inspected judged good or better

Strengths

- Enthusiasm amongst teachers and senior leaders to make languages work
- More celebration of home and heritage languages
- Almost all schools fostered excitement about languages
- Contribution to personal development nearly always good
- Linking languages to other subjects
- Subject leaders know what to improve

To improve

- Very few schools planned progression Y3 – 6
- Providing opportunities to use ICT to develop skills
- Self, peer, continuous and summative assessment
- Reading from an early age
- Writing to underpin language and be creative

Ofsted Judgements

- Achievement is good or better in two thirds of schools
- Quality of teaching good or better in just over two thirds of lessons
- Progress good or better in just over two thirds of lessons
- Provision is good or better in two thirds of schools
- Subject leadership good in over two thirds of schools
- Overall effectiveness is good or better in two thirds of schools

Reading the Runes

And we're going to reform our curriculum and qualifications, showing the most ruthless, relentless and uncompromising commitment to rigour.

David Cameron launching Tory Draft Education manifesto, 18th January 2010

I don't agree with the direction of his review - it moves away from subjects and downplays the importance of knowledge...

...parents also have a right to expect that the basics will be covered properly, that children are secure in literacy and numeracy and that subjects like history and geography are taught properly, as discrete subjects...

I am a big supporter of teaching modern foreign languages properly - and I'm deeply concerned by the decline in the numbers taking MFL GCSEs and A levels. Yes, we need to help children acquire the skills and knowledge in KS1 and KS2 to master MFLs, but we also need to reform the curriculum, assessment and our league tables to deal with some of the barriers to students following MFL courses.

Michael Gove, TES Webchat Friday 23rd April 2010

A major review of the curriculum will be launched this year setting out the subject content children will be expected to master at each stage of education.

It is likely to emphasise rigorous content such as more geometry and algebra in primary maths, a focus on biology, chemistry and physics as separate sciences and the study of classical authors in English.

History lessons are likely to be based around a narrative of the past, covering key periods, the kings and queens and the Empire.

The review forms part of the new Education and Children's Bill announced as part of the coalition government's legislative programme on Tuesday.

Government sources said that the "slimmer" curriculum would prescribe subject content but give schools more freedom to decide how to teach lessons.

The Bill will also introduce a new reading test for 600,000 six-year-olds in England every year – identifying those struggling the most. This follows research showing that children who fail to master reading at a young age fall much further behind by the end of secondary school.

Michael Gove, the Education Secretary, said an overhaul of the curriculum was vital to restore subject knowledge. Daily Telegraph, 25th May 2010

And I think that it's important that parents have a guarantee that children are fluent in the English language, that they have a capacity to use mathematical reasoning. I also think it's important that we encourage the teaching of modern foreign languages, and history so that people have an understanding of this nation's past.

Michael Gove, Radio 4 Today, 26th May 2010

I want to ensure our national curriculum is a properly international curriculum – that it reflects the best collective wisdom we have about how children learn, what they should know and how quickly they can grow in knowledge.

Michael Gove to NCSL, 17th June 2010

Sayings

Bulgarian

The more languages you know, the more you are a person

German

Those who know no foreign language knows nothing of their mother tongue.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Spanish

For every language that becomes extinct, an image of man disappears.

Octavio Paz

French

Un homme qui parle trois langues est trilingue.

Un homme qui parle deux langues est bilingue.

Un homme qui ne parle qu'une langue est anglais.

Claude Gagnière

Not only does the English Language borrow words from other languages, it sometimes chases them down dark alleys, hits them over the head, and goes through their pockets.

Eddy Peters