Routes into Languages
Event Evaluations in England 2011-2012

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Appendix A: pupil pre-event questionnaire, pupil post-event questionnaire, teacher post-event questionnaire
Executive Summary

1 This report presents the findings of a large-scale pilot evaluation survey of Routes into Languages activities in England in 2011-2012. It aimed to collect information on learners’ experiences of Routes events and to measure indications of attitudinal change in the immediate aftermath of events.

2 Data for the report came from all nine regional consortia in England and consisted of 3607 pupil pre-event questionnaires, 3398 pupil post-event questionnaires and 342 teacher post-event questionnaires.

3 In the pupil sample, there were a higher proportion of female than male respondents. All year groups between 7 and 13 were represented but approximately one half of all questionnaires came from learners in year 9 (the year group specifically targeted by the evaluation). Pupils were found to be attending schools and colleges of differing levels of performance but more of them were at schools where achievement at GCSE and A-level is broadly in line with national averages in England.

4 Responses to pupil pre-event questionnaires showed that most learners had positive attitudes to language learning. Approximately two thirds of them enjoyed language learning, enjoyed meeting people from other cultures and perceived that languages would help them to get a job. Just over half of respondents indicated that they would like to continue with language study.

5 Attitudes were found to vary according to several different factors: gender (boys had more negative attitudes than girls), year group (year 9 learners had more negative attitudes than those in other year groups) and school/college achievement (learners in schools/colleges of well below average achievement had more negative attitudes than those in other schools, especially learners in schools of well above average achievement).

6 Learners in years 9 and 11 were the least likely to express interest in carrying on with language study.

7 Qualitative comments made by respondents in the pre-event survey indicated that they were mainly very positive about language learning as they most frequently described it as enjoyable and fun.

8 Not everyone enjoyed language learning and a small proportion of participants were found to have hostile attitudes to languages.

9 Post-event questionnaires showed that participants had been involved in a wide range of different Routes activities. School visits by consortia teams were the most frequent of these.

10 Responses to post-event questionnaires revealed that most learners rated Routes activities highly and they valued the information they received.

11 Indications of positive attitudinal change were found in all areas after events. There was an increase of 3.0% in the proportion of learners who reported enjoyment of language learning and an increase of 3.2% in the proportion of learners who reported enjoyment of meeting people from other cultures. A somewhat larger increase of 11.1%
was found in the proportion of respondents who perceived languages would be useful for jobs.

12 The percentage of learners who agreed that they would like to carry on with language learning rose by 4.2% in the post-event survey.

13 Post-event responses appeared to show indications of greater attitudinal impact of Routes events among particular groups of learners. These were boys, learners in Key Stage 3 and learners in schools or colleges of well below average achievement. Particularly striking was an increase of 8.9% in the proportion of learners in schools of well below average achievement who expressed interest in continuing with language study in post-event questionnaires.

14 Pupils' post-event qualitative comments were very enthusiastic and suggested that activities were enjoyable, had provided useful information, advice and guidance and had provided support for language learning.

15 Events were not enjoyed by everyone and a small proportion of respondents continued to demonstrate very negative attitudes to language learning in the post-event survey (as in the pre-event survey).

16 Learners most frequently suggested that events could be improved by the inclusion of more active and interactive tasks.

17 Responses to teacher post-event questionnaires indicated that almost all teachers perceived Routes activities to be very positive experiences and valuable sources of information.

18 Three-quarters of teachers believed that events were likely to change attitudes to language learning although teacher in schools/colleges of well below average achievement were less confident about this.

19 Teachers' qualitative comments indicated that they found events useful and enjoyable and were appreciative of the language learning opportunities provided.

20 Some teachers suggested that events could be improved through the inclusion of more active tasks and some changes to organisation. Overall though, most teachers were very enthusiastic about activities.

21 Limitations of the surveys include disparities in the numbers of questionnaires returned by different consortia and variations in the sample sizes of different groups of learners. These will be addressed in the forthcoming year. However, this pilot evaluation has succeeded in providing a national overview of learners' and teachers' perspectives of Routes activities.

22 Overall, survey findings suggest that Routes into Languages activities across England are highly valued by pupils and teachers and that they are providing an immediate motivational lift. Although it is important not to confuse these findings with evidence of longer-term impact, they do contribute to the growing body of evidence that Routes into Languages activities are associated with positive attitudinal change. The motivational impact appears to be greater among groups of learners who are less likely to study languages, which indicates that Routes activities are effectively targeting these groups. Indications that events are encouraging these groups of
learners to think differently about languages must be viewed as an important first step in the widening participation process.
1 Introduction

Routes into Languages is a national programme aimed at increasing participation in language learning across England and Wales. It is funded by HEFCE and HEFCW\(^1\) and consists of nine regional consortia of universities in England and one national consortium of universities in Wales working together to promote languages in schools and colleges in their local areas by organising a wide range of activities and events. This report presents the findings of evaluation surveys conducted with pupils and teachers involved in Routes events in England. The evaluation process was set up by an evaluation working group which was convened following the recommendation of the independent evaluator, SQW\(^2\) that all consortia should implement common evaluation tools. In 2011-2012 the new evaluation tools were piloted and all consortia collected data using learner pre-event, learner post-event and teacher post-event questionnaires. The purpose of these surveys was to explore pupils’ experiences of Routes into Languages activities, to measure indications of attitudinal change towards languages after events and to elicit the perspectives of teachers on the usefulness of Routes activities and their likely attitudinal outcomes. The report begins with an explanation of the methodology used. Findings of pupil pre-event, pupil post-event and teacher post-event surveys are then presented. These are followed by an evaluation of this pilot and conclusions.

2 Methodology

An evaluation working group consisting of two consortium directors, one consortium project manager and a member of the Routes central team was convened in July 2011 in order to develop a set of evaluation tools that could be utilised by all consortia in England. As a result, a learner pre-event questionnaire, a learner post-event questionnaire and a teacher post-event questionnaire were produced (see Appendix A).

The pre-event survey set out to elicit learners’ perspectives on language learning prior to engagement with a Routes into Languages activity. It consisted of a series of rating-scale statements with which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement and disagreement on a five-point scale. These statements covered key components of motivation including enjoyment of language learning, enjoyment of meeting people from other cultures (integrative motivational orientation\(^3\)), usefulness of languages for jobs (instrumental motivational orientation\(^4\)) and difficulty of language learning. Respondents were also asked whether they would like to carry on learning languages. A final open question (Is there anything else you would like to say about learning languages?) was included in order to give respondents the opportunity to provide a perspective on language learning in their own words.

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\(^1\) Higher Education Funding Council for England and Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

\(^2\) SQW (2011)

\(^3\) Gardner (1985, 2001)

\(^4\) Gardner (1985; 2001)
Pre-event questionnaires were completed either at the beginning of an event or a few weeks prior to an event in cases where consortia sent questionnaires to schools in advance.

The post-event survey had two key aims. These were to explore learners’ experiences of the event and the information they received and to measure indications of attitudinal change after engagement with a Routes into Languages activity. Learners were asked to rate the event as a whole and the information they received on a five-point scale. They were also invited to indicate their level of agreement with the same statements as in the pre-event survey. An additional open question was included for learners to contribute any other thoughts about the event. Post-event questionnaires were completed at the end of an activity; most of which were one-off events but a small number involved interventions over a period of time.

Both pre- and post-event questionnaires collected the name of the respondents’ schools, their gender and year group.

The teacher post-event survey utilised a set of rating-scale statements to investigate teachers’ views on whether the event was a positive experience, whether its content was suitable for targeted students, whether it had provided valuable information and whether it was likely to change attitudes to language learning. There were also three open questions:

- Which aspects of the event/activity were most useful?
- Can you suggest any improvements?
- Do you have any further comments?

Teacher questionnaires were completed at the end of the activities.

Due to the nature of the methodology employed in collecting data from the learners, it has not proved possible to link each pupil pre-event and post-event questionnaire. However, it is believed that the two population samples (pre and post) consist mainly of the same individuals. It is clear though that not everyone who completed a pre-event questionnaire also completed a post-event questionnaire and vice versa. Although these differences between the pre- and post-event samples will have produced errors in the final results, it is considered that such errors will have been minimal due to the large size of both samples and because all schools have been matched across the pre- and post-event data. Data from schools that could not be matched has been discounted. Learners’ responses have also been analysed by gender, year group and type of school/college attended. In a number of such cases the samples created have remained large (i.e. around 1000) but in other cases, samples are much smaller and, therefore, the information may be less reliable in the smaller samples. An additional complicating factor with this part of the analysis is that it is apparent that a small number of learners elected to provide more information about themselves in one questionnaire than they did in the other (gender, year group and name of school).

Questionnaires were administered by Routes consortia project managers in cooperation with their partner universities and analysis was conducted by the Routes central team. The
process was carried out in line with the ethical and data protection guidelines of the University of Southampton.

3 Characteristics of learner sample

A large set of 3607 pre-event and 3398 post-event questionnaires from 202 schools/colleges were returned by all nine regions. As stated above, all schools represented in pre-event questionnaires were also represented in post-event questionnaires but the numbers of returns from individual schools were not always the same. The largest number of questionnaires came from the South West, followed by Yorkshire and the Humber and the West Midlands. These three regions accounted for 78.3% of pre-event and 75.3% of post-event questionnaires.

All year groups between 7 and 13 were represented in returns. Year 9 pupils were overwhelmingly the most frequent respondents with 2072 pre-event questionnaires (57.4% of total) and 1873 post-event questionnaires (55.1%). As year 9 is the last compulsory year of language study in English schools, this year group was particularly targeted by the evaluation and because of the sample size its responses can be considered the most reliable of the year group samples. A small number of students did not provide year group information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Year group samples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-event questionnaires</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-event questionnaires</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were a large number of male and female respondents represented in both the pre- and post-event questionnaires although there were a higher proportion of females (59.1% of pre-event and 58.2% of post-event) than males (38.5% of pre-event and 36.3% of post-event). This is not unexpected given evidence that girls are more likely to study languages in
post-compulsory age groups. A small number of respondents did not provide gender information.

3.1 Types of schools and colleges attended

As Routes into Languages has a remit to widen participation in language learning, the 202 schools (and a small number of colleges) attended by questionnaire respondents were analysed according to their achievement because substantial evidence links school attainment to the socio-economic circumstances of learners. Using Department for Education performance tables available in the public domain, schools and colleges were, therefore, categorised according to the percentage of learners who obtained 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths (schools) and average A-level points scores (colleges). For GCSE the national average for all schools in England in 2011 was 59% and for A-level the national average for all 16-19 institutions was 746.0 points.

Using national averages as a starting point, five categories of schools/colleges have been created (see Table 2). It is acknowledged that this process has limitations because the two categories at either end of the achievement scale (well below average and well above average) include outlying schools (e.g. a school with 100% of its intake achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs). Also, performance information is not available for all schools and some schools in the data are middle schools, which are obviously not included in GCSE performance tables. Additionally, school achievement does not reveal anything about the achievement of individual learners who participated in Routes activities. Nonetheless, categorising schools in this way has provided useful information about the range of schools engaging with Routes into Languages. It shows that schools of differing levels of achievement have been involved in events but that a greater proportion of learners came from schools/colleges of around average achievement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Schools: percentage of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs in 2011</th>
<th>Colleges: average A-level point score per student</th>
<th>Pre-event respondents</th>
<th>Post-event respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well above (national) average</td>
<td>76% and above</td>
<td>900 and above</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above average</td>
<td>65%-75%</td>
<td>800-899</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Around/about average</td>
<td>54%-64%</td>
<td>700-799</td>
<td>1149</td>
<td>1002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below average</td>
<td>43%-53%</td>
<td>600-699</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carr & Pauwels (2006)
6 e.g. IPPR (2012)
7 http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/index.html
Information about the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals was available for 148 of the 202 institutions (not for colleges and not for some schools). This showed that schools in this survey had an average of 15.9% of their pupils eligible for free school meals. This compares with a national average for 2011 of 14.7% and confirms that schools in this survey were clustered around the national average.

4 Findings: pre-event questionnaires

4.1 Attitudes to language learning

As described in Section 2 above, students were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a five-point scale with the following statements:

- I enjoy learning languages
- I enjoy meeting people from other cultures
- Languages will help me to get a job
- Language learning is difficult
- I would like to carry on with languages

For the purposes of this report, agree and strongly agree responses have been collated in the text but can still be seen separately in the corresponding figures and tables (percentages have been rounded up in the figures).

Responses to the statements showed largely positive attitudes to language learning as 68% of learners agreed (i.e. agreed and strongly agreed) that they enjoyed learning languages; 67.7% agreed that they liked meeting people from other cultures and 66.4% agreed that languages would help them to get a job.

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8 http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/index.html
Figure 1: I enjoy learning languages (pre-event)

Figure 2: I enjoy meeting people from different cultures (pre-event)
Levels of enjoyment of language learning seem high when compared to research studies which have reported that learners do not enjoy languages\textsuperscript{9} but they align closely with a previous attitudes survey carried out by Routes into Languages.\textsuperscript{10} A high incidence of enjoyment can be partially explained by the presence of post-compulsory age groups and by the larger number of female respondents in the data set.\textsuperscript{11} The reported interest in meeting people from other cultures is also very similar to findings in the previous Routes survey and points to the existence of an integrative motivational orientation, which includes a desire to communicate with native speakers.\textsuperscript{12} Support for the idea that languages are useful for jobs suggests that most learners in the survey also possessed an instrumental motivational orientation where language learning is associated with extrinsic rewards.\textsuperscript{13} This has been reported in other motivation studies with UK learners\textsuperscript{14} but in this survey it appears to be at a significantly lower level than the earlier Routes survey where 82% of learners had agreed that languages would be useful for jobs.

Survey respondents were less likely to agree that they would like to carry on with languages although this was still supported by 56%. Interestingly though, this seems to suggest that some students who enjoy learning languages would not like to continue studying them.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{Languages will help me to get a job (pre-event)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{9} e.g. Barton (2003); Watts (2003)
\textsuperscript{10} Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010)
\textsuperscript{11} Carr & Pauwels (2006)
\textsuperscript{12} Gardner (2001)
\textsuperscript{13} Gardner (2001)
\textsuperscript{14} e.g. Coleman, Galaczi & Astruc (2007)
As can be seen in the figures above, all statements attracted strong disagreement from 2% to 8% of respondents, possibly indicating a small hard core of disaffection with language learning among those participating in Routes into Languages activities.

It is also worth noting that although a majority of respondents enjoyed language learning, found it useful and would like to continue with it, they simultaneously found languages more difficult than other subjects.

Figure 5: Languages are more difficult than other subjects (pre-event)

4.2 Pre-event responses by gender
Girls generally responded more favourably than boys. For example, 74% of girls agreed that they enjoyed learning languages compared with 59.1% of boys and 60.9% of girls agreed that they would like to carry on with languages whereas 48.8% of boys agreed. These findings are not unexpected as previous research has found that girls tend to have more positive attitudes to languages and are less inclined to be ethnocentric than boys.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Figure 6: I enjoy learning languages (gender pre-event)}

\textbf{Figure 7: I enjoy meeting people from other cultures (gender pre-event)}

\textsuperscript{15} e.g. Carr & Pauwels (2006); Coleman, Galaczi & Astruc (2007)
A higher proportion of boys also reported finding languages more difficult than other subjects.
4.3 Pre-event responses by year group

As the sample sizes in different year groups varied considerably, caution is needed in interpreting the attitudes of different year groups. The number of year 7 and year 13 respondents was very small compared with other year groups, especially year 9. Additionally, questionnaire items relating to continuing with language study and the usefulness of languages for jobs could be considered to be rather more hypothetical for young learners in year 7.

Respondents in years 12 and 13 appeared to have more positive attitudes than those in other year groups. Almost all of them agreed that they enjoyed learning languages, enjoyed meeting people from other cultures and perceived that languages would be useful for jobs. These findings would seem to point to high levels of instrumental and integrative motivational orientations among these students. In addition, 87.8% of year 13s and 72.8% of year 12s indicated that they would like to carry on with languages. Year 13 responses were characterised by high levels of strong agreement. This is potentially encouraging for the universities in the Routes network as it could suggest that there might be a high conversion rate to studying languages in higher education among these students. It is difficult to interpret year 12 responses given evidence that languages suffer from a particularly high dropout rate between years 12 and 13 (i.e. between AS and A2).\(^{16}\) Year 10 respondents also seemed to have very favourable attitudes.

Indeed, students in all year groups were found to respond positively with the exception of year 9. Year 11 responses also raised some concerns. For example, 55.5% of year 9 respondents agreed that they enjoyed learning languages. This compared with 68.8% of year 7, 81.7% of year 8, 87.4% of year 10 and 75.2% of year 11 respondents. Additionally,

\(^{16}\) Cambridge Assessment (2009)
fewer year 9 respondents indicated that they enjoyed meeting people from other cultures and believed languages would be useful for jobs than in other year groups (although year 7 learners were also not so convinced of the jobs argument). Previous research has shown that language learning motivation tends to decline over the course of Key Stage 3 so these findings are perhaps unsurprising.\textsuperscript{17}

With regard to wanting to carry on learning languages, respondents in years 9 and 11 were far more negative than those in other year groups. Just 47.6\% of year 9 and 43.1\% of year 11 learners agreed that they would like to continue. The low levels of interest in carrying on with language study in years 9 and 11 are particularly concerning as these are two years in which important decisions about subject choice are made. Year 11 responses showed a large gap between enjoying languages and enjoying engaging with other cultures on the one hand and wanting to carry on learning languages on the other hand. This could be worthy of further investigation to explore why so many year 11s who enjoy languages do not want to continue learning them. Low interest in continuing with languages has been reported among year 11 students before. However, it was associated with lack of enjoyment and interest and lack of relevance for future career plans,\textsuperscript{18} which does not seem to have been the case here.

\textbf{Figure 11: I enjoy learning languages (year group pre-event)}

\textsuperscript{17} e.g. Coleman, Galazzi & Astruc (2007)
\textsuperscript{18} Graham (2002)
Figure 12: I enjoy meeting people from other cultures (year group pre-event)

Figure 13: Languages will help me to get a job (year group pre-event)
Figure 14: I would like to carry on learning languages (year group pre-event)

Year 7 learners were more inclined to agree that languages were difficult compared with other subjects as 66.3% of them agreed with this compared with 60% of year 13, 58.4% of year 9, 58% of year 12, 56.9% of year 11, 56% of year 8 and the somewhat lower 46.6% of year 10 respondents. Perceptions of the difficulty of language learning do not, therefore, provide an explanation for the low levels of interest in continuing with languages expressed by year 11 learners who enjoyed them.

4.5 Responses by school/college achievement

Attitudes also differed considerably according to school/college achievement. Respondents in schools/colleges with well above average achievement were significantly more positive than respondents from other schools, including above average schools/colleges. Respondents from schools with well below average achievement were more negative than those from other schools. These two groups of schools/colleges appeared to be outliers because responses from above average, around average and below average schools showed more similarities. For example, 85.6% of respondents in well above average schools reported that they enjoyed learning languages. This compared with 69.1% in above average schools, 64.1% in around average schools, 67.2% in below average schools and 52.2% in well below average schools. Similarly, 76.4% of pupils in well above average schools agreed that they would like to carry on with languages as opposed to 52.8% in above average schools, 53% in around average schools, 57.6% in below average schools and 43.4% in well below average schools. These findings would seem to reinforce previous suggestions that
languages tend to be socially elitist subjects, which are preferred by students from high performing and socio-economically advantaged schools/colleges.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{Figure 15:} I enjoy learning languages (school/college achievement pre-event)

\textbf{Figure 16:} I enjoy meeting people from other cultures (school/college achievement pre-event)

\textsuperscript{19} Vidal Rodeiro (2009)
Perceptions of the difficulty of languages also differed according to levels of school/college achievement. A lower proportion of respondents in well-above average schools agreed that languages were more difficult than other subjects than those in other schools, especially well below average schools. However, differences were smaller than had been the case with the other statements.

4.6 Responses to open question: Is there anything else you would like to say about learning languages?
This question generated a huge variety of comments from 1017 respondents (28.1% of total), some of whom wrote detailed answers. These were categorised in the manner of grounded theory methodology which resulted in the emergence of a large number of themes, many of which showed positive attitudes to languages but there were also neutral and negative remarks. The greater frequency of complimentary responses tends to reinforce evidence from the rating-scale statements, indicating that the majority of respondents liked languages.

The most common themes to emerge centred on the enjoyment of language learning. Learners reported that languages were enjoyable, fun, great, good, interesting and that they liked and loved them 282 times. The following are examples of comments made:

   “Learning languages is really fun” (year 9 boy, above average school, London)

   “I really enjoy learning French” (year 10 boy, around average school, East)

   “I enjoy it and will continue throughout my life” (year 9 girl, above average school, Yorkshire and the Humber)

   “It’s fun and a new experience” (year 8 girl, well below average school, South West)

   “J’adore joue au foot et French” (year 10 boy, well below average school, North West)

   “I love German – it is legendary” (year 9 boy, around average school, South West)

   “Es ist sehr gut” (year 11 girl, well above average school, North West)

Respondents also expressed a desire to learn another language 73 times. Specific reference was made most frequently to Spanish (22 mentions) and Italian (nine mentions) and then to Chinese, Japanese, German, Latin, Russian, Icelandic, Greek, Punjabi, Urdu, Turkish, Finnish and African languages.

Another common theme was the idea that languages are useful, helpful for the future, important and a good skill to have (56 mentions), for example:

   “I think they are a very useful skill, which most people should acquire” (year 10 girl, around average school, Yorkshire and the Humber)

Languages were also reported to be good for jobs and careers (45 mentions):

   “I believe that they can help you get a better job in the future” (year 7 girl, well below average school, South East)

   “Good for CV” (year 12 girl, below average school/college, West Midlands)

The benefits of learning languages for travel were identified 42 times e.g.
“It can help you when you go on holiday abroad” (year 9 girl, below average school, South East)

There were 32 remarks which linked learning languages to gains in cultural knowledge, for example:

“I enjoy learning about languages and how different countries celebrate different occasions” (year 8 girl, well above average school, North East)

Learners specifically reported that they would like to carry on studying languages in 46 instances as highlighted by the following examples:

“I am applying to do a three language degree at university with the intention of becoming an interpreter” (year 13 girl, well above average school/college, East Midlands)

“I would like to carry on a language till A level” (year 9 boy, above average school, South West)

A few others also reported that they might choose a language.

Other positive themes which were mentioned five or more times can be seen below (see Table 3). These included the notion that languages are good for communication, easy, important and that the respondents’ language teachers were good.

The most frequent negative category to emerge was lack of enjoyment (158 mentions). Learners reported that they did not enjoy languages, found them boring, rubbish and a waste of time, e.g.

“I do not like French. It is mind-numbingly boring and I’m English. I don’t get them. You get me” (year 9 boy, around average school, South West)

“It causes me too much stress and I don’t enjoy it” (year 11 girl, above average school, Yorkshire & Humber)

“It’s boring and won’t help me in future” (year 8 girl, around average school, East)

Some pupils’ remarks focused on the difficulty and challenge of language learning (78 mentions) and included references to languages being confusing, difficult, challenging and to not understanding them, for example:

“I find learning other languages harder because there are certain rules you have to follow” (year 9 boy, above average school, London)

“I don’t like learning languages. I don’t understand it” (year 9 girl, below average school, South West)
A small number of participants also referred to the confusion and difficulty they were experiencing in learning two languages:

“.... I also find it hard learning two languages at the same time because I get confused” (year 9 girl, around average school, South West)

Languages were reported as having no use or purpose (15 times) and it was also suggested that they should not be compulsory e.g.

“I don’t see why I would have to carry on doing a language for GCSE. I think it should be optional” (year 9 girl, above average school, South West)

Other negative categories which were mentioned five or more times included not liking teachers and not liking textbooks.

All these negative observations back up findings from the rating scales, which appeared to suggest the existence of a minority of respondents who were disaffected with language learning.

Some responses to this question were essentially neutral in tone (rather than either positive or negative). These included comments about the importance of teachers (21 mentions), needing more choice of languages, needing more language lessons, needing to start learning languages earlier and to learn more about culture, as follows:

“There’s only three to choose from; we need more choices!” (year 9 girl, above average school, West Midlands)

“We should start learning a language at an earlier age” (year 10 boy, around average school, East)

“More Russian lessons, it would be easier to learn if we had more lessons....” (year 10 girl, around average school, South West)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Is there anything else you would like to say about language learning?</th>
<th>Number of times mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive comments</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are enjoyable/ fun/ good/ great/ interesting/ I like languages/ I love languages</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to learn another language</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will/may choose a language</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are useful/ important</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are good for careers</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are good for travel</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are helpful for culture</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are good for communication</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are good for university</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are easy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher is good</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative comments</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are not enjoyable / boring/ not fun enough/ a waste of time</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are difficult/confusing/ challenging* / I don’t understand</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are not useful/ should not be compulsory</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like textbooks</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other comments</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher is important</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More choice of languages is needed</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need to learn more about culture</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need more language lessons</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We should start learning languages younger</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More speaking is needed in language lessons</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*It is acknowledged that the idea of ‘challenge’ is not always negative*

There were also a variety of other themes, which were mentioned fewer than five times. These included suggestions that more school trips abroad were needed and requests for more food tasting in language lessons. A few learners also reported that they spoke other languages to family members such as Punjabi and Italian.

**4.7 Summary of pre-event findings**

In summary, responses to pre-event questionnaires indicated that around two-thirds of participants enjoyed learning languages, enjoyed meeting people from other cultures and believed languages would be useful for jobs. Just over half of respondents indicated that they would like to carry on learning languages. A minority of participants were rather less complimentary about languages and a small number appeared to have hostile attitudes. Qualitative comments suggested that many of these students found languages fun, enjoyable and useful but others considered language learning to be boring and a waste of time. Attitudes were found to vary according to gender (boys were more negative than girls), year group (year 9s were more negative than other year groups) and level of school/college achievement (learners in schools of well below average achievement were more negative than those in other schools, especially schools of well above average achievement).
5 Findings: post-event questionnaires

5.1 Events attended

Learners took part in a diverse range of Routes into Languages activities, which included revision and study days, languages conferences, cultural events, careers talks, film, media, creative arts and sports events, taster sessions and school visits.

Where possible, events have been grouped together into categories. For example, A2, AS and year 12 study and revision days have all been grouped as A-level study days. However, it proved difficult to categorise many activities because they covered more than one topic. A languages day organised by one consortium, for example, included cultural content, a languages taster and a careers talk. Activities have, therefore, been listed with the number of participants alongside (see Table 4), which shows that visits to schools by consortia teams were by far the most frequent form of intervention and involved 42.5% of participants. School visits included year 9 assemblies, ‘languages and you visits’ and most often, ‘why study languages?’ presentations. The next most common activities were Festivals for Cultures attended by 7% of respondents. Learners’ qualitative comments (see section 5.7) indicated that events in several regions included translating and interpreting strands, which shows involvement of the Routes National Networks for Translating and Interpreting in the consortia activities.

It is also clear from Table 4 that events had distinctive aims and purposes such as increasing cultural awareness (e.g. Chinese and Japanese Day), raising attainment (e.g. GCSE Revision Day) and providing information, advice and guidance on employability and careers (e.g. World of Work).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Events attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75th Anniversary of the Spanish Civil War- Stories of ordinary men and woman: International Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Level Study Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able Linguists Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese and Japanese Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese New Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Languages Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival for Cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film and Culture Event for GCSE Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French and Spanish Challenge Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Language Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Olympic Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE Revision Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Film Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Xmas Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going Global!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian Mafia and Film Theatre Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Taster Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Factor Song Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Ambassadors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Roadshow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lend your voice to an actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routes into Languages conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routes into Languages Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routes into Xmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and Language Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Italian Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World of Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2 Experiences of events

Respondents were asked to rate the event overall and the information they received on a five-point scale:

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
Reactions to events overall were very encouraging with 83% of responses excellent, very good or good. Just 2.1% of attendees rated activities as poor. The information received at events was perceived to be excellent, very good or good by 85.8% and poor by 1.5% of respondents. As with the pre-event survey, percentages have been rounded up in the figures.

![Pie chart showing event ratings]

**Figure 19: Please rate the event as a whole (post-event)**
These results would seem to suggest that Routes activities are valued by the overwhelming majority of those participating in them.

### 5.3 Post-event attitudes to language learning

Post-event, respondents were also asked to indicate their levels of agreement with the same five statements as in the pre-event questionnaire.

Responses to all statements were more positive than in the pre-event questionnaires. For example, 70.7% of pupils agreed that they enjoyed learning languages (+3%); 70.9% agreed that they liked meeting people from other cultures (+3.2%) and 77.5% agreed that languages would help them get a job (+11.1%). The consistent improvement across these attitudinal measures in a large sample like this does suggest that Routes activities are having an immediate motivational impact. The somewhat larger increase in the numbers of pupils agreeing that languages would be useful for jobs aligns with findings from an earlier Routes survey of teachers in England\(^2\) and a recent survey in Wales,\(^3\) where teachers had particularly identified increased awareness of the career benefits of languages over a longer term among learners following engagement with Routes. These findings provide further support to those teachers' perspectives and suggest that Routes may be particularly influencing pupils' instrumental motivational orientations for language learning.

The percentage of learners who agreed that they would like to carry on with language learning had risen to 60.2% post-event; an increase of 4.2% over pre-event results, which indicates that some learners appeared to be changing their minds about languages in the

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\(^2\) Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010)

\(^3\) Gallagher-Brett (2012a)
immediate aftermath of activity. Whilst it is possible that some of these alterations in attitudes could be partially linked to ‘post-event euphoria,’ other existing evidence indicates that for some learners, Routes events are associated with longer-term attitudinal change and increases in languages uptake.\textsuperscript{23}

Post-event there remained a small core of disaffection expressed by strong disagreement with the statements above, which suggests that Routes events are not reaching some of the learners who take part in them. The level of strong disagreement ranged from 1.8% to 6% so it had diminished slightly after the activities but this is a relatively small change (it was between 2% and 8% pre-event).

In contrast with the other attitudinal statements, there was little change in perceptions of the difficulty of language learning post-event as 58.1% agreed this post-event as opposed to 56.7% pre-event (so there was a slight increase post-event).

5.4 Post-event responses and gender

In reactions to events and information received, there were some small differences between the responses of boys and girls although both were largely positive.

Events overall were judged to be excellent, very good or good by 84.2% of girls and 81.6% of boys. Information received was rated as excellent, very good or good by 86.6% of girls and 85.8% of boys. Girls seemed a little more inclined to judge events and information as very good while boys tended to judge them as good. Boys also appeared to be a little more likely to express negative views of activities as 3.3% of them rated events overall as poor compared with 1.4% of girls and 2.4% of boys indicated that the information received was poor whereas only 0.8% of girls suggested this. As previously stated, these differences can probably be explained by boys’ generally less favourable attitudes to languages.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{22} Handley (2011: 156)
\textsuperscript{23} Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010); Handley (2011)
\textsuperscript{24} e.g. Coleman, Galaczi & Astruc (2007)
However, analysis of post-event attitudinal statements revealed some interesting findings. Girls continued to express greater enjoyment of language learning, more interest in meeting people from other cultures and more willingness to continue studying languages, all of which reinforces their more favourable outlook on languages. But boys’ responses showed more positive attitudinal change than girls’ responses after activities (see Table 5 below), including a 6.4% increase in the desire to continue with languages.
Table 5: Attitudes and gender post-event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of agreement (strongly agree &amp; agree)</th>
<th>Girls post-event</th>
<th>Boys post-event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy learning languages</td>
<td>75% (+1%)</td>
<td>64.4% (+5.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy meeting people from other cultures</td>
<td>74.4% (+2.4%)</td>
<td>65.3% (+3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages will help me to get a job</td>
<td>79.5% (+10.2%)</td>
<td>74.7% (+12.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to carry on with languages</td>
<td>63.5% (+2.6%)</td>
<td>55.2% (+6.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Boys are a target group for Routes because of their under-representation in language learning so these findings are potentially encouraging. There has been some previous evidence of Routes activities influencing boys so this data would seem to provide additional support in this area.  

There were few changes in girls' and boys' perceptions of the difficulty of language learning post-event.

5.5  Post-event responses and year groups

As stated in the section on pre-event responses, caution is needed in interpreting responses from different year groups because of the vastly different sample sizes. In particular, the small year 7 sample was significantly different from the pre-event sample (although it involved the same schools and same events).

All year groups expressed favourable views about events overall and about the information they had received. However, (perhaps unsurprisingly in view of pre-event responses) year 9 respondents were less positive than those in other year groups. Whereas more than 90% of students in all other year groups perceived events overall to be excellent, very good or good, 75.8% of year 9 respondents did so. Year 9s were more positive about information received as 81.3% of them agreed that it was excellent, very good or good but this was still less positive than other year groups.

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25 McCall (2011)
Year group responses to attitudinal statements appeared to present a complex picture post-event (see Table 6). Key Stage 3 (KS3) year groups (7, 8 & 9) showed positive attitudinal change consistently in all areas. Although the year 7 sample could be viewed as somewhat unreliable, it is still showing positive findings. Particularly encouraging are indications of improvements in attitudes among the large group of year 9 participants, including a 5.2%
increase in the desire to continue with languages. This data would seem to suggest that Routes activities are well-targeted and effective with learners in KS3.

The situation in Key Stages 4 and 5 (KS4 and KS5) seems to be rather different. Only year 11 participants showed consistent improvement in attitudes whereas the other year groups clearly did not. There could be a variety of reasons for this but as reported above, participants in KS4 and KS5 did not seem to view events in a more negative way than those in KS3. One possible explanation is that although older learners were found to be involved in a range of Routes activities, there was more of a focus on raising attainment with them than on promoting enjoyment of languages (e.g. exam revision and study days) and there is nothing in the attitudinal statements to capture this aspect. This could be viewed as a weakness of the questionnaire. It should also be noted that learners in years 10, 12 and 13 already had very positive attitudes pre-event and so this evidence seems to indicate that the activities did not improve attitudes where they were already favourable. Additionally, there are more female respondents in older, post-compulsory age groups who showed less positive attitudinal change than males so gender could be a complicating variable.

It is worth noting that all year groups showed positive attitudinal change in one area, i.e. the idea that languages would be useful for jobs. This adds to existing evidence in indicating that Routes activities are providing useful information, advice and guidance about employability to learners of all ages and that this is resulting in improvements to learners’ instrumental motivational orientations for language learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of agreement and strong agreement</th>
<th>I enjoy learning languages</th>
<th>I enjoy meeting people from other cultures</th>
<th>Languages will help me to get a job</th>
<th>I would like to carry on learning languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 post-event</td>
<td>92.8% (+23.4%)</td>
<td>87.8% (+11.5%)</td>
<td>66.1% (+9.8%)</td>
<td>83.5% (+27.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8 post-event</td>
<td>83.5% (+1.8%)</td>
<td>82.6% (+5.9%)</td>
<td>78.1% (+10.5%)</td>
<td>72.9% (+3.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9 post-event</td>
<td>58.7% (+3.2%)</td>
<td>59% (+2.6%)</td>
<td>74.2% (+14.5%)</td>
<td>52.8% (+5.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10 post-event</td>
<td>86.2% (-1.2%)</td>
<td>84.5% (-0.6%)</td>
<td>86.5% (+6.5%)</td>
<td>70.3% (-0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11 post-event</td>
<td>79.9% (+4.7%)</td>
<td>81% (+4.7%)</td>
<td>79.6% (+7.9%)</td>
<td>45.8% (+2.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12 post-event</td>
<td>93.9% (-0.1%)</td>
<td>96.7% (+2.4%)</td>
<td>86.6% (+1.5%)</td>
<td>72.1% (-0.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 13 post-event</td>
<td>93.9 (+0.5%)</td>
<td>98.8% (-0.1%)</td>
<td>93.9% (+6.7%)</td>
<td>86.6% (-1.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6 Post-event responses and school/college achievement

Participants from schools/colleges of differing levels of achievement were found to assess activities positively. Events were rated as excellent, very good and good by 80.7% of respondents in schools of around average achievement (the least positive result) and 87.9% by those in schools of above average achievement (the most positive result). Information received was assessed to be excellent, very good or good by 88.4% of respondents in schools of well above average achievement (the most positive result) and by 83.6% in schools of below average achievement (the least positive result).

Respondents from schools/colleges of well above average and well below average achievement were not found to be outliers here (see Figures 25 & 26)

![Figure 25: Please rate the event as a whole (school/college achievement post-event)](image)
Figure 26: Please rate the information you received (school/college achievement post-event)

Responses to attitudinal statements post-event continued to show that learners in schools/colleges of well above average achievement held the most positive views about language learning while those in schools of well below average achievement held the most negative views. These two groups of schools remained outliers to the main body of schools (above average, around average, below average) in their responses.

However, responses also showed positive attitudinal change in all areas among respondents from all types of school/college except those of well above average achievement (see Table 7). The biggest changes seemed to occur in the responses of those from schools of well below average achievement, i.e. the most challenging schools. Particularly striking was an increase of 8.9% in the reported desire to continue with language study in these schools. Given Routes has a remit to widen participation in language learning to groups who do not traditionally study languages, these are potentially hopeful findings. It would be helpful if they could be replicated on a larger scale. The greatest confidence can be attached to responses from those in schools of around average achievement because of the larger group of 1002 respondents. These reveal an increase of 5.3% in wanting to study languages.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of agreement and strong agreement</th>
<th>Well above average achievement</th>
<th>Above average achievement</th>
<th>Around average achievement</th>
<th>Below average achievement</th>
<th>Well below average achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy learning languages</td>
<td>85.5% (-0.1%)</td>
<td>71.2% (+2.1%)</td>
<td>69.4% (+5.3%)</td>
<td>69.3% (+2.1%)</td>
<td>58.4% (+6.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy meeting people from other cultures</td>
<td>81.5% (+0.5%)</td>
<td>71.1% (+4.7%)</td>
<td>67.4% (+3.1%)</td>
<td>75.4% (+2.8%)</td>
<td>59.7% (+5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages will help me to get a job</td>
<td>86% (+2%)</td>
<td>78.3% (+13.2%)</td>
<td>75.1% (+13.1%)</td>
<td>75.7% (+9.6%)</td>
<td>75.6% (+15.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to carry on learning languages</td>
<td>75.6% (-1.2%)</td>
<td>57.5% (+4.7%)</td>
<td>58.3% (+5.3%)</td>
<td>60.3% (+2.7%)</td>
<td>52.3% (+8.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These post-event responses seem to suggest that although students in schools/colleges of well above average achievement enjoyed Routes activities and had more favourable attitudes to language learning than those in other schools, the activities did not influence their attitudes. This was also found among the year groups with the most positive attitudes and seems to be suggesting that Routes activities have less attitudinal impact on those learners who are in groups which have favourable attitudes to languages anyway.

For learners in all other types of schools, there appears to have been a consistent improvement in attitudes post-event, especially for those in schools of well below average achievement. As stated above, caution is needed in interpreting findings due to the range of sample sizes. However, support for these results comes from the Routes into Languages first-year undergraduate survey 2011-2012,\(^{26}\) in which students who had attended independent schools and other high performing schools/colleges prior to university and had taken part in languages outreach and enrichment activities were less likely to report that their attitudes to languages and decisions to study them had been positively influenced as a result than those who had attended maintained schools and average/below average performing schools/colleges. The undergraduate survey reflects a longer-term perceived impact of outreach activities rather than their immediate aftermath.

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\(^{26}\) Gallagher-Brett (2012b)
5.7 Responses to open question: Is there anything else you would like to say about the event?

1387 participants (40.8% of total) responded to this question with many of them making multiple comments (see Table 8). Overwhelmingly, learners wrote about how much they had enjoyed and liked activities and reported that they were fun, good, awesome, brilliant, amazing and interesting (657 mentions). Several said that they were glad they had come. Enthusiasm for the events comes through strongly in their remarks, as following examples highlight:

“Enjoyed every bit. Had fun” (year 8 boy, middle school, North East)

“Funny as, I'm not even joking, proper hilarious. But not in a bad way, it was brilliant” (year 9 girl, well below average school, East Midlands)

“I LOVE IT! Thank you. Better than the Space Centre” (year 7 boy, around average school, West Midlands)

“Invite us more, it was great. Italian man was fab!” (year 10 girl, well below average school, North West)

“It was good, I loved it loads!” (year 9 girl, around average school, South West)

“It was wicked .....” (year 8 boy, well below average school, London)

“Very interesting, thank you” (year 9 girl, below average school, South East)

Comments about enjoyment sometimes included learners’ wishes to be involved in something similar again.

“Awesome day, would love to come again and the uni's fantastic! Gracias” (year 10 girl, below average school, Yorkshire & the Humber)

“I loved it. It was so fun and I would want to come again” (year 8 boy, no school information, East)

The high volume of learners’ comments which focused on the enjoyable nature of these events further reinforces findings from previous evaluation reports that Routes activities are successful in stimulating interest in languages.27

In 141 responses, learners indicated that events had provided helpful information, advice and guidance, either generally or more specifically about languages and careers and about studying languages or translating and interpreting at university. This indicates that the consortia and national networks are working together to provide information that is valuable to learners. Comments included the following:

27 SQW (2011)
“I thought that it was really interesting about how useful even a GCSE in a language can be later in life” (year 9 girl, around average school, South West)

“The event gave me lots of information I can use in later life” (year 9 girl, below average school, South East)

“I like the translation taster session! Everyone gave very encouraging and helpful information and advice.” (year 12 girl, below average school/college, West Midlands)

“I thought it was a real eye opener about university. The information I received was really helpful” (year 9 boy, no school information, East Midlands)

“It was quite interactive and informative” (year 9 boy, well above average school, London)

A few students who did not like languages also indicated that there had been an increase in their awareness of the potential usefulness of languages, e.g.

“I hate French but I now realise that it'll help me get a job” (year 9 girl, around average school, South West)

Learners also reported that activities were educational and had supported their language learning (99 mentions). Most of these comments related to exam preparation and revision, as follows:

Good practise for my oral exam and reading comprehension (year 13 girl, around average school/college, Yorkshire & the Humber)

I improved on my pronunciation and learned new ways about talking in past tense (year 11 girl, above average school, Yorkshire & the Humber)

Some participants also referred to the beneficial learning opportunities they had been given to interact with native speakers; often these were student ambassadors:

“I think having her in our class has helped improve my Italian” (year 9 girl, around average school, East Midlands)

Respondents were particularly enthused by specific tasks and activities or different aspects of events (96 mentions). There were 12 positive references to cultural aspects in general, 11 to origami and 11 to calligraphy. Other activities singled out for mention included African dance, ball games, Bollywood, dubbing, Frisbee, market place, music lessons, Tai Chi and translating and interpreting sessions, e.g.

It was awesome. Bollywood is wicked (year 9 boy, around average school, North East)

“I enjoyed learning about spies” (year 9 girl, above average school, South West)
“Really fun. I wanted to do more Chinese calligraphy” (year 9 girl, well above average school, East)

Several of these activities such as calligraphy and origami were part of language taster sessions. There were an additional 67 references to how good learners had found language tasters. These included general comments about having the opportunity to learn a new (and sometimes unusual language) and remarks about specific languages, most frequently Chinese and Arabic but also Catalan, Farsi, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish.

“I thoroughly enjoyed learning about Persian calligraphy and Portuguese. It was so much fun! Thank you for giving me this opportunity. I would love to carry on the language I learnt” (year 9 girl, above average school, North East)

“I enjoyed the Arabic taster” (year 10 boy, well above average school, North West)

“I thought that it was very informative as I learnt two brand new subjects. Never in a lifetime would I expect to learn a brand new subject, it was a lovely experience” (year 7 girl, well above average school, West Midlands)

These comments also suggest that Routes is continuing to raise the profile of languages of the wider world and community languages. Twenty-eight respondents went on to report that they wanted to learn one of these new languages or would like more choice of languages generally.

Event organisation and food also attracted favourable comments (36 mentions). Some learners felt that activities were well-organised, that campus tours were good and they reported that they had enjoyed the food they were given, e.g.

“I especially enjoyed the campus tour.” (year 9 boy, well above average school, North West)

“Well planned and presented, thanks” (year 12 boy, below average school/college, South West)

“Nice lunch and very fun!” (year 9 boy, well above average school, East)

“Thank you for a great day, we were looked after well and the timetable was well organised” (year 9 boy, below average school, West Midlands)

There were a large number of complimentary remarks about event presenters, university teachers and student ambassadors, describing how good, helpful and friendly they were and also how nice it was to talk to student ambassadors and hear their personal stories. These

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28 Handley (2011)
findings reinforce previous evidence which has indicated that the role of student ambassadors is an important one in Routes.29

“Teachers were incredible! I’m really glad I came here, thank you!” (year 13 girl, around average school/college, Yorkshire & the Humber)

“The Chinese and Spanish teachers were lovely. Thanks!” (year 12 girl, around average school/college, South East)

“The student ambassadors were able to provide extremely useful information - many thanks.” (year 12 boy, well above average school/college, West Midlands)

“I enjoyed talking to the student ambassadors” (year 9 girl, around average school, North East)

45 students indicated that they were thinking of choosing a language as a result of the event or that they had previously been considering doing a language and the event had helped them decide to go ahead, as follows:

“I was considering taking Spanish and this event has made my decision definite” (year 9 girl, below average school, South East)

“When I first came here at the start of the day I didn’t really see the point in languages. The starting lecture helped me to see the importance and gave me the desire to want to carry on a MFL. During the day I found it fun, which made me think twice …” (year 10 girl, around average school, Yorkshire & the Humber)

“It made me think that I might actually want to take a language” (year 9 girl, well below average school, South West)

“This has made me think more about choosing a language for GCSE” (year 9 boy, around average school, South East)

“It helped me decide I do want to take French” (year 9 girl, above average school, South West)

“Now considering to take A-level French” (year 11 boy, above average school, Yorkshire & the Humber)

There were a few remarks in which pupils did not specify that they would be choosing languages but nonetheless they suggested that events had helped with this issue, as follows:

“Helped me with my language choices” (year 9 boy, well above average school, London)

29 SQW (2011)
As well as helping participants to think more favourably about languages, there were also some indications that events were encouraging some students to think differently about university, e.g.

“It gave me a brand new look on university. I now see it as a whole new positive concept” (year 10 girl, well above average school, East Midlands)

One learner suggested that an event had made him think about choosing to study abroad:

“I really enjoyed it. It has inspired me to now make the choice to study abroad” (year 9 boy, well below average school, South West)

A small number of learners made favourable observations about liking languages which were seemingly unrelated to the event and were not very different from some of the pre-event open responses.

Finally, there was one specific event in the South West where a large number of female students wrote lengthy complimentary comments about their experiences. Here is one example in full:

“I think the whole process was good as we got told how to use languages and found out about different cultures but also that learning a language gets you a more interesting job. Also the general day was really good because it taught me so many things like Japanese numbers, languages and also got to taste some more food that they would have in France, e.g. Pain au chocolate et croissant and orange juice. But we also did a quiz which was interesting and fun and also they got everyone involved and didn’t leave anyone out. In the activities there was more positive things than negative things which is really good. I think I really enjoyed it and would do it again if I could so thank you as it has really helped with my options. I have learnt so much that I didn’t know before.” (year 9 girl, above average school, South West)

Table 8: Is there anything else you would like to say about the event?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive comments</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The event was enjoyable/ fun/ awesome/ interesting/ good/ amazing</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The event provided useful information, advice and guidance</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The event supported my language learning/ I learnt new things</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particular aspects of/ activities in the event were good</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters, teachers, university staff and SLAs were good</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language tasters were good</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will/ may choose a language as a result of the event</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to be involved in another activity</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aspects of the event organisation were good  36
I like languages  12
I would like to learn a new language  11

Negative comments

| Particular aspects of/activities in the event were not good enough/could have been better | 105 |
| The event was boring/not enjoyable/repetitive/a waste of time | 84 |
| Aspects of event organisation were not good/could have been better | 52 |
| I don't like languages | 34 |
| Language tasters were not enjoyable/were too difficult | 11 |
| Information, advice and guidance was not useful/not good enough/could have been better | 10 |
| I won't be choosing a language/I don't want to study languages | 10 |

However, not everyone reported a positive experience of events as can be seen in Table 8. Some learners were critical of different elements of the events they had attended.

Particular activities and tasks in events were not always well-received (105 mentions). The most frequent complaint was that there was not enough interaction and not enough choice of task. There were also comments about activities being too advanced, too basic and about videos being poor or difficult to understand. A few students suggested that there was too much writing and there should be more role plays, more icebreakers and more fun (e.g. games and quizzes). One student stated that she did not like being put on the spot. Other comments on this theme included the following:

“I enjoyed my chocolate roll but more activities to do would help” (year 8, no gender information, middle school, North East)

“It was too basic” (year 11 girl, well above average school, Yorkshire & the Humber)

“Could've been more interactive instead of just sitting and listening” (year 9 girl, above average school, South West)

“Put more games in the activities” (year 7 boy, around average school, West Midlands)

Lack of enjoyment was also reported by some participants (84 mentions) with events most often being described as boring. Learners also suggested that activities had been repetitive,
pointless, rubbish, confusing, a waste of time and ‘not my cup of tea.’ One respondent wrote that he was feeling bullied into taking a language. Comments included the following:

“I didn't really enjoy the event. I don't care about different languages. Don't want to learn any. I think it was a waste of time” (year 8 girl, below average school, South West)

“Bit boring” (year 10 girl, well below average school, East Midlands)

Aspects of event organisation also attracted negative comments (52 mentions). One common criticism was about the food. Students also suggested that campus tours were not needed or that better campus tours were required. There were reports of activities being too long, too short, disorganised, journeys being too long, too much walking being involved and university maps being needed. There were 21 suggestions that student ambassadors needed microphones or louder voices because they could not be heard. There were also a couple of complaints about rooms being too hot and about not liking the prizes on offer at events, e.g.

“It was a bit disorganised” (year 9 boy, well above average school, East)

“Walking from places were too far. More organisation.” (year 10 boy, well above average school, North West)

“Tour was a waste of time and completely pointless” (year 12 girl, below average school/college, Yorkshire & the Humber)

“Not enough pain au chocolat” (year 9 boy, above average school, South West)

“I couldn't hear a thing, but the stuff I heard was good” (year 9 boy, around average school, South West)

“There was only one thing which I did not find very good, my school won the quiz yet we got like two lollipops to share between us!” (Year 10 girl, below average school, East Midlands)

However, it should be noted (as can be seen in several comments above) that some of these complaints were focused on there not being sufficient emphasis on a particular activity or there not being enough time for it and these were attached to otherwise very positive remarks, for example:

“It was amazing and I have definitely found out more about languages and it has really helped me but we SHOULD of seen GCHQ. Therefore there should of been more time.” (year 9 boy, above average school, South West)

With regard to complaints about campus tours, these were made at the same events where other learners had praised the tours.
A number of general hostile comments about languages were also made; most of which seemed unrelated to events (34 references). As with the positive comments of this sort, these were similar to pre-event responses. Students reported that they did not like languages (mostly French) and that they found languages difficult. A few additionally suggested that there should have been more information at events about the importance of English.

A small number of references were made to negative experiences at language tasters (11 mentions). A few of these concerned a dislike of the taster language and suggestions that there should be more choice of languages on offer. Mainly though these remarks came from learners who found the Arabic and Russian tasters difficult, e.g.

“It was too much to take in in one lesson, especially Russian” (year 8 boy, well above average school, West Midlands)

“Would have been better if we could choose ab-initio language” (year 12 boy, no school/college information, South East)

There were also some comments about information received at events not being useful, about already knowing the information and about needing more information about university study, for example:

“I would have liked more information about university degrees and languages combined” (year 11 girl, well above average school, London)

Finally, there were 10 remarks from learners who stated that they would not be choosing a language and in a few instances, they indicated that events had helped them to decide this. A couple of these students suggested that they had enjoyed the event, but that languages were not for them, for example:

“It did not convince me to take a language” (year 9 boy, well below average school, South West)

“Although I wouldn't like to take languages to a specific university degree, today has helped me to decide that” (year 12 girl, no school/college information, West Midlands)

“It was good and a language would be useful in life but I have other subjects I would like to take for GCSE” (year 9 girl, above average school, South West)

Negative comments of some participants provide further evidence that Routes activities are not reaching all of those who take part in them.

5.8 Summary of pupil post-event data

Learners’ reactions to events were largely extremely positive and enthusiastic. They rated events and the information they received highly. Their attitudes to languages showed improvements in all areas when compared with the pre-event survey. A higher proportion of
Participants reported enjoyment of language learning, enjoyment of meeting people from other cultures and there was a particularly large increase in the ratio of those who agreed that languages would help them to get a job. The percentage of learners who indicated that they would like to continue studying languages had also increased. However, the impact of Routes activities appeared to vary for different groups of participants. There seemed to be a greater impact for learners in KS3, for boys and for students who attended schools of well below average achievement. At the same time, the activities did not have such an influence on the attitudes of learners in groups which had already demonstrated favourable attitudes in the pre-event survey (older learners, girls and learners from schools of well above average achievement). These groups could also be interacting as complicating variables.

Positive findings were reinforced by learners’ qualitative comments, the majority of which revealed tremendous enthusiasm for Routes activities. There were, however, indications of a minority of disaffected students who were not reached by the events they had taken part in.

6 Teacher post-event questionnaires

Teachers who attended activities with their pupils were invited to complete a post-event questionnaire, which aimed to elicit their views on whether the event was a positive experience, whether the content was suitable for targeted students, whether the event had provided students with valuable information and whether it was likely to change students’ attitudes to language learning. Teachers were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with items on a five-point rating scale. The questionnaire also included three open questions:

- Which aspects of the event/activity were most useful?
- Can you suggest any improvements?
- Do you have any further comments?

6.1 Characteristics of teacher sample

Questionnaires were completed by 342 teachers in 185 schools in eight regions. A small number of teachers who completed questionnaires were not working at schools in the pre- and post-event pupil questionnaire sample. These were not discounted as they were considered to contain relevant information about events. The highest number of returns came from the South East, followed by the North East and the South West. There were no returns from the North West. Two regions asked their teachers to complete an adapted questionnaire with either one or two of the main rating scale items questions replaced by alternative items. This means that there are a few instances in which there are relatively high numbers of non-responses in the analysis.

30 North West teachers completed a different questionnaire which will need to be analysed separately.
Teachers were working in schools/colleges of all differing levels of achievement. However, the proportion of teachers employed in schools with around average achievement was significantly larger than those from other schools and made up 28.6% of the total. The sample from other types of schools ranged from 10.5% to 13.5% of the total.

6.2 Teachers’ responses to events

Teachers’ reactions to events were overwhelmingly positive and indicate that they really valued the events they attended. For example, 97.1% of teachers agreed (i.e. agreed and strongly agreed) that events were a positive experience and no-one disagreed. Additionally, 89.2% agreed that the content was suitable for targeted students and 92.6% agreed that events had provided students with valuable information, which suggests that Routes activities are considered to be useful sources of information, advice and guidance by MFL teachers.

![Figure 27: The event was a positive experience (teacher post-event)](image-url)
Although teachers were less sure that the events would change students’ attitudes to language learning, this was still agreed by 73.7% of them and this finding is broadly similar to evidence from an earlier Routes survey of teachers.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{31} Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2011)
Figure 30: The event is likely to change attitudes to language learning (teacher post-event)

There were some differences in the responses from teachers working in schools/colleges of varying levels of achievement.

All teachers in schools/colleges of above average, below average and well below average achievement agreed that events were a positive experience. There were a small number of teachers in schools of well above average and around average achievement who were not sure about this. The content of events was regarded as suitable by 94.9% of teachers in schools of above average achievement, 94.5% of those in well below average schools and 93.2% of those in below average schools. Once again, there was a little more uncertainty in teachers employed in schools of well above average and around average achievement with 89.1% and 84.7% agreement respectively. It is difficult to speculate on the reasons for these differences which could simply be related to characteristics of individual teachers. Few school differences were found in teachers’ perceptions of the information provided at events.

There were interesting variations in teachers’ perspectives on the likelihood of events changing attitudes depending on the type of school/college they worked in. Teachers in schools of well above average achievement were most confident that there would be an improvement in attitudes to language learning as 82.6% of them agreed. This was a higher level of agreement than teachers in schools of below average (79.6%), above average (76.9%) and around average (72.5%) achievement. In contrast, just 58.4% of teachers in schools of well below average achievement indicated that events were likely to change students’ attitudes and 30.6% of these teachers reported that they were not sure. It could be viewed as a positive finding that the majority of teachers in the most challenging schools believed that attitudinal change was probable. However, it does also suggest that some teachers working in difficult circumstances may feel that it is harder to change the attitudes of their learners than teachers in other schools.
Interestingly, this does not concur with findings from the pupil post-event surveys where attitudinal change was not found among learners who attended schools of well above average achievement but was found in all other schools, especially those of well below average achievement.

6.3 Responses to open question: Which aspects of the event/activity were most useful?

Teachers’ views were found to coincide with those of their pupils in some instances. However, their priorities were somewhat different and their comments focused a little less on enjoyment of events (see Table 9). They most frequently suggested that particular tasks and activities included in events were most useful. These included cultural elements, creative tasks, group work, games and quizzes and use of celebrity examples, as highlighted by the following comments:

“Introduction talk at the start linked to the millionaire game - pupils really enjoyed this...” (teacher in a well above average school, London)

“The workshops showed pupils the culture and brought language to life” (teacher in a below average school, South East)

“Game in Spanish, very entertaining....” (teacher in a well above average school, South West)

Teachers were also appreciative of the language learning opportunities provided by events. These were referred to 77 times. Support for exam preparation, writing practice, reading, vocabulary, grammar, film and especially speaking were all perceived to be useful, for example:

“Accelerated Italian sessions and confidence building. Students were noticeably more confident in using target languages” (teacher in a well below average school, East Midlands)

“The students practised a lot of exam style tasks and got a lot of speaking/pronunciation practice....” (teacher in an around average school, no regional information)

“The total immersion in a day exposed the target language at the right level of difficulty” (teacher in a below average school, South East)

“The lectures about 'La haine' and they were really useful as we study the film in the 2nd year....” (teacher in a below average school, West Midlands)
Suggestions that activities supported language learning were also apparent in pupils’ comments and align with findings from an earlier Routes survey of teachers.\textsuperscript{32}

Language tasters were highlighted as positive 50 times by teachers, as follows:

“The language taster probably gave them the best thing they could come away with” (teacher in a well above average school, Yorkshire & the Humber)

“BSL- very informative- got pupils asking some really good questions” (teacher in an around average school, West Midlands)

The role of presenters and especially of student ambassadors were repeatedly referred to (42 mentions) because of the help they provided on the day, because they were seen as good role models and because they talked about their own experiences of studying languages and studying abroad:

“The students were very chatty and positive about uni life. Well organised” (teacher in a well above average school, South West)

“The enthusiastic speakers and friendly student ambassadors inspired the pupils” (teacher in an above average school, South East)

“The opportunity for pupils to meet MFL students and listen to their experiences of life in a foreign country” (teacher in an around average school, North East)

Routes activities were also perceived by some teachers to be useful sources of information on careers as well as general information, advice and guidance on university life, languages at university, residence abroad and statistics, e.g.

“The business and language talk was excellent, students don’t realise how closely languages and various careers are linked” (teacher in a below average school, East Midlands)

“The introduction and talks about role of languages in jobs, good to raise awareness and positive attitude towards languages” (teacher in a below average school, South East)

“The information was very good- to the point. The short films particularly helped break up the information giving it in a very positive way” (teacher in a well below average school, South West)

Raising the profile of languages and showing the importance of languages were mentioned 21 times, as follows:

“...it was good to see an emphasis on the importance of German” (teacher in an above average school, North East)

\textsuperscript{32} Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010)
“Presentation on reasons for benefits of language learning. Quite thought provoking for students...” (teacher in a well above average school, Yorkshire & the Humber)

A few teachers were gushing in their praise for the usefulness of activities:

“The structure of the day was excellent, it was a good mix of language, ICT and sport, therefore allowing lower linguistic ability to access the project and feel comfortable in their areas of strength. The physical aspect of being in the university was hugely beneficial to the students and the contact with student ambassadors and representatives from [name of a multinational company] was inspiring to the students. The day was split into bite-sized chunks and this meant that the students were always engaged” (teacher in an around average school, East)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: What was the most useful aspect of the event/activity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Particular tasks/ activities in the event were good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The event supported students’ language learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language tasters were good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters and/or student language ambassadors were good/helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information, advice and guidance (including careers) was good/ useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The event raised the profile of languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational aspects were good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the university was useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All aspects were useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The event was fun/ inspiring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 39 teachers did not answer this question and two indicated that they did not know what was most useful about the activity.

6.4 Responses to open question: Can you suggest any improvements?

There were 229 responses to this question (66.9% of total). Teachers’ comments were varied and ranged from suggestions about event venues and organisation through to ideas about specific details of particular tasks and activities (see Table 10). Often, teachers reported that they wanted more of an aspect of an activity.

Most commonly, suggestions for improvement focused on aspects of event organisation (59 mentions) and included complaints about the venue, poor food and lack of campus tours. Some teachers felt that events were too rushed and needed more time while others felt that events were too long. There were also a small number of references to the need to mix
schools up more, to organise events at different times of the year, to start events later in the day and to provide better directions to the university. Comments included the following:

“Impressive achievement!”

“Organise events at different times of the year, to start events later in the day and to provide better directions to the university.”

Comments included the following:

“A little bit rushed at times” (teacher in an above average school, West Midlands)

“The presentation was a little too long for our 9 year group who were getting a little restless towards the end....” (teacher in a below average school, East Midlands)

“2 separate rooms for calligraphy and paper folding would make it feel less hectic!” (teacher in a well below average school, Yorkshire & Humber)

“More information about how to get to the venues at [name of university] and possibly more helpers to assist with crossing the roads” (teacher in a below average school, East)

Some teachers criticised event tasks and activities and especially made reference to the need to include more fun (e.g. games and quizzes), to work with smaller groups and to provide more active, interactive or practical tasks in order to keep pupils occupied, for example:

“Some kind of practical activity may have helped pupils to remain focused” (teacher in a well below average school, South West)

“Some workshops groups were quite large; could be made smaller perhaps?” (teacher in an above average school, North East)

Comments about active and interactive tasks were not dissimilar to remarks made by pupils about the need for more interaction, more activities and more choice of activities. There were also 14 references to the need for learners to be better prepared for tasks, either at the start or in advance, as follows:

“Perhaps working with schools prior to event to enable some preparation” (teacher in a below average school, South East)

Similarly, there were suggestions that pupils needed better instructions in order to carry out tasks and for them to have more opportunities for feedback.

The need to improve language learning opportunities was mentioned 29 times. This included recommendations for more use of the target language as follows:

“More of the presentation in German especially if you have native German speakers” (teacher in a well above average school, North East)

There were also complaints that language tasks were too difficult and that insufficient help had been provided to less able learners, for example:

“Some of the classes had difficulty to learn in such a short amount of time and some students switched off” (teacher in an around average school, West Midlands)
Teachers also suggested that more information, especially careers information could have been provided in some instances (12 mentions), e.g.

“Mention a few careers of ex-students, more details on where your work students are placed” (teacher in an above average school, South East)

There were nine responses in which it was proposed that there should have been more contact with ambassadors/university students during the event, e.g.

“Maybe to involve more the students from University to lead a short activity or to make a presentation about what it is like to study a language at Uni or the gap year” (teacher in a below average school, West Midlands)

More choice of tasters was also requested five times, for example:

“Different taster languages maybe so students could choose or try more than one” (teacher in a below average school, East Midlands)

Finally, in 27 responses teachers indicated that events did not need to be improved because they were already good, e.g.

“No, it was perfect” (teacher in an around average school, East Midlands)

“No everything was good” (teacher in a well above average school, North East)

“No this was the best year ever! All activities ran smoothly, technology worked and food was delicious” (no school information, South East)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10: Can you suggest any improvements?</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspects of event organisation could be improved</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particular tasks/ activities in the event could be improved</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language learning opportunities could be improved</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No it was good</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information, advice and guidance</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More contact with university students</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More choice of tasters</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, two teachers proposed that more interventions like these events were needed.

6.5 Responses to open question: Do you have any other comments?

218 teachers (63.7% of total) responded to this item (see Table 12). In many instances, they thanked the event organisers and stated how much they and their students had enjoyed the activity. There were also some further specific suggestions for improving particular events as
well as a few general observations about the impact of the Routes programme and the continuing problems faced by languages in their schools.

Most frequently, comments focused on the positive and enjoyable experiences of events and 57 teachers recorded their thanks to the event organisers. Some of these simply wrote ‘thank you’ while others tagged their thanks to the start or end of another comment, often related to how enjoyable they found the activity and/or what a positive experience it had been:

“Thank you for the day. I hope pupils will think twice about doing more languages” (teacher in a well below average school, East Midlands)

“Quel plaisir et un grand merci! The event was delivered professionally, materials were well prepared. There was plenty of student participation. A thoroughly enjoyable and purposeful event” (teacher in an around average school, West Midlands)

“Great, thank you. We enjoyed both presentations.” (no school information, North East)

“Very enjoyable and useful day- Thanks” (teacher in an around average school, South West)

There were 116 comments related to events being enjoyable, great, brilliant, fantastic and positive experiences. In a few cases, teachers also noted that events had even been enjoyed by challenging students, for example:

“Thanks - enjoyed by even the most difficult to please students” (teacher in a well below average school, South East)

“Thanks a lot for a wonderful and most useful day. The students have thoroughly benefitted from it” (teacher in a below average school, West Midlands)

“The event was fantastic and pitched at exactly the right level. The presentation was engaging and thought provoking without being "teachery" which enabled students to get a fresh perspective on the benefits of learning languages and the doors they can open. [Name of school] was very impressed and delighted with the event and would definitely like to do similar events in the future. Thank you so much for coming” (teacher in an around average school, London)

The suggestion above about wanting to be involved in future Routes activities was a recurrent theme in responses and was referred to 21 times, e.g.

“Can you come again next year?” (teacher in an around average school, North East)

“We'd like to come again!” (teacher in an around average school, South East)
The perception that events were useful and/or informative was also another frequent theme, as follows:

“There were some great ideas in the presentation and the activities were valid and useful...” (teacher in a below average school, London)

Teachers also praised presenters, speakers and student ambassadors 18 times, for example:

“All the ambassadors who attended our event were enthusiastic, positive and dynamic. They worked very well with the students, followed instructions and hopefully enjoyed the activity as much as the students” (no school information, London)

“None except I found the ambassadors’ approach to younger pupils to be first class” (teacher in a below average school, South West)

“.... excellent choice of speakers plus activities” (teacher in a below average school, South East)

There was, however, one complaint about a student ambassador arriving late at an event and not providing such a positive experience as the school had encountered the previous year.

A range of other themes emerged from responses. Among these was a suggestion from five teachers about the importance of messages about languages being delivered by someone other than a teacher (a theme which has emerged previously in a Routes evaluation).33

“...... Quite thought provoking for students and more effective that the messages are delivered by 'real' people rather than MFL teachers.....” (teacher in a well above average school, Yorkshire & the Humber)

Five teachers commented that the effect of the event would be to increase interest in languages uptake at their schools while a further three specifically stated that uptake had improved as a result of Routes activities, for example:

“The session was very well received by year 9, as usual, and it has given us a useful starting point for discussions with them prior to options process. The talks last year were very helpful in our drive to increase the uptake of MFL at KS4 and as the number below show, our uptake doubled. We feel that the positive message from the talks was very effective” (teacher in an above average school, East Midlands)

“Thank you [name of presenter], you are invaluable to our aims and have exactly the right message for our pupils. You have a positive impact upon our uptake at KS4” (teacher in a well below average school, East Midlands)

33 SQW (2011)
These comments back up suggestions from some learners that they were thinking about choosing languages as a result of the activities.

Suggestions for improving particular aspects of events were usually made by one teacher at an event and were mainly associated with event activities and organisation. They included the following ideas:

- Longer taster sessions
- Better preparation of students before tasks and better instructions
- More information about languages at university
- More icebreakers
- More active tasks
- A different choice of film
- More use of the target language
- More bins (during a craft activity)

One teacher also proposed that a different time of year would have been more suitable for the event.

There were also additional positive reflections on activities. A few teachers were fulsome in their praise:

“This was a very professional hugely worthwhile day. The group that attended were lower ability students who have had a very turbulent experience of MFL with long term cover, etc. They are challenging students who show extremes of behaviour in school. The trip was inspiring to them with some of them wanting to take GCSE purely due to the day at [name of university], on the day they displayed good behaviour and were very engaged with the project and the target language. The day helped improve the teacher-student relationship in school.” (no school information, East)

“Fab! Very good and motivating! Thank you” (teacher in a middle school, North East)

“A wonderful, inspiring day, thoughtfully prepared with a huge number of little details, e.g. imported Mexican food and papel picado, Mexican blouses worn by staff, the way the rooms were decorated, which added up to immersion in a Mexican atmosphere! [Name of presenter] was a fantastic, enthusiastic leader.” (teacher in an around average school, South East)

“The event as a whole was very successful. We have received many positive comments from students and from their parents at a recent parents evening.” (teacher in a well above average school, Yorkshire & the Humber)

“Absolutely fantastic - all students were fully engaged and motivated. They all really enjoyed the practical activities, i.e. origami, playing with cards, Picasso-style painting,
Table 11 includes all themes which were mentioned five or more times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11: Do you have any other comments?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The event was enjoyable/ excellent/ great/ fantastic/ brilliant/ a positive experience</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/We would like to be involved in another activity</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The event was useful / provided good information, advice and guidance</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspects of the event organisation were good</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters/ speakers / student ambassadors were very good/ great/ helpful</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event organisation should be improved</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taster sessions were great/very good</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of event tasks/ activities should be improved</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that messages about languages are delivered by non-teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The event will/should increase interest in uptake</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.6 Summary of teacher post-event survey

Teachers were overwhelmingly positive in their reactions to events and agreed that they provided learners with valuable information and that they would be likely to change attitudes to language learning. Interestingly, teachers in schools of well below average achievement were less confident about the prospect of attitudinal change than teachers in other schools. Qualitative comments demonstrated that teachers believed that events included interesting and innovative tasks and had helped students’ language learning. Some teachers felt that the organisation of activities could be improved and that learners sometimes needed more active tasks to keep them fully engaged. In their responses to the final question, many teachers extended their thanks to event organisers and reiterated how enjoyable, fantastic and positive they perceived activities to have been.

7 Evaluation of pilot

This pilot evaluation has resulted in the collection of a large body of pre- and post-event data using common evaluation tools and has succeeded in its aim of providing a national overview of learners’ and teachers’ perspectives of Routes into Languages activities.
Qualitative comments from learners and teachers have also added a rich dimension to rating-scale statements by capturing enthusiastic reactions to activities.

Nonetheless, some issues have arisen with the evaluation process and these will be addressed by the Routes central team and consortia in the forthcoming year. There were significant disparities in the numbers of questionnaires returned by different consortia. In order to improve the representativeness of the evidence produced, it would require consortia to contribute more balanced samples in future. There were also large variations between sample sizes of different groups of learners, especially those in different year groups. This was due to the specific targeting of year 9 learners, which was very successful but which made it difficult to compare responses in some instances. In particular, the data collection process would benefit from targeting the widening participation cohort of schools more effectively.

Using the same post-event survey template for all activities regardless of their aims and purposes has perhaps not always been wholly adequate. This applies particularly to those events which focused on raising attainment in language learning as these elements were not covered by the attitudinal statements (although qualitative comments enabled some of this to be captured).

The connections between pre- and post-event learner questionnaires also need to be improved in order to reduce possible variations and errors in the two samples. Due to ethical requirements, it was not possible for participants’ names to be recorded on questionnaires. However, there are ways in which the Routes central team and consortia could seek to tighten this up. For example, one consortium used back-to-back pre- and post-event questionnaires for one activity so that the same pupils’ responses were clearly linked. This is one possibility that could be explored.

Overall, the evaluation has largely proved to be successful. Of course, its focus on the immediate impact of Routes activities does not cover aspects of possible longer-term impact. However, it make a useful contribution to what is known about the effectiveness of Routes events and aligns with other emerging findings which do include more longitudinal elements. It is the first time that Routes has engaged in a national evaluation of this sort and as such, if replicated on an annual basis with the necessary revisions, it would be possible to produce a critical mass of evidence about the effectiveness of Routes events.

8 Conclusions

A large number of boys and girls of different ages from a diverse range of schools took part in these Routes into Languages pre- and post-event surveys. Findings have shown that Routes activities across England are found to be enjoyable and useful by the overwhelming majority of learners who participate in them. Pre-event attitudes which were largely positive were found to have improved post-event in key motivational areas (enjoyment of language learning and enjoyment of meeting people from different cultures). There was a particularly
big increase in perceptions of the usefulness of languages for future jobs across different
groups of learners post-event. The growth in the proportion of learners expressing interest in
the possibility of continued language study post-event was also noteworthy. Qualitative
comments from both pupils and teachers served to reinforce the enthusiastic aura
surrounding events. There can be little doubt, therefore, that Routes events are proving
successful at creating an immediate motivational lift. Although it is important not to confuse
this with evidence of longer-term impact, survey findings do contribute to the growing body of
evidence that Routes into Languages activities are associated with positive attitudinal
change. Some of the existing evidence from other surveys has also pointed to indications of
longer-term improvements in attitudes and uptake.\textsuperscript{34}

An additional benefit of Routes activities has also been highlighted by some pupils and
teachers in qualitative observations here. This concerns their suggestions that events are
helping to support language learning. Whilst this survey does not provide evidence that
learners’ attainment is being raised, teachers and learners clearly perceive that there is a
learning impact. This has emerged before in other Routes surveys, notably the earlier
teacher survey\textsuperscript{35} and also in the first year undergraduate survey where participants indicated
that the support for language learning was most useful aspect of enrichment and outreach
activities.\textsuperscript{36} This is an element of Routes’ success which has perhaps been under-
emphasised.

It is clear, however, that Routes activities are not succeeding with everyone. Some very
negative and hostile attitudes towards languages and towards events have been
demonstrated by a minority of participants. It is difficult to speculate on what steps could be
taken to improve this and whether it is at all possible for this hard core of disaffection to be
reached. However, where teachers and pupils made similar criticisms of activities, many of
which were constructive, it would be worthwhile for consortia to explore whether particular
issues could be addressed. Suggestions that some events needed more interactive and
active tasks are possible examples of this.

Survey findings also suggest that although activities were widely valued by the learners
participating in them, there appeared to be a greater attitudinal impact among particular
groups (boys, learners in KS3 and learners in schools/colleges of well below average
achievement). Although in some instances where sample sizes were not large, more data
would be useful to verify all this, it is potentially encouraging as a key aim of Routes is to
widen participation in language learning among these target groups. The indications that
events are having an immediate impact in making these learners think differently about
languages must be viewed as an important first step in the widening participation process.

\textsuperscript{34} Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010); Gallagher-Brett (2012b); Handley (2011)
\textsuperscript{35} Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010)
\textsuperscript{36} Gallagher-Brett (2012b)
Acknowledgements

Pupils and teachers in 202 schools in England which contributed to this survey

Staff in Routes into Languages partner universities

Routes project managers: Renata Albuquerque, Claire Barber, Clare Forder, Lynn Hall, Irena Holdsworth, Nick Johnston, Jenny McCormick, Angela Morris, Karla Ortega-Porcaya, Mirella Santamaria, Sarah Schechter, Kat Stevenson

Adrian Brett
Claire Wilkins

Other members of the Routes Evaluation Working Group: Cathy Watts and Irene Wilkie
References


Appendix A: pre-event questionnaire

What do you think about language learning?

Date: ___________________

Name of your school / college: __________________________________________

Please circle your School/ College Year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yr 8</th>
<th>Yr 9</th>
<th>Yr 10</th>
<th>Yr 11</th>
<th>Yr 12</th>
<th>Yr 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Are you? Male / Female

Read the sentences. Tick the box to show if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or are not sure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy learning languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages are more difficult than other subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy finding out about other cultures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages will help me to get a job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to carry on learning languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything else you would like to say about learning languages?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you!
Post-event questionnaire

What did you think of the event?

Name of the event: _____________________________________________________

Date(s): ____________________

Venue: ____________________________________________________________

Name of your school / college: _________________________________________

Please circle your School/ College Year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yr 7</th>
<th>Yr 8</th>
<th>Yr 9</th>
<th>Yr 10</th>
<th>Yr 11</th>
<th>Yr 12</th>
<th>Yr 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Are you? Male / Female

Following the event tick the box to show if you agree or disagree with these statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I enjoy learning languages</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Languages are more difficult than other subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy finding out about other cultures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages will help me to get a job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to carry on learning languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The event as a whole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information you received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is there anything else you would like to say about the event?

Thank you!
# Teacher post-event questionnaire

**What did you think of the event? - Teacher evaluation**

Your name:

Your school/college:

Activity/event:

Year group(s) involved (please circle):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yr 7</th>
<th>Yr 8</th>
<th>Yr 9</th>
<th>Yr 10</th>
<th>Yr 11</th>
<th>Yr 12</th>
<th>Yr 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The event in general</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This event was a positive experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content was suitable for the targeted students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The event has provided students with valuable information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The event is likely to change students’ attitudes to language learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Which aspects of the event/activity were most useful?**

**Can you suggest any improvements?**

**Do you have any further comments?**

If you would be willing to receive a brief follow-up telephone call, please indicate the number on which we can contact you.

____________________________________

Thank you