

# Languages Learning at Key Stage 2

## A Longitudinal Study

Final Report

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## Executive Summary

In 2006, The Open University, the University of Southampton and Canterbury Christ Church University were commissioned by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES), now Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to conduct a three-year longitudinal study of languages learning at Key Stage 2 (KS2). The qualitative study was designed to explore provision, practice and developments over three school years between 2006/07 and 2008/09 in a sample of primary schools and explore children's achievement in oracy and literacy, as well as the possible broader cross-curricular impact of languages learning.

### Key findings

- Head teachers, languages co-ordinators and most teachers involved with languages were enthusiastic and committed. In addition to their intrinsic value, they saw languages as enriching and broadening their overall curriculum provision. They also perceived languages as making a substantial contribution to children's personal and social development and to their literacy development in English.
- Children were enthusiastic about their learning experience in most case study schools and appreciated the interactive teaching, and the wide variety of game-like activities, which made learning languages fun. Children indicated they were motivated by the language learning process itself as well as by their perceptions of the wider value of languages.
- French was the most commonly taught language, followed by Spanish and German, with minimal evidence of the teaching of other European or world languages. A discrete lesson of 30-40 minutes was typically timetabled for most Key Stage 2 year groups.
- Staffing for languages was a key concern for head teachers and influential in determining delivery models. These involved specialist teachers, class teachers or a combination of both.
- Teachers and schools valued the training opportunities and support available, and these were impacting positively on provision. However, there was an ongoing need for the development of teachers' personal language skills; further training was also needed for the teaching of literacy and intercultural understanding, developing cross-curricular links, and ensuring progression in children's learning and assessment.
- Schools were drawing increasingly on the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005) and QCA schemes of work (QCA, 2007, 2009) to inform planning; Framework learning objectives for oracy and to a lesser extent literacy were being incorporated into local schemes of work. The development of intercultural understanding was seen as an important underlying rationale for languages, but there was little evidence of systematic reference to Framework objectives in this area.
- Where children had been taught languages throughout Key Stage 2, there was some evidence of progression in their learning. However, whole school curriculum planning and assessment practices remain areas for further development.

- Children's performance in the assessment activities carried out by the research team was variable, but findings indicate that children can achieve levels in listening, speaking and reading in line with national expectations (equivalent to Year 6 outcomes in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005) and / or Asset Languages Breakthrough) after four years of learning one language. Writing remains the most challenging area for these learners; the best performances were found where children had received consistent provision, and where teachers' linguistic skills were strong.
- A school-wide vision for the learning and teaching of languages was important for successful provision. This originated with the head teacher and, in the majority of cases, was mediated and taken forward by the languages co-ordinator, and by class teachers willing to engage with teaching and training opportunities, especially languages upskilling.
- Funding for training and for physical and human resources has been significant in enabling the development of provision. Schools have an expectation that funding for ongoing professional development will be maintained and that training to teach languages will become an integral part of initial teacher education.

### **Background to the study**

The Government has undertaken to provide all children in Key Stage 2 in primary schools in England with the chance to learn a foreign language by 2010. This commitment was set out in the National Languages Strategy, *Languages for All: Languages for Life A Strategy for England* (DfES, 2002) as part of an overall commitment to quality languages provision for children and adults.

A recent review of the Languages Strategy expressed satisfaction with progress in the provision of languages in primary schools, and recommended that 'languages become part of the statutory curriculum for Key Stage 2 when it is next reviewed' (Dearing and King, 2007 p.9). The recent *Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum* (DCSF, 2009) duly recommends that languages are situated within one of six new areas of learning 'Understanding English, communication and languages' to enable teachers to exploit links between languages and literacy and develop a coherent overall approach to language education. This new area of learning, including compulsory languages learning, will be taught from September 2011.

Since the publication of the National Languages Strategy a number of initiatives have supported languages learning in Key Stage 2 including the publication of the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages (DfES, 2005), offering planning guidance and delivery advice for teachers and curriculum managers, and schemes of work for French, German and Spanish (QCA, 2007, 2009). There has also been a significant increase in government funding for local authorities and schools which can be used for training purposes, and the development of training and networking programmes for trainers, teachers and teaching assistants. These developments have been supported by an increase in the number of initial teacher education (ITE) places specialising in languages provided by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA).

## **Key aims of the research study**

The key aims of the study were to:

- review existing evidence on the impact of languages learning on children;
- investigate the nature and quality of the provision of languages learning at Key Stage 2 in a range of schools; and
- assess its impact on children's learning in languages and across the curriculum.

## **Methodology**

The methodology had three strands.

### **Strand 1 - Literature Review**

A literature review provided a backdrop to the research study, concentrating on what is known about languages learning and teaching in primary schools in Anglophone contexts. The review investigated rationales and aims for languages learning in the primary phase; the organisation of languages provision; learning and teaching; assessment and recording; factors influencing provision; and impact on children's learning.

### **Strand 2 - The nature and quality of languages learning provision at Key Stage 2**

For this strand, qualitative case studies were conducted of 40 primary schools in England. These schools were already teaching languages to some or all Key Stage 2 year groups and were prepared to commit themselves to the research over a three year period. They were selected to reflect a range of school types in terms of size, location, economic affluence (in terms of socio-economic indicators such as numbers of children eligible for free school meals) and ethnic makeup. Other criteria included: different models of languages provision; and different lengths of experience in teaching languages. In each year of the study, the research team carried out lesson observations, interviews with head teachers, language co-ordinators, class teachers, teaching assistants or foreign language assistants, and focus group discussions with children in Years 3-6 in these schools. Children also completed a questionnaire about their attitudes to languages learning. Documentary evidence relating to languages teaching was collected where available.

### **Strand 3 - Impact on children's learning in languages and across the curriculum**

This aspect involved exploring and documenting children's achievements in oracy and literacy in the target language as described in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*. A subset of eight schools participated in this aspect of the study. In each year of the project, specially devised group assessment tasks (in French, Spanish or German, depending on the school) were administered by trained assessors to small groups of children. Some Year 6 children also completed Asset Languages Breakthrough tests.

The intention was also to investigate the cross-curricular impact of language learning in schools. The research team defined 'cross curricular' as referring a) to wider attitudes to learning and b) to metalinguistic knowledge, and devised a survey instrument for use with Year 6 children to explore these elements. However, difficulties in sustaining a satisfactory matched 'control'

sample of schools not currently teaching languages meant that the investigation into cross curricular impact had to be substantially modified. In 2008/09, literacy co-ordinators in case study schools were interviewed to explore their perceptions of the impact of languages on children's wider learning and in particular their literacy learning.

### **Findings from the literature review**

The literature review took note of widespread international activity and enthusiasm for primary languages. The most important rationale underpinning current primary initiatives internationally has to do with increasing children's opportunities for language learning, and capitalising on younger children's positive motivation for languages. However, rationales such as the promotion of language awareness, intercultural understanding, and children's sensitisation to multilingualism in society, also play a role in current schemes.

Much of the published literature is concerned with administrative arrangements and processes of implementation, e.g. the relative merits of different staffing models, the upskilling of teachers, and the development of appropriate pedagogy for the primary phase. Assessment is generally recognised as a weakness of current primary models internationally, and transition from the primary to the secondary phase is also a generally acknowledged problem. There is to date rather limited and indirect international evidence on the learning outcomes which may be expected for languages learning in primary schools. There are suggestions that children's target language learning mostly involves formulaic expressions, words and phrases; some advantages have been claimed for children starting languages in primary school, over those starting languages at a later age, but the evidence base is small. In addition, many observers have claimed benefits for learning strategies and/ or for language awareness, but there are very few studies which measure such outcomes directly.

### **Findings from the fieldwork**

#### **Perceived benefits of languages learning**

Head teachers, languages co-ordinators and most teachers involved in languages teaching remained enthusiastic and committed. In addition to the intrinsic value of languages, they saw them as enriching and broadening their curriculum provision. Teachers generally believed languages were making a substantial contribution to children's development in the areas of personal and social learning, cultural understanding, communication skills, literacy skills, knowledge about language and attitudes to learning. A number of head teachers saw languages learning as contributing to a school ethos which valued diversity and increased tolerance and understanding of other people.

#### **Children's attitudes towards languages learning**

Children in most schools were positive and enthusiastic about their experience of languages. They appreciated the interactive nature of the teaching and the wide variety of activities commonly used, including games, songs, the use of storybooks, storytelling and drama, role-play and puppets which made learning fun. Children indicated they were motivated to learn by the language learning process itself, including learning new words and phrases, as well as by their perceptions of the wider value of languages for communication with other people. Most children had a strong sense of their own progress and achievement and spoke about their improved comprehension, speaking skills and pronunciation.

A minority of children made negative comments on aspects of their experience, mentioning excessive repetition of topics, and limited opportunities for individual work and reading and writing. These points illustrate the need to develop a teaching approach that takes account of the needs of all learners.

Many children who experienced difficulties in literacy in English and across the curriculum appeared more assured in languages and gained confidence through their involvement in structured yet varied oral interaction. Staff believed that this was of considerable value to their self-esteem.

### **Key issues in provision for languages teaching**

The schools that took part in the study typically offered a discrete timetabled lesson of 30-40 minutes to most Key Stage 2 year groups, with more time allocated to Years 5 and 6. Few schools were providing a weekly hour of language teaching as suggested in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005). French was the most commonly taught language, followed by Spanish and German, and the majority of schools taught one language throughout Key Stage 2. There was minimal evidence of the teaching of other European or world languages.

The delivery model adopted by these schools involved either specialist teachers (over a quarter of schools), class teachers (a third of schools) or a combination. The greater use of specialists in the case study schools compared to the national picture reported by Wade and Marshall (2009) partly reflected historical situations in these schools as early adopters, and associated concern to ensure progression in learning for children who had experienced languages consistently from Year 3.

Staffing for languages was a key concern of head teachers in the case study schools and influential in determining the delivery model. Some schools argued for a mixed approach as languages are introduced, drawing on the language skills and teaching expertise of one or more staff to deliver core provision, while supporting class teachers to take more responsibility for languages as their confidence and expertise develops.

Staff mobility was also a concern in some schools and fragility of provision was evident especially when expertise or leadership rested with one or two individuals. A number of head teachers said that skill in languages was now a criterion when recruiting new staff.

### **Staff training and development**

There was clear evidence that training was impacting on teaching and that teachers and schools valued the training opportunities available to them locally, nationally, and through the internet. The support offered by local authorities through advisory staff, regional support groups and cluster meetings was particularly appreciated. Support from the secondary sector was less apparent but some cases of successful collaboration were reported.

Training sessions covered language upskilling plus a variety of topics relating to pedagogy and the organisation of languages teaching. The research suggests that an increased training focus on cross-curricular learning, intercultural understanding and the learning and teaching of reading and writing would be helpful, as well as a continuing focus on developing teachers' own language skills.

Many respondents noted the need for ongoing training as the staff profile changed, particularly in order to ensure progression in children's learning. In order to sustain languages teaching, funding for continuing professional development will be needed for a considerable time and the place of languages in initial teacher education will need further consideration.

### **The Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages and schemes of work**

Schools were drawing increasingly on the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005) and the QCA schemes of work (QCA, 2007, 2009) to inform planning, and learning objectives for oracy and to a lesser extent literacy were being incorporated into schemes of work. There was little evidence that the objectives for intercultural understanding were referred to in any systematic way.

Teachers were drawing increasingly on commercial resources (DVDs, schemes of work, web based materials, interactive whiteboard resources) to inform their planning and to support teaching and learning. The extent to which these reflect the underpinning aims of languages learning in the primary school, in particular the development of cross-curricular approaches, would warrant further investigation.

### **Teaching and learning**

The key aims held by staff in the case study schools involved promoting children's enthusiasm for languages learning, and developing listening and speaking skills. All participants described fun and enjoyment as key motivational factors. Teachers employed a range of rapidly changing activities, largely oracy-based, to maintain children's interest and enthusiasm, and a similar pedagogy persisted throughout Key Stage 2, centring on the topic-related teaching of vocabulary and sentence forms to express personal information or describe events. There was an emphasis on developing children's ability to produce memorised language items and formulaic phrases, rather than creating their own independent sentences. Some of the older children, who have experienced continuous teaching, were able to engage in sustained dialogues and draw on previous learning more creatively.

Literacy activities did not form a substantial part of most lessons, though there was evidence of increased attention to literacy over the three years of the study. Most literacy activity involved reading rather than writing, which was frequently presented as a homework activity for the older children. The shortness of lessons and the relatively limited confidence and expertise among some staff appeared to constrain the amount of time spent on literacy activities, with implications for timetabling and staff development.

Some teachers were beginning to include objectives relating to intercultural understanding in their lessons. Where this was happening children were learning factual knowledge and being given opportunities to express attitudes, e.g. about similarities and differences between practices or institutions in different European countries. Teachers were drawing increasingly on commercially produced resources relating to intercultural understanding. A number were integrating contributions from native speakers, including foreign language assistants or visiting students, or staff who have visited the country.

There was an increase in the number of whole school events focusing on developing children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures and languages, and of international links and partnership projects which supported the development of intercultural understanding, although these were not usually related directly to the objectives in the Framework. Staff need to be well

informed and confident in order to encourage discussion and reflection in this area, and to ensure children encounter a range of perspectives, with clear implications for both initial teacher education and ongoing professional development.

There was some evidence of an increase in cross-curricular links over the three years of the study although mainly created by individual teachers rather than at whole school level; such links were generally more apparent when class teachers were teaching languages. There was little existing evidence of systematic linkage with schemes of work or topics. However, it was clear that teachers were beginning to think about how such links could be developed, and that further guidance around this issue would be useful.

### **Progression in children's learning**

Where children had experienced four years of teaching throughout Key Stage 2, classroom observations showed some evidence of progression in their learning. However, further work is needed to achieve more consistency in this area, in terms of curriculum planning, the development of shared expectations about learning outcomes for different year groups, and assessment practices. The employment of specialist teachers to teach older children was considered necessary by managers in some schools to ensure progression and differentiation, at least until class teachers had developed the necessary knowledge and confidence.

### **Achievement in languages**

In each year of the study, assessment activities in French, Spanish and German were carried out by the research team with children from each Key Stage 2 year group in eight schools. Performance across the schools was variable, but findings indicate that children can achieve levels in listening, speaking and reading in line with national expectations (equivalent to Year 6 outcomes in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005) and / or Asset Languages Breakthrough) after four years of learning one language. Children were making progress in target language pronunciation, and in learning vocabulary (though few verbs were known). Most could engage in basic conversational interaction, with the best older children producing a range of simple sentences, and starting to do so creatively. When listening and reading simple texts, children could use a good range of strategies to work out meanings. Writing remains the most challenging area for these learners, with lack of verb knowledge again a limiting factor. Overall, the best performances were found where children had received consistent provision, where teachers were experienced and where teachers' linguistic skills were strong. These findings make an important contribution to understanding attainment in languages and should be taken into consideration when addressing the issues to do with progression mentioned above.

### **Leadership and management**

The commitment and vision of head teachers were critical in establishing and sustaining provision, as was effective subject leadership. Languages co-ordinators were actively developing schemes of work, selecting resources, providing colleagues with support and training through modelling practice and providing one-to-one advice and suggestions, as well as organising training events and liaising with the local authority (LA) and other schools / agencies. Effective co-ordinators were a source of up-to-date expertise who kept languages on the school agenda among competing priorities and were relied upon for guidance by busy staff. However, many language co-ordinators were working largely in isolation from other areas of the primary curriculum, and this issue will need to be addressed for the long-term sustainability of the subject.



## **Transition and transfer from Key Stage 2 to 3**

Transition and transfer from Key Stage 2 to 3 were ongoing concerns for many staff in these schools. While some primary schools were passing on information to secondary schools about schemes of work in languages, and about children's achievements, many teachers were not confident that the information was being used effectively. Teachers were concerned that children's prior learning would not be taken into account in secondary school, and about the possible negative impact on children's motivation and enthusiasm for languages learning. This issue needs to be prioritised if continuity and progression are to be ensured.

## **Ensuring provision is sustainable**

In general the schools involved in this study had a school-wide vision for the subject. This involved an understanding of the intrinsic and extrinsic value of being able to communicate in another language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well as an understanding of how languages can enhance children's learning in other areas of the curriculum. This originated with the head teacher and was mediated, supported and taken forward by the languages co-ordinator, and by class teachers' willingness to engage with languages.

Funding for training and resources has been significant in enabling this development, as have the support and training opportunities provided by local authorities, various regional and national networks and some secondary schools. However, there was still a degree of uncertainty about the place of languages in the curriculum and on the timetable. While languages typically had a settled place in the school week, provision of 60 minutes per week teaching time was still largely an unmet challenge.

Schools have an expectation that funding for training and ongoing professional development will be maintained and that training to teach languages will become an integral part of initial teacher education; head teachers in the study clearly expected to be able to recruit staff with this expertise in the future.

Schools who have moved farthest towards embedded, secure provision were those that capitalised on a wide range of languages-related opportunities, including local networks and projects; ongoing training; international partnerships; and local and national sources of funding and award schemes. These schools also made good use of any staff members with languages expertise as well as members of the wider school community. Frequently, key staff in such schools were leading the subject in their local context. Such indicators of successful provision link back directly in every case to strong leadership which is highly committed to languages.

# 1 Overview of the study

## 1.1 Introduction

In 2006, The Open University, the University of Southampton and Canterbury Christ Church University were commissioned by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES), now Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to conduct a three-year longitudinal study of languages learning at Key Stage 2 (KS2). The qualitative study was designed to explore provision, practice and developments over three school years between 2006/07 and 2008/09 in a sample of primary schools, the impact of languages learning on children's achievements in oracy and literacy in the target language, and the possible broader cross curricular impact of languages learning.

## 1.2 The policy and research context

The Government is committed to make provision for all children in Key Stage 2 in primary schools in England to learn a foreign language by 2010 with a view to this becoming a statutory requirement from 2011.

This interest in early language learning reflects international trends toward teaching languages at younger ages, especially evident in Europe. The Council of Europe's views are reflected in the document *A Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR: Council of Europe, 2001). Following Council of Europe Recommendation R(98) 6, the CEFR advocates the multilingualism of European citizens, in order 'to promote mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity through more effective international communication' (p.3). Commitment to languages learning in primary schools is evident across mainland Europe and elsewhere (Blondin et al. 1998), and languages are compulsory in many primary school systems (Nikolov and Curtain, 2000). By 2003-4 most European Union member states expected that all primary school children would learn at least one language, usually English in practice (Eurydice, 2008).

Because of the international status and significance of English however, the promotion of languages learning and teaching in Anglophone contexts such as the UK presents special challenges (Graddol, 2006), and the evolution of policy has been complex, as shown in following sections.

### 1.2.1 Recent policy development in England

The teaching of languages in primary schools in England in fact has a long if somewhat checkered history. The perceived failure of the 1964-1974 Nuffield/Schools Council Primary French project in England (Burstall et al., 1974) and a similar project in Scotland (HMI, 1969) effectively put an end to plans for the widespread teaching of languages in the primary sector in the UK for over a decade. In the late 1980s however, with increasing European integration, there was renewed interest in languages, and Scotland introduced its Modern Languages at Primary School (MLPS) pilot in 1989. In England and Wales, *The Nuffield Languages Inquiry* (1998-2000) argued that unless the UK enhanced the learning of languages, its competitive position in the world would further decline (Nuffield Foundation, 2000), and was accompanied by a reassessment of the earlier Primary French project, and in particular, the reasons for its demise.

In England, the *National Languages Strategy* (DfES, 2002) set out the government's commitment to increasing the nation's language capability, seeing languages as 'a lifelong skill - to be used in business and for pleasure, to open up avenues of communication and

exploration, and to promote, encourage and instil a broader cultural understanding' (DfES, 2002 p.5). Overarching objectives are to improve teaching and learning and to introduce a recognition system to complement existing qualification frameworks. At primary school level the Strategy makes a highly significant commitment:

*Every child should have the opportunity throughout Key Stage 2 to study a foreign language and develop their interest in the culture of other nations. They should have access to high quality teaching and learning opportunities, making use of native speakers and e-learning. By age 11 they should have the opportunity to reach a recognised level of competence on the Common European Framework and for that achievement to be recognised through a national scheme (DfES, 2002 p.15).*

The Strategy noted that this entitlement was the norm in many European countries and that supportive and enthusiastic head teachers and teachers were crucial in providing children with positive learning experiences. The authors also noted that a huge cultural shift, a reconsideration of curriculum planning and substantial training would be necessary to develop a workforce and a curriculum that would enable the vision to become a reality. At the same time the Strategy recognised that schools would have different starting points and would need to build capacity for languages teaching gradually in line with their local circumstances.

### **1.2.2 Developments in provision**

The impact of this commitment has been substantial. In the early 2000s, nineteen Key Stage 2 Language Learning Pathfinder partnerships were established between local authorities and schools with government funding, to develop methodologies for the delivery of languages (Ofsted, 2005). Government investment to ensure a sound infrastructure has also been substantial. A range of resources have been created to support schools and teachers, such as the *Schemes of Work for Key Stage 2 Languages* (QCA, 2000, 2007, 2009), and the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005). The content of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* is closely aligned with the principles contained in *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003), in that it promotes a holistic approach to the curriculum and encourages teachers to exploit links between curriculum areas wherever possible. The Framework focuses on learning objectives which show progression over four years and offers guidance to different audiences, from schools that are new to teaching languages, to those with more established provision that are working to promote continuity of learning to Key Stage 3.

There has also been a significant increase in government funding which can be used by local authorities and schools for training purposes and to employ specialists including foreign language assistants. Other initiatives include the development of national and regional training and networking programmes for trainers, teachers and teaching assistants such as the Comenius Network provided by the CILT The National Centre for Languages, the further development of the National Advisory Centre for Early Language Learning (NACELL) and the establishment of an online 'Training Zone' for primary teachers. More recently the NACELL website and the Training Zone have been combined to form a unified online training, networking and materials resource on the Primary Languages website ([www.primarylanguages.org.uk](http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk)) and in April 2009 an information, support, training and advice network 'Links into Languages' was launched as successor to the Comenius network.

This investment has brought about a significant increase in the number of primary schools teaching languages. By Autumn 2006, approximately 70% of primary schools were offering languages to some year groups in Key Stage 2 (Lines et. al., 2007), up from 44% in 2004 (Driscoll et al., 2004a). By Autumn 2008, 92% of schools were offering at least some Key Stage 2 pupils the opportunity to learn a language in class time and 69% of schools were fully meeting the entitlement for all Key Stage 2 year groups (Wade and Marshall, 2009). The

QCA annual report of 2004/5 (QCA, 2005) notes that the most positive developments in languages learning in England have been in primary schools.

Making provision for all Key Stage 2 pupils to learn a language presents a considerable challenge to schools, and much of the provision examined by Driscoll et al. (2004a) fell short of the entitlement set out in the 2002 National Languages Strategy. According to this report, language provision across the country lacked coherence and consistency, with different aims and approaches to delivery as well as variations in time allocation and languages taught. Enthusiasm for languages amongst primary teachers was tempered by concerns about the lack of appropriately trained staff, limited resources and pressures of timetabling. An evaluation of the Key Stage 2 Language Learning Pathfinder partnerships noted lack of continuity and progression, while differentiation and assessment were underdeveloped (Muijs et al., 2005). However the more recent NFER survey notes a number of positive developments (Wade and Marshall, 2009 p.5). In addition to a significant increase in the proportion of schools meeting the entitlement, this survey documents: an increase in the provision and take-up of training; growing confidence in the sustainability of language provision and an increase in the number of schools using monitoring and assessment procedures. While it notes elements of progress in arrangements for transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3, issues around continuity and progression remain a concern for many respondents.

The shortfall in primary teachers with language expertise led to the setting up in 2001 of the Initial Teacher Training Primary Languages Initiative jointly between the then Teacher Training Agency (now Training and Development Agency for Schools: TDA) and the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale in France. This aimed to bring together higher education institutions (HEIs) in England and France to provide specialist language teacher training for the primary sector, including a reciprocal teaching placement in the target language country to improve fluency and intercultural understanding. Currently, 40 HEIs in England are participating and languages include German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, in addition to French. These developments have been supported by an increase in the number of primary languages initial teacher education (ITE) places provided by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). The number of academic providers offering primary ITE courses with a specialism in languages rose from five in 2001/02 to 38 in 2006/07, and over this period, 3,000 trainees with a languages specialism (Ofsted, 2008b); by 2008/09, this number had increased to c4,600 (TDA unpublished statistics).

Further developments designed to promote languages in primary schools include:

- a significant increase in government funding for local authorities and schools;
- a national and regional KS2 Framework training programme: *Training the Trainers*;
- encouragement by the TDA to HEIs to extend languages training to primary generalist trainees;
- the introduction of a recognition system, the Languages Ladder;
- opportunities for primary teachers to undertake work shadowing in a European country, with European funding;
- opportunities for primary schools to employ a foreign languages assistant (FLA) ( see Martin et al., 2003). (In 2008/09 the British Council estimated that 450 FLAs were working in 789 state primary schools, up from 305 FLAs in 550 schools the previous year.)

Alongside these developments in the primary sector, languages became optional at Key Stage 4 (ages 14-16) from September 2004, prompting a rapid decline in languages learning at this level (Ofsted, 2008a). In 2006 Lord Dearing undertook a review, making recommendations to arrest this decline (Dearing and King, 2007). Among other proposals, the *Languages Review* argued that at the next review of the primary curriculum, languages should become statutory in Key Stage 2.

This recommendation was supported by the *Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum* (DCSF, 2009) which includes further proposals relating to the teaching of languages in primary schools including: that schools should focus on the teaching of one or two languages to ensure progression over four years (although this does not preclude the teaching of other languages), and that the language(s) taught should normally be ones that children are likely to study at Key Stage 3. The report also recommends that languages are situated within one of six new areas of learning 'Understanding English, communication and languages' to enable teachers to exploit links between languages and literacy and develop a coherent overall approach to language education. Recommendations supportive of languages were also included in the recently published Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander et al., 2009).

### **1.2.3 Meeting other objectives in the National Languages Strategy**

In 2005, further steps to meet the National Languages Strategy objectives were taken with the introduction of a recognition scheme to complement existing National Qualification framework levels. The Languages Ladder is designed to meet the needs of a wide range of learners including children in primary schools, aiming to recognise achievement at different levels, in different skills and in different contexts. Each of the six Languages Ladder stages is made up of smaller graded steps. A series of 'can-do' statements for each of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) is intended to facilitate formative assessment and to provide short-term motivational goals for learners. A voluntary assessment scheme called 'Asset Languages' has been developed to support the assessment of the Languages Ladder stages (Jones, 2007). The Asset Languages project is developing tests for all four skills, in a large number of languages relevant to education in England.

### **1.2.4 Other research projects in England**

These changes in policy and practice created a pressing need for detailed information about current delivery and children's learning experience. The then DfES commissioned two longitudinal research projects to explore and report on developments in primary schools since the introduction of the Key Stage 2 Framework. These were the qualitative study being reported here, plus a quantitative study conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), titled "Longitudinal Survey of Implementation of National Entitlement to Language Learning at Key Stage 2" (Wade and Marshall, 2009). The NFER team found that in 2008 92% of schools were offering at least some children in Key Stage 2 the opportunity to learn a language, an increase of 22% from 2006. 69% of schools were offering languages to all year groups in Key Stage 2, an increase of 35% since 2006. Further information and findings may be found in the Research Brief or full report (Wade and Marshall, 2009).

The DfES also commissioned the University of Cambridge to carry out a two-year research study on the impact of the Key Stage 3 *Framework for Modern Foreign Languages* (DfES, 2003b) on provision and practice in secondary schools. This study found near universal support from staff and children for the teaching of languages in primary schools. However at the time of the study (2006-2008) 'the impact of the primary initiative on the secondary curriculum was weak' and language departments 'were still generally unclear' about how they would teach and ensure progression for children with mixed experiences of languages learning in Year 7 (Evans and Fisher, 2009 p.1).

### **1.2.5 Policy development in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic**

Elsewhere in the United Kingdom there have been similar developments. In Scotland, the *Modern Languages in Primary Schools* pilot ran from 1989 to 1995, mainly using specialist visiting teachers; languages were initially introduced in pilot schools in Primary 7 (age 11+) and later in Primary 4 and Primary 5.

In 1993, following an interim evaluation (Low et al., 1993), languages provision was extended to all Scottish primary schools, with the expectation that regular class teachers would normally deliver languages. A debate followed about the support they required to teach languages effectively (Johnstone, 2000); subsequently, teachers received in-service training amounting to 27 days distributed over four terms (Martin, 2000; Johnstone et al., 2000).

Following further studies, the report *Citizens of a Multilingual World*, (Ministerial Action Group for Languages, 2000) recommended an entitlement to a minimum of six years' language study, later endorsed by the Scottish Executive (2001). All pupils in Scotland are now entitled to learn either French, German, Italian or Spanish from Primary 5 to Secondary 4 (age 10-16: HMIE, 2005).

In Wales, the National CILT Cymru *Key Stage 2 Modern Foreign Languages Pilot Project* was launched in 2003 as one strand of *Languages Count*, the National Languages Strategy for Wales (Welsh Assembly 2002, reviewed 2008), which maps out the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to languages other than English and Welsh. This pilot involved 118 primary and 18 secondary schools in 18 local authorities. From 2008/09 resources were made available through the Better Schools Fund to enable all primary schools to offer a language if they wished, and guidance was commissioned in order to disseminate good practice from the pilot. Funding was also committed from 2008-2011, to develop primary languages on a non-statutory basis, until the next review of the school curriculum. A *Key Stage 2 Non-statutory Framework for Modern Foreign Languages in Wales* was published by the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS, 2008) and is included in the recently revised National Curriculum for Modern Languages in Wales (September 2008).

In Northern Ireland as part of recent revisions to the primary curriculum, teachers are encouraged to offer 'an element of language teaching', with materials on offer for French, German, Irish or Spanish (Laffitte-Fitou, 2009).

In the Republic of Ireland both Irish and English are taught in state primary schools. There is usually no other languages provision until secondary school, although a National Pilot *Modern Languages in Irish Primary Schools* was launched in 1998, and was favourably reviewed by Harris and Conway (2002). This National Pilot was initially extended, only to be eventually discontinued, so that the teaching of Irish could continue to be prioritised at primary level.

### **1.3 Aims and objectives of the research study**

This research study was designed to explore provision and practice in a sample of schools over three years following the introduction of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, to investigate the different ways in which schools build and maintain capacity for languages, and to examine how children's attitudes, learning and attainment within languages and across the curriculum were affected. The key aims were to:

- review existing evidence on the impact of languages learning on children (Research Strand 1);
- investigate the nature and quality of provision for languages at Key Stage 2 in a range of schools (Research Strand 2) ; and
- assess the impact of the provision on children’s learning, both in languages and across the curriculum (Research Strand 3).

### **Strand 1 - Literature review**

The main objective for the Literature review was to:

- examine and synthesise existing policy, empirical, and theoretical literature from national and international sources, relevant to languages learning and teaching in the primary school.

### **Strand 2 - Case studies of 40 schools**

The main objectives for Strand 2 were to:

- document the beliefs, attitudes and views of practitioners on the teaching and learning of languages, track changes over time, and identify the main factors influencing these;
- describe the range of teaching approaches and curricular models used and track changes over time;
- provide evidence of the extent to which practice aligns with the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*;
- document the approaches used to assess, record and report attainment and progress in languages, and track changes in assessment practices over time;
- document and track the attitudes and views of learners in relation to languages;
- document the nature and level of children’s intercultural understanding.

### **Strand 3 - Assessing attainment in primary languages**

The main objectives for Strand 3 were to:

- document children's attainment in oracy and literacy, as described in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*;
- provide evidence on the nature of progression in languages over 3 years;
- explore the impact of languages on other curriculum areas (specifically English) and on children's approaches to wider learning.

## **2 Methodology**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This section provides a brief overview of the research methodology adopted for the study, including information on: criteria for selection of the case study schools (2.2); methods for data collection and analysis (2.3); and the actual profile of participating schools (2.4). Fuller information is provided in Annexes A-C and in the Technical Appendices.

### **2.2 Criteria for selection of the case study schools**

#### **Strand 2 cohort**

The cohort of 40 case study schools was selected, as far as possible, to reflect:

- established provision in languages for at least some Key Stage 2 year groups and a commitment to maintain provision for the three years of the study;
- a range of school types: small, medium and large schools, rural, urban and suburban schools, those in more or less economically affluent areas (according to socio-economic indicators such as numbers of children eligible for free school meals), and varying in ethnic makeup;
- different models of languages provision;
- different length of experience in the provision of languages teaching.

(see Annex A for further discussion of how schools were selected and details on the ethical procedures followed.)

#### **Strand 3 cohort**

During the 2006/07 Strand 2 visits, the 40 case study schools were each asked to indicate their willingness to participate in Strand 3 of the research. Of those who agreed, eight were selected and designated as 'enhanced' case study schools. A key criterion for inclusion in Strand 3 was an ongoing commitment to teaching languages across all four Key Stage 2 year groups for the duration of the study; another was the language(s) being taught, so that a sample of schools was selected teaching French (5 schools), Spanish (2 schools) and Spanish + German (1 school). (See Annex B for further details.)

### **2.3 Methods for data collection and data analysis**

#### **Strand 1**

The study was informed by a literature review initially conducted in 2007 and updated as the study progressed.



## Strand 2

Data collection instruments were developed by the research team specifically for the qualitative case studies in 40 primary schools. In each year, the researcher allocated to each school made a one- or two-day visit to carry out the following:

- observation(s) of Key Stage 2 languages lessons (with open-ended and systematic elements);
- semi-structured interviews with different adult groups:
  - head teachers;
  - languages co-ordinators
  - class teachers (those observed teaching languages);
  - teaching assistants (2006/07 and 2007/08 only);
  - foreign language assistants (2008/09 only);
- focus group discussions with 4-6 children selected by their school (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 in 2006/07 and 2007/08; Years 5 and 6 only in 2008/09);
- questionnaires with individual children, completed by focus group members before discussion (one version for Years 3 and 4, another for Years 5 and 6, both used in 2006/07 and 2007/08 only).

(Annex A provides further details about the visits carried out in each year of the study. Annex C provides an overview of the complete dataset collected for Strand 2.)

In addition during each visit, where available, researchers gathered examples of school documentation relating to languages, which served to provide a broader contextual picture of the place of languages within each school.

## Strand 3 a) - Oracy and literacy in languages

The tasks designed by the research team to assess oracy and literacy in Years 3, 4 and 5 were first developed in 2006/07 in parallel versions for French, Spanish and German, and remained largely the same throughout the project, with only minor modifications after the first year. Group tasks were devised for the assessment of both oracy and literacy with the exception of writing, where individual tasks were used. The research team proposed using external Asset Languages Breakthrough tests for assessment of Year 6 children, given their established relationship with the Languages Ladder, and in 2006/07, all eight schools agreed to enter some Year 6 children for some Asset Languages Breakthrough tests. In 2007/08 and 2008/09 however, the number of schools choosing to enter children for Asset Languages tests decreased (four schools did so in 2007/08, and two schools in 2008/09 - see section 8.5 for further details). Accordingly the research team devised group assessment tasks for use with Year 6, reflecting the Year 6 oracy and literacy objectives of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, and these became the main means of assessment for Year 6 children in 2007/08 and 2008/09. The tasks remained confidential and were not shared at any stage with the schools, so it was possible to re-use the same tasks in successive years. (More details of the assessment tasks are provided in Annex B and in the Technical Appendices available online.)

Detailed scoring schemes were devised for the activities used with each Year group, to assess performance in oracy and literacy. These aimed as far as possible to provide comparable information across year groups, as well as across the three years of the project (see Annex B for further information about the procedures adopted for Strand 3 data).

### **Strand 3 b) - Cross curricular impact of languages**

In addition, in a separate exercise it was hoped to investigate the cross curricular impact of languages learning in schools. For the purposes of the study, the research team defined 'cross curricular impact' as referring to impact on overall attitudes to learning and on metalinguistic knowledge (in particular, knowledge and understanding of language structure), and limited it to these two elements. The aim was to explore whether or not there was any discernible difference in these two elements between children in schools which were teaching languages, and those in schools which were not currently doing so. The enhanced case study schools were therefore matched as far as possible with a group of 'control' schools which were not currently teaching languages.

A short two-part written test was specially devised to collect this data. The section on attitudes to learning - 'Part 1 About me' - contained 20 numeric open ended statements designed to explore self efficacy, attitudes to learning, approaches to learning and understanding/orientation to others. Children were also asked to indicate if they spoke a language other than English, and an open ended question about children's favourite school subject was also included. The section on language structure - 'Part 2 Words and sentences' - was informed by the Key Stage 2 Programme of Study for English, and explored a) knowledge and understanding of sentence construction and use of punctuation and b) word level knowledge and understanding. All test data were inputted into *SPSS*, a quantitative data analysis package, and subjected to rigorous analysis by two researchers. However, difficulties in sustaining a satisfactory matched 'control' sample meant that the investigation into cross curricular impact was later substantially modified (see Annex B for additional details).

In 2008/09 literacy co-ordinators in all case study schools were invited to take part in an interview survey to explore their perceptions of the impact of languages learning on children's learning and in particular their literacy learning. A structured interview schedule was prepared, piloted and amended in the light of feedback. Fifteen literacy co-ordinators agreed to be interviewed and their perceptions are discussed in the body of the report. (see Annex B for further information about these interviews).

## **2.4 Profile of the schools**

This section provides background information on the characteristics of the achieved sample of schools, helpful in interpreting the research findings presented in following sections.

### **2.4.1 Schools' profiles (Strand 2 achieved sample)**

Profiles of the case study schools have been compiled using information provided by head teachers and teachers, Ofsted inspection reports and data supplied by the DCSF.

Of the 40 case study schools selected in 2006/07, 38 consented to continued participation in the research in 2007/08; two schools withdrew and were successfully replaced. In 2008/09, one further school withdrew, leaving 39 schools in the 2008/09 cohort. The profiles of the schools in each annual cohort are displayed in Tables 2.1-2.10 below. They present information on school type, school size, school age range, geographic location, whether schools were previously Key Stage 2 Language Pathfinder schools, the proportion of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) with and without statements, the proportion of children eligible for free school meals (FSM), the children's ethnicity and the proportion of children whose first language is reported to be other than English.

**Table 2.1 - School type**

	No. of schools (2006/07)	No. of schools (2007/08)	No. of schools (2008/09)
Community	26	26	26
Voluntary aided	11	10	9
Voluntary controlled	3	4	4

**Table 2.2 - School size**

	No. of schools (2006/07)	No. of schools (2007/08)	No. of schools (2008/09)
Small (199 or less)	10	12	11
Medium (200-350)	14	10	9
Large (351 or more)	16	18	19

**Table 2.3 - Age range of children**

	No. of schools (2006/07)	No. of schools (2007/08)	No. of schools (2008/09)
5-11 years	36	35	34
7-11 or 8-11 years	4	5	5

**Table 2.4 - Geographic location according to Government office regions<sup>1</sup>**

	No. of schools (2006/07)	No. of schools (2007/08)	No. of schools (2008/09)
East Midlands	2	1	1
East of England	9	9	8
London	9	9	9
North West	4	4	4
South East	10	10	10
South West	2	3	3
West Midlands	2	2	2
Yorkshire and the Humber	2	2	2

**Table 2.5 - Key Stage 2 Language Pathfinder school**

	No. of schools
Yes	5
No	35

**Table 2.6 - Children with Special Educational Needs without statements (SEN)**

	No. of schools (2006/07)	No. of schools (2007/08)	No. of schools (2008/09)
Low proportion (less than 10%)	4	3	7
Medium proportion (between 10-25%)	33	33	27
High proportion (more than 25%)	3	4	5

<sup>1</sup> The initial identification of Local Authorities and schools was largely dependent on the research teams' contacts. The bias towards the South, East and South-East reflects this.

**Table 2.7 - Children with Special Educational Needs with statements (SEN)**

	No. of schools (2006/07)	No. of schools (2007/08)	No. of schools (2008/09)
Low (less than 1%)	17	18	22
Medium (between 1-2%)	12	11	10
High (more than 2%)	11	9	7

**Table 2.8 - Children eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

	No. of schools (2006/07)	No. of schools (2007/08)	No. of schools (2008/09)
Low proportion (less than 10%)	24	26	25
Medium proportion (between 10-25%)	11	10	10
High proportion (more than 25%)	5	4	4

**Table 2.9 -Children's ethnic origin**

	No. of schools (2006/07)	No. of schools (2007/08)	No. of schools (2008/09)
'White majority' ethnic background	26	26	26
'Asian' ethnic background	6	6	5
'Black' ethnic background	7	7	7
Other	1	1	1

The labels used in Table 2.9 were defined by the research team as follows:

- 'white majority' - more than 75% white ethnic background; includes white, Irish, traveller of Irish origin, any other white background ethnic origin;
- 'Asian' - less than 75% white ethnic background; includes Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, any other Asian background ethnic origin;
- 'Black' - less than 75% white ethnic background; includes Caribbean, African, any other black background ethnic origin;
- Other - less than 75% white ethnic background; this particular school shared approximately the same proportion of children from a 'white majority' background ethnic origin as children from an 'Asian' background ethnic origin.

**Table 2.10 - Children with reported first language other than English**

	No. of schools (2006/07)	No. of schools (2007/08)	No. of schools (2008/09)
Low proportion (less than 10%)	25	22	21
Medium proportion (between 10-25%)	12	13	13
High proportion (more than 25%)	3	5	5

## 2.4.2 Languages background of staff

Table 2.11 provides information about the languages backgrounds of language co-ordinators in 2008/09 (where known).

**Table 2.11 - Highest language qualification of languages co-ordinators, 2008/09**

<b>Qualification level</b>	<b>No. of co-ordinators</b>
Native speaker	1
Initial teacher education with languages specialism	2
Postgraduate degree	3
Undergraduate degree	9
A level (s)	9
GCSE / O level (s)	8
No languages qualification	5
Not known	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

## 2.4.3 Schools' experience in teaching languages

Schools' experience in teaching languages is the final element of the contextual information considered relevant for the interpretation of results presented in later sections of the report. Table 2.12 shows how long languages had been taught in participating schools by 2008/09. The schools who left the study after 2006/07 were replaced by schools with very similar experience.

**Table 2.12 - Length of time teaching languages**

	<b>No. of schools (2008/09)</b>
2-3 years	2
4-6 years	23
7-9 years	5
10-14 years	4
15 years or more	5

## 2.4.4 Schools' profiles (Strand 3, achieved sample)

The same eight enhanced case study schools took part in the language skills assessments in all three years of this study. These schools were generally located in socially advantaged areas (only two had a proportion of children eligible for free school meals of 10% or more). Their intake was more diverse in ethnic terms: four of the schools had a 'white British' intake of 75% or less.

## **3 Literature review**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this literature review is to examine relevant literature and set a context for the longitudinal study of languages learning at Key Stage 2. Literature has been examined under six headings: rationales and aims for languages learning in the primary phase (3.2), the organisation of languages provision at primary school (3.3), learning and teaching (3.4), assessment and recording (3.5), influences on provision (3.6), and impact on children's learning (3.7).

The review includes literature with a range of methodological styles, incorporating conceptual work, case studies, surveys, quantitative accounts and ethnographies as well as narrative and systematic reviews. It draws on studies conducted by national bodies and agencies such as DfES / DCSF, QCA, Ofsted and other bodies such as NFER and CILT. Since the focus of the longitudinal study is on children at Key Stage 2 in England, reference is made mainly to research in English-speaking contexts, primarily the United Kingdom, the United States of America or Australia. As there are few studies on primary language learners in England, the review also draws on studies of early secondary learners. Research published since 2000 is prioritised, although key earlier studies are incorporated where appropriate.

The *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005) provides guidance for schools on the teaching of languages using five strands: Oracy, Literacy, Intercultural Understanding, Knowledge about Language and Language Learning Strategies. For ease of reference, much of this review follows these strands.

### **3.2 Rationale and aims for languages learning in the primary phase**

#### **3.2.1 The age factor**

There are longstanding debates about the best age for children to begin learning a new language. These centre around possible age-specific advantages as well as the availability of extended learning time. The 'Critical Period Hypothesis', developed by Lenneberg (1964) from the work of Penfield and Roberts (1957), was based on a biological view of language development, claiming essentially that as younger children's brains have greater plasticity, they are particularly adaptable for learning languages. Thus it has been claimed that language acquisition that takes place after puberty will be different in nature and potentially less successful (Nikolov and Djigunovic, 2006). However, other researchers have argued that older learners may compensate for supposed lack of brain plasticity through more highly developed learning strategies (Johnstone, 1994).

Marinova-Todd et al. (2000) and Francis (2005) point out that although psycholinguists generally agree on a critical period for first language acquisition, there is less agreement with regard to the second language. Although Birdsong (2005) suggests that age of acquisition is the most reliable predictor of attainment he notes that the effects of age of acquisition on early learners are inconsistent. Other researchers argue that on balance 'the evidence for some sort of maturational constraints is comparatively much more substantial than the evidence against them' (Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson, 2001 p.152).

Donato et al. (2000), who researched early classroom learners of Japanese in the United States of America, point to time-related benefits, noting that an early start allows for an overall longer period of learning with greater potential for attainment. However, in this study, factors such as the learner's age, aptitude, and attitude, and the effectiveness of the teaching, also impacted on achievement.

Marinova-Todd et al. (2000) also observe that several years of language instruction are necessary for long-term benefits to be achieved. The benefits of early languages learning may also be undermined if children's achievements are not recognised by secondary schools. Singleton notes 'there is a consistent finding that learners exposed to a second language at primary and who then at secondary school are mixed in with later beginners, do not maintain an advantage for more than a modest period over these latter' (2000 p.22).

Despite the continuing debate and inconclusive research on the benefits of an early start, languages learning at primary level has continued to rely on two main age-related arguments:

- that an early start provides more time for learning overall and
- coincides with a period of generally high motivation, since young beginners tend to be enthusiastic and willing to take risks (Tierney and Gallastegi, 2005).

### **3.2.2 Teaching aims and approaches**

In England, policy for languages learning varies across and within local authorities, with some decisions being made by clusters of primary schools or individual schools. Muijs et al. (2005) found three broad aims for the teaching approaches employed in the 19 Key Stage 2 Language Learning Pathfinder authorities: language competence, language sensitisation and a language awareness / multilingual approach. In Europe Edelenbos et al. (2006) reported the following approaches:

- roughly one hour per week teaching a particular language, mainly based on a course book;
- around one hour weekly teaching a language, but with a more flexible syllabus relating the language to other aspects of the curriculum, e.g. science;
- language awareness, giving access to a number of languages and cultures, in order to develop underlying qualities such as metalinguistic awareness and intercultural sensitivity;
- increased time and intensity in the form of bilingual or partial immersion education.

Broadly, the possible aims of a primary languages programme may be summed up as:

1. language competence, typically in one or two languages;
2. sensitisation through an encounter with a range of languages;
3. a language awareness approach;
4. intensive language study in an immersion style context such as content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

These aims are related below to recent UK initiatives in languages at primary school:

#### ***Language competence***

This approach focuses on developing children's linguistic attainment, usually in one language. It is clearly the main driver behind the recent expansion of languages provision in primary schools internationally (Graddol 2006). Although the *KS2 Framework for Languages*

is generic and non-language specific, the explicit progressive nature of the objectives in the three developmental strands of oracy, literacy and intercultural understanding over four years promotes a language competence approach, with one or two languages taught as a subject (see also recommendations by DCSF, 2009). Similarly in the Scottish context, this is also the most usual approach.

### ***Sensitisation through an encounter***

This approach focuses on developing children's understanding of other languages through encounters with one or more different languages; knowledge about languages is prioritised over the development of competence and progression in one language. This approach has proved attractive in some multilingual and multicultural school settings. European primary school projects which have fostered this approach include the 1997-2001 Socrates-Lingua *Eveil aux Langues dans l'école primaire* (EVLANG) project in five countries (Candelier 2003), and the 16-country *Janua Linguarum - JA-LING - the Gateway to Languages* (Fidler, 2006). The aims of the latter are summarised as:

- to develop students' interest in languages (including their first language);
- to encourage openness to and respect for different cultures and their people;
- to raise students' language and intercultural awareness;
- to encourage the bilingualism of learners whose first language (L1) differs from the language of instruction.

### ***Language awareness approach***

This approach focuses on developing children's understanding of the nature of language through exploring language similarities and differences. A language awareness approach is similar to an encounter approach but typically involves more discussion about language features in the first language. It owes much to the work of Hawkins (1984, 2005), who describes his vision of language education as a two-staged apprenticeship. In Hawkins' stage one (ages 5-14) the purpose is educational with a focus on developing children's wider metalinguistic understanding or 'language awareness'. In Hawkins' stage two, (ages 14-19) the purpose is 'instrumental' i.e. focused on building language competence, with a choice of languages.

There are a small number of instances in the UK of sensitisation and language awareness approaches. One example is the *Language Investigator* programme, described by Jones (2004), and Jones et al. (2005). Presently established in more than 70 % of primary schools in the Coventry area, this has also given rise to a set of commercially available resources, designed for the first two years of Key Stage 2. Ofsted (2005) highlighted the attention paid to language awareness in their description of this programme:

*An innovative approach in one local authority to the Key Stage 2 curriculum supported teachers in teaching a multilingual programme, which built on pupils' work in literacy and developed their early understanding of language. Investigative activities enabled pupils to make links between languages and draw conclusions about how languages work. This provided a strong foundation for later, or simultaneous, learning of one or two specific languages, and pupils made rapid progress. The approach also provided an inclusive, non-hierarchical view of language and culture early on (Ofsted 2005 p.8/9)*



A second project, *Discovering Languages*, evaluated by Barton et al. (2009), can be considered an example of language sensitisation/ encounter. Objectives include:

- to increase pupils' motivation to learn languages;
- to enhance linguistic sensitivity and intercultural understanding;
- to provide a multilingual programme comprising European and non-European languages, including at least one with a non-Roman script.

Martin (2006, 2007) reports on the evaluation of a third project, the *Languages Bridge*, which seeks to provide learners with the 'tools for multilingualism' and which incorporates language awareness features. Barton and Bragg (2007) also report on *Springboard into Languages*, a project involving four schools which aims to develop language awareness through the teaching of Esperanto.

The Ofsted evaluation of ten Key Stage 2 Language Learning Pathfinder Authorities (2005) reported that generalist primary teachers were more confident about teaching language investigation than teaching in a specific language, as this approach built on existing elements of literacy teaching with which they were familiar. However as described in section 1, policy developments in England have subsequently concentrated on equipping primary teachers with the language skills needed to adopt a 'language competence' approach, and the *KS2 Framework for Languages* expects children's knowledge about language to be developed in association with this, and not as an alternative to it. The recent DCSF recommendations for an overarching curriculum strand including 'English, communication and languages' go further in this direction (DCSF, 2009).

### ***CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)***

This approach aims to integrate the teaching of languages with age appropriate curriculum learning to support parallel linguistic and cognitive development, in the first language and another language. As a languages learning approach it draws on immersion education models such as the French-medium education programmes for English speaking children, found in bilingual Canada (Swain and Lapkin, 1982). Immersion education is a long term strategy which typically aims to produce high level bilinguals who can function academically and professionally in two languages. It has the following characteristics:

- intensity (children learn significant other subject-matter through their immersion language);
- time (substantial time is given to the immersion language, both overall and in any one week);
- exposure (sustained input and interaction).

Immersion education is extremely rare in the United Kingdom (apart from provision for Welsh and Scottish Gaelic which commonly takes this form). One successful example was the Walker Road *Early Primary Partial Immersion* (EPPI) initiative in Aberdeen (Johnstone, 2002; Johnstone and McKinstry, 2008), in which from Primary 1 onwards, children received some of their education through French and some through English.

A less radical means of providing extended time for languages learning is to teach one or more other subjects through the medium of the target language, and this is the typical CLIL experience. Marsh (2002 p.58) defines CLIL as any activity in which a language is used as 'a tool in the learning of a non-language subject, in which both language and the subject have a joint role.' Generally, the emphasis in CLIL classrooms is on communication rather than

learning grammar. Its proponents claim that it can have a positive effect on a young learner's thinking skills and conceptualisation, while nurturing a 'can do' attitude towards languages learning.

The CLIL approach is being explored in a number of European educational systems, predominantly to promote competence in English (Lorenzo, 2007; Seikkula-Leino, 2007). In England, the Content and Language Integration Project (CLIP) sought to improve pupils' languages capability and develop a cross-curricular approach to languages learning (Coyle, 2007a); it was piloted in 2002 and evaluated by Dobson (2005). There have been a small number of other primary and secondary CLIL projects in England, as well as in initial teacher education, some of which were TDA funded (Montet and Morgan, 2001).

It is difficult to make direct comparisons across these four approaches, as the social contexts in which they are typically adopted are very different. However it is notable that in the 1990s and 2000s, approaches aiming to deliver advanced skill in a desired language (essentially 'language competence' and 'CLIL' approaches) have gained ground internationally, and 'language encounter' /'language awareness' approaches have lost ground. There is of course no reason why language competence approaches cannot simultaneously promote language awareness, and growing evidence that this can be the case, at least where language learning is sustained and reaches an advanced level (Jessner, 2006).

### **3.3 The organisation of languages provision at primary school**

#### **3.3.1 Languages taught**

In line with previous studies, Muijs et al. (2005, p.24) and Ofsted (2008a) found French to be the dominant language taught in England, although nearly a third of the schools surveyed taught Spanish and there was some teaching of German or Japanese. Similarly, Wade and Marshall (2009) found that French was taught in 89 % of schools which taught languages in their 2008 survey, Spanish in 25% of schools and German in 10% of schools. The survey showed that 66% of schools only offer French and where two languages are taught French is most often combined with Spanish. Teaching of non-European world languages is still limited; for example, a study by The National Centre for Languages (CILT, 2007) identified 26 primary schools as teaching Mandarin, with over 2,000 participating children, and the NFER survey notes very small numbers of schools offering Italian, Chinese, Japanese or Urdu (Wade and Marshall, 2009).

As indicated by Wade and Marshall, community languages do not usually form part of primary languages provision. However Ofsted (2005) noted that in a few Key Stage 2 Language Learning Pathfinders, the local authority sought ways to provide teaching in a community language, either for groups of pupils with the language as a home or heritage language or, rarely, for whole classes. Currently, CILT is coordinating the *Our Languages* project, which aims to audit different approaches to provision, each suitable for a specific local community. According to Dugard (2009) the main approaches linking with the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* are:

- Community language as the Key Stage 2 entitlement language (i.e. the only primary language), for example, Bengali in Tower Hamlets, where the majority of children are Bengali speakers;
- Community language as an additional language for 1 or 2 years, alongside another main language. For example, Enfield where French is taught in Years 3-6 and additionally Turkish in Years 5 and 6;

- Multilingual language awareness approaches in Years 3 and 4 with a one language focus in later years. For example, Bradford, where Arabic supplementary materials are used alongside the *Investigating Languages* resources, with Arabic becoming the main language taught in Years 5 and 6.

Two other models discussed by Dugard (2009) are:

- A world language taught as an entitlement language to primary children, in the absence of mother tongue speakers (e.g. Mandarin Chinese in Plymouth)
- A different language learned each year across Key Stages 1 and 2, including both community and European languages (e.g. Somali in Sheffield).

As regards which language should be taught, the *Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum* proposes that 'schools should be free to choose the language(s) that they wish to teach; however, as far as possible the languages offered should be those which children will be taught at Key Stage 3' (DCSF, 2009 p.24). The *Cambridge Primary Review* concludes: 'Like Rose, we see no alternative to the decision on such matters being taken locally' (Alexander, 2009).

### 3.3.2 Time allocated and provision

It is obviously important that sufficient time for languages is provided within the curriculum, and it has been argued on the basis of children's maturational level that languages learning should be distributed in frequent short lessons and/or that activities should be varied, to reflect children's limited concentration span (e.g. S. Holden, 1980). The *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* suggests that an hour a week should be allocated to languages learning, with at least thirty minutes provided as discrete teaching, and the rest by integrating the language into the wider curriculum. The NFER survey found that across all year groups the amount of time spent on languages in most schools ranged from 30 minutes to one hour, with older children receiving slightly more time. The median amount of time spent on teaching in 2008 was 40 minutes in Years 3 and 4 and 45 minutes in Years 5 and 6 (Wade and Marshall, 2009). Ofsted (2008a) found that just over half the primary schools surveyed were allocating an average of 30 minutes a week, rising in some schools to an hour. Overall, 30 minutes were deemed by Ofsted as insufficient for learners to progress, if there was not good reinforcement at other times.

In Wales, some schools are using 'discretionary time' after statutory subjects have been covered, to fit in the 30 minutes per week for languages required by the KS2 Modern Foreign Languages Pilot. Welsh Pilot experience indicates that it is more appropriate to spread languages work evenly across the school year as a whole, than to deliver languages via intensive blocks at particular periods. The main identified constraint is general pressure on the primary curriculum and lack of time within the school day (People and Work Unit, 2006). The 2008 NFER survey indicates that primary schools in England typically provide discrete languages lessons rather than integrated instruction. There has been an increase in this type of provision over the three years of their study, with 84-85% of the sample schools providing discrete lessons to Years 3, 4 and 5, and 79% providing discrete lessons for Year 6. However this survey also indicates that some element of integrated instruction is provided in over 30% of schools.

### 3.3.3 Staffing for languages in the primary school

In England, languages have been taught in primary schools most often by generalist class teachers, and by visiting teachers from secondary schools (Driscoll 2000; Driscoll et al., 2004a; Muijs et al., 2005; Edelenbos et al., 2006; Wade and Marshall, 2009), supported by teaching assistants and native speakers (Martin et al., 2003; Martin and Farren, 2004).

However, by 2007, Wade and Marshall (2009) note a decline in the number of peripatetic specialist teachers and teachers from secondary schools teaching languages, and an increase in the numbers of trained primary class teachers teaching languages. In 2008, they note the number of teachers involved in teaching languages per school as ranging from 1-5. The proportion of staff with limited or no qualifications was considered high with only 13% of schools indicating that all the staff teaching languages held a languages degree. The main delivery model for teaching languages in the 2008 sample involved class teachers, whether working alone (37%), working with a Teaching Assistant (TA) (15%) or working with a Foreign Language Assistant (FLA) (4%). Specialist teachers were involved in teaching in less than 20% of schools, either as external peripatetic specialists (11%) or internal peripatetic specialists (8%). In 18% of schools a mixed delivery model was used which most frequently involved a class teacher working alone and an external specialist teaching some classes. Other combinations included: a class teacher working alone and a class teacher working with a TA; a class teacher working with both a TA and an external specialist teacher; a class teacher working both alone and with an internal specialist teacher, and a class teacher working alone alongside a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA), also working alone.

Beyond the teacher's personal language proficiency, a number of advantages have been claimed for specialist teaching by observers and evaluators of primary languages (Driscoll, 2000; Driscoll et al., 2004b; Muijs et al., 2005; Ofsted, 2005; Welsh Key Stage 2 Pilot):

- Deeper subject knowledge enabling conceptual explanations, a wider range of structures, and breadth of vocabulary rather than a diet of 'learnt-by-heart' phrases;
- Good pronunciation providing an excellent model for learners and other teachers;
- Lessons which may proceed at a faster pace;
- Explicit knowledge of the language leading to an awareness of and ability to correct error;
- First hand experience of the country supporting children's developing intercultural understanding;
- Confidence allowing specialists to be flexible in their responses rather than having to stick to a lesson plan.

However, teachers need to apply their knowledge appropriately for the age, stage and interests of the learner (Blondin et al., 1998). Chesterton et al., (2004), reporting on Australian research, suggest that weak pedagogical practice in specialist teachers and/or inability to enthuse young learners adversely impact on the quality of early languages learning. The possible disadvantages of using specialists can be summarised as:

- Outsider status and lack of ownership of space, restricting pedagogic options;
- Often little experience of the primary curriculum and pedagogy (Low, 1999);
- Little knowledge of pupils' achievements/cognitive development beyond the languages lesson;
- Practical difficulties in liaising with class teachers;
- Need to negotiate working consensus and behaviour management with each successive class;

- Difficulty with making links between the language and wider curriculum (Ofsted, 2005);
- Lack of involvement in planning meetings or with the school as a whole.

In support of involving generalist teachers, Low et al. (1995), argue that to be effective a teacher does not need a high level of linguistic expertise, but needs to be confident in their language use in a limited number of core areas. Some of the generally claimed advantages of involvement of the class teacher are:

- Knowledge of pupils as individuals with usually good rapport;
- Best placed to match learners' maturational needs;
- Scope to bring languages work into the broader curriculum (depending on the teacher's fluency);
- Potential to exploit opportunities to reinforce the language little and often (Martin, 2000).

Sharpe (2001) suggested a teaching force comprising two categories of primary teacher: a primary trained generalist with additional specialist language training and class teachers able to support the 'primary specialist'. The current Welsh Pilot Project reports that class teachers appreciate and benefit from specialist support in planning and delivering lessons. Barton et al. (2009) report that primary school heads and teachers welcomed the concept of a multilingual language awareness programme, since they believed it does not require any specialist language knowledge for teachers to deliver it, and provides a practical solution to the issue of non-specialists delivering languages.

There is very little evidence concerning the impact of foreign language assistants (FLAs) in primary languages. Their potential contribution is noted by Ofsted (2005), who observed that, in the best lessons, FLAs contribute well to pupils' intercultural awareness.

### **3.4 Learning and teaching**

This section focuses on literature relating to elements of languages learning and teaching as they are structured in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005), namely the core strands of oracy, literacy and intercultural understanding, and the cross cutting strands of knowledge about language and language learning strategies.

#### **3.4.1 Oracy**

The first strand of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* is oracy, the development of listening and speaking skills and spoken interaction. In the early stages of languages learning, a key element is pre-fabricated, formulaic chunks, set phrases learned whole, which have an immediate communicative value by enabling the learner to interact with others. The use of formulas must be distinguished from creative construction in the new language to generate fresh sentences and ideas.

Progression in oracy depends in part, on the richness of the target language input, which can be provided by teacher talk plus the use of resources such as DVDs, and in part on a range of opportunities for pupils themselves to interact. In general, research to date suggests that oracy is the main focus of languages teaching in the primary school. It is claimed as one of the advantages for a younger start to languages learning, that primary age children have fewer inhibitions about attempting to speak a new language (Tierney and Gallastegi, 2005).

### ***Use of story***

The three year study by Donato et al. (2000) in the United States of America suggests that oral proficiency can be enhanced through story telling activities. Stories with a cultural dimension and accompanied by visual aids enriched the curriculum, moving it away from discrete word learning towards whole texts rooted in Japanese culture. This approach is supported by Ghosn's (2004) study of twelve English as a Foreign Language primary classrooms in the Lebanon, and by Linse (2007), who suggests that stories with rich illustrations originally created for native speaker children, can help develop both oracy and literacy skills. The use of repetitive, controlled language within a predictable and familiar context, at a level slightly above children's language ability, helps learners develop a feel for the patterns of the target language, practise specific phonemes, and predict the words which fit into core structures, frequently repeated.

Edelenbos et al. (2006 p.149) note the need to alternate between speaking tasks which focus on fluency and those requiring accuracy, as well as between spontaneous speech and activities which can be prepared. They highlight the value of stories, 'not only because of an appeal to children's imagination but also because they help children acquire a narrative discourse structure'.

### **3.4.2 Literacy**

The second strand of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* is Literacy including reading and writing which are seen as supporting and supported by the development of Oracy.

#### ***Reading***

It is increasingly accepted that a balance between literacy and oracy is beneficial for languages learning in school (e.g. Edelenbos et al., 2006 p.148). However in primary languages generally, oracy has been given priority over literacy. The Ofsted (2005 p.14) Pathfinder evaluation notes that the teaching of reading and writing was less common than listening and speaking: 'A small minority of teachers applied English literacy techniques effectively to the foreign language, skillfully eliciting pupils' understanding of the links between sounds and spelling in the language. This tended to occur where secondary teachers worked with primary teachers and where a real dialogue had been established'. Similarly, Muijs et al. (2005) note that in a few Pathfinder lessons pupils were working at text level and developing strong literacy skills. Nonetheless, few examples of systematic reading were observed, and although pupils could write accurately when given the opportunity, most schools did not focus on writing skills.

Both first language (L1) and second language (L2) models of reading comprehension recognise that reading involves interaction between top-down processes (knowledge of context, of the world) and bottom-up processes (decoding graphemes, obtaining meaning at word and phrase level). There is a growing consensus that encouraging readers to deploy strategies in both directions can help them read texts normally assumed to be above their competence level (Macaro and Erler, 2008).

There is limited research on strategy instruction for early L2 literacy (e.g. encouraging learners to infer meanings from context, to identify cognates or to analyse word structure), but some small scale studies present positive preliminary results. Woore (2007) reports a study where a Year 7 class of 28 near beginner learners of German were taught an explicit bottom-up strategy to solve pronunciation problems when reading (in this approach, the learners used poems to locate familiar words containing the problem grapheme). Pre- and post-tests suggested a small but significant improvement in decoding skill as a result.

Macaro and Mutton (2009) describe another small scale study, this time with Year 6, which focussed on teaching top-down inferencing strategies to be used when confronted with new or unfamiliar French words in short texts. Again, the children who received strategy instruction made significant advances on some measures (their inferencing ability and learning of function words).

The teaching of Language Learning Strategies is encouraged in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, as well as the development of bottom-up decoding skills. Findings from an Ofsted (2008c) survey on the extent to which a sample of schools had changed their teaching of English phonics on the basis of the 2006 Rose Review of the Teaching of Reading, indicate that children enjoy phonics lessons within a systematic programme. It should, however, be noted that Key Stage 2 specialist languages teachers may not have first hand experience of phonics in English, as this teaching is typically undertaken in Key Stage 1. There is no clear evidence yet available on the extent of such teachers' phonics knowledge, on the extent of phonics teaching within languages at primary level, nor on its effectiveness.

### **Writing**

Again there is limited research on writing by early language learners. Macaro (2007a) studied the French writing strategies of a group of Year 7 language learners, finding that copywriting was very common. He reports that all learners in the sample were trying to use grapheme-phoneme correspondences in their writing, although lack of awareness of actual grapheme-phoneme correspondences in French limited their effectiveness. (It is unknown whether these Year 7 language learners had received any phonics teaching.)

Macaro (2007a) also studied the learners' attempts at free writing, defined as the generation of sentences through which learners express their own ideas. In practice the observed free-writing comprised filling in sections, to allow learners to personalise a piece of text. Learners did not consider recombining phrases and depended largely on set phrases learned through topics. This approach may be a consequence of learners not ever having to generate language without resources. Writing, conceived as 'writing the language of others', led to feelings of dependence. Similarly, Way et al. (2000) found that the provision of an L2 model, whilst eliciting the best quality writing, may reduce challenge, since learners tend to 'lift' text from the model.

Writing strategies in a new language require substantial practice and take time to develop. Although more inaccurate writing may be produced in the short term, Macaro suggests that learners should:

- be encouraged to formulate by choosing from a range of strategies;
- be given opportunities to write and apply formulation and monitoring strategies;
- do more free-writing without access to resources, except a dictionary (Macaro, 2007a).

### **3.4.3 Intercultural Understanding**

Education policy documents increasingly emphasise cultural dimensions of language learning (Liddicoat et al., 2007). Thus the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* states:

*Language competence and intercultural understanding are an essential part of being a citizen. Children develop a greater understanding of their own lives in the context of exploring the lives of others. They learn to look at things from another's perspective, giving them insight into the people, culture and traditions of other cultures. Children become more aware of the similarities and differences between peoples, their daily lives, beliefs and values (DfES, 2005 p.8).*

However, teachers' views, values and beliefs are of critical importance in developing children's intercultural understanding. Static models of culture (Liddicoat 2004) lead to a self contained cultural component taught in the learner's first language, for example the teaching of decontextualised cultural facts in secondary school classrooms described by Byram (1997). Emerging models view culture as constantly changing and dynamic.

Byram and Doyé (1999 p.141) suggest that intercultural speakers need particular attitudes, knowledge and skills. Byram (1997) has argued that learners need to develop more than intercultural understanding or awareness; they need to develop a set of related knowledge and skills to achieve intercultural competence. He suggests this competence involves: knowledge (*savoir*), attitudes (*savoir être*), the skills of interpreting and relating, (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre / faire*) and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*). Indeed, primary age children already possess some *savoirs* (knowledge) about their own social group's practices and culture, together with less fixed ideas about linguistic and cultural differences (Liddicoat 2004). Byram (1994) selects the attitudes of openness and curiosity, *savoir être*, as especially suited to the primary phase, during which the foundations for intercultural competence can be laid.

Byram also emphasises the importance of *empathy*, the notion of seeing the world from someone else's point of view, a capacity which according to Hawkins (1999) is at its best around the age of nine, declining with the onset of adolescence. The teacher is crucial for the development of empathy, both as an information source and as a model.

Byram cautions, as does Hatoss (2005), that simply exposing children to languages learning or to other cultures, will not, of itself, lead necessarily to some of the intercultural outcomes typically suggested for languages programmes at primary level, including positive attitudes. Intuitive and unsystematic teaching of culture leaves pupils with 'unstructured information rather than knowledge' (Byram, 1989 p.120).

In a cross European study of *Languages and Cultures in Europe* involving 12 countries including the UK (LACE, 2007) the authors note that where (inter) cultural competences are included in the curriculum there is a focus on knowledge and attitudes; a finding supported by other small scale studies in England (C. Holden, 2004). In contrast, however, the LACE study findings suggest that teachers view intercultural competence development as being primarily concerned with attitudes and behaviour rather than cognition. Teachers in the study indicated they felt unprepared for developing intercultural competence, with 63% indicating they had received little or no training in this area during their initial teacher education, and 53% indicating they had received no further professional development in this area.

Muijs et al. (2005) outline some ways in which understanding of culture was being developed within Pathfinder schools, including engagement with native speakers, themed days, e-mail based exchanges, activities with children in other countries and trips to countries where the language was spoken. However at secondary level, Evans and Fisher (2009) note that the *Key Stage 3 Framework* has had a limited influence on the teaching of culture, with only 12% of respondents indicating that it had had a significant effect on their practice. An Ofsted (2008b) survey indicates that the best specialist trainees apply the intercultural understanding they gain from their placement abroad. There is some evidence that the increased opportunities for trainee primary teachers to undertake a teaching placement abroad is enabling these teachers to review and reflect on their own knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards other cultures and cultural practices (Newman et al., 2004). On the whole, however, there is little evidence in the literature of how intercultural understanding is being taught in the UK.



### 3.4.4 Knowledge about Language

There has been substantial debate about the role of explicit knowledge about language and grammar study within languages programmes. From the 1960s to the 1980s, successive language teaching approaches downplayed its contribution to the development of language proficiency. The audiolingualism of the 1960s argued for habit formation through structured oral practice; the communicative language teaching movement of the 1980s argued for learner engagement in meaningful language use; in their strongest versions, both approaches marginalised the systematic study of grammar. However, findings from the early years of the Scottish MLPS initiative (Low et al., 1993, 1995; Low, 1999) are in line with the findings of much international research (Blondin et al., 1998; Martin, 2000; Williams, 2005), which acknowledges the importance of an understanding of the target language as a system, in the classroom based development of language competence (see also Mitchell, 2003).

Recent years have seen a general return to explicit grammar teaching, or at least advocacy of knowledge about language (KAL) in various guises in policy documents and frameworks. Evans and Fisher found that teacher support for the *Key Stage 3 Framework for Languages* was 'based mainly on its conformity with teachers' prior beliefs and approaches to language learning... expressed as approval of a return to explicit teaching and learning... and an explicit focus on grammar' (2009 p.37). Pupils interviewed as part of this study, indicated that 'the purpose of learning grammar and grammatical concepts had been made explicit to them' and that pupils referred to 'progression from word level work to more complex work on building sentences and even texts' (Evans and Fisher, 2009 p.37).

In an earlier secondary school study, Mitchell et al. (1994) investigated the place of KAL in both English and languages in Year 9 in three case study schools. In these schools, language at word and sentence level received the most consistent attention from languages teachers. In contrast, English teachers focussed KAL discussion at text level, i.e. discussing features of whole texts rather than referring to details at sentence level. Pupils thus seemed to receive largely unrelated messages about KAL from different subject teachers, which failed to constitute 'a developmentally coherent curriculum strand.' In comparison, primary teachers of languages would appear to have a real opportunity to make connections between English, literacy and languages work in a less fragmented and *ad-hoc* way.

At primary level, Ofsted (2005) report instances of good KAL teaching, describing a Year 5 lesson in which pupils learned how to deduce meaning from texts and made comparisons between languages. Barton et al. (2009) report that teachers in the *Discovering Language* project were provided with notes on metalinguistic elements in the five languages under consideration, and also used National Curriculum literacy terminology. However these isolated instances apart, little is known about how far the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* proposals for Knowledge about Language are being implemented and/ or linked with wider literacy teaching within schools.

### 3.4.5 Language Learning Strategies

'Commonly defined as the skills, tactics and approaches, which learners adopt in tackling their language learning' (Harris, 2006 p.4), learner strategies offer 'the tools for learners to manage their own learning' (Grenfell and Erler, 2007 p.6). Strategies can be taught (Harris, 1997; Macaro, 2001); however, effective strategy use is bound up with motivation. Learners who believe that their achievement or failure can be explained by factors within their control, such as which strategies they employ, are likely to be motivated to attempt tasks again (Williams and Burden, 1999). Coyle's (2007b) study of a mixed ability class of 11 year olds in their first year of German, concludes that classroom culture, scaffolding learning and creating learning opportunities, impacts on the strategic behaviour of both learners and teachers.

International research on learning strategies mainly focuses on adult learners of English as an L2, and there are very few strategy studies with a primary school focus. Exceptions are the evaluation of the Scottish MLPS Pilot (Low et al., 1993), Walters' (2007) account of Bangladeshi pupils' strategies for learning to read in UK primary school settings and Macaro and Mutton's (2009) pilot study of an inferencing strategy intervention described above, which showed positive impact from strategy instruction on some though not all measures of learning.

Some research has been conducted by members of UKPOLLS (UK Project on Language Learner Strategies) with (near) beginner secondary pupils in England (see e.g. Grenfell and Harris, 1999; also Coyle, 2007b; Grenfell, 2007; Macaro, 2007; Walters, 2007). This research indicates that successful language learners at this level:

- employ a range of strategies;
- have a wider repertoire than less effective learners;
- apply the strategies more frequently;
- deploy metacognitive strategies;
- often use a number of strategies in combination, rather than applying one isolated strategy.

This research provides some support for the inclusion of learning strategy instruction in early languages programmes. For example, Harris (2006) found impact on language performance and motivation from encouraging learners to transfer strategies across English and other languages. However there is effectively no evidence on whether and how learning strategies are currently taught at primary level.

### **3.5 Assessment and recording**

#### **3.5.1 Purposes and rationale for assessment**

The assessment literature includes a mix of conceptual discussions of issues, reports of developments and policy initiatives, and limited research into the workings and effectiveness of language assessment in primary schools (Alderson and Banerjee; 2001; Hasselgren, 2000 and 2005; Johnstone, 2000; Zangl, 2000).

Johnstone (2000) lists a number of 'good reasons' for developing techniques for the assessment of languages in primary school:

- gauging the return on a massive public investment
- feedback to parents and the public, in order to develop realistic expectations
- informing national policy developments
- self-evaluation at the level of institutions, teachers and learners (p.123).

To this list can be added the need to inform the transition process to secondary languages education, through some form of documentation of achievement.

Many reports of actual assessment initiatives relate to programme evaluation and are just one component of larger studies. Examples are Johnstone's (2000) account of assessment techniques in the evaluation of the 1990s MLPS initiative in Scotland; evaluations of a Japanese programme in the United States (Donato, 1996; Donato et al., 2000) and the account by Harris and Conway (2002) of assessments used in the evaluation of the primary languages initiative in the Irish Republic.

A second group of assessment initiatives focus on the measurement of standards being achieved in languages by the end of primary education. Thus, McPake et al. (2003) describe instrumentation used in a national survey of attainment in Primary 7 and Secondary 2 conducted in 2001 for the Scottish Executive. Edelenbos and Vinje (2000) describe the 1996 assessment of standards in primary English in the Netherlands and Hasselgren (2005) reports a Norwegian government initiative for national testing of English in the fourth and seventh primary school grades.

The third area is the educational need for formative and self assessment in languages, where most work centres round versions of the European Language Portfolio (Hasselgren, 2005, see 3.5.3 below).

Finally, a growth area is the development of free-standing proficiency tests referenced to nationally and internationally recognised scales, as a basis for 'portable' certification in a variety of languages. In the UK, the Asset Languages project is a government-funded initiative providing proficiency tests in four language skills in a range of languages, mapped to the Languages Ladder developed by the DfES (2005) and linked to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR): see 3.5.3 below.

### **3.5.2 Languages assessment in primary schools**

According to McKay (2005 p.256) the assessment of young language learners requires a knowledge of their social and cognitive development, as well as understanding of assessment principles and practices. Johnstone (2000) summarises some challenges in the development of assessment tools for primary level languages:

- The need to design assessments of adequate reliability and comparability (see also Kondo-Brown 2004);
- The absence of clearly defined shared curricula;
- The need to develop clear and shared understandings of what it is reasonable to expect primary pupils to achieve;
- The very limited and idiosyncratic extent of children's language skills;
- The generally very limited assessment expertise in primary contexts;
- Difficulties in interpreting beginner performances and relating them to pre-determined attainment levels (see also Thompson et al., 2002).

Martin (2000), Driscoll et al. (2004a), Muijs et al. (2005), Ofsted (2007), and Whitby et al. (2008) comment on the generally underdeveloped state of assessment of languages in primary contexts in England. Ofsted surveys (2005, 2008a) report that most schools had yet to develop procedures for assessing and reporting on pupils' progress. Teachers gave children positive oral feedback during lessons, but fear of undermining children's confidence deterred many from assessing them formally. Schools recognised, however, that as provision grows, more formal assessment procedures would be needed to support progression throughout Key Stage 2.

Among the teacher trainees surveyed by Ofsted (2008b) assessment was the weakest area. The best trainees gave formative oral feedback to help pupils' pronunciation. Many, however, did not correct errors sufficiently, either because they did not recognise the importance of doing so, or did not know how to. However, even trainees pioneering languages in schools were aware of the need to record progress, and the best had identified ways of doing this. Most attempted to adapt the recommended course or school assessment system to the languages classroom.

### **3.5.3 Assessment models**

The two best known externally developed assessment models relevant for languages in the primary school are the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and the Asset Languages scheme.

#### ***European Language Portfolio (ELP)***

The European Language Portfolio (ELP), which incorporates a language passport, language biography and dossier (Little and Perclova, 2001) is based on the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001) and its 'can-do' statements, with the aim of enabling language learners to 'record their qualifications and other significant linguistic and cultural experiences in an internationally transparent manner' (Council of Europe, 1998). Their creation has accompanied a shift in emphasis from content and results, to process and the capacity of learners to self-direct their learning.

The Council of Europe has approved numerous ELPs for different age groups in different countries. Hasselgren (2005) reports nine national initiatives to produce primary level ELPs, including the CILT version for English primary schools (McLagan, 2006), judged by Hasselgren as particularly child-friendly. Others are the French version, (Debyser and Tagliante, 2001), the portfolio for ESL learners in Irish primary schools (Little, 2005), Hasselgren's own variant in Norway and portfolios for the assessment of English as a Foreign Language (Hedge, 2000; Rea, 2001).

Teachers can use these portfolios for a variety of formative as well as summative purposes:

- To inform planning for future learning;
- To acknowledge and celebrate linguistic diversity;
- To record learners' achievement/document learners' best work;
- To document the learning process;
- As a tool for reflection on the part of learners;
- To inform transition to secondary school.

Junior versions of the ELP provide scope for assessment of different strands of languages learning, through can-do statements covering both oracy and literacy. In addition, in England, the revised junior version (McLagan, 2006) incorporates statements relating to intercultural experiences.

Regarding use of the ELP, Nunes (2004) suggests that portfolios should not be completed in a single session at the end of year but that their development should be dialogic, contributing to interaction between the teacher and learners, and documenting the learner's reflection on

learning. Ofsted (2005) comment that while pupils' self-assessment is at an early stage, they gain a sense of achievement as they complete 'can do' statements. However, the actual use of ELP in schools e.g. to inform transition has received only passing attention in research.

### ***The Languages Ladder and Asset Languages***

The Nuffield Languages Programme (2002) recommended a framework designed to exert a formative function through a 'learning ladder of bite-sized, accessible targets', with the intention of boosting learner motivation especially among early learners. The concept was taken forward in the National Languages Strategy (DfES, 2002), which adopted the so-called Languages Ladder as a voluntary recognition system to complement existing national qualifications frameworks and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001).

The Languages Ladder describes a series of levels in can-do terms, for the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (DfES, 2005b). Jones (2007 p.19) describes it as: 'a user-oriented proficiency scale describing progression via examples of things which learners at a level can typically do'. The levels broadly correspond to those of the CEFR; they can be used by schools and learners for a range of assessment purposes. Dearing and King (2007) suggest for example that the Languages Ladder could be used to address the transition phase:

*There should be informal classroom assessment of every child's learning near the end of Key Stage 2 by reference to the Languages Ladder, so that the Key Stage 3 teacher is well informed about the pupil's learning standard and needs. The assessment we recommend is formative in purpose, fit for the individual child, not aggregated, and should not be the basis for any league tables. (Dearing and King, 2007 p.10)*

The Asset Languages project (Jones, 2007) was funded by DCSF at the University of Cambridge, to produce a range of assessment tools based on the Languages Ladder, in the same four skills and in a wide range of languages. Two assessment strands are offered: external assessment at six defined stages of progression, and a teacher assessment scheme. At lower levels, specially adapted versions of the assessment materials have been produced with primary schools in mind. Jones (2007) acknowledges the technical difficulties involved in producing relatively standardised assessment tools for learners in the earliest stages of languages learning. Findings from the 2008 NFER survey indicate that only 3% of schools are currently using Asset Languages and that the majority of schools who are monitoring and assessing children's learning (only 46% of the study sample) preferred to design and use their own assessment tools (Wade and Marshall, 2009).

It remains to be seen whether the more formal Asset Languages scheme, with its clear merits in terms of external referencing, will grow in attractiveness to primary teachers many of whom are still at the early stage of developing formative assessment tools.

## **3.6 Influences on provision**

### **3.6.1 Factors hindering and enhancing languages provision in primary schools**

The viability and success of a primary languages programme is related to the value the school as a whole places upon it (Barratt-Pugh and Rohl, 2001) through strong leadership, good short, medium and long term planning, a curriculum model with staff to take it forward through a process of audit, planning and review and well developed partnership with secondary schools (Ofsted, 2008a). The NFER survey report identified the following seven factors as the most likely to affect the sustainability of languages: staff changes/stability of staffing; time constraints; funding and financial support; access to training; physical and practical resources; staff proficiency in languages and specialist or suitably trained staff (Wade and Marshall, 2009).

In Pennsylvania, Donato and Tucker's (2000) study of a Spanish programme of around 2,800 learners identified the following factors underpinning sustainability:

- An overarching concern for careful and collaborative planning and programme evaluation;
- Programme expansion carried out consecutively each year rather than to learners in all elementary grades in a single year;
- A concern that learners should make progress.

Proficiency outcomes are critical to the success of language programmes. A repetitive curriculum and failure to adjust teaching to the growing abilities of the child can undermine the value of languages instruction (Donato and Tucker, 2007).

### **3.6.2 Transfer and transition**

According to the CILT Transition Project (2008) 'transfer' is about procedures and systems: passing on records and deciding which language(s) a pupil will study in Key Stage 3, when, and how. 'Transition' focuses more on building on the learner's prior knowledge and skills and is integral to curriculum development and change.

Effective transition is essential if the benefits of primary languages are to be realised at secondary level. Galton and Pell (2000) note that many negative features of transition found in the 1980s still exist across the wider curriculum. Research in Scotland suggests that even though rooted in a 5-14 curricular context, secondary teachers who taught languages in feeder primaries in Scotland in the 1990s, did not necessarily build on what pupils had done during their primary schooling (Low et al., 1993, 1995; Low and Johnstone, 1997; Martin 2000).

A 2001 survey on behalf of QCA found that slightly less than half the authorities in the sample made authority-wide arrangements to facilitate transition in languages and less than a quarter of secondary teachers took account of transfer data, with similar findings in QCA (2005) and Bolster et al. (2004). Ofsted (2005) reported that in the majority of Pathfinder authorities, primary-secondary patterns of transfer were complex. Most secondary schools took pupils from a wide range of primary schools and pupils could not necessarily continue in Year 7 with a language learned in Year 6. Local authorities did not always communicate this and unrealistic expectations often arose of immediate continuity. Even secondary schools involved in primary outreach work failed to use information from Key Stage 2 to plan for Year 7. Higher attaining Year 7 pupils often lacked challenge in their early months at secondary, expressing frustration at repeating earlier learning. Some secondary teachers used children's language portfolios to boost their confidence in Year 7 and children appreciated this acknowledgement of their prior learning. One local authority set up an awards scheme, which was motivating for children at transfer and raised awareness in secondary schools of language developments in primary. Ofsted (2008a) reports that little has changed. The 2007 *Languages Review* recommended:

*Wherever possible, ... clusters of primary and secondary schools in a local authority area should link up to seek to achieve agreement on the languages to be taught in primary schools and arrangements for progression to the secondary schools, and to foster close contact between the primary teacher and the specialist language teacher in the secondary school. (Dearing and King, 2007 p.10)*

The recent studies by the NFER (Wade and Marshall, 2009) and the University of Cambridge (Evans and Fisher, 2009) confirm that both the transfer of information between primary and secondary schools and the ability of secondary schools to take into account children's prior languages learning remain areas for concern. The NFER survey notes increased planning for transition by local authorities (LAs), including the provision of transfer documents, use of a specific curriculum across the LA and specific joint language curriculum activities. Support from LA advisory staff for transition was reported by 82% of the 111 LA respondents, and initiatives including cluster/network meetings, transition conferences and events, working parties and projects were mentioned. However, school responses indicate a less positive overall view of transition developments, although there is more contact between primary and secondary schools in some areas, and some schools are adopting an authority-wide curriculum. In terms of schools' internal arrangements the most significant finding relates to an increase in reporting to parents on children's language attainment (Wade and Marshall, 2009).

Findings from the University of Cambridge study suggest that knowledge of the Key Stage 2 languages initiative is growing from a very low baseline, but that many staff in secondary schools are still not taking into account children's prior experiences when they enter secondary school. Ensuring progression for children with different languages experiences is considered the major challenge by secondary teachers. Some evidence of increased openness and collaboration between secondary and primary teachers/ schools to address the issues of transfer and transition is noted by the research team. However, there is clearly still considerable work to be done (Evans and Fisher, 2009).

In April 2007, CILT undertook a project on effective transition in languages from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. The key findings and recommendations from the first year of this project are:

- A homogeneous Year 7 group does not exist (even if all children in a class have learnt the same language at primary school, they come from different primary schools, have been taught in different ways, and have different levels of ability and confidence);
- Year 7 children are in a class with few others whom they know well, which may affect their confidence, particularly in speaking;
- Year 7 teachers need to diagnose their pupils' confidence, ability and needs, in order to build effectively on the primary languages experience;
- Pedagogic continuity should be promoted via cross-curricular work, with varied learning techniques systematically built into schemes of work and lesson plans;
- Meaningful links with pupils' own areas of interest should be made by revisiting Key Stage 2 themes in a linguistically and cognitively more challenging way;
- Secondary teachers must be familiar with the *Key Stage 2 Framework* and the QCA Schemes of Work;
- Revisiting does not mean repeating, and the challenge is to present old language in new ways (CILT, 2008).

In Wales, there was some evidence from the Pilot project that where primary teachers deliver 'in-house', liaison with secondary schools is less effective and pupils' previous learning is less likely to be taken into account in Year 7. Pupils appreciated getting to know a teacher from the secondary school, particularly when the teacher went on to teach the same pupils in Year 7. The involvement of the secondary teacher helped to ensure progression at Key

Stage 3, especially where a full school cluster was involved. The Welsh Pilot evaluation reinforces the importance of cluster co-ordination (People and Work Unit, 2006). Similar issues concerning transition are reported in international research (Reddan, 1998; Zennaro, 1996; Chesterton et al. 2004).

A final transfer issue has to do with the choice of language. Muijs et al. (2005) note that the predominance of French impacts on diversification programmes at secondary level and can create an issue at the transfer stage. According to Pachler (2002), many secondary schools are finding themselves compelled to revert to French as their core language provision in order to smooth transition from primary. Switching languages between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 fails to achieve the continuity aspired to by the Council of Europe (1998 p. 35), although as Hunt et al. (2005) state, an emphasis on transferable languages learning skills may help improve performance in the fresh language at secondary school.

### **3.6.3 Teacher subject knowledge and development**

The Ofsted Pathfinder study (2005) notes that training for languages is seldom based on effective auditing of teachers' knowledge and skills. Good practice is modelled and primary teachers are coached, but teachers are not trained to evaluate their own progress, and training arrangements may be *ad-hoc*. The same report highlights the need for head teachers and co-ordinators to receive training in monitoring progress, in order to conduct audit, planning and review more effectively. Ofsted (2008b) report that trainee teachers adapt the generic advice they receive on teaching methods for use with languages; however, they need additional specialist feedback on their language teaching, for example, on how to increase their classroom use of the target language. In the best schemes, external specialists observe languages teaching and offer developmental feedback, while targeted training progressively enhances the skills of school mentors to support language teaching.

Wade and Marshall (2009) report local authority (LA) support for languages teaching in primary schools as increasing, and mainly involving: the provision of a languages advisor (either primary or secondary) and/or support from secondary teachers (from both secondary language colleges and other secondary schools), together with training aimed at developing pedagogical and linguistic skills. A number of LAs also indicated in the same survey that they provide schemes of work and website support. Schools also reported that support from their LA, the secondary sector and external sources, including CILT, the British Council and universities increased between 2006 and 2008.

LAs reported that they were using monies made available through the Standards Fund to support training of teachers in the Key Stage 2 Framework, for funding a languages co-ordinator, the provision of teaching resources/materials, providing or training lead teachers and training of higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) and teaching assistants (TAs). A number of schools are unsure as to whether this funding has been devolved to them; those who are aware of the funding indicate it has been used mainly for purchasing teaching resources, for training purposes, for employing foreign language assistants and for obtaining support from external sources. In spite of the acknowledged increase in support, the report indicates that the demand from schools remains high (Wade and Marshall, 2009).

The Council of Europe (1998) recommends that both initial and in-service teacher training should include courses which 'take account of the principles and practice of language testing and assessment, including learner self assessment'. However a survey by the European Association for Language Testing and Assessment (Hasselgren et al., 2004; Hasselgren, 2005) reveals an acute lack of training in assessment for primary languages teachers. It seems from the surveys mentioned above (Ofsted, 2008b; Wade and Marshall, 2009) that the picture in England is similar.



### **3.7 Impact on children's learning**

Language learning is a long process and the benefits of learning languages in primary school are not easily measurable. Research in England and elsewhere has generally claimed that languages in primary schools offer a positive experience for both learners and teachers (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2005; Ofsted, 2005; Muijs et al., 2005; QCA, 2005). However, it is difficult to generalise from individual studies of the wider benefits of learning languages, due to variation in approaches to teaching, amounts of time for learning, and contexts for language provision. While the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* offers a valuable model of curriculum progression, evidence is needed about learners' attitudes towards languages and the learning outcomes actually achieved.

#### **3.7.1 Impact of languages learning on knowledge and achievement in languages**

##### ***Impact on language proficiency***

Language-related outcomes are strongly dependent on the curriculum model adopted (Edelenbos et al., 2006). The *Languages Review* (Dearing and King, 2007) note that older pupils with prior experience of languages learning tended to do better later than those who had none, whether or not they continued with the same language on transfer. However, as noted earlier this may depend on the account taken of their previous languages learning experiences (Singleton, 2000). In an American context, Lipton (2001) reports that students who started learning French before the age of ten, achieved better on a French Advanced Placement Test than those who started later. In England, QCA report that some secondary teachers appreciate the increased confidence, enthusiasm and better pronunciation of Key Stage 3 pupils, who have learned a language at primary school. These teachers expect that learning at Key Stage 3 will 'be accelerated as more pupils benefit from prior learning in primary schools' (QCA 2005, p.9). The evaluation of the Welsh Pilot (People and Work Unit, 2006) indicates that secondary teachers identify the most common impact as increased enthusiasm and confidence among pupils entering Year 7. The independent evaluation of the Scottish Pilot (Low et al., 1993, 1995) found evidence that project pupils had an advantage over children starting languages in secondary school in pronunciation and intonation, the ability to initiate and respond in conversation, and the use of more phrases and sentences rather than single words, though there was no evidence of an increase in grammatical accuracy.

In the same study in Scotland, Low et al. (1995) reports that more pupils who learned a language in primary school took national tests at age 16. However, children's responses in the Welsh pilot (People and Work Unit, 2006) illustrate that enjoying languages learning and acknowledging the importance of other languages do not always equate to a commitment to studying them at GCSE. In contrast to Low et al.'s findings for Scotland (1995) only 64% of primary pupils in Wales expected to continue learning a language and only 46% of those interviewed at secondary expected to study a language at GCSE level despite their enthusiasm.

For primary schools in England, the National Languages Strategy has suggested that the lowest (Breakthrough) level on the Languages Ladder/ Common European Framework may be an appropriate achievement target for Key Stage 2 languages learning. However there is no pre-existing research which clarifies whether this level is feasible/ being achieved. Ofsted reports have commented on the broad outlines of children's achievement, but without specific reference to the Languages Ladder. Thus, Ofsted (2005) found that pupil achievement was at least satisfactory in all Pathfinder schools visited, and very good or excellent in about half. Most gains were in speaking and listening, with some pupils able to speak extensively and confidently, with generally accurate pronunciation and intonation. Areas for development were pupils' knowledge about language and writing skills, not emphasised in most schools. Muijs et al. (2005) note the challenges arising from an early emphasis on oracy alone in

classroom settings, pointing out that some pupils find it hard to maintain concentration, as well as having difficulty remembering what was learned.

Ofsted noted that pupils with special educational needs achieved best, when a teacher or learning support assistant with good knowledge of their learning needs took part in primary languages. The majority of Pathfinder schools paid only limited attention to meeting the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language, and successfully exploiting their linguistic knowledge and experience (Ofsted, 2005).

The later survey by Ofsted (2008a) indicates that in the better schools:

- pupils had good listening skills and understood basic classroom instructions;
- speaking skills were developing well but pronunciation was adversely affected, as pupils were unaware of the links between sounds and spelling;
- reading was less well developed, although some pupils were able to comprehend well using languages learning strategies;
- writing was mainly copying, matching words to pictures, or filling in gaps in phrases.

The point made by Edelenbos et al. (2006), regarding the influence of programme type on achievement, is clearly illustrated by the Walker Road Early Primary Partial Immersion Project. Here, the children reached a level of proficiency in French in all four skills, far beyond what could usually be expected of primary languages learning. They could use French in order to access other curriculum areas and cope with a fast flow of French input from their native-speaker teachers. They could tell stories in French, and read and write at secondary school level (Johnstone and McKinstry, 2008). More generally, international research shows that compared with non-immersion learners, immersion learners develop a much greater proficiency in the immersion language, with no clear demonstrated loss of first-language or subject-matter competence (for overviews see Cummins 1999; Johnson and Swain, 1997; Johnstone, 2001). In many cases they derive benefits to their general cognitive, linguistic, social and intercultural development. Success in immersion depends however on factors such as high-quality teaching, sound planning, continuity from one year to the next, a supportive ethos and good links with parents.

### ***Impact on knowledge about language***

There is longstanding research evidence that early naturalistic bilingualism leads to enhanced metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok, 2004), but the evidence regarding languages learning in formal education is less clear. Well before the introduction of the National Curriculum in England, language educators in the United Kingdom were arguing that a coherent approach to the teaching of first and foreign languages should enhance language awareness and/ or knowledge about language, and lead to positive transfer effects across languages (see e.g. the various reports of the National Congress on Languages in Education of the late 1970s and early 1980s). The broad educational case for language awareness associated with foreign languages was made by Hawkins (1984). With the advent of the National Curriculum, publications on language awareness/knowledge about language followed in large number relating to English (as reviewed by e.g. Hooper, 1995), but the issue received relatively limited attention with respect to languages until the 2000s, when it figured to an increased extent once more in the Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 Frameworks for Languages.

In section 3.2.2 above, a number of current initiatives were reviewed which seek to promote language awareness/ knowledge about language through languages learning. There is only limited evaluation evidence so far on the impact of these initiatives. Barton et al. (2009) report that teachers had difficulty assessing the impact of the *Discovering Language* programme on children's metalinguistic skills. Some children interviewed for this study said they understood how languages borrow words from each other, and showed partial awareness of similarities and differences between languages such as French, Spanish and German. There was anecdotal evidence from teachers that some children were spontaneously comparing grammar patterns across languages, had an increased awareness of grammatical features such as gender, and a better understanding of terms such as 'verb' and 'adjective'.

In their broader study, Ofsted (2008a) noted that children making good progress were starting to see language patterns and understand concepts such as gender, singular and plural, as well as cultural elements. Where progress was judged only satisfactory overall, children's recall was sometimes weak and their understanding of grammatical rules and languages learning strategies more limited. It seemed that few schools drew on children's heritage languages and cultures to develop knowledge about language.

Evans and Fisher (2009) report approval among teachers of a return to an explicit focus on grammar in the *Key Stage 3 Framework for Languages* and children's ability to use 'grammatical terminology to discuss their learning' (p.3). They suggest that the pedagogy being adopted by teachers in their sample schools is encouraging children to manipulate language independently to a greater extent than previously.

The evaluation of the Welsh Pilot project also commented on gains in knowledge about language. The report suggests that children make literacy links through examining how languages work, and identify differences and similarities with Welsh and English. It is claimed that use of common terminology, similar contexts and joint activities can support children's language development across languages (People and Work Unit, 2006).

Relatively little is known however about how this process works in practice. Classroom experience from several countries suggests that young learners are typically able to absorb and produce chunks of 'learnt by heart language', without necessarily being able to manipulate language structure creatively. Johnstone (2003) cautions that teachers face a considerable challenge in supporting learners to link the intuitive and analytical components of their languages learning, as they progress.

### ***Transfer of language learning strategies***

It is hard to assess the impact of early languages learning on language learning strategies, owing to the unobservable nature of internal mental processes, the few empirical studies on primary age learners, and the difficulties young learners experience attempting to describe the strategies they are deploying, while using language. The most common methods for strategy elicitation are retrospective self-reports: questionnaires, interviews, and learner diaries, intended to elicit learners' recollections of which strategies they used, when, how, and how often. Think-aloud procedures may also be used, where learners verbalise their thoughts while performing a task (Chamot and El-Dinary, 1999); none of these methods are easy to use with young children.

In England Harris (2004) reported that some 12 year old high attainers in four London secondary schools already seemed to be transferring some strategies from English to languages. In contrast, low attainers, identified by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) as the learners who might benefit most from strategy instruction, found fewer opportunities for transfer. Low self-efficacy may make them resistant to considering new strategies; Wenden

(1999) stresses the need to alter low attaining learners' self perception, if e.g. strategy instruction is to be of benefit.

Harris' (2007) study of secondary school beginners provides evidence for the positive impact of strategy instruction on performance and motivation in French, indicating that children who felt that listening and reading strategies had been equally useful, transferred strategies across skills areas. Strategies provide more options, although selecting appropriate strategies requires sophisticated metacognitive knowledge, and breaking down strategies into sub-strategies to make them more accessible, may lead to confusion owing to the larger number to be understood and deployed.

### **3.7.2 Impact of languages learning on attitudes and motivation**

Edelenbos et al. (2006) suggest that the development of positive attitudes and motivation is a major benefit of languages learning in the primary sector. A number of UK studies provide empirical support for this. In the Key Stage 2 Pathfinder schools, learner attitudes were observed to be very positive, with most teachers agreeing that children thoroughly enjoyed their languages lessons and motivation was high (Muijs et al., 2005). The evaluation of the Welsh Key Stage 2 Pilot (People and Work Unit, 2006) indicates that pupils arrive in Key Stage 3 with a 'language-learning readiness', positive attitudes towards learning other languages and less inhibition about using the language (boys particularly so). In the evaluation of the first year of the *Discovering Language* project (Barton et al., 2009), just over half the children surveyed claim to have enjoyed their lessons. Interview responses in the main were positive and children appeared convinced of the need to learn languages, saying they would use them when abroad.

Findings of the Early Primary Partial immersion Project in Scotland (Johnstone and McKinstry, 2008) indicate that EPPI pupils also enjoyed being educated through French as well as English. Boys in particular thought other primary schools should provide partial immersion, though all children were less certain about immersion at secondary.

Internationally, there is research on the evolution of attitudes and motivation for languages over time. In Croatia, Djunovic's (1995) study found that children's early positive attitudes to learning French - an hour a day with degree level fluent teachers who used the target language - were associative, derived from enjoyment of 'games'. However, by the age of nine, the Croatian children had developed a sense of themselves as language learners and their still positive attitudes were linked to learning rather than playing. Motivation assumed a more intrinsic form as it became associated with cognitive challenge.

Nikolov (1999) studied the motivation of Hungarian children learning English across primary and secondary phases. The 6-8 year olds were more likely to give reasons for learning English related to the classroom (we have fun; the teacher is nice). As they grew older, reasons became more instrumental (it will be useful when I travel). Achievement was itself a motivating factor, represented by good grades, rewards and language knowledge. The children felt successful, which generated a need for further success. Nikolov concludes that self confidence plays a major role and external rewards gradually lose their attraction. Hood (2006) similarly suggests that a desire to integrate into the target language group is a predictor of success in languages learning in the longer term, particularly when paired with intrinsic motivation, defined as 'the desire to learn for its own sake' (Lamb, 2001 p.85).

In the United States of America, Heining-Boynton and Haitema (2007) report on two large-scale studies to ascertain development over time of attitudes toward learning languages. One of these studies followed learners of French and Spanish in two school districts in North Carolina, from kindergarten through to Fifth grade. These two elementary school programmes use a CLIL approach with subject matter taught through the target language,

and have been functioning since the 1980s. An attitudes survey was administered to large numbers of elementary school learners at the end of the school year over a four-year period, finding that both boys and girls were positive about languages lessons. The girls were positively inclined, the boys neutral, in their wish to continue languages learning in the next grade.

The primary school studies just reviewed compare interestingly with other studies of attitudes and motivation, as far as gender bias is concerned. Lower secondary school studies typically show strong gender differentiation, with girls much more favourably disposed towards languages than boys (e.g. Davies 2004; Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005; Williams et al., 2002; Coleman et al., 2007). The gender difference seems generally smaller for primary school children, though Barton et al. caution that 'gendered attitudes to languages learning in some boys may develop at a very early age' (2009 p.7).

Positive attitudes to learning languages in the primary phase on the part of both girls and boys is evident in the research reported above, although boys are clearly less favourably disposed by the time they enter secondary schools. Young children generally view languages learning as fun and enjoyable and are motivated by the kinds of activities their teachers provide to support their early learning. Older primary aged children are able to distinguish between learning and playing and the research evidence suggests that their motivation for languages learning gradually changes, as they perceive a purpose for speaking another language in communicating with others and in learning as a challenge in itself.

### **3.7.3 Impact on learners' intercultural understanding**

In the Key Stage 2 Language Learning Pathfinder evaluation, over half the teachers surveyed felt that 'learning a foreign language has made my pupils more tolerant of other cultures' (Muijs et al., 2005 p.37). An Ofsted report on schools with the International Schools Award, half of them primary schools, notes that International School status 'positively impacted on pupils' awareness of other countries, while still promoting understanding of their own culture' (Ofsted, 2006). Ofsted (2008a) report pupils' interest in the way others live and readiness to compare cultural aspects of languages learning with life in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. Learners identified with young people in target language countries and with those who spoke languages other than English, reflecting on similarities and differences in languages and lifestyles.

Barton et al. (2009) believe that the use of DVDs filmed on location in target language country schools, supported children's developing intercultural awareness as evidenced in interviews, although children's holidays abroad were also influential. In another school, with a high ethnic minority population, teachers felt that language awareness activities helped to counter stereotypes.

In Alsace, Young and Helot (2003) and Helot and Young (2005), report on a three year language awareness project in a small primary school, where 37% of pupils were of non-French origin. By bringing native speaker parents and local residents into the school, children learned some basic vocabulary and found out about the culture of over 20 different countries. The study provided evidence for enhanced motivation and the greater acceptance of other cultures and languages among participating children.

### **3.7.4 Impact of languages learning on the coherence and quality of children's learning, including learning in other parts of the curriculum**

Most of the research evidence claiming broader educational benefits from languages learning in the primary school relates to early bilingual or immersion programmes (see e.g. Genesee, 2004). The Walker Road EPPI evaluation produced findings in line with

international experience; Johnstone and McKinstry (2008) report that learners displayed a particularly impressive proficiency and confidence in French listening comprehension. At the same time, attainments in English language, mathematics and environmental studies in two Primary 7 classes at Walker Road were compared (one EPPI and one non-EPPI). The evidence shows that children have not been disadvantaged in these subjects by receiving some of their education through the medium of French.

The impact of CLIL on children's wider learning is less clear, with some studies claiming that while language skills may benefit, content learning can be negatively affected (see discussion in Lorenzo 2007). Compared with work on immersion and increasingly on CLIL, however, there is very little research evidence either way on the possible wider impact of limited hours' instruction for early learners, of the type common in the UK.

### ***Attainment in English and the wider curriculum***

In England, some schools in the Ofsted Pathfinder study (2005 p.17) claimed that learning languages was 'beginning to reinforce pupils' generic oracy and literacy, for example through making links between sounds and spellings'. One Pathfinder project also emphasised the contribution of languages to progress in numeracy and the report suggested that 'mental calculations in mathematics was given a new slant through using a foreign language' (ibid). Similarly, Muijs et al. (2005) found tentative beliefs among teachers concerning improvements in literacy due to languages provision. More broadly they claimed that increased confidence, use of learning strategies and improved general communication were contributing to attainment in other subjects.

In Wales, the evaluation of the Key Stage 2 Pilot reported beliefs that languages learning supports the development of good listening skills, and can help children develop oral confidence and realise the importance of accuracy. Nearly a quarter of teachers surveyed saw a development in literacy skills, in the ability to analyse language, and in sentence construction. Over half of school staff identified a positive impact on the general curriculum, and over a third were developing links with Welsh and English, numeracy, geography, science, ICT, drama and PE (People and Work Unit, 2006).

The evidence from the very small number of studies that have directly measured children's attainments and tried to relate these to limited hours' instruction in languages is somewhat mixed. A study by Schuster (2005) in the United States of America compared five schools in which children learned a language as a subject with eight schools where languages were not taught. The programme was clearly developing children's ability in the language itself, and the study also showed that achievement in reading, language arts and mathematics did not suffer as a result of time taken from other subjects in the curriculum. On the other hand, no significant enhancement of subject learning was found.

However in another small scale empirical study, Bassetti et al. (2007) investigated whether learning Italian improves English first language reading and spelling. The study involved 40 Year 6 children in two primary schools in England, twenty who had been learning Italian for five years and twenty who had not. Results suggested that learning a language in primary school can have a positive influence on the children's first language reading skills, since the English + Italian group scored higher than the English-only group on some tests (English single-word reading and spelling). There were however no statistical differences for *ad-hoc* English reading.

### 3.8 Summary

This review has surveyed recent conceptual literature and empirical research on the learning and teaching of languages in the primary school, with a focus on recent initiatives in English-speaking contexts. The literature reflects considerable commitment and enthusiasm for languages among educators and children involved in such initiatives.

The main focus of recent programmes has been on the promotion of competence in individual languages, with hoped-for associated attitudinal and motivational benefits, as well as benefits relating to intercultural awareness. Much of the recent literature is concerned therefore with related issues such as the creation of a suitably skilled cadre of teachers, and teaching and learning processes to do with target language oracy and literacy. There is a reasonable body of work on attitudes, which suggests that primary programmes can lay a positive foundation, though the literature also makes it very clear that transition to secondary school presents an attitudinal challenge as well as a challenge for curriculum progression. Useful empirical work is also taking place on the development of language learning strategies, though much of this has focused on lower secondary rather than primary level learners. Work on CLIL and immersion as well as evaluations of current sensitisation and language awareness initiatives offer useful alternative models to compare with more typical patterns of limited hours' instruction.

By comparison the recent literature has rather less to say about a number of key issues which are central to the long term embedding of languages in the primary curriculum, including:

- the actual attainment of learners taking part in languages learning (though see Enever et al. 2008 for preliminary findings from a major European investigation on this topic);
- the course of development of children's intercultural understanding, and its relation to languages learning experience;
- the promotion of knowledge about language through languages learning, and the nature of the knowledge acquired;
- the transfer of knowledge and skills acquired in languages learning, to other areas of the curriculum, in particular to English oracy and literacy.

In these areas further research and development activity is clearly needed, so that languages can continue to make a positive contribution to a changing and more integrated 21st century primary curriculum.

## **4 Teachers' perspectives on languages: benefits, impact and recent developments in the schools**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section first of all provides an account of the overall educational benefits of languages learning for Key Stage 2 children, as perceived by their teachers in the case study schools. The data comes from interviews carried out with head teachers, languages co-ordinators and class teachers over the three years of the study (2006/07-2008/09) and with literacy co-ordinators in 2008/09. Successive sub-sections provide accounts of teachers' underlying rationale for teaching languages (4.2), their beliefs about the wider impact of languages (4.3) on personal and social development (4.3.1) and on literacy development in particular (4.3.2). Head teachers, languages co-ordinators and teachers were also asked about ongoing developments in their schools, and their responses dealt with changes in teachers' confidence and attitudes over time (4.4), and their developing understanding and implementation of different aspects of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (4.5).

### **4.2 Underlying rationale for languages**

Head teachers, languages co-ordinators and many teachers involved in teaching languages remained enthusiastic about the initiative over the three years of the study. In addition to the intrinsic value of learning a language they saw languages as enriching and broadening their curriculum provision.

Head teachers saw languages as making a major contribution in the areas of personal and social learning, cultural understanding, communication skills, literacy skills, knowledge about language and attitudes to learning. These perceptions were voiced by head teachers in both linguistically diverse and largely monolingual schools, and across the socio-economic spectrum in terms of children's backgrounds. A number of head teachers felt that languages contributed to a school ethos which valued other languages, cultures and religions and contributed to increased tolerance of other people.

A number of head teachers viewed languages as contributing to citizenship education and in particular the ability of children to see themselves as European or world citizens:

*I think it's really good to know another language. We're trying to encourage global learning, global society so consequently if they can hold their own within that, then that's really good and it's all part of developing our citizenship.*  
(Head teacher interview 2006/07)

A small number of head teachers made references to *Every Child Matters* and the development of economic well-being and highlighted the learning of a language as a life skill. They saw this as having the potential to open up opportunities and raise children's aspirations in the world of work, business and travel. This was considered particularly important by a head teacher in a school in an area of economic and social deprivation. Some head teachers noted, however, that it was difficult to separate or evaluate the specific impact of languages learning from other curriculum initiatives in primary schools.

### **4.3 Perceptions of cross-curricular impact on children's wider learning**

The richest data relating to the impact of languages on children's wider learning is to be found in interviews with head teachers and class teachers in 2006/07 and 2007/08 which addressed this topic, and in interviews with literacy co-ordinators conducted in 2008/09. The analysis is divided into two parts: section 4.3.1 reports on wider effects on children's learning while section 4.3.2 explores perceived consequences for the English and literacy curriculum, and children's knowledge about language.



#### 4.3.1 Developing confidence, self-esteem, positive attitudes to learning and a wider world view

In 2006/07, head teachers and class teachers were asked about what they saw as the impact and benefits of languages learning for the children in their school. Children's personal and social development was most frequently mentioned by head teachers (30 of 38 interviewed) and by class teachers (42 of 59 interviewed). In 2007/08, a similar question was posed and again, children's personal and social development featured most often in responses (24 of 59 class teachers and 15 of 33 head teachers). In particular, they perceived children as feeling more confident which they felt stemmed partly from recognition of their own achievement in languages. In turn this seemed to make children less fearful of participating even with the risk of making mistakes:

*You can see that some of them, they are proud of the fact that they are learning another language and they recognise that it isn't an easy thing to do. And they say 'well I am having a go and I am getting better', and they show more enthusiasm in their learning because of that, because they are not giving up. I think [this is the case] particularly in learning French, because it is new to all of them and so there is less of a difference, and they can see that 'yeh I can do it, I can have a go at it and it doesn't matter if I make a mistake or I look a bit silly'.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

In addition, a number of class teachers and head teachers had observed children adopting a more positive attitude towards learning in general:

*I think its quite an important point to make that some children who don't feel successful in other areas do feel that they can do languages work well, and that's really important for them, to be able to feel good about themselves. That increasing confidence can filter into all sorts of different areas, so it's a very positive thing.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

Teachers also reported on the positive impact of languages in giving children a rapid sense of achievement, due to the highly inclusive, oracy-based approach which was commonly adopted in languages pedagogy. Their own achievements were immediately visible to them:

*But even for the shy children, for example, because the dialogue is so rehearsed, because they've said it so many times by the end – thirty kids have said it, it gives the shy children a chance to not be quite so shy because everything is so rehearsed, whereas in other lessons you're not going to have 28 other kids saying 'I've got three brothers and one sister' before it's your turn to say it. That gives them confidence.*

(Head teacher interview 2006/07)

Furthermore, many class teachers referred to the fact that languages presented a 'level playing field' for children, in that the majority were starting from a similar position in terms of prior knowledge and experience:

*They start from the same level, which is great to see for some of them who, perhaps, are not high academic achievers in all areas. So they can really shine when speaking a modern foreign language.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

*I think one of the benefits as I said earlier, is that when we started, in terms of special needs children they felt they were able to contribute just as much as more able children in class. A lot of the special needs children by the time we get to the end of Key Stage 2 already have perceptions of themselves as special needs, and can switch off from other subjects in the curriculum. It is very good that they can then participate on the same level.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

Literacy co-ordinators also noted that whilst children were often grouped by ability for literacy, languages offered everyone a 'fresh start', and the inclusive nature of languages teaching appeared to have a positive impact on certain groups of children:

*The kids that are struggling in English are picking up on the French so much quicker.*

(Literacy co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*Those children that are weaker at literacy are often the ones that shine at foreign languages.*

(Literacy co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

At the same time the supportive learning environment associated with languages supported children in building empathy with their peers:

*They have frequently spontaneously burst into applause when somebody tries something for the first time, so there is a very nice spirit of having a go, applauding people, because they realise that it is not very easy.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

That children were learning about one or more different languages, one or more different country(ies), and aspects of culture related to those country(ies), was generally felt by head teachers and class teachers to be a really valuable benefit of languages learning. In some cases, head teachers spoke of feeling especially conscious that in their particular locality the children were growing up in fairly monolingual, monocultural environments. A powerful feature of languages education was its potential for introducing children to a world beyond that of the local community - this was considered important both now and for children's lives in the future.

#### **4.3.2 The development of English, communication, literacy skills and knowledge about language**

The emphasis on oracy in the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages was mentioned by many respondents and was seen as significant for the development of children's communication skills and in particular their speaking and listening skills. One head teacher, whose school had been involved in a small-scale research project to evaluate the impact of languages on speaking and listening skills, said that the results had been very positive. Another head teacher referred to positive comments about children's speaking and listening skills in an Ofsted report and a number of teachers referred to children's enhanced ability to engage in conversations with visiting adults.

When asked to consider the benefits of languages for learning across the curriculum, many examples relating to English language and literacy were given. For example, in 2006/07 12 head teachers and 24 class teachers saw benefits in terms of developing knowledge about language, often with close links to literacy.

The overwhelming majority of literacy co-ordinators interviewed in 2008/09 saw languages as contributing to progress in literacy, though this group also stressed differences in pedagogy between the two subjects. Whilst languages were taught in a fun, interactive fashion through songs, games, images and talk, the literacy co-ordinators saw the main focus of literacy as developing reading and writing skills, with any oral work serving these ends. (The majority of the literacy co-ordinators reported that the school target for literacy was improving children's writing, the language mode least represented in observed languages lessons.) Literacy co-ordinators also characterised the content and texts of literacy lessons as more complex and involving more ideas than languages lessons. Because literacy was text-based and languages were perceived as focusing on listening and conversation, a number of literacy co-ordinators were unsure about the links between languages and reading and writing in English or saw these as occurring only at word level:

*They don't tend to concentrate on writing any of the words down and what they look like, it's just repetition and pictures and songs... and obviously in literacy you can't just rely on repetition and songs, obviously we study books or texts.*

(Literacy co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*There may be some impact on reading, because they have to decode a word in any language, so they are using their reading skills in any language.*

(Literacy co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

These differences notwithstanding, the literacy co-ordinators saw languages learning as benefiting various aspects of children's literacy development in English.

### ***Speaking and listening***

Head teachers, class teachers and literacy co-ordinators all reported developments in speaking and listening. Many comments focused on children's increased confidence when speaking and the necessity to concentrate hard when listening:

*I would say that some of the discernible impact would be ... confidence through the increasing competency in speaking and listening, now if you are speaking and listening in a foreign tongue, that helps in L1, in the mother tongue.*

(Literacy co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*There are children who are fairly quiet and I've noticed they've become a bit more confident ... we're all starting from a base line, and so they are confident to speak out, and when they see they've been successful you see them glowing.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

*Our Ofsted said how good our children were at speaking and listening and they are, they are very well developed. And I think it has to be part of that, because that's a really huge opportunity to develop those skills, it doesn't matter that it's in French.*

(Head teacher interview 2006/07)

*I think there are lots of benefits for the children. I think it really develops their self-confidence, it really helps them with their concentration and their speaking and listening really comes on.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

*...oracy as well, making people talk, we were involved in a dialogic project with Robin Alexander a couple of years ago, which also aimed to develop pupils' oracy and questioning skills and so on, and MFL seemed to fit quite nicely alongside that, with a lot of oral work, particularly to begin with.*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

Two head teachers suggested that this gain was particularly beneficial to their school because of children's perceived weakness in speaking and listening:

*As I said, the speaking and listening, because our children do come in on a very low baseline as regards speaking and listening.*  
(Head teacher interview 2006/07)

A number of class teachers and head teachers also made specific reference to improvements in children's listening skills. As surmised by one teacher, when someone is giving an instruction in English children may feel they do not need to listen so carefully - but when this is happening through a less familiar language it is likely they will need to pay fuller attention:

*I think it will increase their listening skills because we can make assumptions about ... what we expect to hear, but when we're listening to a foreign language we don't know what we're expecting to hear, so it does improve listening.*  
(Head teacher interview 2006/07)

*Yes, and I think it aids their listening skills as well because they have to concentrate quite hard ... They're constantly paying attention, so I do think that helps.*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

Literacy co-ordinators also felt that the greatest positive impact of languages teaching was on children's confidence in speaking and listening. They believed that the emphasis on oral work in languages teaching (role play, conversation, listening, repeating, drama) enabled children to feel more '*ready, willing and able*' to speak in English in other contexts in school:

*Children love drama and are happy to do that in French and English and other subjects as well really.*  
(Literacy co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

Literacy co-ordinators believed that languages teaching helped children to value the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately, and one felt that children were more able to sustain a conversation due to repeated practice in languages lessons. One literacy co-ordinator felt that children's articulation in English had improved, and that this was due to improved listening skills learnt in languages lessons, where '*they have to really pay attention*'.

## **Literacy**

### **Languages and literacy - pedagogical links**

Despite their emphasis on differences between languages and literacy pedagogy, the literacy co-ordinators interviewed also noted some similarities, promoted by a recent increased flexibility in the primary curriculum. Literacy co-ordinators described both areas of learning as offering opportunities for speaking and listening, working with talk partners, drama, role play, discussion, and the use of audio-visual and digital resources. Both areas of learning involved

work across a range of genres which included poetry, plays, letters, stories, reports and explanations. Languages and literacy both involved identification of word groups, sentence structures and using punctuation to listen, speak or read for meaning:

*[Language] is very hands-on, very verbal, sort of interactive, and with the writing and English lessons in general I try to make it that way as well.*  
(Literacy co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*There's always going to be an understanding of the text, looking at words, do you understand those words? What's actually happening? All the comprehension elements are in there, and also reading words, yet it is all very oral, so they're not really into the stage with reading and writing words.*  
(Literacy co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

Twelve head teachers also made explicit links between languages learning and progress in literacy:

*I think the links with literacy are quite self-evident, the structures of language, the oracy.*  
(Head teacher interview 2006/07)

*It certainly impacts in literacy. Their language skills give them a deeper understanding of their own language.*  
(Head teacher interview 2006/07)

### **Spelling and dictionary skills**

A number of class teachers linked languages learning to improvements in children's spelling, some because of the careful listening required, others pointing to learning through comparing grapho-phonetic systems:

*They're looking at spelling and the framework concentrates on sounds as well. They're focusing on that so in literacy they're looking at sound blends as well. ... they have to listen hard in French.*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

*It helps them in English. They notice a lot with spellings in French – because it's spelt a certain way they have to work out how to pronounce it, so it helps them to do that in English.*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

*...'chat' and 'chien' today, so we are picking up on spellings and what it's like in English and French, and cross referencing, that sort of thing.*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

Two class teachers and a head teacher talked about use of dictionaries in languages lessons, and how this had supported children's dictionary skills more generally:

*For example dictionary skills, we've got a full set of French dictionaries as well as a full set of thesauruses and a full set of English dictionaries, so again a lot of the skills are the same.*  
(Head teacher interview 2006/07)

As well as effects at word level, teachers also commented on work at sentence and text level. In most cases this was linked to children's greater awareness of, or knowledge about, language.

### **Knowledge about language**

Many class teachers (24 in 2006/07) and head teachers (12 in 2006/07) and all the literacy co-ordinators interviewed in 2008/09 reported a heightened awareness of language arising from languages learning. Most linked this knowledge about language directly to aspects of literacy development, claiming that learning and analysing another language could help understanding of English:

*I really fundamentally believe that the knowledge and understanding that you gain through learning another language can really help your understanding of your own language, and how language works.*

(Head teacher interview 2006/07)

*I think they are more aware of literacy, they are definitely more aware of how languages work, as I said before the word classes that kind of thing, and how you can move languages around, and the connections.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

*...it is really going over what we have been doing in our English literacy lessons but from another angle, and I think that it does make it very clear to them. It helps them see the bigger picture of why we are learning all these bits.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

Several teachers voiced the view that awareness arises from explicit comparison:

*...It is nice to be able to draw parallels between the two languages, and say 'look this is happening in French, this is what you do in English, just like they do this, we do that', you know, just looking at, comparing the two languages, looking at the way that the language is structured...*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

One teacher suggested this was akin to a problem-solving exercise:

*Children can compare the language. For example, now they are comparing English to Turkish which is the structure of the sentences and how they are different, but now it's kind of solving a puzzle. If they get used to solving those kinds of puzzles they can understand the structure of a language or the sound system of a language.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

### **Word level knowledge**

Literacy co-ordinators noted a positive impact on children's awareness and understanding of language at word level, reporting increased awareness of word 'roots', histories and origins, and that children enjoyed being able to identify links between words in different languages.

Literacy co-ordinators also described children's developing ability to listen for sounds in different languages and to pronounce and spell words using this knowledge. One class teacher pointed out how cognates can reinforce knowledge of spelling patterns:

*When some words sound the same, you make the connection between the two, or sometimes the spelling patterns are the same*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

### **Sentence level knowledge**

Teachers and literacy co-ordinators reported children's improved ability to identify and discuss sentence structure in different languages:

*You talk about different words and build up vocabulary and sentence structure... they have to think about that, and they bring it across into English.*  
(Literacy co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*Sentence structure perhaps, or looking at ... the position of an adjective in a sentence, so we are reinforcing the use of the word 'adjective' ... Getting the children to know which is the noun in this sentence, for a French sentence asking them which is the noun, talk about the definite and indefinite articles, so they are learning terms, or they are reinforcing terms that they have been using in their literacy.*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

These comments raise the possibility that learning languages and comparing the syntax of languages improves children's knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, an opinion voiced by several teachers and head teachers:

*... but it's not only then related to the Spanish, it's related to the English. Because they could tell you now what a preposition was, but they couldn't have told you a couple of weeks ago what a preposition was without the Spanish coming in...*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

*...It's so much easier to talk to children, when they're learning French, about the noun and the adjective...*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

### **Text level learning**

The focus in most languages lessons observed was on learning at word and sentence level. However there was some evidence of text-level work, and of its impact on English literacy:

*...We have done instructions, looking at maybe a simple set of instructions in French for a recipe like we do in English, and knowing that the verb always comes first in French and they can see that that is the verb and telling you what to do.*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

Literacy co-ordinators gave three examples of children reading and comparing familiar texts in English and in another language (Red Riding Hood and Goldilocks in French, and the Lord's Prayer in Spanish). In these cases it seems likely that children were reinforcing their knowledge of text structures, gained in English, by applying it to texts in other languages.

One class teacher referred to children using the higher order reading skill of scanning in their new language. (The literacy assessments reported in section 8 provide clear supporting evidence of transfer of L1 reading strategies to the target language.)

### **Other areas of the curriculum**

There were some references to impact on other areas of the curriculum, produced by a relatively small number of respondents. Over the course of the study, the number of co-ordinators reporting some kind of cross-curricular links, had nonetheless increased. In 2006/07, 15 co-ordinators talked broadly of subjects which they felt provided obvious links, such as geography, citizenship, mathematics and physical education. However links were often described as 'opportunistic'.

Six class teachers and three head teachers also talked about an impact on children's geographical knowledge, of countries associated with the language they were learning.

Three class teachers in 2006/07, and five class teachers and three head teachers in 2007/08, identified benefits for numeracy work. Some talked about how children sometimes used target language numbers when struggling with a maths problem:

*A lovely story that I have ... was a SEN child in my year three class and he was really struggling with his ten numbers because he felt he would count eleven, twelve, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, he really couldn't differentiate between thirty and thirteen, it kind of didn't compute, and he was getting very frustrated using this number line, and the next thing he went 'once doce, trece, catorce, quince, dieciseis,' because to him it made sense in his head, because sixteen in Spanish is ten and six, sixty is completely different. And it was beautiful to see him use the Spanish and put it in a situation where he could utilise it. So progress like that you can't really have a tick sheet for ...*  
(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

In 2007/08, twenty co-ordinators gave examples of links between languages and other subjects. Once again, using knowledge of numbers during mathematics, and known vocabulary and instructions in physical education were mentioned most frequently. Art, singing, drama, geography, history and science were mentioned occasionally.

Over time, however, the perceived benefits of languages learning did not really change: respondents tended to consistently identify the same features, and children's personal and social development continued to be the feature most spoken about by respondents.

### **Language teaching models and curriculum impact**

A noticeable link between a school's model of languages teaching, and the literacy co-ordinator's knowledge of its wider impact, was evident in the literacy co-ordinator interviews. Where languages were integrated into the life of the school and taught by all (or most) class teachers, with links to the wider curriculum, literacy co-ordinators were able to comment more extensively on children's wider literacy learning. They were less able to comment in schools where a specialist delivered discrete languages lessons which did not link to class topics. In this situation, knowledge of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* was not necessarily shared with teachers who did not teach a language (for further discussion, see section 6):

*[The Language teacher] basically does everything and says 'This is what you have to do', but no I haven't had any training on that [the Framework].*  
(Literacy co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

Across the 15 case study schools where literacy co-ordinators were interviewed in 2008/09, liaison between literacy and languages seemed to be weakest where class teachers had minimal involvement in the languages teaching and/ or where the literacy co-ordinator was



based in the the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) or Key Stage 1 (KS1) and did not have regular contact with languages provision in Key Stage 2. Language-literacy liaison was most effective in schools where the two co-ordinators worked together and where languages were integrated across wider themes and topics; in these schools literacy co-ordinators were better able to identify patterns of children's learning across both contexts.

#### **4.4 Teachers' developing confidence**

Interviews with language co-ordinators, teachers and head teachers in 2008/09 provide clear evidence of development in teachers' confidence in teaching languages.

In schools where class teachers were doing some or all of the languages teaching, language co-ordinators generally indicated that teacher confidence had developed over the three years of the study. They reported that teachers felt more confident about teaching languages, were more comfortable with new approaches, were experimenting with links to other curriculum areas, and were asking questions and requesting help:

*The feedback from the staff is that they like the way we are doing it now, using the QCA scheme in place of the [commercial] scheme, so I think that will stay a little while. Unless we change topics and things, and we want to choose more related [ones], we quite like the fact that we can do some of this cross-curricular, the QCA units that we have chosen for the moment fit with the science units for those year groups and things like that. Although we want the language progression we also as a bonus wanted it to try and fit in with other curriculum areas.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*Everybody's far more confident with it, and the other good part about it is, nobody's afraid to ask anybody else how to pronounce things, so one knows one thing or somebody's not sure, everyone's asking one another because everybody's in it together, so it's quite good really.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

Languages co-ordinators also talked about a growing enthusiasm for languages teaching amongst class teachers. This was particularly evident where they were teaching languages to the same year group for a second year or where they were teaching the scheme of work for a second time, as was the case in many schools by 2008/09:

*Yes, it's the familiarity that (Year 3 teacher) has got because he's actually been in one place for three years. And he's confident at doing that. He's got the skills obviously, so if he went to Year 4 he knows the bank of games and all of that sort of stuff, but I'd have to stop and go through all the vocabulary with him again.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*I would say my confidence has grown delivering it in Year 3 ... It's so much easier, no matter if it's French or delivering any subject, it's your second year, you know the pitfalls, and you know what works well.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

Provision of positive and supportive feedback to teachers was also helpful for developing confidence. One teacher reported the impact of comments from an Ofsted inspector:

*So it's just having that positive feedback. It's like the kids, you know, they want positive feedback, so do adults, and I think that helps..., so I think that has definitely made me very confident.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

Where specialist teachers were involved in teaching languages, the languages co-ordinators also indicated that many class teachers were developing the confidence to carry out reinforcement activities or use the language for incidental purposes, especially where they were present for lessons taught by the specialist. This practice increased over the three years of the study as teaching during PPA time slightly decreased, and some schools moved towards a class teacher delivery model:

*We've already got some staff teaching and some observing as well, so it's better, they're starting to get more confidence. They observed the lessons and then now with FLA doing the German they are doing the same. So it's helping them with staff training and they're realising that it's not such a difficult thing to do, you know, a lot of them said how much they're looking forward to actually having a go themselves now.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

Specialist teachers also recognised that they needed to change and develop their practice and expectations as children's knowledge and understanding increased:

*I've had to [change] because the children have progressed that quickly. Yeah, because you're always aware that they've learnt so much, so you have to think on your feet sometimes as to how you can extend the conversation or where do you go next from here ... So yes, it has changed; it's had to change. It's just knowing which children... because they all seem to be going with it, but you are aware there are some children who are going a lot quicker so you have to stretch them a little bit further and ask more pointed questions, or when you involve them in paired work you're trying to work out which children they are and being aware. But yes, I would say it's had to change.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

### ***The impact of training on teachers' developing knowledge and confidence***

The majority of languages co-ordinators also talked positively about the impact of training on teachers' developing confidence, knowledge and skills in teaching languages:

*I've seen an impact ... she's one of the teachers that I thought would give it up, because she really struggled, but she said 'no' and she wants it to carry on. And she went on the courses and now she'll come to me, she asked me yesterday actually what a 'rainbow' was, and things like that, because she wants to sing the songs and she wants to do that. So yes, I think that has been an impact; if she hadn't had that training, I think she would be less confident. So yes, I think it has had an impact on the learning, children's learning, and (Year 3 teacher) definitely, her French has improved...*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

A number of teachers had received individual support through modelling of lessons and one teacher talked about how over a period of time she had gradually moved from an observer through shared teaching to teaching the lesson with the advisor observing her, a process she found particularly supportive. Many talked about the wide variety of training opportunities on offer and their appreciation of the fact that training was usually free with supply cover

provided. This was seen as a key factor in enabling both initial and ongoing staff development:

*Certainly two teachers that went on the training, both of them said it was the confidence to teach, and sort of gaining ideas and different ways to do it and make it interesting. You know, they're both really enthusiastic about it...*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

A number of schools had a rolling programme of training where teachers from different year groups were released each year. However, in a significant number of schools staff turnover meant that training needs remained high and in a small number of schools most staff had not availed themselves of training opportunities, sometimes because of distance of training venues, and sometimes because training sessions were held after school and clashed with other commitments.

#### **4.5 The impact of the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages**

Over the three years of the study language co-ordinators indicated that they were developing their familiarity with the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, although only a small number indicated that they referred to it regularly for planning purposes. In general it was regarded as 'a point of reference' for languages co-ordinators rather than for class teachers. By 2007/08 the majority of schools had adjusted their planning to take account of the new Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes of work (QCA, 2007) or had introduced schemes designed by their local authorities or commercial publishers. Language co-ordinators were confident these were underpinned by the objectives of the Framework itself.

In most schools medium and short term planning was still evolving as staff became more familiar with the schemes of work and more confident in developing and integrating a variety of resources. By 2008/09 there is clear evidence that planning was becoming more systematic and coordinated in some schools:

*There's formal planning now and we make sure there are assessments, but I think the planning and the assessments are coming together more, so we're trying to look at individual children, see where the strengths and weaknesses are.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

#### ***A developing focus on children's learning***

In schools where staff were more involved in developing schemes of work and where children had received consistent provision throughout Key Stage 2, a number of languages co-ordinators were seeing clear evidence of progression in children's learning:

*Personally I'm quite astonished at the level that some of the children are achieving now in Year 6, this being the fourth year that they've done French, and some of them are displaying real high level thinking in terms of language. They are analysing sounds, they are analysing the structure of the language. If I put a sentence on the board very often I can write something and say 'there's a mistake there, spot it, tell me what I've done', and they can say, 'Oh you should have 'e' on that because it's feminine'. Or looking at adjectives agreeing, or if I put 'le' instead of 'la' they'll tell me if it's a word they know well. So I'm really quite pleased at how detailed their knowledge is becoming.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

A number of co-ordinators indicated that because languages were now established as part of the curriculum they could start to look seriously at issues of progression, differentiation and assessment:

*There's more differentiation going on now; that wasn't evident really before; everyone was doing a similar sort of thing. Now it's even differentiated down to asking a child a question that you know they can answer and another one a question that will be, that one couldn't, but that one could, as it were.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*And within the class I do differentiate more than last year, so if there's written work, there's a lot of differentiation, and with oral work it's more differentiation by outcome. But I try and pair up mixed ability pairs so that at least they're getting a little bit more input.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*They [the teachers] can use that [Language Portfolio] then to inform planning, so you can differentiate any work that they do and the kind of resources in front of them. Some children will have pictures without words, some children will have pictures of the Spanish words and some will have pictures in English and the Spanish word, depending on what their need is, and that's something (we) try to do a lot more.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

### **A developing focus on the teaching of literacy and intercultural understanding**

As the study progressed, it became clear that the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* was having an impact on the teaching of literacy (see section 4.3.2 above) and intercultural understanding in a number of schools, and that objectives relating to these strands were being included more regularly in planning. These strands were identified by respondents in 2006/07 as needing to be addressed. By 2008/09 it was clear from both teacher comments and lesson observations in Year 5 and Year 6 that more time was being spent on literacy:

*Years 5 and 6 have started to do more writing within every lesson of a new topic, new words, put them in the dictionary...the sound and the spelling is quite different, we try and just go through it with them and get them to attempt how they think it would be spelt, and then go through it properly; it's quite difficult. But they are certainly attempting a lot more writing in the older years.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

### **Developing confidence in teaching intercultural understanding**

Teacher attitudes towards teaching intercultural understanding also changed over the three years of the study. In 2006/07, many teacher responses indicated a lack of awareness or confidence in addressing this aspect. However, by 2008/09 26 language co-ordinators could say that there had been developments in teaching the Intercultural Understanding strand. A number indicated that locally organised training sessions had contributed to this, and that teachers were now drawing on material from commercial resources including DVDs to show children aspects of everyday life and to discuss similarities and differences. A number said that intercultural understanding was now firmly included in schemes of work:

*For intercultural understanding for Year 6, one of our units is called *Passport to the World*, so the children have to do work on that... So they would each take a country, which they would research, and then we have presentations ... It's absolutely fantastic, you learn a huge amount.*  
(Class teacher interview 2007/08)

### ***The provision of authentic or additional experiences***

By 2008/09, 13 schools were organising visits, mainly to France, to provide children with authentic communicative experiences. In addition, nearly half of the case study schools had established partnerships with schools in the European country where the language they were teaching was spoken. Children were also writing and receiving letters and pictures and/or emails:

*So they've begun; they've exchanged films of what's going on, so we took a film of a typical day in the life of our school; you know, lunchtime, what it's like and our school fete and things.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

Teachers increasingly felt these experiences were important in providing contact with 'real people' and children were enthusiastic. A number of these contacts also involved teacher exchange visits, enabling teachers to establish personal contacts and develop their own intercultural understanding.

By 2008/09, the majority of case study schools were organising international days or weeks where children experience something of the languages and cultures of different countries. Some of these were well-established events. Other respondents talked about integrating languages into book weeks, art weeks, assemblies or Christmas celebrations, which were viewed by respondents as developments associated with the teaching of languages.

### **4.6 Summary**

There are clear perceptions among teachers that learning and teaching languages in the case study schools had, or was beginning to have, an impact on children's attitudes to learning, their personal and social development and their communication and literacy skills. Head teachers, and languages teachers remained positive and committed to languages teaching. Many class teachers were developing confidence in their teaching of languages through the support they received from languages co-ordinators and through local training opportunities. Given that the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* was only launched in 2005 and the QCA schemes of work were not available until 2007, most of the schools were making progress towards developing their local schemes of work while taking account of official guidance. There was evidence in many of the case study schools of developments in the teaching of literacy, especially to older children, and of more attention being paid to the teaching of intercultural understanding. A number of languages co-ordinators were also beginning to address issues of progression, differentiation and assessment for learning. These aspects are further discussed in sections 6 and 7.

## 5 Children’s perspectives on languages learning

### 5.1 Introduction

This section explores children’s attitudes towards learning languages across the three years of the study. It draws on data from questionnaires completed by children in Years 3-6 in 2006/07 and in 2007/08, and on focus group discussions. Additional questions were included in the survey for Years 5 and 6 to investigate perceptions about future learning. Teachers’ and head teachers’ views about children’s attitudes drawn from the interview data and observation field notes are also reported. In section 5.2 children’s enjoyment of languages learning is explored. Section 5.3 provides details of the ways in which children perceive learning languages as different from learning other subjects. Section 5.4 considers children’s sense of their own progress and achievement and section 5.5 children’s perceptions of the wider value of learning languages

### 5.2 Children’s enjoyment

A key objective of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* is the promotion of motivation for languages learning through enjoyment. The children’s responses (Table 5.1) clearly indicate high levels of enjoyment: over 97 % of all groups responded 'yes' or 'sometimes' to the survey question ‘*Do you enjoy learning languages?*’ although the unqualified positive responses to the question decreased with age.

**Table 5.1 - Do you enjoy learning languages?**

Year	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	% (n=136)	% (n=139)	% (n=141)	% (n=142)
Yes	81.6	71.7	69.5	58.5
Sometimes	16.9	25.4	28.4	38.7
No	1.5	2.9	2.1	2.8
	% (n=144)	% (n=146)	% (n=152)	% (n=143)
Yes	86.7	75.3	73.7	69.2
Sometimes	13.3	24.0	24.3	28.7
No	0.0	0.7	2.0	2.1

Most children were also looking forward to continuing to learn languages with 74% or more of the children in each group responding positively (Table 5.2). Year 3 tended to be the most motivated to learn more languages with an overwhelming majority answering positively in both years. Year 4 children were nearly as positive; while figures declined somewhat in Years 5 and 6, a large majority remained positively motivated for language learning.

**Table 5.2 - I am looking forward to learning more French/German/Spanish**

Year	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	% (n=136)	% (n=139)	% (n=141)	% (n=142)
2006/07				
Yes	98.5	89.2	81.6	74.6
Unsure	0.0	1.4	14.2	20.4
No	1.5	9.4	4.2	4.9
	% (n=144)	% (n=146)	% (n=152)	% (n=143)
2007/08				
Yes	95.8	94.5	77.6	76.9
Unsure	1.4	2.1	18.4	19.6
No	2.8	3.4	3.9	3.5

### 5.2.1 Intrinsic enjoyment of languages learning

Children talked extensively about languages learning as ‘fun’ and commented on the range of activities including songs, games and chants that their teachers used to support their learning. Many were also able to identify what is fun but also helps them to learn. A number of children mentioned that they were enjoying memorising new words and phrases, and practising sounds, as well as learning about the culture of the country where the language was spoken. Correspondingly a significant number of teachers commented on the intrinsic motivation derived from children’s developing ability to combine learned language in new ways. Children’s curiosity about the roots of language and its structure and their developing confidence about their ability to learn made them feel positive about languages:

*French is really fun. It’s not just fun just with playing games; it’s just fun as in learning different words and learning about different countries and how they live.*

(Year 5 Focus group 2007/08)

*I’m fascinated that our own language came from so many other languages - Greek, Latin, French - because you’re always finding words and thinking ‘hang on - that’s French’. When you think that someone way back thought ‘let’s use that word’.*

(Year 6 Focus group 2008/09)

### 5.2.2 What children like about languages lessons

A number of children mentioned enjoying languages lessons because of the personal characteristics of the person teaching them languages. Some children clearly appreciated their teacher’s fluency and subject knowledge:

*I like the way we learn it because our teacher is very nice and if we don’t understand she’ll explain it further [child explains that the teacher will translate into English].*

(Year 5 Focus group 2008/09)

*[the teacher] is better than our old teacher because our old teacher wasn’t really French and she didn’t really have a French accent and she said quite a few of the words wrong ... So she let the computer say it and we had to copy it.*

(Year 5 Focus group 2008/09)

Other children mentioned their appreciation of particular teaching techniques, e.g. in helping them to practise their pronunciation:

*She helps us to learn Spanish by splitting it up into sounds. Sometimes she does that in high voices and low voices and its fun.*  
(Year 5/6 Focus group 2006/07)

*She really, really tries to help you and sometimes she makes up little songs for us, so you can just sing the song in your head and you just remember it, so it's really good.*  
(Year 6 Focus group 2008/09)

*Well if we get it wrong she will kind of sound it out and then put it in kind of syllables and then we have to copy her.*  
(Year 3/4 Focus group 2006/07)

Learning as a whole class with choral repetition and chanting as well as opportunities to work in pairs and groups were also seen as enjoyable by many children:

*Yes, I mostly like it when you're doing it all together (in the whole class) because if you don't know it and you listen to other people you gradually pick it up.*  
(Year 5 Focus group 2008/09)

*It's more fun to work in groups and go out with the lady who's taking French, doing it in smaller groups.*  
(Year 5 Focus group 2008/09)

Singing songs contributed to many children's enjoyment: '*I really like all of it but the best bit is when we learn the songs*'. Children described how songs were linked to actions to assist memorisation and recall, and said that they enjoyed linking actions to words as they sang faster and faster. Narrative songs were also mentioned as were songs that simulate set piece dialogues, where children reconfigure phrases or substitute words in role-play scenarios. However, some individuals mentioned that they found whole class singing difficult and a few other children wanted more ownership of their work. One Year 3 child said: [it is] '*good to be independent, not always as a class singing*'.

Some children also mentioned interactive and creative activities organised by the teacher such as designing and labelling a monster, or making a weather wheel. Children from all year groups valued the use of ICT but older children in particular mentioned ICT-related activities as enjoyable. Most ICT activities involved the whole class although there was some individualised activity e.g. creating an animated cartoon:

*I enjoy the new interactive white boards.... you can all see what's going on ... And there are some things that you can touch and they'll do things for you.*  
(Year 5 Focus group 2008/09)

Games and game like activities were mentioned by many children:

*You understand more because she does it in games, but it's still working and games all mixed together, so you're having fun but you don't get bored.*  
(Year 5 Focus group 2008/09)

Many commented positively on the competitive nature of different types of games though some children found losing quite frustrating:



*But if you're losing ... it's not nice ... cos even if you're losing you are really trying hard to get it right...*

(Year 5/6 Focus group 2006/07)

Individual children noted that games could create conditions for some children to become over excited which potentially ruined the activity and the learning.

### **Oracy and literacy**

Listening and speaking were specifically highlighted as enjoyable. The younger children, in particular, commented on copying the teacher's model and speaking the language with comments such as *'I enjoy just pronouncing it'* and *'its fun making different sounds with your mouth'*. Listening to the teacher speaking with a *'foreign accent'* was considered fun by some children and others spoke about scanning for gist.

Reading and writing were mentioned less frequently although it was clear that some children welcomed the opportunity to *'write things down'*, and that story books enhanced interest and enjoyment. A number of the older children indicated they would like to do more writing. Some commented on the value of writing to pen pals, and the fun of creative writing:

*...and sometimes you can write. because I'm not sure if it was before Christmas, I think it was, we had to write a letter to Santa in French and it was quite fun ...'*

(Year 6 Focus group 2008/09)

### **Intercultural enjoyment**

Children's enjoyment of learning the language was echoed in their enjoyment of learning about the European country where the language was spoken. Table 5.3 shows that in the 2006/07 and 2007/08 questionnaire surveys, the younger children reported enjoying learning about the country slightly more than children in Year 6. However, over 94% of children in Years 5 and 6 said they would like to visit the country.

**Table 5.3 - Enjoy learning about (France, Germany, Spain)**

Year	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	% (n=136)	% (n=139)	% (n=141)	% (n=142)
Yes	76.1	71.9	77.3	66.9
Sometimes	19.4	24.5	19.9	30.3
No	4.5	3.6	2.8	2.8
	% (n=144)	% (n=146)	% (n=152)	% (n=143)
Yes	81.8	80.8	66.4	65.7
Sometimes	14.7	15.8	30.9	32.2
No	3.5	3.4	2.6	2.1

Children spoke about their enjoyment and interest in experiences at school such as learning how people live, sampling special dishes, and singing traditional songs as well as going on school trips:

*Definitely, ...half of my family is Indian and I think learning French and lots of other languages sort of brings you more into life ... you know what's going on in the world; you know how people live... we learnt a lot about different places in France; so not just one place ...*

(Year 6 Focus group 2008/09)

*I enjoy the way we learn French because ... we get to go on a trip, because it's fun...*

(Year 6 Focus group 2008/09)

### **5.2.3 What children dislike about languages learning**

Very few children claimed not to enjoy languages at all. More commonly children mentioned specific aspects of learning languages that were not enjoyable, for example: persistent repetition of known words, phrases and topics, the lack of challenge of tasks and the limited opportunities to develop skills. Comments such as *'Like if you've learnt it and you know what it is, then you don't really want to get told it again'* or *'every year we like start off from the beginning again'* were mentioned by some children in the Year 6 focus group discussions. Some children in Year 5 and 6 were discouraged by the repetitive use of the same DVD in their lessons and others questioned the need for languages to be timetabled in short sessions in the afternoon when they were tired.

Comments about the extent of whole class teaching varied; while many appreciated learning as a whole class, others found the lack of differentiated group work frustrating and spoke about the need for more challenge both in content and skill development. Some children also mentioned that they would like to be set homework and independent tasks away from the class lesson.

Accuracy in languages was a challenge for some children, who worried about making mistakes when speaking in front of the class, and about other children's reactions:

*They sort of make fun of you if you get something wrong, and then they get the whole class starting and it's just like a bit embarrassing for that person.*

(Year 6 Focus group 2006/07)

Conversely, other children mentioned support from peers when mistakes were made.

A few children expressed a greater degree of anxiety about their learning experience. In one case, children found the teacher's use of the target language quite stressful:

*It kind of scares most of our class when, (the teacher) ...says everything in French, and we're all just like 'Err' because we have no clue what he's saying. I know he's French and he goes really fast, he goes really, really fast and he doesn't... tell you what it means.*

*He only tells us what it means if we say what's that?*

*Apart from that he just reads really, really fast.*

(Year 5 Focus group 2008/09)

Written accuracy on the computer also appeared to create anxiety for a few children especially when it was linked to competitive activities. Some children mentioned that any error in spelling meant that they could not win the game or quiz even when they knew the meaning of the word.

A small number of children particularly in Years 5 and 6 were frustrated by time wasted when other children misbehaved especially when the teacher imposed sanctions on the whole class:

*I like everything in French, but it's just some people mess about... and every time we're going to play a game, ...they start messing about. And she says 'now that you guys are messing about, we're not going to play a game' so everyone else gets upset (so it isn't fair).*

(Year 5 Focus group 2007/08)

### **5.3 How learning languages is different from other subjects**

The majority of Year 5 and 6 children's questionnaire responses and focus group comments indicate that they saw learning languages as different from other subjects. When asked what was distinctive about languages, children mentioned fun and games as key factors. Year 6 in particular commented on how languages are a relief from the intensity of work in other areas of the curriculum:

*Generally ... every lesson in academic subjects like science, maths and literacy, it is sitting and learning and watching and concentrating really hard. Whereas in French you still have to concentrate, but they do it in a fun way so it is fun.*

(Year 5/6 Focus group 2006/07)

*I think German is quite an enjoyable subject because it's coming up to SATs and we're really pressurised ...it's like work, work, work. But in German, they push us hard, but it's not pressure... it's exciting.*

(Year 6 Focus group 2008/09)

*Yes, it's not like literacy where ... they just give you a writing test and everybody starts doing something; there aren't really games in it.*

(Year 5 Focus group 2007/08)

### **5.4 Children's sense of progress and achievement**

During the focus group discussions, the large majority of children spoke extensively about their improved comprehension, speaking skills and pronunciation. They referred to their teacher's feedback through praise, stickers and merit points as evidence of their achievement. A few children also referred to their increased ability to use the language while on holiday in the target country.

Children's responses to the questionnaire survey indicated that the majority perceived themselves as 'good at languages'. More than 50% of children from Year 3 to Year 5 responded this way in 2006/07, with the number increasing in 2007/08. The Year 6 response was slightly lower in 2006/07 but increased to 53% in 2007/08. Less than 10% of children surveyed considered they were not good at languages and overall 90% of all children reported that they were good at languages or good sometimes (see Table 5.4).

**Table 5.4 - I am good at languages**

Year	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	% (n=136)	% (n=139)	% (n=141)	% (n=142)
Yes	51.8	50.3	56.7	46.1
Sometimes	43.0	47.5	41.8	48.2
No	5.2	2.2	1.4	5.7
	% (n=144)	% (n=146)	% (n=152)	% (n=143)
Yes	62.9	64.4	59.2	53.1
Sometimes	28.0	27.4	34.9	38.5
No	9.1	8.2	5.9	8.4

## 5.5 Children's perceptions of the wider value of learning languages

Responses to the additional survey questions for Years 5 and 6 indicated that children perceived languages as useful for a range of reasons. Table 5.5 shows that over 75% of children considered languages to be helpful to them. Year 5 children were more positive than Year 6 in both 2006/07 and 2007/08, with overall responses more positive in 2007/08 than in 2006/07.

**Table 5.5 - Learning French / German / Spanish is helpful to me**

Year	Year 5	Year 6
	% (n=141)	% (n=142)
Yes	85.1	77.1
Unsure	10.6	17.1
No	4.3	5.7
	% (n=152)	% (n=143)
Yes	80.1	75.5
Unsure	16.6	21.0
No	3.3	3.5

The focus group discussions in 2008/09 confirmed that the large majority of children in Years 5 and 6 appreciated and valued languages as having a real purpose for communication both at home and abroad. Comments such as '*It will be a lot easier to communicate*' and '*If you don't know the language of the country you're in then it kind of limits your enjoyment*' were fairly common. Some children spoke about helping visitors from the target country with comments such as:

*We're going to have a French or German person staying with us on an exchange and it would be good if you knew the language.*  
(Year 6 Focus group 2008/09)

Perceptions about the value and usefulness of languages were frequently drawn from holiday experiences such as shopping, eating out and camping.

During the focus group discussions a number of children referred to their preferred choice of language(s) particularly when this differed from the one they were learning. A few children spoke about their respect for other languages and demonstrated a clear sense of empathy towards speakers of languages other than English in their school:

*There are lots of people in this school that are from different countries. Like there's one person from the Philippines; there's two people from Poland, and that's just in our class, so probably, if we learn lots of languages,... we could help them*

(Year 6 Focus group 2008/09)

*Yes, because if you go to another country on holiday you need to know how to speak, and if you speak the language that you use where you live in your normal country it's an insult to them ...you're basically saying 'oh I can't be bothered to learn your language I'm just going to speak English'.*

(Year 6 Focus group 2008/09)

Children spoke about the transferability of languages learning with comments such as: 'Once you learn one language you're able to learn other languages very easily'. Children also mentioned the impact of languages learning on their literacy learning. Several children spoke about languages feeding their imaginations for story-writing ideas, and one child referred specifically to achieving Level 5 in national curriculum assessment tests. Some children felt languages learning had helped to extend their vocabulary and improve their spelling abilities (whether in English or another language), their reading comprehension skills, and/or their understanding of English words. They also felt they were developing a better awareness of language, and that their listening and speaking skills had improved. Less commonly, children commented on how languages helped learners to explore the similarities and differences between words in different languages. A few children appreciated the wider benefits of languages with references to: learning about different cultures; increasing confidence levels; helping with voice projection in drama lessons; and enhancing general knowledge for project work. Revisiting the basics was also mentioned, with examples such as telling the time, learning numbers and the days of the week. Languages were thus viewed through a broad lens. As one child said:

*It isn't just about learning a new language - it also teaches us about geography, history - it helps us in general and would help us not just to learn a language. Say if you were doing European history, it would probably help you there and if you were trying to get a degree in geography or something...*

(Year 6 Focus group 2008/09)

Over 95% of the children surveyed in Years 5 and 6 believed that learning a language in primary school would be helpful for them in secondary school. Some children perceived languages as an essential skill, valuable for their future employment, as well as a testament to their general level of education with comments such as 'If you want to get a job and (they) want to see you've got good education, if you've learned a language they might hire you'.

## **5.6 Summary**

Children were positive and enthusiastic about their languages learning experience in the majority of the case study schools and appreciated the teaching approaches their teachers used, in particular, the interactive nature of the teaching and the wide variety of game-like activities which supported their learning while making learning fun. The majority of children also clearly saw languages as a part of their primary education and their education and life in the future. A few children, particularly in Year 6, indicated they were frustrated by the amount of repetition, their own limited progression and the lack of challenge in lessons. Most of the

older children perceived learning languages in primary schools as a useful foundation for learning in secondary school and some children mentioned the importance of languages for their future lives at work and in communicating with speakers of other languages.

## **6 Practice and provision in learning and teaching languages in the schools**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This section provides an account of developing provision and practice in the case study schools. The discussion draws on interviews with head teachers, languages co-ordinators and class teachers and statistical and documentary evidence collected over the three years of the study (2006/07-2008/09). Section 6.2 provides an overview of the organisation of teaching and learning including the languages taught, the time allocated to teaching languages and staffing models. Section 6.3 examines how these schools are developing their use of external guidance, the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* and various schemes of work and published resources. Section 6.4 considers subject leadership and management and, in particular, the role of language co-ordinators in these schools. Section 6.5 considers the contribution of external sources of advice and support and training opportunities to the development of provision and practice, and section 6.6 deals with financial issues.

### **6.2 Organisation of learning and teaching**

By 2008/09, approximately half of the case study schools had been teaching languages at Key Stage 2 for between 4-6 years; provision in the majority of the remainder was well-established with 14 schools having a long history of teaching languages (seven years upwards and some having taught for 15 years or more (see section 2.4.3, , Table 2.12). The introduction of languages in these schools sometimes stemmed from involvement in local or national initiatives, such as the Key Stage 2 Language Learning Pathfinder project between 2003-2005. Other schools had formerly been middle schools which taught languages as part of the curriculum to older children, and had retained and developed their languages provision after they became primary schools. Often, the teaching of languages in curriculum time had been stimulated by the work of after-school clubs, usually provided by parents or teachers with expertise in a specific language.

Enthusiasm, interest and expertise were cited as significant factors in the establishment and maintenance of languages learning and teaching in the case study schools. Many head teachers said they were passionate about languages teaching: either because they were linguists, trained language teachers or fluent bilinguals, or because they considered themselves poor at languages and were determined to offer children opportunities to develop skills they felt they did not have. Many languages co-ordinators were equally passionate, and most were fluent speakers or had some facility in the language being taught although there were some exceptions. Teachers' growing interest and enthusiasm over the life of the study were evident in their comments and in the lessons observed.

In 2008/09, 38 of the 39 schools visited were providing languages throughout Key Stage 2 while one school was teaching to Year 4 and 5 only.

#### ***Key Stage 1***

Fourteen schools reported teaching languages across Key Stage 1 as well as Key Stage 2, and another seven said this was happening with some but not all Key Stage 1 year groups (for a small number of other schools these details are unknown). Three were planning to introduce provision in the future, and five were not providing languages in Key Stage 1. These figures were similar to those recorded in 2007/08. Eight schools were providing regular, weekly lessons and in one school the children were learning languages two or three times each week; in thirteen schools the provision was irregular. The duration of languages

lessons varied considerably, although six schools said languages were taught for 30 minutes in Key Stage 1. Where teaching was taking place in Key Stage 1 this could arise from the movement of staff with languages expertise from Key Stage 2 to lower down the school.

### **6.2.1 Languages taught**

There was a range of reasons for the language choices made by schools, including the personal interest and expertise of staff members and/or the head teacher at the point when the decision was taken to introduce languages teaching; sometimes the language was chosen on the basis of an audit of staff skills. Where most children go to the same secondary school, the choice was usually determined by the language the children would study there. In two secondary schools the language taught from Year 7 alternated year by year and the primary schools followed the same pattern.

In 2008/09, the majority of schools were continuing to teach the same language(s) as in previous years. French was the most common choice, usually due to staff expertise and geographical location. Some schools taught Spanish because it was felt to be a more universal language and Spain was a popular holiday destination, while a small number of other schools taught German. In 2008/09 there was a slight increase in the number of schools teaching German, and a slight decrease in the number teaching Spanish, which was the reverse of the trend in 2007/08. Over the three years of the study, one school taught Turkish, a language spoken in the local community, in Year 5, alongside French in Years 4-6. There were also fluctuations in the language(s) some schools were teaching: for example, Italian was offered in one school in 2006/07 and again in 2007/08; Greek was offered in one school in 2006/07; French and Polish were taught in one school in 2007/08; in 2008/09 one school was offering Spanish and Chinese while another was teaching six-week 'taster' courses, beginning with Japanese. These changes were generally attributable to the varying availability of teachers and / or other adults or parents with expertise in those particular languages.

### **6.2.2 Time allocated to languages**

Time allocated to languages learning varied slightly between the case study schools, both in terms of frequency and length of lessons. Generally, languages were taught in weekly timetabled, discrete lessons. In a few schools languages were taught fortnightly. In 2008/09, the number of schools teaching 30-39 minute lessons had decreased slightly, whilst the number teaching 40-49 minute lessons remained similar to 2007/08. In 2008/09, three schools were providing 60 minutes in Years 3 and 4 and six in Years 5 and 6. In some schools all year groups had the same length of lesson, in others, Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 were taught for approximately 30 minutes as a discrete session and Years 5 and 6 lessons lasted between 40-60 minutes.

Additional time for languages was being found through incidental language work in class routines, e.g. calling the register, classroom instructions, greetings. A few schools mentioned spending more extensive time on cross-curricular work, for example a PE lesson in Spanish, singing songs in the chosen language in music, starter activities in mathematics, or science. Some co-ordinators were uncertain about the extent to which this additional language work (for incidental as well as cross-curricular purposes) was actually taking place, particularly where schools were moving towards a topic-based curriculum. Occasionally, languages provision was disrupted due to focussed weeks, special events or school closures.

### **Year 6**

One co-ordinator admitted that languages '*get lost to the core subjects in Year 6*' and several schools stated that there was no language provision in the month leading up to national curriculum assessments. Elsewhere, languages were postponed completely until after the



testing period. In some schools, Year 6 children were experiencing either 'taster' sessions in the final half term before secondary school, or intensive language teaching to compensate for lost time. In about three quarters of the schools there was reasonably consistent provision throughout Year 6.

### 6.2.3 Staffing models

The staffing models in the 39 schools visited in 2008/09 can be broadly divided into three types. An overview is given in table 5.1, together with indications of school movement between the different types.

**Table 6.1 -Staffing model over three years (39 schools)**

	<b>No. of schools</b>
Class teacher (in some cases, with some specialist support, e.g. from an FLA, Languages co-ordinator etc.)	10
Specialist	10
A combination of class teachers and specialists	7
Class teacher for younger children, specialist for older year groups	5
Move from specialist to class teacher	2
Move from specialist to combination	2
Move from combination to class teacher	2
Move from combination to specialist	1
TOTAL	39

#### 1. Class teachers teaching languages to their own class: 14 schools

Schools using a class teacher model for all or the vast majority of classes in Key Stage 2, increased from 12 schools in 2007/08 to 14 in 2008/09 although there were variations in the schools adopting this model from year to year.

In one (one form entry) school the lack of confidence of the Year 6 class teacher to take on children with three years of French meant the school opted to employ a part-time secondary specialist for that year group only. In another school (two form entry) one Year 4 class teacher teaches one Year 5 class as well as his own class.

#### 2. Specialist teacher(s): 11 schools

Schools using this model employed one or two internal or external specialists to teach languages, either primary or secondary trained. In most cases the specialist had specialist knowledge of languages, but in two cases the person carrying out all the languages teaching in the school had limited languages expertise. In one case the person worked with a FLA. The specialists taught languages to more than one class in the school; in most cases this was to most of the classes in a school.

The number of schools using this model remained similar, with 12 schools in 2007/08 and 11 schools in 2008/09. However, it should be noted that although the total number of schools opting for a specialist teaching model hardly changed, some schools had moved away from the specialist model while others had moved to this model.

Detailed implementation of this model varied from school to school. In four schools, teachers with specialist knowledge of one or more languages were employed as part-time visiting teachers throughout the three years of the study. Most of these teachers also taught in other primary schools and two had advisory / training roles in the local authority. One school

employed a teacher from the secondary school to teach two year groups; the other two year groups were taught by an in-house language specialist as part of her teaching role. In three further schools three members of staff with specialist knowledge of languages taught languages to the whole of Key Stage 2 as part of their teaching role in the school. Some specialist provision was evident in a further 18 schools over the three years of the study, usually for the older children.

### **3. A mixture of class teachers and language specialists teaching languages: 14 schools**

In 2008/09, the number of schools using a mixture of class teachers and specialists across all the Key Stage 2 year groups remained the same as in 2007/08. As before, there were shifts by individual schools to, as well as away from, this particular model. Where a mixed model of specialists and class teachers prevailed, the specialist teacher(s) were typically found in upper Key Stage 2 on account of the increased demands of the curriculum, particularly as regards literacy.

#### ***Foreign Language Assistants***

Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs) were working in ten schools in 2008/09, a slight increase in numbers over the three years. The majority of teachers interviewed valued their contribution to teaching and learning and the development of intercultural understanding, a view supported by the children in their focus group discussions. FLAs were a living embodiment of the country's culture, providing first-hand information about festivals and daily living, as well as a source for authentic songs, rhymes, stories and playground games. Both children and teachers appreciated the presence of an FLA as a language model with whom they could check pronunciation and vocabulary:

*She [Spanish FLA] was wonderful and very popular and the children were really enthused and if you still ask them they remember.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*Although I'd like to think that my French is quite good and I'd like to think that my accent is quite good...it's never going to be as good as the real thing, so I like to try and use [FLA] as much as possible for pronunciation of words and things, because mine could be extremely good but it's not native, and that's ideally what they need to hear, is a native pronunciation; I don't want to teach children bad habits and bad pronunciation.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

A number of respondents noted that their FLA was funded externally and others cited funding as an issue in being able to employ an FLA. A number of schools not currently employing FLAs wished to do so in future.

#### ***Teaching Assistants***

Over the three years of the study teaching assistants became more involved in languages teaching. Respondents indicated that specific training opportunities had been provided for them in some schools and in one recorded instance by the Local Authority. In one school a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) was the specialist teacher. In a number of schools teaching assistants were taking a more active role in lessons and in school-wide events by 2008/09.

## 6.3 Use of external guidance and resources

### 6.3.1 The Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages and the QCA (2007) Schemes of Work

In 2006/07, because some schools had been teaching languages for some time some of the resources being used were not explicitly referenced to Framework objectives (they pre-dated the publication of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*). For several, the year 2000 QCA Schemes of Work had been their starting point. Eighteen language co-ordinators said they were using the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, and seven stated they were relying on a published resource to provide Framework coverage, although not all commercial schemes of work explicitly linked lessons to Framework objectives. For one, it provided a clear strategy to work from the bottom up, to introduce languages year on year. For another school, the publication of the Framework had taken away the '*burden of planning*' by providing a structure with exemplar activities. Six co-ordinators said they were not yet incorporating the Framework in their planning.

By 2007/08, approximately a quarter of languages co-ordinators said they were making more use of the Framework, and four had begun using a local authority scheme of work. There was also an increase in the number of commercial schemes of work and resources being adopted by schools, with the more recent publications making specific reference to the Key Stage 2 Framework objectives. Eleven co-ordinators said that the publication of the 2007 QCA schemes of work for Key Stage 2 was also influencing provision, although a few schools commented these had arrived in schools too late to impact on their planning for that particular year. Seventeen languages co-ordinators indicated they had developed or were developing their own scheme of work; in many cases through reference to the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, the QCA scheme and/or to one or more commercial schemes. At least three of these schemes were being developed together with others in local networks or clusters. Some schools were introducing rolling programmes for languages to take account of the fact that older children would not have covered some of the expected outcomes in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* or units in the QCA schemes of work. In a number of schools Years 3 and 4 and even Year 5 were following the same scheme of work.

By 2008/09 all 39 schools visited reported using a scheme of work when planning. The eight schools using the 2007 QCA schemes of work were typically modifying the sequence of units, in order to link with their own topic-based curriculum or to support cross-curricular links. A number of co-ordinators suggested they were allowing a new scheme to bed down and teachers to gain confidence in using it; this was considered necessary within the culture of primary schools where new initiatives are common.

2008/09 was viewed by a number of languages co-ordinators and head teachers as a period of consolidation; the influence of the Framework on co-ordinators' thinking was seen in comments about the growing inclusion of literacy-related activities and the development of intercultural understanding. The latter was often mediated through commercial resources: typically DVDs and video extracts and/or through the deployment of FLAs, native speaker initial teacher trainees, and international partnerships or links. Head teachers and class teachers were generally less aware of the detail of either the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* or the QCA schemes of work. Exceptions were one head teacher who described the Framework as a *skeleton to hang our teaching on* and two head teachers who had participated in 'Training the Trainers'.

Several languages co-ordinators reiterated the importance of resourcing languages properly from the start. Many schools could comment on a range of commercial materials, with a core of particularly popular packages, some of which provided native speaker audio and/or video files for pronunciation support. The most recent were referenced to Framework objectives or

were linked to the 2007 QCA schemes of work. In several cases these had been adopted 'wholesale' by a Local Authority and in some schools in 2008/09, this curtailed the use of other schemes of work previously introduced. This meant that children within a single school could sometimes be following different schemes of work, as an older scheme was phased out and a new one introduced. A few co-ordinators with external roles had devised a scheme of work not only for their own school but for other schools in the LA. One cluster had worked together with an independent school to devise a cluster scheme, commenting that children were reported as being more confident in Year 7 and able to 'take off at a much quicker pace'.

### 6.3.2 Resources

Some non-specialist teachers preferred interactive whiteboard resources, which provided structured support in the form of ready-made lessons, sometimes with power point files. E-learning credits were used to purchase some of these. Many teachers created their own resources or used supplementary materials such as finger and hand puppets, flashcards, storybooks (some dual language), dictionaries, posters and stickers. Nineteen schools had partner schools abroad in 2008/09, and some partners provided authentic materials; sometimes teachers used visits abroad to collect resources. A number of co-ordinators reiterated the importance of human resources, 'enthusiastic and committed staff', and children who were native speakers of the language.

### 6.3.3 Transferring information to secondary schools

Many teachers and head teachers expressed ongoing concerns throughout the three years of the study about transfer and transition and relationships with secondary schools (also identified by Evans & Fisher, 2009). They were concerned about children's achievements not being recognised, about children starting all over again and about the impact this would have on children's enthusiasm and motivation for languages learning. A number of languages co-ordinators wanted to transfer information about children's achievements but were unsure whether this would be looked at or used:

*I always ask if they want it. It's pointless sending it up to be binned because the children colour them and make them look nice, and then I just think if somebody is going to just put them in the recycling, there is no point. I'd rather the high schools be honest about that, because the children, some of them, it's like a memento... they want to keep them. They want to keep their whole French file intact, with the visual; they've the art book and the visual, and I don't want to give it to anybody if they're not going to look at it.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

However, the same school also provided an example of increased sharing and valuing of respective expertise:

*I find that the high school teachers...they're saying to me 'It's great that we're involved because we're learning so much from you as well'...I say I'm learning constantly so much from them; they come in...they see how the primary is organised and what we're doing and I know teacher A at secondary school B looked at what I was doing and how I was teaching, not just French but other subjects as well, and he says 'No wonder the primary school children, when they come, they're so switched on because you teach in such a different style', and you don't realise it, when you're doing it. But I suppose it suddenly changes when [they go to secondary school] because the children are moving around and you've not got the same children all the time, so you can't build up that sort of confidence in their abilities.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

Schools which entered children for external Languages Ladder assessments (see sections 7 and 8) usually transferred this information to at least some of their associated secondary schools. One school had sent information to secondary colleagues but this had been returned after a short period:

*We have done things before where we filled in whole files of things to send to [the secondary school] and then they have said, 'Thank you,' ... and then sent it home again, which was not really the point of it.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

### **Parental views reported by teachers**

Teachers reported that parents were becoming more interested in their children's languages learning, were positive about languages being part of the primary curriculum, and perceived benefits for children's learning and achievement in secondary school. Some were beginning to express concerns to teachers about children's experience in secondary schools:

*I have had a couple of parents that work in the school who've had children who've learnt French with me, and they have said that initially they have been a bit bored when they've gone to secondary school. And that worries me because I don't want to enthuse them here, get them interested in languages and then for them to get bored when they get there. On the other hand we have had children whose parents have come and said 'Oh she won this month's languages award at school', and that's very gratifying, it's really nice to hear.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*Do you know every year it's lovely because we hear of children who say to us, their parents say to us, they came top of the French test and we know they have gone to secondary school and its really benefited them. I was at an awards evening at the local boys school, and when I joined Year 6 a few years ago those children are now in Year 10, and at the awards evening, from Years 7 to 10 there was a languages award and 3 out of the 4 boys who received the award came from this school, which kind of made me feel really proud to see. And I have had parents who have written letters or said how pleased they are.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

### **6.3.4 Reporting to parents**

In 2006/07 around a third of the schools indicated they included languages in their end-of-year reports to parents; by 2008/09 over a half did so. Some schools reported the topics taught in the child's year group rather than information about individual children's progress. Others commented on their enthusiasm for languages, perseverance, or effort. One school wrote under three headings: 'enthusiasm', 'ability to retain vocabulary', and 'pronunciation'. Others drew from a bank of ready-made statements such as 'tries with pronunciation', which they used to find a descriptor for individual children. Elsewhere, comments referred to enjoyment of a recent trip to France. Several languages co-ordinators emphasised the need to comment positively and, in general, schools did not use levels or grading on their reports. An exception was one school which used grades 1-5 against the five strands of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* plus a comment about effort, in their annual reports. Alternative approaches to informing parents were a termly newsletter, inviting parents to a languages morning attended by a foreign language assistant, and raising awareness at parents' evenings.

## **6.4 Subject leadership and management**

Where the head teacher was a linguist, s/he was often teaching at least some of the classes or had started the process off prior to appointing a co-ordinator. Some head teachers had formerly been language co-ordinators or languages teachers themselves before promotion.

### **6.4.1 Languages co-ordinators' backgrounds and expertise**

In 2006/07 most schools had appointed co-ordinators, although this was not the case in all schools, especially (but not in all cases) where a secondary specialist teacher came into the school to teach the children. In 2008/09 all but two of the 39 schools visited had a languages co-ordinator of whom 35 were interviewed. Six co-ordinators had been newly appointed to the role in 2008/09, three were on maternity leave and two head teachers were acting as co-ordinators in their schools. The majority of persons fulfilling the role were primary teachers; 32 co-ordinators were teaching in Key Stage 2, and five were not.

As described in section 2.4.2 (see table 2.11), a number of co-ordinators were trained language specialists, who had studied one or more languages to degree level and/ or chosen a language teaching specialism as part of their initial teacher education. In 2008/09, just under half of the co-ordinators had either a GCSE or A level and just over a third had studied languages to degree level. Five had no languages qualification and did not teach languages themselves. Some taught their own class, and sometimes other classes alongside. Others did all the languages teaching throughout Key Stage 2.

Over the period of the study, the majority of co-ordinators reported experiencing different types of training for the subject leadership role, which included attendance at meetings and short courses, sometimes with a specific focus such as the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, Asset Languages assessment or how to deploy a foreign language assistant. Some co-ordinators mentioned observing lessons by a specialist, or team-teaching. In 2008/09, participation in twilight regional support group (RSG) meetings was mentioned by nine co-ordinators, three of whom acted as a group's co-ordinator. Eight co-ordinators said they attended national languages conferences. Two said they had been on one-week courses abroad and two had participated in a British Council two-week teacher project; though not everyone offered this opportunity could take it up. Informally, co-ordinators prepared themselves by listening to CDs, reading in the target language, visiting the country, or accessing the primary languages training zone.

### **6.4.2 The role of languages co-ordinators**

The role of languages co-ordinators varied according to local circumstances, and was largely dependent on the competence and confidence of other teachers. In 2008/09 head teachers were asked to detail their expectations of the languages co-ordinator's role. In-school responsibilities generally included administrative tasks such as timetabling languages lessons, and oversight of staff. Support for the senior management team could involve contributing to development plans and language policies. The role often included planning at whole-school level and sometimes the provision of detailed weekly plans and related resources. In 2008/09 several co-ordinators said they had placed schemes of work with their accompanying materials on-line, for teachers to download and adapt. As well as mentoring and monitoring other teachers, a few co-ordinators also mentored native speaker foreign language assistants, and teacher trainees from the UK and abroad.

Fourteen co-ordinators also held a languages role outside the school in 2008/09. Of these, five were Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs), two were lead teachers and others worked in a languages capacity with the local authority. For ASTs, this was equivalent to a time commitment of one day a week. Over the course of this three year study, co-ordinators reported attending meetings with secondary partners, sometimes on behalf of a cluster or

network, and participation in local authority steering groups. A number of co-ordinators visited other primary schools to provide support either for individual teachers or senior management, by running staff meetings or writing action plans. One co-ordinator felt that this arrangement worked best if a fixed end point was negotiated, to prevent over-reliance on the support. Other co-ordinators talked about involvement in regional support groups, and another had a role in a local HEI working on an initial teacher education course for languages.

Having a dual role had advantages and disadvantages for the host primary school. Where schools employed a languages co-ordinator with an external role they benefited through their expertise, for example, co-ordinators knew in advance about courses and events. However, a number of co-ordinators commented that their other responsibilities impacted upon the time they could spend developing languages provision within their own schools, and necessary absences sometimes had a negative effect on their own classes. Some co-ordinators with an AST role felt that this often expanded and, where they were part-time, that it encroached on their own time; for such reasons, one AST decided to relinquish this role.

### **6.4.3 Internally organised training**

A number of languages co-ordinators organised in-house training for other teachers and teaching assistants either through staff meetings or through occasional INSET days; some also disseminated their expertise via handouts. However, some co-ordinators were frustrated that they sometimes lacked sufficient time to share with colleagues what they had learnt on courses, for example, due to their own teaching workload; in such cases they felt the impact of their training was limited.

In-house training sessions tended to include updates on latest developments such as new schemes of work or the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, discussing resources and/or sharing teaching ideas. In one large three-form entry junior school the co-ordinator and head teacher had decided to use monies allocated to the school to pay supply cover for teachers in Years 3 and 4 to have two full days' training run by the co-ordinator, which involved the co-ordinator modelling lessons for each of the year groups. Several other co-ordinators taught demonstration lessons and one video-recorded lessons to share at staff meetings. One school undertook regular peer monitoring over two-week periods, in which one teacher taught a lesson and the other provided feedback. In another school, the co-ordinator taught the lesson on alternate weeks and used assembly time for discussion of possible follow-up activities with the class teacher; this discussion was intentionally class teacher- rather than co-ordinator-led. A few co-ordinators offered linguistic support, particularly with pronunciation, which some perceived as 'a key worry'.

### **6.5 External sources of support, guidance and training**

In addition to in-school training, many schools drew upon external sources of support, which were mainly local authority-led. Cluster, network, and regional support group meetings typically took place once or twice per term. Local authority events were often underwritten, provided free of charge to schools, and / or offered with supply cover. In addition to running training events, some local authority advisors and consultants had conducted an audit on behalf of schools to help them develop their languages provision model. Some local authorities produced regular newsletters for schools.

The content of training was mostly focused on how to teach languages rather than on developing teachers' own language skills. On occasion, courses attempted to blend pedagogy and language upskilling. Some meetings dealt with international links rather than specific language and pedagogy issues.

Cluster and network meetings tended to be more strategic: '*discussing what we want to happen and where we want to go*'. Some clusters were engaged in short-term projects such as devising an assessment tool for use across the whole network or developing a transition project. Other clusters took a more general focus, which was not specifically focused on languages, or they had recently become language clusters when the secondary school became a specialist language college (SLC).

Some co-ordinators wanted to receive more advanced guidance and support for developing their provision model further. Conversely, others felt that much of the training was aimed at schools which were already well-established and mentioned the need for personal language development (rather than pedagogy) for non-specialists and non-linguists, and/or for teaching assistants. Training needs within individual schools changed over the three years with teachers identifying languages upskilling, the teaching of literacy and intercultural understanding and progression and assessment as needing greater attention as teachers became more confident with the teaching itself.

Several teachers felt that twilight training sessions were inappropriate, even though recognised as valuable, because delegates were tired at the end of a working day. In some instances, after-school sessions clashed with regular staff meetings thus making attendance difficult. These teachers indicated that training should be offered as a priority during the working day. It could be especially hard for co-ordinators or teachers to attend sessions when they had the '*additional pressures*' of being Year 6 teachers. The physical location of meetings in large local authorities could also make attendance problematic though languages co-ordinators expressed their appreciation for advisors and consultants being accessible by email or telephone.

A number of schools reported attending training events at associated secondary schools. However, this support tended to come from specialist language colleges and not from the school to which the majority of children transferred. A number of co-ordinators reported failed attempts to link with secondary schools. Liaison was sometimes dependent on key individuals, and stopped or decreased when that person left the secondary school.

Where face-to-face support did not exist, some co-ordinators were able to contact the secondary school by telephone or email. Not all schools had requested support from the secondary sector, sometimes because the primary school had its own in-house specialists. Some secondary schools released staff to teach in primary schools after public examinations. In one school, Year 11 children assisted with lessons and in another, Year 10 children ran a lunchtime German club.

Many were enthusiastic about the support received from their local authority advisors and specialist language colleges or secondary schools and the opportunities this provided for contact with specialists and with native speakers:

*You see they all know [Frau XX who is the German advisor] because they had her earlier in the school, and she's invaluable... if we didn't have her and we hadn't had the support, I don't think things would have been as organised and integrated as they have been.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

*We get visitors coming in; we get students coming in, French and German students coming in to school from time to time, again with our contact with the SLC, so they have exchange students come over and they send them into the primary schools and they do a presentation about where they live and about their school, their lives, and then the children get to ask them questions.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)



## 6.6 Finances

Seventeen co-ordinators reported that their schools had set up specific budgets for languages which they drew upon, usually by submitting bids for small items. Larger resources such as schemes of work were sometimes purchased by a local authority for all its primary schools, using some of the money Government has provided for Key Stage 2 languages. In some cases, local authorities also funded schools to have a foreign language assistant, or paid for supply cover to allow teachers to attend training. Most local authorities provided a mix of 'funded' and 'pay-for' courses which schools could opt into. Two co-ordinators stressed the importance of funding for supply cover to allow teachers to meet together and another to pay for protected time for the creation of resources. The main expenditure was on resources or training.

## 6.7 Summary

Over the three years of this study, the schools involved have made a concerted effort to establish and maintain languages provision. The choice of staffing and delivery models was fairly equally distributed between class teachers teaching their own classes, use of visiting external or internal specialists, and a combination of the two models. French was taught in the majority of these schools with a small number choosing to teach Spanish and German. All the schools provided a discrete timetabled languages lesson although only a minority offered a timetabled hour per week for languages learning. There was some evidence of time being allocated to languages in addition to timetabled lessons, but this was usually for incidental purposes, was generally unplanned and was variable within and across schools. All but two of the 39 schools visited in the final year of the study had languages co-ordinators in post (one school does not have co-ordinator posts for any subject; the languages co-ordinator in the second school was on extended leave). In some cases the co-ordinator's role had changed to an advisory position as the number of class teachers involved with languages teaching had increased. All schools visited in 2008/09 had schemes of work in place. The increasing range of support, both in terms of non-statutory guidance in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* and the 2007 QCA schemes of work, together with commercial packages, were beginning to have an impact on provision in most schools. In the main, training opportunities were being accessed although finding time to disseminate the outcomes of training more widely among staff was difficult; class teachers saw ongoing need for language-based courses alongside training on pedagogy for older learners. Language co-ordinators saw the need for more training on teaching literacy and intercultural understanding and assessment. 2008/09 was a time of consolidation for many of these schools and almost all teachers interviewed commented on their increased confidence, particularly where they were teaching year groups for a second time.

## 7 Pedagogy

### 7.1 Introduction

This section explores the characteristics of learning and teaching languages at Key Stage 2 across the three years of the study. It identifies and comments on trends in teaching approaches and examines children's learning experience from Year 3 to Year 6 through an analysis of observation data, interviews with head teachers and teachers, focus group discussions with children and questionnaire data from focus group participants. Section 7.2 provides an account of the teaching approaches and developments in the case study schools over the three years of the study. Section 7.3 further explores learning and teaching as it relates to the core and cross cutting strands in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*. Progression in children's learning is considered in section 7.4 and monitoring, assessment and recording in section 7.5.

### 7.2 Teaching approaches

#### 7.2.1 Key aspects of the pedagogy employed in the schools

The predominant orientation was towards interactive whole class teaching and the development of speaking and listening skills. It was clear that teachers, head teachers and children all valued what they perceived as the highly interactive and engaging nature of languages learning. The majority of teachers regarded confidence and competence in listening and speaking the language as the core goal of their lessons and valued oracy as the key strand in developing communication skills.

Teachers frequently orchestrated lessons around whole class choral repetition and interaction in the target language. The majority of teachers employed a brisk pace and made regular and rapid changes of activity. They indicated that they did this in order to motivate the children and to help them automatise their knowledge of the new language. The frequent changes in activity helped to sustain motivation and concentration:

*We tend to do it through games, songs, acting, kinaesthetic moving, drama, story, you know, through fun short snappy ways so that they are going to retain it, at least we hope so.*

(Class teacher interview 2006/07)

The range of activities was diverse and created a 'game' like orientation. For example, teachers, and sometimes children, devised physical gestures to aid visualisation and memorisation of vocabulary and pronunciation. Such mnemonics were used extensively and were valued by both teachers and children. The use of objects to stimulate interaction was also a frequently employed technique. For example a toy cat was placed in different locations and children were individually invited to describe its position in relation to other objects in the room.

Many of the lessons across the year groups involved a sequence of short activities which built incrementally on key vocabulary, moving from repetition and rehearsal as a whole class to using the language in individual interactions with the teacher or in pairs in some cases. For example, one teacher used a mixture of flash cards and the interactive whiteboard (IWB) to revise colours and clothing vocabulary and children then practised this vocabulary in a game and a short role-play. The same vocabulary was highlighted in a story, and finally children were invited to bring in their own clothes for the next lesson, so that they could talk about what they were wearing.

Occasionally lessons could be over reliant on physical/ visual/word game activities and did not appear to fully extend the children's competence, with the level of challenge being insufficient to motivate some of the most able and/or the oldest in the class. This was particularly apparent in composite classes.

### **7.2.2 Developments over the three years of the study**

Three aspects of classroom practice in particular developed over the three-year period of the study in the case study schools: there was a marked increase in the frequency of revisiting previously taught language elements at the start of lessons, there was more use of the IWB to support teaching and teacher modelling in whole class teaching situations, and there was an increase in teacher use of the target language for incidental and organisational purposes.

#### ***Revisiting and reinforcement of previously taught language***

While repetition techniques featured in lessons across the three-year period, there was clear evidence by 2008/09 of an increase in focus on revisiting and reinforcing earlier learning at the beginning of the lesson. Almost without exception, the 45 languages lessons observed during 2008/09 started with a recall activity, to refresh the children's minds and revisit previous vocabulary/concepts prior to the introduction of new knowledge. This initial focus on recapping and revision of material frequently took up around a third of the lesson and was seen by teachers as crucial to consolidate learning, particularly because children were usually only receiving one languages lesson a week.

In both 2007/08 and 2008/09 the most commonly used teaching sequence across the year groups can be described as comprising three stages. Stage 1 involved revision of previous learning in whole class contexts, Stage 2 the presentation of new language in whole class contexts, and Stage 3 the reinforcement of the new language patterns and vocabulary in whole class contexts and in some cases in pair or individual work. Instances of group work were less frequently observed.

Whilst there is clear evidence of a common starting point in terms of reinforcement of previous learning, focused concluding plenaries were not always used. Perhaps as a result of the relatively short length of languages lessons. Where plenaries were observed, teachers tended to use game-like activities to conclude the lesson. In all cases these activities made use of repetition and involved recycling current or previous learning through activities, songs or chants.

#### ***Teacher modelling and use of the interactive whiteboard***

Teachers spent considerable time during the lessons modelling the target language and inviting children to imitate their language and pronunciation. For example, teachers modelled target language words and utterances before inviting children to repeat or respond as a whole class, in pairs or individually and before they referred to support materials on the IWB. The oral focus and regular whole class rehearsal of key vocabulary/ questions and answers was frequently enhanced by visual support using diverse resources. Some teachers made explicit reference to children's interests in their choice of resources, using visuals of familiar characters such as the Simpsons or favourite footballers. In the second and third years of the study, teachers appeared to be making more extensive use of the IWB for images, key vocabulary, colour charts, weather symbols and maps as well as IWB books. Flash cards were also often combined with the IWB resource in whole class contexts. In addition, teacher-to-child question and answer routines with teachers asking questions of the whole class to which they expected individual children to respond, often by addressing named individuals directly, were frequently observed. This combination of teacher-led whole class choral repetition and teacher-to-child interaction, based on models provided by the teacher or through IWB resources were a common feature of practice across all year groups.

### ***Incidental use of the language for everyday routines***

There was considerable reported evidence from the teacher interviews of teachers making more use of the target language for organisational and incidental language purposes during the school day. This practice was reported much more frequently across the three years of the study, though it was mainly unplanned and not formally recognised in school policy. In the main, it involved commenting on behaviour, giving instructions, calling the register and greeting children. This suggested increased confidence and flexibility on the part of the teachers and offered children additional exposure to the target language, as well as enhancing their confidence:

*The main thing they are more confident with is the numbers, so I know a lot of teachers will try and get the number work involved in the languages, or simple things like colours. Whenever there's a link that can be made, not tenuous, but certainly subjects where it's quite obvious, teachers will try and use the number work, or the colours or things to help them.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

### **7.2.3 Other aspects of the pedagogical approach**

#### ***Pair, group and individual work***

Whilst whole class teacher-led activities were the dominant teaching method, some teachers used pair work for reinforcement. This was often quite tightly structured around the vocabulary, phrases or sentences that were the learning focus and only rarely allowed for expressing personal meanings. This pair work was usually but not exclusively oral and involved time for card games, carefully structured dialogues and role-play (for example exchanging personal information, ordering food, asking for directions), and completing sentences, using writing frames and/or matching words and visuals.

The amount of pair work observed over the three years of the study remained largely constant. It was observed in 18 lessons in 2006/07, in 22 lessons in 2007/08 and in 19 lessons in 2008/09. There are fewer examples of pair work in composite classes across the three years of the project. Generally, children engaged in oral practice in pairs, but on occasion pair work was used for literacy tasks. The following extracts from the field notes are typical examples of different types of pair work:

*The final activity of the lesson involved children working in pairs. The teacher gave each pair a flashcard and they had to work together to make up a number of sentences about that animal. Their sentences were to follow the format the teacher had just modelled to the class: 'Voici un/une...; il/elle s'appelle...; il/elle a ... ans' (making sentences using cards)*  
(Year 4 Lesson observation 2008/09)

*Ten minutes into the lesson the teacher moves onto the next activity, first giving instructions in French and then asking someone to explain how the game works. A pupil volunteers and explains the rules in English extremely well, all the cards from the envelope handed to pairs of pupils are placed face down on the desk and the pupils take turns to turn over two cards at a time trying to find a matching pair. If the pair matches you keep the cards in your own pile and if they don't match you return them face down to the desk and the other pupil has a turn. The matching pairs consist of a picture of a classroom object [learnt about earlier] and the word for that object written in French. The teacher adds that to win the pair of cards to add to your pile you need to also say the word in French, and your partner needs to ensure you are saying the word. The pupils continue this game in their pairs for ten minutes, all pupils participate and the classroom is very noisy. The language teacher, the class teacher, the classroom assistant and the researcher all roam the room checking on the progress of the pupils. (game: matching cards)  
(Year 5 Lesson observation 2006/07)*

*Children worked in pairs to try to match up mini flashcards showing parts of spellings to spell the days of the week in Spanish.  
(Year 4 Lesson observation 2007/08)*

Over the three years of the study Year 5 children worked together in pairs in more lessons than other year groups, i.e. in 18 out of 25 observations.

Fieldworkers noted that children spent between 5-14 minutes on pair work activities in 25 of the 59 lessons observed (where pair work was a feature of the lesson), and between 15-29 minutes in nine lessons; all the other examples of pair work were five minutes or less. An exception was one Year 4 lesson in 2007/08 where children spent over 30 minutes in pair work interaction, as described in the following extract from fieldnotes:

*Children sat on chairs in a circle. The teacher told each child they were either A or B. The A children went round the circle saying Hello to the B children and asking how they were in German. The B children replied using one of responses written on whiteboard. Children extended their greetings to include 'What is your name' with the response, 'My name is...'. Children built up to short dialogues with known language and small amounts of new language. A few children demonstrated their dialogue to the class...*

*The children then learnt how to say in German 'Where does it hurt?' They practised the new phrase with responses in the A - B activity and then in pairs. The conversations continued; each child taking turns to be the doctor and patient. The lesson ended with a demonstration of the conversations. Some images were used to revisit key vocabulary. The children were given the opportunity to select the language they wished to use as well as use language spontaneously.  
(Year 4 Lesson observation 2008/09)*

Over the three years of the study, group work was observed less frequently than pair work. There were nine examples in Year 3; four examples in Year 4; four examples in Year 5; five examples in Year 6. Group work for composite classes was also infrequent with only one example in 2006/07 (out of nine lessons), two examples in 2007/08 (out of 12 lessons) and two examples in 2008/09 (out of 11 lessons). Independent work increased between Year 3 and Year 6. Between 2006/07 and 2008/09, children worked independently in 15 observed lessons in Year 6; ten lessons in Year 5; six lessons in Year 4 and five lessons in Year 3. Most independent work lasted between 5-10 minutes with only four lessons where it continued for 15 minutes or more (one example in each of Years 4 and 5 and two examples in Year 6). Independent work took place in only one composite class (Year 5/6).

### **Cross-curricular links**

Some teachers in 2006/07 and 2007/08 spoke about their desire to integrate children's use and learning of language in and through the curriculum. Examples given in teacher interviews most frequently involved a joint language and PE lesson. Teachers also described some languages lessons with elements from science, healthy eating, geography, history, maths and music. Lessons on the planets were mentioned in a number of interviews. Class teachers and language co-ordinators in a number of schools reported that cross-curricular links were being developed and that teachers were selecting units from the QCA schemes of work, to tie into their topic for the term:

*This term we did 'transport' to start with and that was ok, they loved that; it appeals to boys and girls. Rockets and submarines... so we did the countries of Europe and we've got this big interactive map of Europe, and I actually said to the Year 6 teacher last week, 'this is a really good geography lesson for Year 6s'...it was saying 'trouve Hungary' and there's this big map of Europe...today the Year 4s did it as a quiz and the first time round they got 6 out of 20 and then...at the end of the lesson I said 'Let's go back and see if we really learnt anything from that map' and we got 19 out of 20. So, you see their geography skills...*

(Languages co-ordinator / Class teacher interview 2007/08)

*My topic this term has been about the Romans and settlements, so we've gone for the World Around Us unit out of the QCA for the Spanish.*

(Class teacher interview 2008/09)

### **Teaching languages through topics**

The content of most lessons was topic based – greetings, animals, numbers, days of the week and the weather were taught to all year groups. The choice of language changed in some schools, so that the cycle of familiar topics was sometimes repeated in a different language, and the introduction of new schemes of work in 2007/08 meant that children were sometimes revisiting previous topics or areas of learning, in the same language. Over the three years of the study the following topics were being taught in the lessons observed.

In Year 3 Sixteen topics: greetings; pets; numbers to 31; days of the week; months of the year; dates; birthdays; colours; animals; family members; food; clothing; places in the town; weather; seasons and the alphabet.

In Year 4 Sixteen topics were also covered. These overlapped with Year 3 topics except that capital cities, school subjects and ordinal numbers were observed while birthdays, colours and dates were not.

In Year 5 Nineteen topics were covered. These overlapped with Year 4 topics except that colours; dates; classroom objects; directions; sports; time; preferences; seasons; and parts of the body were observed, while capital cities; pets; months of the year; school subjects were not.

In Year 6 Eighteen topics were covered. These overlapped with Year 5 topics, except that Christmas; musical instruments; nationality; place names; months of year; and the alphabet were observed while classroom objects; dates; ordinal numbers; parts of the body; time; sport and seasons were not.

The topics covered in composite classes followed a similar pattern.

## 7.3 Teaching of the strands from the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages

### 7.3.1 Oracy

The majority of teachers regarded confidence and competence in speaking the language as the core goal of their lessons. There was a strong consensus amongst teachers that in order to motivate and enthuse children, teaching and learning needed to be mainly oral, active and enjoyable. Oral language work took the majority of the teaching time in all the lessons observed.

Teachers provided a range of listening activities and combined these with targeted speaking activities. Many teachers noted children's increasingly attentive listening during languages learning, which they attributed in part to their enthusiasm, in part to the need to listen carefully for pronunciation and meaning, and in part to the generally fast paced interactive teaching approach.

Teachers used visual and word level prompts to encourage children to take part in speaking and listening activities. Many teachers used repetition routines and games/game like activities, so that children spent time in every lesson repeating single words or phrases as a whole class using different voices, gestures and on occasion their whole body. A common repertoire of repetition techniques involved whole class repetition of vocabulary in different ways, for example: slowly, quickly, with and without gestures, with different emphasis and rhythms.

These routines were usually followed by short sequences where individual children responded to teacher questions or engaged in structured dialogues and role plays:

*The objective of the lesson was to revise previously learnt phrases for ordering food and drink in a French restaurant/café. The phrases were displayed on the IWB and the children read the sentences aloud and the teacher checked the class understood the meaning of the phrases by asking 'qu'est-ce que ça vous dit' and the children responded individually. The children, in groups of four, had to perform a role-play ordering food and drink using the phrases learnt. One child was the waiter and the other three were customers. The teacher provided a menu in French so that the children could choose what they wanted to eat and drink. The children then practiced the role-play in their groups. They were encouraged to move around the classroom and to actually act out the role-play as if they were visiting a restaurant/café. At the end of the lesson one group of four presented their role-play to the rest of the class. The class then said what they liked/noticed about the role-play presented. They were also asked to think about what they could add to the role-play.*

(Year 6 Lesson observation 2008/09)

This combination of teacher-led whole class choral repetition and teacher-to-child interaction was consistent practice across all schools and across all year groups. These exchanges were intended to support memorisation of new language at word and sentence level and develop children's confidence. Children experienced and interacted with language through mime, actions, songs, rhymes, games and stories, they also regularly listened to a model provided by the teacher or a published resource and then imitated what they had heard. Chants and songs accompanied by actions were also common; on occasion songs were used as the stimulus for conversations or a writing activity.

Children developed their pronunciation through singing, repeating after the model produced by the teacher or voices on commercial packages. In some lessons children also discussed and practised letter sounds, phonemes and the use of accents and on rare occasions children were given extended listening activities where they could scan for gist with visual support. There was evidence of learning within the large majority of lessons observed, in that children were confident to use the models provided to ask and answer largely formulaic questions, as well as recall specific words and phrases from memory with the aid of visual or written support.

### 7.3.2 Literacy

Across the three years of the study the amount of time spent on reading and writing represented a small part of the lessons observed. However, in the 2008/09 lessons, there was more evidence of literacy related activities particularly for the older children. Children encountered the written word on flash cards, the whiteboard, IWB, worksheets and story-books, for example the words to a Christmas carol on the IWB. Children read aloud words, phrases and sentences as a whole class, or followed text as it was read to them. Literacy activities, when they occurred, were mostly brief; in a small number of lessons children engaged with longer texts, reading together with the teacher and on occasion, as individuals or in pairs. The use of non-fiction texts was observed on two occasions, one relating to information about the Tour de France and the other a text about farm animals. On rare occasions story-books stimulated more sustained language production in role plays and small re-enactments. One small rural school with composite classes used 'The Three Little Pigs' as the framework for an extended project which concluded with a production by Year 6:

*The school was well resourced. They had bought a substantial amount of teaching resources in 2008 including rap songs, posters, books and a new ICT commercial package. The school taught French and Spanish for 45 minutes every week. The school benefited from a range of staff with relevant expertise and from strong parental support. All children in Key Stage 2 worked on the story of 'Les Trois Petits Cochons' with varying degrees of complexity and engagement. Years 3 and 4 learnt through songs and games, they developed an awareness of the vocabulary by listening to the story and repeating individual phrases so they could join in with the Year 6 production e.g. 'Non non non' crient les petits cochons'; 'Attention, au grand loup méchant'. Year 6 worked on their characters in class. They wrote what each character might say with support from the model provided using drawing and speech bubbles. To help with comprehension and memorisation they translated some phrases into English. To help with their pronunciation they crossed out letters that were not pronounced e.g. 's' of 'trois'. They discussed ways to adapt the script e.g. one Year 5 child suggested a story about 'the three wolves and the big black pig' (Composite class lesson observation 2007/08)*

When given the opportunity, children engaged as readers (at word, sentence and text level), sometimes reading to themselves or to one another in pairs during a game or worksheet matching activity, and occasionally in unison when reading aloud in whole class contexts. Children frequently matched picture cards to single words. On one occasion they read the words of a song that had been introduced orally, and some classes read aloud familiar children's stories in the target language together with the teacher, followed by a discussion about possible word meanings.

Across the case study schools, written work consolidated and supported spoken language activities. In a number of lessons phoneme-grapheme correspondences were highlighted and children learnt about spelling rules. Writing activities included copywriting and gap-fill exercises where children worked in pairs or as individuals at word and sentence level. This



helped children to consolidate their language knowledge and develop early syntactical and morphological awareness. There were also opportunities for some children to complete / extend sentences and add personal information; writing frames were in use with some older children. On occasion children used computers for writing, for example in one lesson children created descriptions of characters in 'Snow White' (Blanche Neige) arising from their reading of the story.

With regard to both oracy and literacy, languages lessons offered very few opportunities for independent learning or language exploration. In general language models were provided, imitated, practised and reinforced.

The data suggest that many children who experienced difficulties in literacy in English and across the curriculum, appeared more assured in lessons learning the new language and gained confidence through their involvement in constant repetition and interaction which was varied in format. Teachers in the second and third years of the study believed that this was of considerable value to their self-esteem.

Further discussion of oracy and literacy learning and teaching is included in section 7.4 below.

### **7.3.3 Intercultural understanding**

The *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* conceptualisation of intercultural understanding calls for a meaningful exploration of the similarities and differences between children's own locality and that of other countries, and development of detailed understanding of and respect for cultural diversity.

Aspects of learning and teaching relating to intercultural understanding were recorded in ten observations in ten schools in both 2007/08 and 2008/09 (not all the same schools) but in only three schools in 2006/07. (There were passing references to intercultural understanding in a small number of other lessons in each year of the study; however, these were usually *ad-hoc* and brief.) The majority of explicit learning and teaching of intercultural understanding in the lessons observed in all three years of the study involved factual information on aspects of everyday life in France, Spain or Germany. The main sources of information were websites or DVDs provided by commercial schemes of work, or teachers' personal knowledge. Topics included, for example, learning about the weather in different months in parts of France or Spain (five examples), learning about French cities, towns and villages, including investigations of institutions such as 'l'hôtel de ville' and shops, produce and food (two examples). One class was learning about lavender production in France and making lavender bags for Mother's Day. In another lesson, Year 6 children were involved in group role-plays ordering food in a French café. Two teachers were observed using a 'travel' theme with Year 4 children as the stimulus for activities relating to identifying and learning the names of European capital cities, on the IWB. In one lesson children were role-playing customers and travel agents and giving directions. Another of these teachers set the children a problem solving activity involving an internet search, where they had to discover the cheapest means of travelling to France - by train, boat or plane.

In five lessons teachers used images and other resources from commercial schemes of work to introduce aspects of life in French schools. Year 3 children were encouraged to identify similarities and differences in school routines, for example that French children had to bring books and equipment to school every day in their satchels. Children in the 2007/08 and 2008/09 focus groups were keen to share the knowledge they had gained about school life from video material, commenting for example on the absence of whiteboards, computers and wall displays in French schools, children not wearing school uniforms, children not going to school on Wednesday but having to go to school on Saturday, and everyone eating a cooked lunch rather than sandwiches. They showed they could discuss and compare school subjects, daily routines and playground games.

A positive feature for some schools was the setting up of pen pal links and/or school visits, providing opportunities for real communication through the target language and the chance to develop greater intercultural awareness. Many teachers perceived the intercultural understanding strand from the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* as centring on connections to the life and culture of the European countries where the language being learned was spoken. For example in two lessons children were learning about Christian festivals (Christmas and Le Chandeleur/ Shrove Tuesday) in other countries through learning songs, or discussing and comparing practices in English. In turn, children in the focus groups were keen to share their knowledge about how Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter were celebrated in France, Spain and Germany.

Children were also observed reading authentic traditional stories in four lessons over the three years. For example in one composite class children were learning to memorise 'Une petite poule gris' while in a Year 5 class children were using a big book to read 'Le carnaval des animaux' supported by a DVD and songs. In all these lessons objectives relating to intercultural understanding were clear and much of the lesson supported the development of children's understanding.

Interestingly, when asked as part of the focus group discussions, many of the children did not consider that they had learnt very much about the people or culture associated with the languages they were learning. A number of children said they were learning about the language not the culture in their lessons, or that they were learning about the country but not the people. However, when probed the majority of children volunteered information about European countries and aspects of everyday life relating to greetings, lifestyle, food, names of buildings, schools and school routines, sports, the weather and festivals. The younger children were interested in and keen to highlight differences, for example, with respect to politeness and greeting people. Some comments expressed a very basic level of knowledge and appeared to be based on sweeping generalisations ('most of the French people do paintings') or stereotypical views ('eat weird things'). Older children tended to have less stereotypical views and were willing to challenge other children's generalisations or misconceptions during the focus group discussions. Older children's developing maturity was also apparent in comments relating to their willingness to try foods which some of the younger children found unappealing.

Children in one group highlighted the fact that children in France don't study RE, which they had learnt from their foreign language assistant, and some children were keen to offer comparisons between different ways of doing things. The children who were most forthcoming indicated they had learnt factual information from DVDs shown as part of their languages lessons. They believed they had learned about people mainly from teachers who had personal knowledge and experience of the countries, or from visitors including foreign language assistants and visiting students who had talked to them, shown them DVDs and shared personal photographs. One group had learnt about the Spanish invasion and colonisation of South America and about the different languages spoken in Spain from a visiting student who had continued to keep in contact by email.

In the focus group discussions, the children were asked if they knew the names of countries where the language they were learning was spoken. Responses were wide ranging and very few children were sure about where French, Spanish or German were spoken outside Europe, although they were keen to speculate. Many of those who named countries correctly were drawing on their own general knowledge. Some children talked about the different languages spoken by children in their class or school, but there was little evidence to suggest that an exploration of these languages formed part of their languages learning.

Year 5 and 6 children also completed questionnaires prior to the focus group discussions in 2006/07 and 2007/08. In response to a question asking whether they were interested in learning more about the people in the country where the target language was spoken, 80% of the children responded 'yes' in both 2006/07 and 2007/08. Most of the rest were unsure with a small percentage of negative responses (approximately 4% each year). To a question asking whether they wished to visit the country where the target language was spoken, 94% responded 'yes' in 2006/07 (n=283) and 96% responded 'yes' in 2007/08 (n=295). These findings were supported by children's responses in the focus group discussions. The emphasis they placed on the value of being able to communicate with people on visits abroad suggested a growing awareness that everyone would not speak English, a growing respect for other languages and an anticipation that travel would be part of their future lives.

In a small number of schools, intercultural understanding appeared to be separated from language teaching. In one school, German language and 'culture' were taught on alternate weeks and in another school children were being given separate lessons focussing on the culture of European countries.

Many languages co-ordinators, and in particular those who were not fluent speakers or familiar with the countries themselves, highlighted the importance of foreign language assistants, visiting students and native speakers in bringing a cultural dimension to languages (see section 6.2.3). Some suggested that they relied on the input from people familiar with the country and culture to cover this aspect, including teachers who might have travelled to the country and become more knowledgeable.

Visits, email exchanges and pen pals and whole school events were also highlighted as important sources of information and discussion on similarities and differences between England and other countries. Some co-ordinators also saw it as important that children developed a broader world view through contact with people from a wider range of countries. For example, one referred enthusiastically to input from a Korean student visiting the school. Others felt that it was important that children developed knowledge and understanding of the backgrounds of children in their multilingual, culturally diverse schools and that children's knowledge and skills in other languages was validated and drawn on. Some schools were including 'language encounter' elements in their provision including taster sessions in world and community languages. In some cases they were teaching a world or community language for a period of time instead of or in addition to the European language.

### ***Authentic experiences***

Children in Years 5 or 6 in 13 schools were able to take part in a school visit to a relevant country (almost always to France). Most of these schools were in the south or south east of England. Visits took place in all three years of the study, although head teachers and teachers expressed concerns that some parents were anxious about letting their children travel or were unable to afford the visits even where these were subsidised, and as a result not all children were able to participate in these experiences. Some visits were organised for small groups, for example a visit to Madrid for a group of gifted and talented children. Teachers and children indicated they had learnt a lot about the country and lifestyles through these visits and valued them highly. Some teachers prepared children through teaching relevant history, for example, a visit to Normandy involved learning about the Norman conquest and the Bayeux tapestry. The trips often included visits to shops, factories or farms, and teachers felt they provided children with authentic opportunities for communication, the development of interpersonal skills and of intercultural understanding:

*The actual residential visit has got a personal development section, children gaining their independence, it's got adventure skills because they are doing adventurous activities as well as team building skills, as well as using their French language and developing some knowledge of the French culture. So it's a multi faceted visit really because they have a visit to a French bakery where they have to make croissants in a French bakery. They go and visit a castle, they also have the opportunity to go to the local market and buy the ingredients for their lunch and to use their French in the market, so they are experiencing a lot of aspects of French culture.*

(Class teacher interview 2007/08)

Teachers in 19 schools mentioned partner school arrangements, email exchanges and pen pals as a means of enhancing communication with native speakers. Children talked about making videos to send to their partner schools and writing and receiving letters. They were generally positive about these contacts though in some instances, delays in receiving responses were found frustrating:

*I also think that the children are really sort of inspired by the links with other countries, and that's really triggered the children finding out about other places, which was something that we hadn't done so much before. I mean we started a link with a French school through our vicar and when that fizzled out we found another school that were interested and the children were just fascinated with the differences even between those two schools that we made links with. And then a child who'd gone off to a Greek school wanted to write to us, and so we had a comparison between the Greek school and the French school you know, it just bulldozes once the children are interested, they want to know more.'*

(Class teacher Interview 2006/07)

### ***The broader international experience***

The development of intercultural understanding was also apparent within the wider curriculum. A number of schools had or were developing links with schools in other countries, often as part of the recognition process for international awards. Funding came from a range of sources including the British Council and Comenius:

*That was a three year project with a school in Spain and a school in Germany...the projects we did were really far and wide. We actually had a maths lesson with them on a video link.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

The Global Gateway was mentioned by a number of respondents as the means through which they had made contact with partner schools although a number also mentioned finding these through personal or family contacts.

Children in one school, which had established a link with a school in Uganda, spoke about exchanging letters in which they each wrote about what presents they would like. The children reflected sensitively on the differences between their requests 'Play Station 3, a plasma screen, hover board' and those of the children in their partner school 'a dress, a ball, a book, pencils', and demonstrated understanding of and respect for different situations and cultures.

Whole school events including assemblies, language days or world weeks, often involving parents, were mentioned by a number of teachers and children and were viewed as powerful means of developing children's understanding. One teacher enthusiastically described how a training day on global citizenship had inspired her to set up an airport in the school hall, as part of their international week:

*...and every child went on a flight and they then went off, they flew to another country which was their classroom, and then they did some work from that country, some of which had a language base to it...*  
(Class teacher Interview 2007/08)

Although these children's knowledge and understanding of the culture and everyday lifestyles of other people in other countries were being enhanced, there was relatively little evidence of children exploring their own culture or the lifestyles of peoples within their own communities or the UK. Few children in the case study schools had the opportunity to learn a language spoken by the local community, although children in some schools were being offered taster sessions in world or European languages, for example, Japanese and Italian. The knowledge children expressed appeared to stem more from their personal experiences than from planned opportunities to explore the linguistic diversity of their own country. However some teachers in linguistically diverse schools felt that the enhanced focus on languages learning was helping children to develop tolerance, empathy and the ability to understand other language learners:

*Now they're more respectful to different cultures. Now, the children who are not native speakers in Turkish but native speakers in English, can understand the other kids who are not native in English. So that makes them think 'what does this mean - learning another language?'*  
(Class teacher Interview 2006/07)

Overall, the data suggest that there have been very positive developments in the learning and teaching of intercultural understanding in a number of schools. However, this aspect was nonetheless observed in less than a quarter of lessons, and the wider conceptualisation of intercultural understanding as expressed in *the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* is yet to be realised in a number of the case study schools.

Teachers' and children's responses suggested that learning and teaching was most effective where teachers and other adults were able to draw on their own experiences and understanding of other countries, cultures and peoples and were willing to seek out a range of means and resources to support children's learning including drawing on the knowledge of native language speakers. Teachers who did not have knowledge of the countries or people and/or lacked confidence in their own knowledge or ability to respond to children's questions or challenge stereotypes or misconceptions were unlikely to prioritise this aspect of learning or teach it effectively.

#### **7.3.4 Knowledge about language**

Schools viewed the teaching of languages as a means of raising children's awareness of the social and cultural value of language. This view was expressed by many teachers and head teachers and was especially (though not exclusively) emphasised by those in schools within whose community many languages were represented.

Teaching elements of knowledge about language (KAL) was commonly observed across all three years in the majority of lessons. Discussions about language forms, about specific sounds, phonemes and words as well as pronunciation were frequently recorded. Other topics discussed included singular and plural forms of verbs and nouns, rules of agreement

with regard to gender and the similarity of some words across languages. Comments on intonation and the use of accents on letters and the pronunciation of words were also observed across all years. Some of these discussions took a comparative form, contrasting English with the target language. The following extracts from fieldnotes depict typical examples of KAL:

*They (the children) discussed the similarities between English and French words. They developed some awareness of phoneme to grapheme correspondences and the notion of silent letters.*

(Year 4 Lesson observation 2006/07)

*There was then a short KAL moment where the teacher asked pupils in English what differences they noticed between the spellings of months in English and French. Pupils commented that they all started with the same letter, that months from September onwards all 'started the same', that if you 'turned the ending around' they would be spelled the same, [the teacher] asked whether they had the same number of syllables.*

(Year 3 Lesson observation 2007/08)

There was some evidence of children applying the rules of sounds and grammar in supported whole class languages learning contexts, but this was much less frequent than teachers' explanation and commentary on the structures and forms of the target language.

One area where most languages taught differed noticeably from English was grammatical gender, and this was the commonest grammatical concept dealt with in observed lessons:

*The next activity involves a revision of the previous week's work on linking an adjective (eight adjectives) to a noun to describe one of the animals. The teacher draws attention to masculine and feminine nouns especially word endings and adjectival agreement. She provides actions to go with each description... A child asked a question about the gender of the different fruits. The teacher responds by reading out the names of fruit and asking children to repeat and say whether they are masculine or feminine, drawing attention to the articles 'el' and 'la'.*

(Year 4 Lesson observation 2008/09)

Children showed their understanding for example, through undertaking various sorting activities and in some cases by correctly explaining their categorisation. Often their understanding was linked to biological or cultural aspects of gender, for example family vocabulary (brother, sister etc), and coloured labels attached to words displayed. One literacy co-ordinator reported the tendency of older children to spontaneously identify the gender of new French vocabulary. The term 'noun' was commonly used by teachers and children alike when talking about gender.

Similarly, in the case of pronunciation, explicit attention often related to sounds acknowledged to be different from those of English, e.g. French 'r' and 'j,' and 'ñ' in Spanish and 'ö' in German. Children showed skill in copying pronunciation modelled by their teacher and showed particular interest in emulating the speech of native speakers such as foreign language assistants or visiting students. They were able to reproduce intonation patterns where they are important for meaning, as in question forms.

Children's knowledge of syntactic patterns was evidenced in over half the observed lessons, for example, by their ability to create new sentences to fit a pattern, by representing sentence constituents with cards, or by use of grammatical terminology. Several literacy co-ordinators commented on children's use of grammatical terms in both English and languages lessons, with transfer of terminology in both directions.

Some teachers highlighted differences between English and target language structures, and introduced syntactic patterns to their classes, most commonly the noun + adjective pattern in French or Spanish. Ability to explore language patterns in a very active way was demonstrated in lessons (in several different schools) where children worked together to deduce rules and patterns within the number systems of Spanish, German, French and Japanese. Some children put their language knowledge to use in playful ways: in a Spanish lesson where children were supposedly using dictionaries to help them name the location of a soft toy, one boy managed to construct '*El gato es muerto!*'

### 7.3.5 Language learning strategies

In each year of the study, teachers commented upon the diverse ways in which they perceived children were using language learning strategies. This appeared to be seen by many of the teachers as largely an issue of increased oral confidence. Children's use of language outside the classroom was a strategy reported by a number of teachers, typically in schools where languages learning was afforded a high profile.

Most strategies observed during lessons or reported by teachers focused on vocabulary learning, and included mnemonic strategies involving gestures and/or similar sounding English words, (e.g. a cat's ears gesture devised by children to recall the Spanish number 'catorce') or asking children to spot possible cognates. Some teachers talked about how they encouraged children to use their knowledge of English vocabulary to 'work out' the meanings of unfamiliar target language words. Use of cognates illustrates the way (target) languages learning and literacy can support each other: one literacy co-ordinator, for example, explained how children had supported their learning of the French days of the week by reference to cognate morphemes (e.g. *lun*-di vs. *Mon*-day –lune/moon) and went on to link this with etymological work carried out in relation to spelling, in an (English) literacy lesson.

In relation to dictionary skills, the 2008/09 findings show that dictionaries were increasingly in evidence on classroom shelves, but they were only seen in use in a very small number of classrooms. In a few classes, children made their own dictionaries.

Despite the fact that most teachers were able to discuss these issues, and offer anecdotal observations, very little explicit teaching of the cross cutting strand of language learning strategies was observed. For example, whilst children commonly used a wide range of mnemonics to help them remember new vocabulary, this often formed part of a game and not identified or discussed as a languages learning strategy.

In sum, in relation to the teachers' use of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, the observational data from this study indicates that there is ongoing but uneven development in relation to the teaching of the strands. After three years of language teaching with the Framework, many, like the teacher quoted below, may be more conscious of the activities they employ to teach languages than they are of the strands underpinning such teaching:

*I think subconsciously I'm becoming more aware that there are these strands and that a good lesson probably does include, not necessarily all, but over time I will include a good smattering of each.*

(Class teacher interview 2008/09)

## 7.4 Progression in learning

This section reviews evidence on progression in children's learning deriving from the classroom observations (findings from the assessments of children's learning are presented in section 8). Overall progression is evident between Years 3 to 4 and Years 5 to 6. In the majority of cases, children in Years 5 and 6 have a greater command of skills and ability to manipulate language than children in Years 3 and 4. The pattern of progression, however, is

variable and uneven across the year groups, which makes expectations for outcomes per year group difficult to summarise. Children in all year groups engaged in simple exchanges but in a number of schools, they also engaged in relatively complex scenarios where they had opportunities to interact through short controlled dialogues including both known and small amounts of new language. Overall children in Years 5 and 6 encountered more literacy activities than younger children but this too depended to an extent on local circumstances.

The following summaries for each Year group give a brief overview of the type of learning activities commonly observed in 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09 with mention of exceptions where appropriate. The research design meant that numbers of observations per Key Stage 2 Year group per year were small and variable, so that some of the variation reported below may result from sampling variation rather than any real variation in practice.

### 7.4.1 Year 3

Children in Year 3 learnt languages more through games that required a physical response and out-of-seat interaction than other year groups. Typical activities included a listening game where children were allocated weather phrases as they sat in a circle. As the teacher called out their phrase children swapped seats. In another lesson children danced whilst chanting days of the week, or made number shapes with their bodies when learning numbers. In one lesson, children repeated the sound of the acute accent while making the shape of the accent in the air as if flicking a sword. They chanted the alphabet, sang songs and rhymes and walked about the classroom shaking hands and greeting each other. Simple exchanges were predominant in most lessons.

In some lessons children engaged in more complex sentence construction, for example in one Year 3 lesson observed in 2008/09, children were converting sentences from first to third person: *je suis* and *je m'appelle* to *il est* and *il s'appelle*, and then extending this to *Ma mère s'appelle*. In two lessons children extended the identification of masculine and feminine words to include possessive adjectives with family members (*mon, ma, mes* in 2006/07 and *mon* and *ma* in 2008/09). Children frequently practised pronunciation, phonemes and letter sounds and in some lessons compared differences between English and the target language or discussed the influences of one language on the other. The following example illustrates a higher-level type of engagement where Year 3 children read a book in pairs, practised prepositions of place, manipulated verbs and engaged in extended utterances in a question and answer sequence:

*Children listen to the teacher reading a story.... Children read book together in pairs. They revise fruit vocabulary and prepositions of place e.g. sur, sous. In pairs children followed each other's instructions and drew pictures e.g. 'deux bananes dans le bol', 'Où est la fraise? La fraise est derrière la pomme'. Verbs faire and regarder were introduced with the story book. Children played 'Jacques a dit' with mimes of prepositions. Role-play question and answer sequence to practise 'Qu'est-ce que tu veux: Je voudrais une crêpe au citron'. (Year 3 Lesson observation 2008/09)*

Reading in Year 3 commonly took the form of single words on cards, the IWB and flip charts. Story-books were a significant part of three observed lessons. In one lesson in 2006/07 children translated a text in pairs, and in another lesson in 2008/09 they listened to the whole of Little Red Riding Hood in French, read to them on the IWB. Writing activities were rare; in one lesson children wrote their own version of a song following a model, and in another lesson in 2008/09 children re-sequenced words in the correct order to make sentences. More typically, Year 3 children considered differences in spelling between English and the target language or were introduced to phoneme-grapheme correspondences.



#### 7.4.2 Year 4

Year 4 lessons overall had similar characteristics in oracy to those in Year 3, with whole class repetition, chanting and some singing:

*The teacher greets the pupils with 'bonjour' as they enter the room ... once they are seated she begins a song, 'salut, ca va', which all the children immediately join in with. The teacher asks pupils to see if they can split the song, which they are obviously familiar with, into individual greetings and responses, in their pairs. They work well in their pairs putting together a conversation from the parts of the song - there is lots of noise and singing as they put together a conversation from the parts of the song.*  
(Year 4 Lesson observation 2006/07)

Children, however, engaged more frequently in short dialogues using extended sentences in paired interaction e.g. '*J'achète une baguette à la boulangerie*', particularly in 2008/09. In 2008/09, also, there were some instances of higher level thinking tasks; for instance children manipulated numbers through mental arithmetic exercises rather than simply reciting numbers in sequence. In one school they constructed extended Spanish sentences based on 'Handa's Surprise' - children predicted which type of fruit each animal would look at or take, using animal and fruit nouns. The sentences included eight adjectival agreements and two verbs; as homework children were also given sentences to write using '*toma*' and '*mira*' to consolidate their learning. Children practised sounding out new words in all three years but work on pronunciation, phonemes and silent letters was more evident in 2006/07 and 2008/09.

Reading tasks in Year 4 became increasingly complex between 2006/07 and 2008/09. In 2006/07, children matched words and numbers and read single words and phrases. In 2007/08 matching pictures and words continued with the use of worksheets and cards, but children also read whole sentences on the IWB. By 2008/09 reading was more prominent in the majority of lessons particularly of whole sentences although matching activities continued with children decoding and recognising single words. In 2008/09 children used a bilingual dictionary in one lesson to identify masculine and feminine words.

Writing was limited across the three years of the project but tasks increased slightly in complexity. In 2006/07, in one lesson, children labelled weather expressions next to pictures. In 2007/08, in one lesson, groups of children engaged in copy writing about members of their family; in 2008/09 children completed a gap fill exercise where they inserted missing animal names and colour adjectives, and were given a writing homework task.

#### 7.4.3 Year 5

Fieldworkers noted some variability in the oral challenge of lessons in Year 5 across the three years of the project. In 2006/07, children used full sentences with a wider range of questions and responses e.g. '*Quel sport tu aimes?*' '*Combien de personnes aiment le skate?*' '*Qu'est-ce qu'il y a dans le sac?*' '*Quelle heure est-il?*' and in some lessons children spoke 5-6 sentences quickly and fluently. Lessons also included singing and rhyme and in one instance dancing. In contrast, in 2007/08, very few lessons included actions to rehearse vocabulary and no examples of singing were observed. Rather there were many more fast moving game-like activities where single words and phrases were produced (e.g. snap). Below is an example of an unusually ambitious Year 5 activity:

*Attention was drawn to pronunciation, gender, silent letters, spellings, comparisons made with English, and children were encouraged to think for themselves, they were not given the answer at once i.e. the boy who suggested 'et' rather than 'mais' in his sentence. Children were also asked to apply the structures and the connectives with previously learned vocabulary (colours) as well as with the sports they were practising in this particular lesson.*

(Year 5 Lesson observation 2007/08)

The oral challenge increased again in 2008/09, and children demonstrated their developing skill and ingenuity in a number of lessons observed, e.g. they confidently selected their own weather expressions supported by written phrases and combined weather expressions with place names using prepositions. In 2008/09, far fewer games were played but singing and rhyme increased. In one lesson children compared and discussed similarities and differences between Spanish and French words but in most lessons links were highlighted between English and the target language and pronunciation practised.

Reading mostly took the form of reading aloud or simple matching games. In 2006/07, in two lessons, children encountered more challenging reading tasks: i) they translated a story provided for a role-play activity and ii) they scanned a text for gist information about the Tour de France. In one lesson in 2008/09 children drew monsters and then placed words in the correct order about their monsters before reading their descriptions aloud.

There was limited progression in the writing tasks observed in Year 5. Children wrote in only one lesson observed in 2006/07 (numbers and number words as the teacher called them out) and once in 2008/09 (the teacher dictated words a letter at a time and children wrote down the letters before guessing the word). However in 2008/09, focused writing tasks were observed in three out of nine lessons including an extension activity where some children were asked to write a sentence about animals using a model on the IWB.

#### **7.4.4 Year 6**

Lessons continued to be interactive with an increase in focused dialogues e.g. *'j'aime le rugby mais je n'aime pas le golf'* (2007/08). In one lesson Year 6 children sang phrases of a song unaccompanied using chunks previously modelled on the DVD *'dans mon sac ...j'ai un crayon'* (2007/08). Reciting and repeating single words in different topic areas were a regular part of many lessons. For instance children practised numbers up to 30 and up to 200 in one lesson. In two lessons in 2008/09 numbers were used for mathematical calculation (e.g.  $9.71 \times 100$ ). Role-play activities were also observed in some lessons.

Phonemes were discussed in most lessons, as in lessons with other year groups. Overall in Year 6, the extent of comparison, discussion and analysis of language increased over the three years of the study. In 2006/07, verb endings, masculine and feminine words and letter sounds were given attention. In 2007/08 discussions also included word stress, accents, adjectival agreement and basic capitalisation rules; in 2008/09 silent letters and prediction of letter sounds were also explored.

In the majority of Year 6 lessons reading was limited, and there was little progression of tasks from those carried out by younger year groups. In 2006/07 and 2007/08 children read from cards, worksheets and the whiteboard e.g. days of the week and weather words with use of articles. In one lesson, in 2007/08 children helped each other to read through a script for 'Aboie Georges'. In 2008/09 worksheets were less frequently presented so children read more consistently as a whole class. In one lesson, the teacher read aloud one of the letters that had arrived from pen pals in France and children translated the letter together.

In contrast to previous years of the study the extent and complexity of writing increased substantially for Year 6 in 2008/09. There were instances of writing observed in 2006/07 but very little in 2007/08 although children in one class were compiling a vocabulary book, and elsewhere spelling rules were rehearsed. In a number of lessons in 2008/09, children extended oral practice through writing sentences either individually or in pairs. In one lesson children wrote a brief description about their individual appearance and character traits using vocabulary they had already learnt and further key vocabulary items taken from a worksheet, and in another lesson they used a writing model to make identity cards (name, age, nationality, date of birth, favourite colour and animal and number of siblings). In 2008/09 there was one ambitious example of homework, where children were asked to prepare an oral presentation about themselves using sentences used during the week. The following extracts depict other Year 6 writing activities:

*Children write sentences combining a noun and a colour adjective on mini-whiteboards. They then hold them up for the teacher to see. Some pupils asked to read out their sentences. Children use dictionaries to help them look up words they don't know*  
(Year 6 Lesson observation 2006/07)

*Children were asked to remember the words for siblings already met in a previous lesson. They were able to practise using these words to reply to questions from the teacher. There was a written product. This was a piece of writing about their family members. This added to the written work already undertaken about themselves. The children were supported by the written word, either on the board or on vocabulary sheets.*  
(Year 6 Lesson observation 2008/09)

*Children also worked in pairs ordering the words displayed on the interactive white board to make sentences and writing them on their small whiteboards. They also wrote their own sentences together about the weather in different seasons.*  
(Year 6 Lesson observation 2008/09)

*Writing task. Children each had to write a brief description (about visual appearance and character traits) of themselves in French, using vocabulary they had already learnt. The activity was modelled for them through written examples shown on the interactive whiteboard (about other teachers and herself), which the teacher read out aloud. Each child also had a vocabulary sheet, which listed the main words they had been working with.*  
(Year 6 Lesson observation 2008/09)

## **7.5 Children's engagement during languages lessons**

Observation field notes confirm that children were motivated and engaged in almost all the observed lessons over the three years of the study. Children were frequently praised in the target language and English or awarded points and stickers for their participation and engagement which produced a conducive setting for risk-taking.

On occasion there were minor instances of inattention by a few children but a general lack of engagement and low motivation for a sustained period were observed in only four lessons. The following extracts from the observation data provide evidence of the generally high levels of engagement and participation and one example where Year 6 children were less motivated:

*The children participated very enthusiastically for most of the lesson, repeating expressions and gestures with confidence, volunteering eagerly to hold up flashcards and responding with big shows of hands to teacher questions.*  
(Year 3 Lesson observation 2007/08)

*...during each activity the whole class was engaged, smiling and apparently enjoying themselves. The song and the hand gestures were performed with enthusiasm. During the game on the OHP with the missing card more than half the class had their hand up to provide the answer. During the pairs game the children remained engaged, on task and happy. The children also very much enjoyed singing the days of the week song in two groups.*  
(Year 4 Lesson observation 2008/09)

*Pupils did appear to be compliant and receptive. They showed little real engagement with language learning until they encountered the measuring task shown on the DVD. Then there were some volunteers to join in.*  
(Year 6 Lesson observation 2008/09)

## **7.6 Monitoring, assessment and recording**

In 2008/09 thirty-three co-ordinators responded to questions about assessment. Of these, about a third described assessment as informal. The observations across all three years suggested that the majority of teachers monitored children's responses informally and offered immediate formative feedback to individual children and to the class as a whole. When responses were not accurate, teachers were still very supportive of children's attempts. There was little evidence of systematic, formal assessment of children's learning. Teachers formatively assessed children by addressing questions to individuals, and recast their responses where necessary, and on occasion some teachers increased the challenge for particular children. Tools for monitoring progress included observing children's responses to prompts, listening to children's interaction during pair work and checking children's writing.

In a minority of schools the specialist and class teacher assessed jointly, which simultaneously informed the class teacher of children's progress. Some teachers were developing tick lists as a form of record keeping, and one school video-recorded children preparing for role plays or performances or giving presentations, enabling children as well as the teacher to see and hear themselves. These recordings did not appear to be formally assessed, but were available as a record of overall performance.

### ***Self-assessment and peer assessment***

Just under half of the case study schools commented that they were introducing various forms of self-assessment in order to make '*assessment manageable and not put people off*'. Assessment for learning was carried out orally and not recorded by teachers, consisting of routines such as thumbs up and down or using a traffic lights system to indicate how children felt they had achieved. Written pieces might be annotated with happy or sad faces or indications whether children had worked independently, with a partner or group, and with or without the teacher's help.

### ***Written records***

In some schools 'can-do' statements provided a written record of achievement, some created by the schools, in many cases based on published resources. In some schools the self-assessment sheets produced by publishers were used unchanged, usually in hard copy. One or two schools which were adopting an ICT based resource were planning to use electronic self-assessment, although this was not yet fully in place at the time of field visits. In 2008/09

around a quarter of schools reported that the can-do statements were drawn from the Junior version of the European Language Portfolio (ELP: McLagan, 2006) and a few were using the Languages Ladder statements in the Portfolio. One school which had piloted an electronic version of the ELP had a system whereby children coloured round the different speech bubbles approximately termly. Different colours were used to distinguish each year group, enabling both children and teachers to see at a glance children's progression over time:

*So if it is revisited, it is revisited in a different colour, so we can see how many times that they feel that they can do it.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

One language co-ordinator had created can-do statements based on the scheme the school was using but described the descriptors for the certificate awarded on completion of a unit as 'steps' rather than 'levels'. This was to avoid confusion with national curriculum levels.

### ***Languages Ladder and external tests***

In 2008/09 very few co-ordinators mentioned the Languages Ladder and those who did tended to discuss it in connection with the European Language Portfolio. A small number of schools, some of which had piloted materials or were part of Strand 3 of this study (see section 8), mentioned entering at least some Year 6 children for Asset Languages Breakthrough external tests.

### ***Information transferred to other classes***

Few schools said that they transferred any assessment documentation to other teachers as children moved up the school, although some mentioned discussion in end-of-year meetings: *'Even in the Foundation subjects we do have quite a lot of meetings at the end of the year as a handover process'*. Some schools recorded in broad terms what content had been taught in a particular year group or class, rather than details about the progress of individual children. A few said that children took their folders of language work and/or self-assessment sheets into the next class.

An exception was one in-house specialist who had a long-standing system of assessing children's written work against her lesson objectives, which were now linked to the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*:

*'Anything they do that's written. The task has a learning objective and I assess them against the learning objective and then I record it in terms of excellent (completely got it), and ...'*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

In this school pronunciation was checked near report time, by asking individuals to read aloud short phrases, repeating this process with a different selection of children over a series of lessons. At the same time children's reading comprehension was assessed by the children writing the meaning in English of words and phrases they were reading silently. Responses were recorded in a mark book and fed into the annual report to parents.

## **7.7 Summary**

Over the three years of the study, teachers in the case study schools have employed and developed a workable and practical pedagogy which promotes enjoyment, confidence, and aspects of learning. Teachers were still 'working towards' implementation of the ideas and approaches underpinning the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*. With regard to the teaching of the Framework strands, a common pattern existed in each of the three years of

the study. Teaching focused on the development of oracy and knowledge about language and less explicit emphasis was given to intercultural understanding and language learning strategies in the majority of lessons. Teachers also afforded less time to literacy than to oracy. However, over the three years of the study there was an increase in the time spent on literacy related activities especially for the older children, with reading receiving relatively more attention than writing. There was broad evidence of progression from Year 3 to Year 6 in terms of the degree of challenge offered and language productions expected from children, especially in relation to oracy. However the picture was complex, with expectations varying across and within schools; a clear consensus has not yet emerged regarding the rate of progression and ultimate achievement to be expected in languages.

Assessment practice was still at an early stage in many schools, although there were indications in 2008/09 that language co-ordinators were beginning to address the issue more systematically. Some had attended some local training sessions where the issues was discussed, and a few mentioned membership of working groups exploring these further. In practice assessment was still largely informal and impressionistic: teachers noted children's oral contributions and commented on written work but recording was minimal. There was no evidence of assessment of intercultural understanding.

## 8 Children's achievement in languages

### 8.1 Introduction

An important aim of the research was to document the extent to which children throughout Key Stage 2 were benefiting from their languages learning experience in terms of attainment in oracy and literacy in the target language, as described in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*. In each year of the project, therefore, specially devised assessment tasks were administered to small groups of children in a subset of eight schools (called here the 'enhanced case study' schools), in three languages: French, Spanish and German. Re-administration of the same assessments on three occasions throughout the life of the project provided a valuable opportunity to check on the extent and consistency of children's achievement in languages, and also to begin to explore any changes in achievement over time.

#### ***Participating schools***

The same eight enhanced case study schools were all willing to participate in the language skills assessments in all three years. An overview of language teaching in these schools is shown in Table 8.1.

**Table 8.1 - Schools participating in language skills assessments**

School	School type	No. form entry	Language(s) taught in KS2
A	All through primary	1	French
B	Junior School	2	French
C	All through primary	2	French
D	Junior School	3	French
E	All through primary	1	Spanish
F	All through primary	2	2 age cohorts Spanish, 2 cohorts German
G	All through primary	2	French
H	All through primary	1	Spanish

#### ***Participating children***

In 2006/07, the assessment tasks devised by the research team were administered to small groups of children (n=4-6) in each school in Years 3, 4 and 5, while varying numbers of Year 6 children, determined by the school, took part in a selection of Asset Languages Breakthrough tests. In 2007/08 and 2008/09 however, small groups of children in all four years took part in the assessment programme devised by the team. It was not feasible to track the same children in successive years, consequently this aspect of the study is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal.

#### ***The assessment programme***

Little comparable research has been reported previously, and little is known about the likely range of achievement to be found among early languages learners in the primary phase. (Donato 2000 provides an interesting account of Japanese learning in American elementary schools, but with a teaching model providing significantly more curriculum time. A new European project will provide comparative evidence on achievement in a range of primary school settings, but has so far produced only interim results: Enever et al., 2007/08.) Available models of early achievement such as those to be found in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* or the *National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages*, have been devised a priori and are not underpinned in detail by empirical evidence on progression and learning outcomes. The tasks devised for this project consequently had to be exploratory

in nature, and were devised in line with the following principles (see discussion in Johnstone et al., 2000 and Hasselgren, 2005, on appropriate assessment practices with young children in languages):

- To reflect the yearly objectives of the Key Stage 2 Framework for both oracy and literacy in the target language;
- To be suitable for administration with small groups of children;
- To have sufficient flexibility to explore different topic areas and maximise children's opportunity to show what they know/ can communicate through the target language;
- To provide children with a varied and enjoyable target language experience.

A key feature of the assessments was that most instruments used were administered to groups rather than individual children, and ratings were allocated for group performance; the only tasks administered individually were those for target language writing. Further information about the tasks, task development, administration and scoring may be found in Annex B and in the online appendices.

Given the small scale of these assessments, and their exploratory nature, the presentation of results is descriptive in nature.

## **8.2 Oracy achievement in Years 3-6**

In this section a short account is provided of children's oracy achievement in the eight enhanced case study schools, over the three years of assessments, as measured by the common rating scales applied to complete group performances.

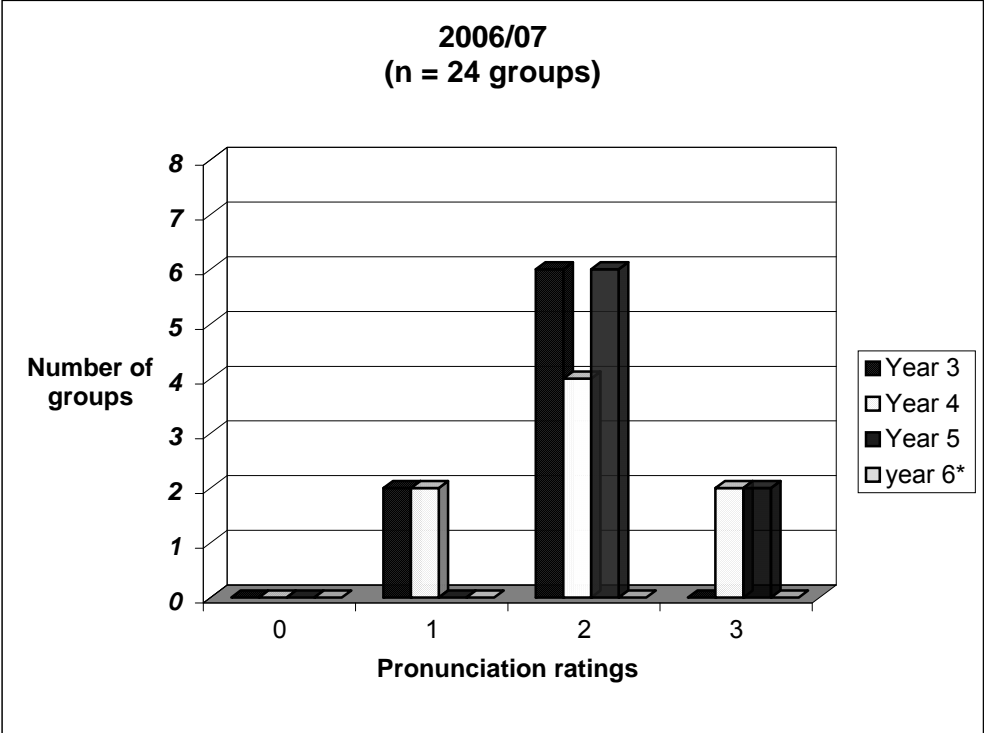
### **8.2.1 Achievement in target language pronunciation**

The first aspect of children's group performance to be assessed was their pronunciation in French, Spanish or German, which was rated globally on a four-point scale, defined as follows: 3, "Children use predominantly target language (TL) phonology"; 2, Children use a mix of L1 and TL phonology"; 1, "Children use predominantly L1 phonology"; 0, "Insufficient evidence".

Figures 8.1-8.3 present the overall pronunciation ratings for each year of the study.

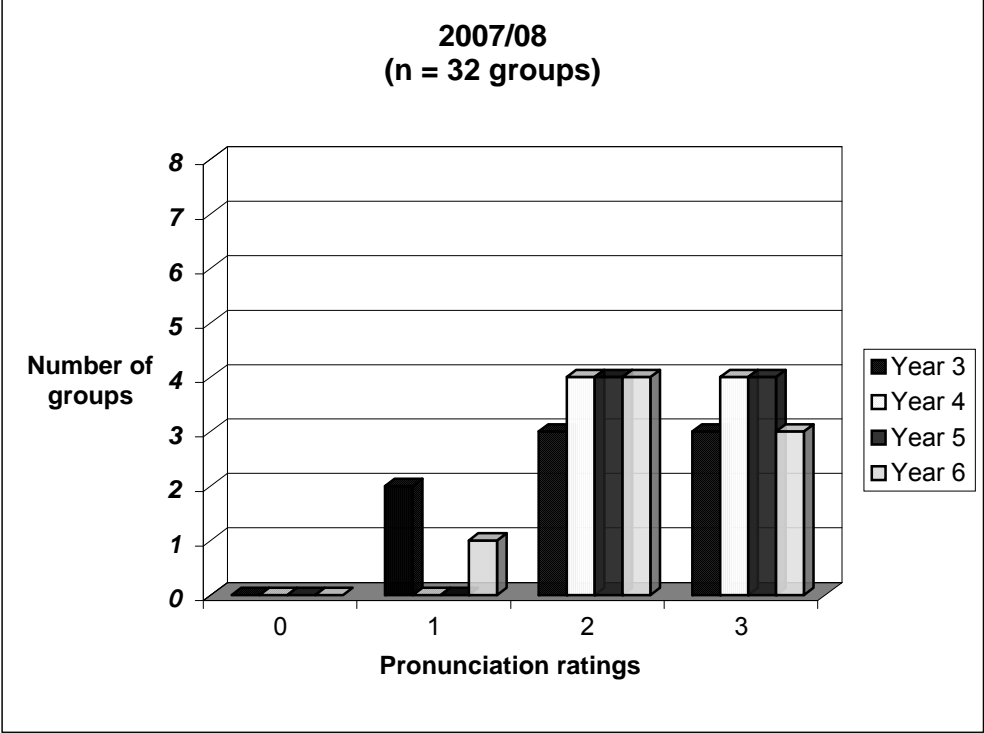


Figure 8.1 - Children's target language pronunciation, 2006/07 cohort

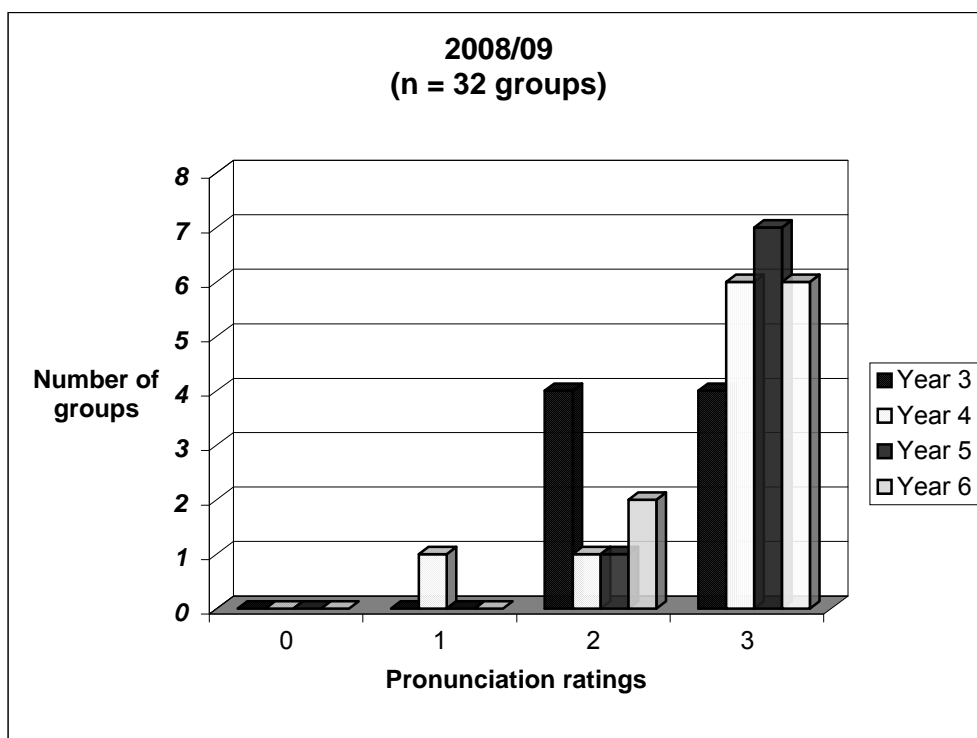


\* Year 6 did not undertake group assessments in 2006/07

Figure 8.2 - Children's target language pronunciation, 2007/08 cohort



**Figure 8.3 - Children’s target language pronunciation, 2008/09 cohort**



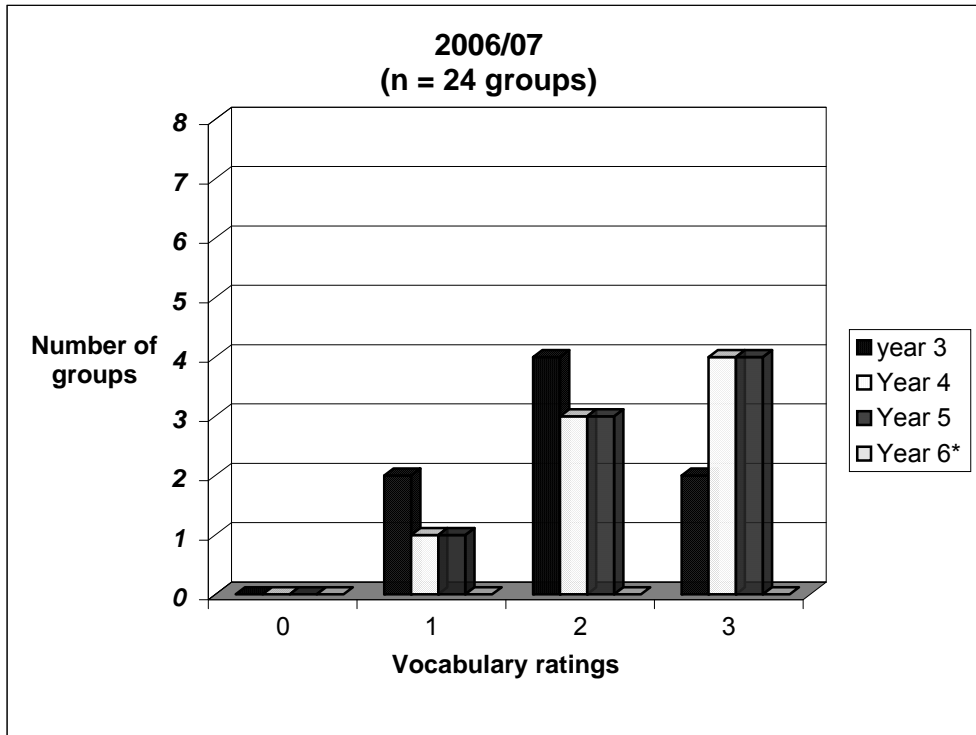
Overall the results presented in Figures 8.1-8.3 show a large majority of groups making clear attempts to use target language phonology when speaking. In Years 3, 4 and 5 there is positive evidence of improvement from the 2006/07 cohort to the 2008/09 cohort, with 17/24 groups achieving the highest rating in 2008/09, compared with 4 groups in 2006/07. In Year 6 performance is similar in both 2007/08 and 2008/09; there is more evidence of spelling-influenced pronunciation in Year 6 than in the other Year groups, perhaps because of greater influence from literacy activity (and possibly the greater use of literacy prompts within the Year 6 assessment tasks; when using familiar language the Year 6 children’s pronunciation was much less influenced by interference from spellings).

In French, the children’s main pronunciation difficulties overall involved nasal vowels, the vowel /y/ and the consonant /r/, as well as interference from spellings (some tendency to pronounce silent letters even when speaking independently of written text). In Spanish, the main pronunciation difficulties noticed involved (non)maintenance of vowel quality and over-use of diphthongs; failure to distinguish between the two ‘r’ phonemes; and poor production of the /j/, /x/ and /β/ phonemes (as in ‘silla’, ‘naranja’, ‘vivo’). In German, problems included long vowels such as /o/ (as in ‘rot’), and the /ç/ phoneme (as in ‘ich’). These sounds present well known challenges for English L1 learners, which are overcome where children are hearing good target language models and get a chance to speak the language regularly.

### **8.2.2 Oral production of target language vocabulary**

The second aspect of children’s oral performance to be analysed is their productive target language vocabulary. Figures 7.4-7.6 provide an overview of the range of vocabulary actually produced by group members during the full set of oral tasks, in each year of the study (counting each different word once only, and excluding imitated words, numbers, and words used only in songs and rhymes). The rating scale used is defined as follows: 3, “50+ target language words produced”; 2, “20-50 target language words produced”; 1, “5-20 target language words produced”; 0, “0-5 target language words produced”.

Figure 8.4 - Ratings of target language vocabulary, 2006/07 cohort



\*Year 6 did not undertake group assessments in 2007

Figure 8.5 - Ratings of target language vocabulary, 2007/08 cohort

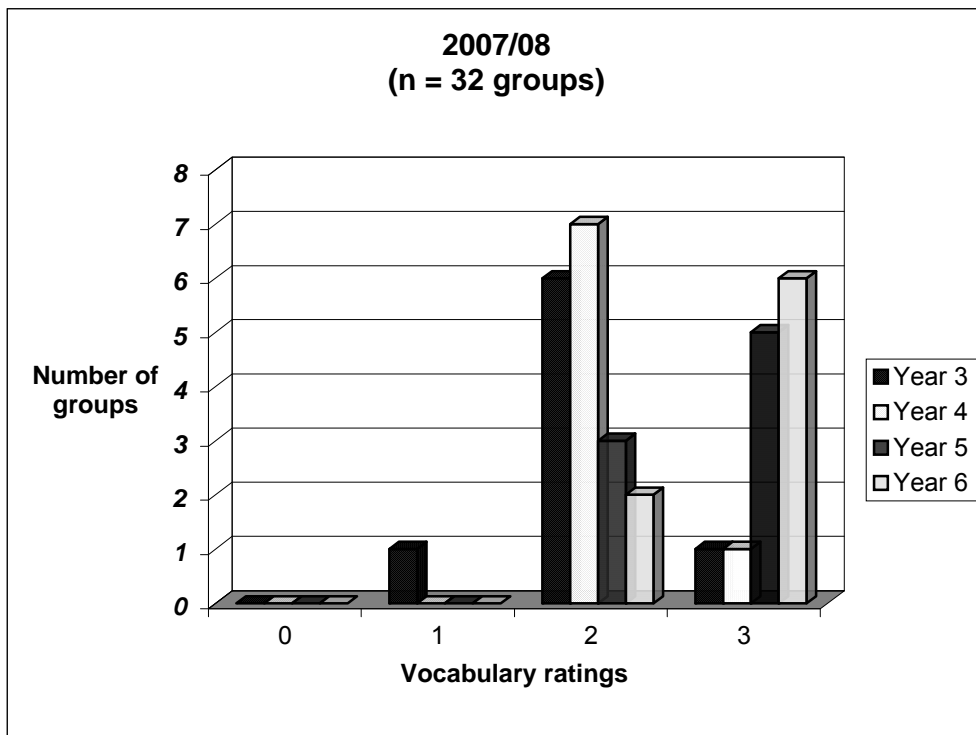
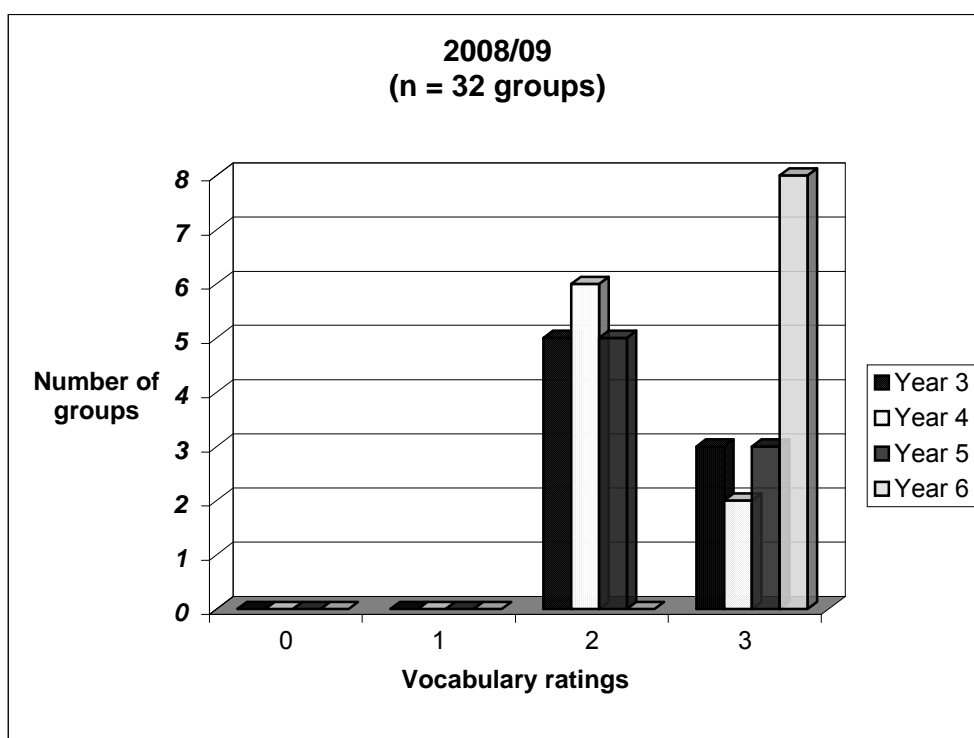


Figure 8.6 - Ratings of target language vocabulary, 2008/09 cohort



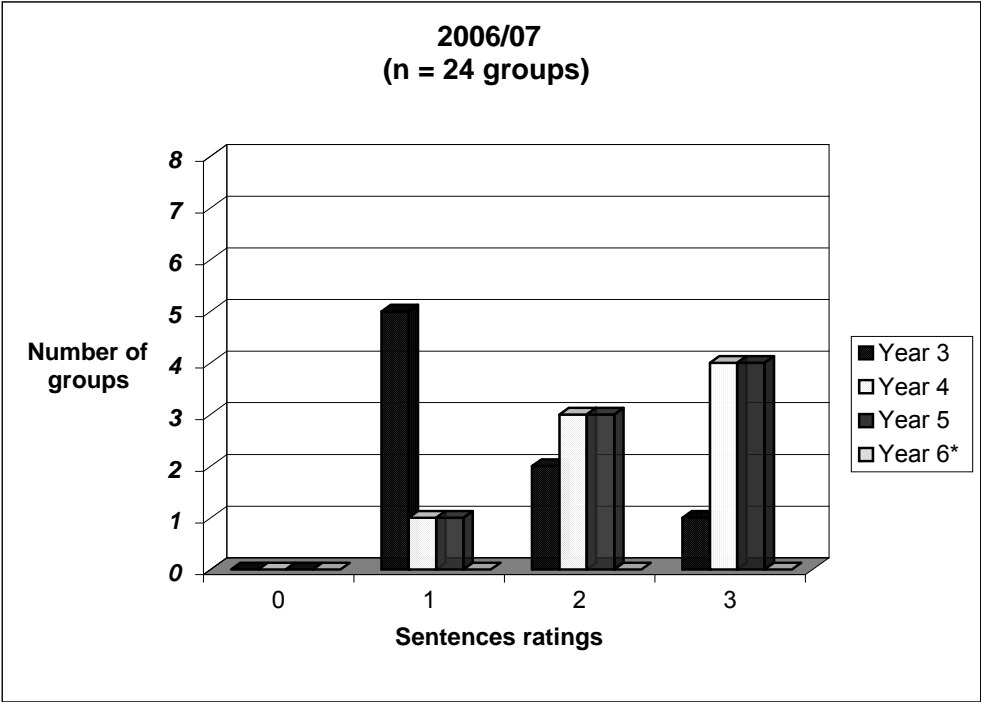
Figures 8.4-8.6 suggest improved vocabulary learning by Year 3 over successive cohorts, and consistent performance in the other Year groups, apart from the disappearance of the 'tail' noticed in 2006/07 (i.e. children who produced 20 different words or fewer).

Regarding the groups of words most likely to be known, there was little change over the three years. Greetings, colour adjectives, and days of the week were commonly known. Children knew groups of nouns in different content areas, e.g. animals, foods, clothes, parts of the body, school subjects, hobbies, weather terms. Very few adjectives other than colour terms were produced (though German Year 6 learners did produce 'nett', 'gut', 'gross'; Spanish learners produced 'grande', 'magnifico', 'estupendo'). A limited range of verbs was known, mostly embedded in fixed phrases (e.g. 'je m'appelle ...', 'j'habite à ...', 'j'ai ... ans'). A minority of groups were familiar with verbs used in classroom instructions (e.g. 'escuchar', 'leer', 'escribir'), and with verbs for preferences ('aimer', 'adorer', 'préférer'); children in the best groups in Years 5 and 6 were also able to use verbs such as 'regarder', 'manger', 'faire', 'jouer', 'être' in simple sentences. The Spanish learners produced a range of indefinite and definite determiners (un/una; el/la), as did the French learners; however the German learners produced only indefinites (ein/ eine), for unknown reasons. The best French speakers produced a range of pronouns (je, tu, il, elle, ce, moi, toi). A few prepositions and conjunctions were noticed.

### 8.2.3 Oral production of target language sentences

The third aspect of children's oracy which was assessed was their ability to produce target language sentences (both statements and questions). Ratings for this aspect are presented in Figures 8.7-8.9. The rating scale was defined as follows: 3, "Children produce several TL sentences without modelling/ scaffolding"; 2, "Children produce several TL sentences with modelling/ scaffolding"; 1, "Children produce 1-3 TL sentences (and several TL phrases)"; 0, "Children produce few or no TL sentences and phrases".

Figure 8.7 - Production of target language sentences, 2006/07 cohort



\*Year 6 did not undertake group assessments in 2007

Figure 8.8 - Production of target language sentences, 2007/08 cohort

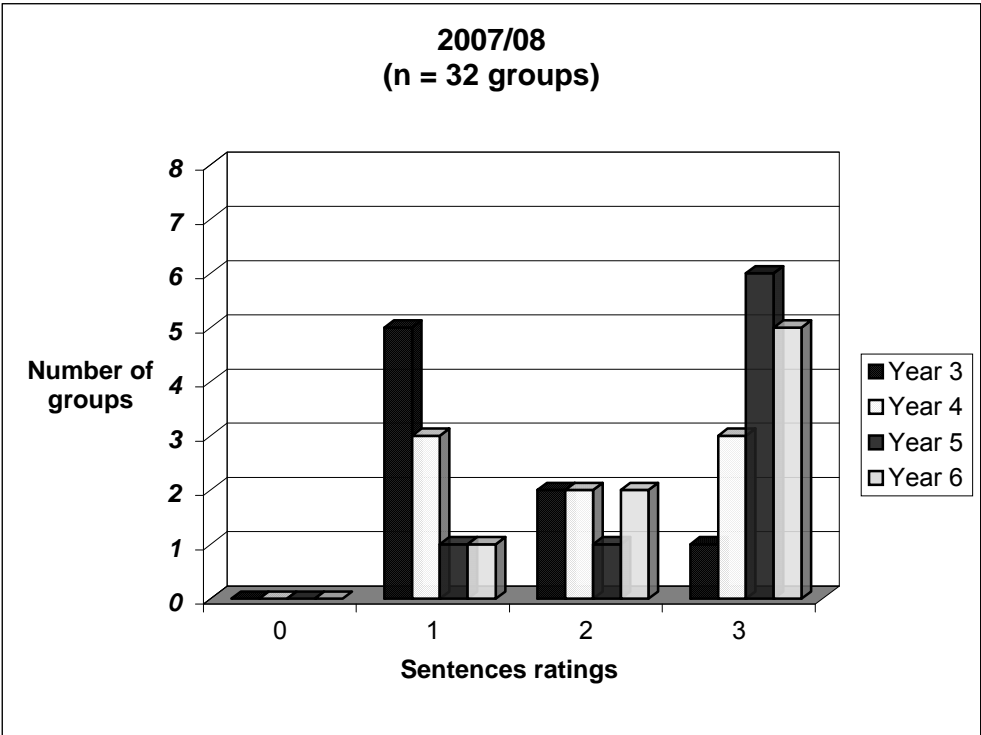
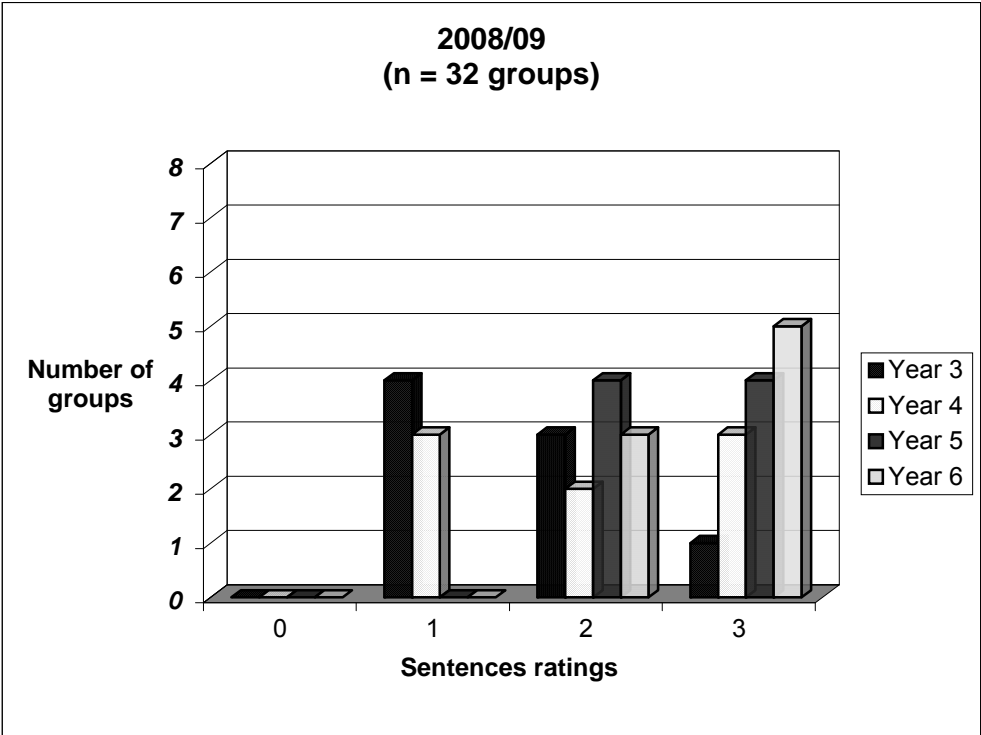


Figure 8.9 - Production of target language sentences, 2008/09 cohort



On this dimension, the Year 3 children typically produced only 1-3 complete sentences, and this picture did not change over successive cohorts. The performance of Year 4 children was slightly better but again remained stable over successive cohorts. The Year 5 and 6 groups in general could produce more sentences, though again there was little overall change between cohorts.

Most of the sentences known and produced were clearly formulaic utterances, useful in introductory conversational interaction: 'me llamo ...', 'tengo ... años'. Some groups could build a wider range of sentences; Table 8.2 shows the range of utterances produced by members of one high achieving Year 6 group during Task 1 (conversation with assessor).

**Table 8.2 - Range of French sentences in Year 6 oral production**

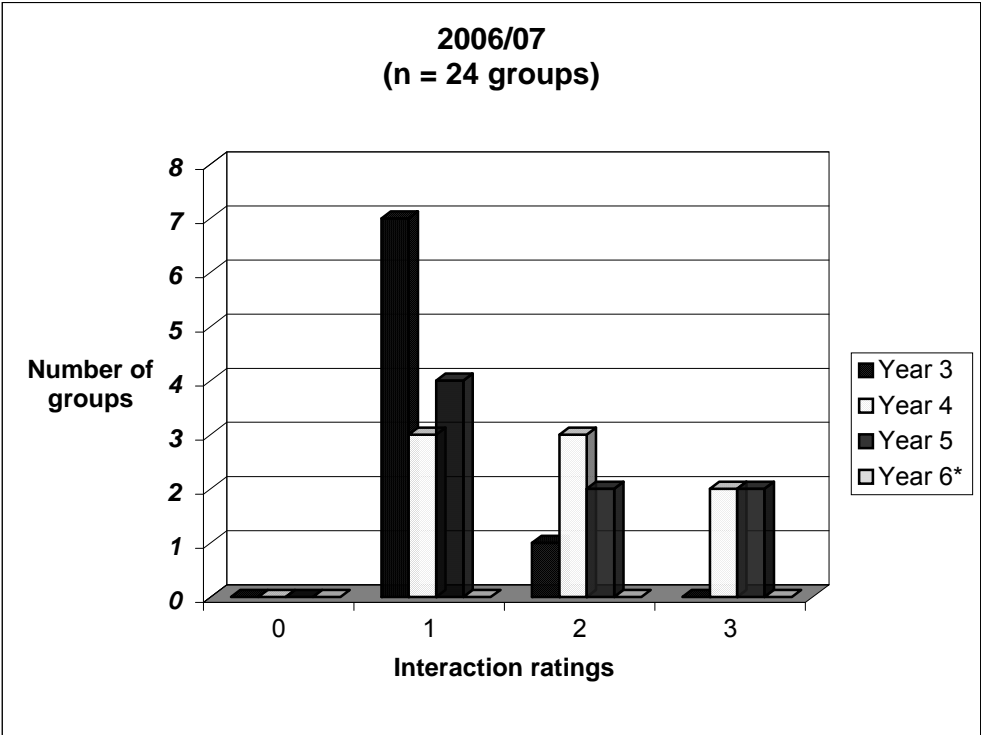
Je m'appelle ... As-tu des frères et des sœurs ? Oui, une sœur. Elle s'appelle.... Un frère. Il s'appelle.... Quatre frères, sept ans, treize ans, six ans. J'ai dix ans Oui, j'ai un poisson rouge Elle s'appelle Goldie Non, je n'ai pas d'animaux. Oui, j'ai un chat. Il s'appelle Timon et j'ai deux poissons rouges. J'ai netball. J'ai joué au football et au tennis. Je joue au netball et je fais de la natation. Je joue au cricket et je fais le jogging. Je fais du cyclisme et du jogging. Je joue du piano. Je joue au basket et je fais du cyclisme. Je regarde la télé par exemple les Simpsons. J'aime manger le chocolat. Moi, j'aime manger les saucissons. J'aime manger un paquet de chips/des bonbons, le biscuit avec chocolat, du pain. N'aimez pas les oignons. Je n'aime pas le <i>sweetcorn</i> . Je n'aime pas manger les choux/ le poisson/ le brocoli. Ma matière préférée est le sport aussi. Ma matière préférée est la technologie, la géo, le dessin.	<i>Year 6 School C, 2007/08</i>
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#### **8.2.4 Achievement in target language interaction**

In every year group, children had the opportunity to engage in role-play either with a doll character manipulated by the assessor (Year 3), or else with a partner, as well as engaging in conversational interaction about self and family with the assessor. Resulting evidence about their interactional performance is presented in Figures 8.10-8.12. The rating scale used for this dimension was defined as follows: 3, "Carry out a role play conversation with little scaffolding"; 2, "Carry out a role play conversation with scaffolding OR Ask and answer individual questions without scaffolding"; 1, "Ask and answer individual questions with scaffolding"; 0, "No meaningful interaction".

This domain requires the ability to take the conversational initiative, as well as responding to others, and shows quite variable performance. In assessing this domain, children were judged to need 'scaffolding' if a) they needed modeling of key phrases by the assessor, or b) they relied exclusively on words and phrases provided on role-play cards (e.g. 'nom'/'famille'/'age'). Results show that in Year 3, no group could manage a role-play conversation without scaffolding, though in 2007/08 and 2008/09, at least half the groups could do so provided some support was given. In each of Years 4, 5 and 6, a majority of groups could conduct a role-play conversation on each assessment occasion, though only a minority could do so independently of scaffolding. However in each of these Year groups, some children could not meaningfully engage in connected role-play, while two groups scored Level 0 in 2007/08. (These children could answer only 1-2 questions without scaffolding; however this 'tail' disappeared in 2008/09.)

Figure 8.10 - Target language interaction, 2006/07 cohort



\*Year 6 did not undertake group assessments in 2006/07

Figure 8.11 - Target language interaction, 2007/08 cohort

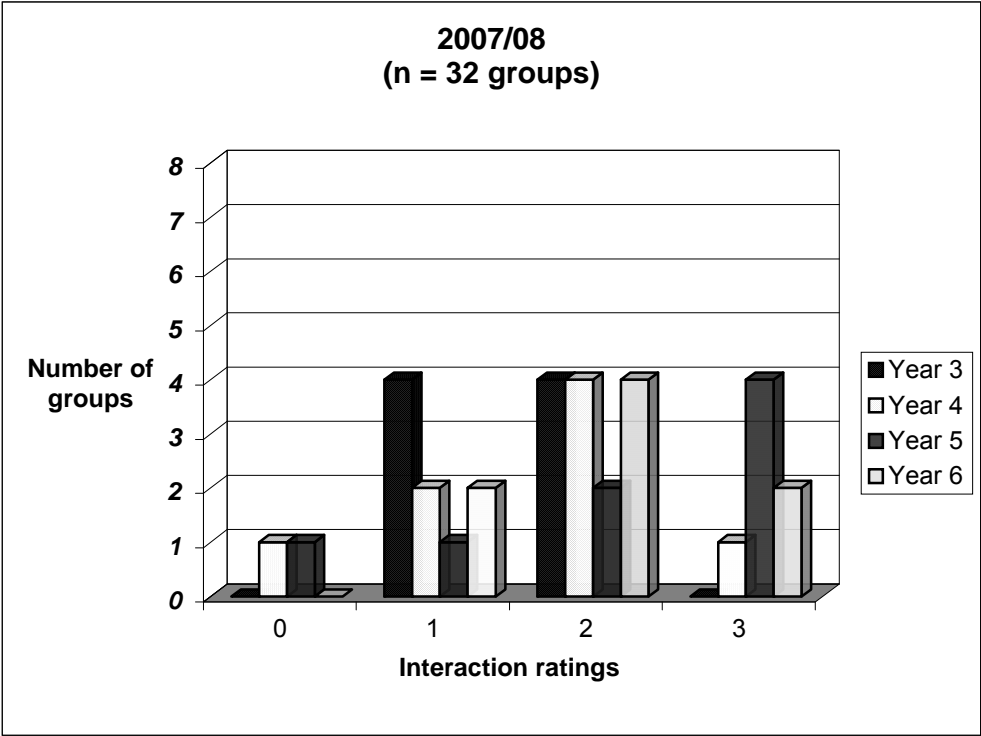




Figure 8.12 - Target language interaction, 2008/09 cohort

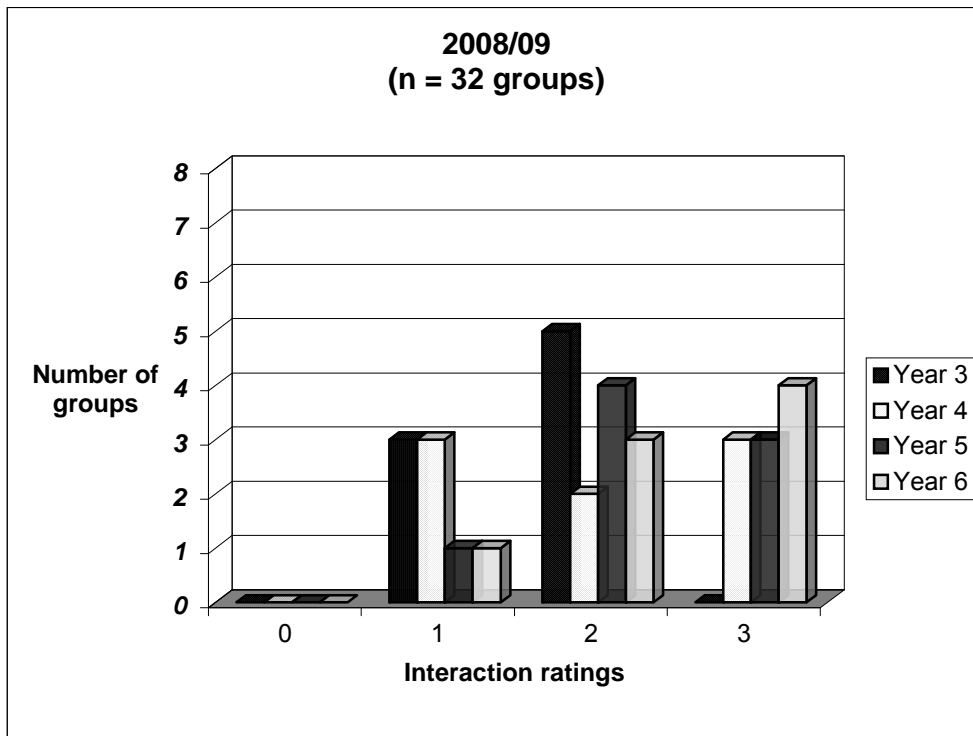


Table 8.3 provides an example of a strong Year 6 conversational performance, created from role play cards with limited rehearsal. This performance arguably reflects achievement at Breakthrough/ Level A1 on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe/Council for Cultural Cooperation, 2001), in line with the objectives of the *National Languages Strategy* (DfES, 2002).

Table 8.3 - Sample Year 6 impromptu role play performance

A : Bonjour. Comment tu t'appelles ?  
 B : Je m'appelle...  
 A : Quel âge as-tu ?  
 B : J'ai quinze ans. Et toi ?  
 A : J'ai quinze ans aussi. Comment est ta famille ?  
 B : J'ai un frère de sept ans, papa a quarante ans et maman trente-sept ans.  
 A : As-tu un animal ?  
 B : Oui, j'ai deux chats. Et toi ?  
 A : Oui, j'ai un lapin et un chien et trois poissons.  
 B : Qu'est-ce tu aimes comme sport ?  
 A : Je fais du skateboard et de la natation. Et toi ?  
 B : Moi, comme sport, je fais du skateboard et du cyclisme.  
 A : *Et à manger ? (phrase taken from role play card)*  
 B : Je mange pizza, paquet de frites.  
 A : Qu'est-ce que tu aimes faire à l'école ?  
 B : Moi, j'adore les maths et le dessin. Les maths, le technologie et le dessin.  
 Et toi ?  
 A : Moi la musique et le télé.  
 B : *Comme loisirs ? (phrase taken from role-play card)*  
 A : Moi, j'adore la musique pop et je regarde la télé.

Year 6 School C 2007/08

### 8.3 Oracy achievement in Years 3-6: Year-specific oracy tasks

In line with the expectations of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, a small number of distinctive activities were conducted with every year group, and these are reported on below.

**Year 3 ‘rhyme and song’:** From 2007/08, only Year 3 were asked to sing songs or recite rhymes; in every year of the survey, all Year 3 groups provided examples mostly with a lot of enthusiasm.

**Year 4 ‘using morphological cues’:** Part of the picture-based discussion task with Year 4 was used to explore children’s ability to interpret detailed morphological cues, e.g. distinguishing aurally between clues to grammatical number (‘un garçon’/ ‘des garçons’), gender (‘il porte’/ ‘elle porte’), or definiteness/ indefiniteness (‘un chico’/ ‘el chico’). This ability figures as a subskill in the *Key Stage 2 Framework*; however in practice the Year 4 children showed very limited ability to notice these cues, independently of other non-verbal or lexical clues to meaning. (There is other research suggesting that this ability takes rather more time to emerge reliably in learners’ oral performance: see e.g. Ayoun, 2007.)

**Year 5 ‘new school’ story:** A new listening comprehension task was introduced for Year 5 in 2007/08, in which children were required to demonstrate overall comprehension of a narrative about the building of a new school by sequencing related pictures, and answer comprehension questions. In 2007/08, of the eight Year 5 groups, three could follow the complete photo story, sequence the pictures appropriately, and retell parts of it. Five groups could partly follow the story, mainly using recognition of individual words as clues (a mix of known vocabulary, proper names and cognates). In 2008/09, results for this task were very similar (four groups could complete the whole task successfully, four did so in part). Table 8.4 shows the story, plus the justifications provided for their solution by a group of Spanish learners who sequenced the pictures correctly.

**Table 8.4 -Sample Year 5 listening comprehension performance**

	<b>Listening comprehension text</b>	<b>Children’s commentary/ justification for picture sequence</b>
[Picture of African architect in his Berlin office]	¡Este es Francis Keré! Es arquitecto. Trabaja en la Universidad Técnica de Berlín en Alemania.	“In this one it’s introducing Francis Kere, it looks like he is in a university, and you said Berlin, so he is in Berlin, and ‘Alemania’ is the name of the university”. “He’s an architect, he would probably make the place”.
[Picture of new school, just built]	Esta es la escuela primaria en Burkina Faso, en África. Francis es el arquitecto de la escuela.	“Then it talks about the school that he’s designed, look at this [other picture], that’s when it is finished, but there [picture 2] it isn’t finished”.
[Picture of architect meeting children at the school]	En la foto Francis está visitando a los niños de la escuela primaria. La escuela es moderna y muy confortable.	“And then he meets the children”. “It said he welcomed the children”.
[Exterior of the finished school, with vegetable plot]	¡Este es el huerto de nuestra escuela! Cultivamos cebollas. Hace mucho calor en África.	“And then it says something about plants, and it’s very hot, ‘mucho calor’.”
[Classroom interior]	Esta es nuestra clase. En nuestra escuela hay 300 niños. En esta foto, estamos escuchando al maestro y mi amigo escribe en la pizarra negra.	“And then it says about ‘clase’, in the classroom, and his friend, ‘amigo’.”  <i>(Year 5 School H 2008/09)</i>

These children’s comments show a) a general knowledge of story sequence (e.g. the first picture is likely to introduce the main character); b) ability to identify and use known Spanish vocabulary as cues (‘escuela’, ‘clase’, ‘niños’, ‘amigo’, ‘calor’, ‘huerto’); and ability to notice and process unfamiliar cognates in a stream of sound (‘arquitecto’, ‘universidad’). This Year 5 group provides a very positive example of what can be achieved where children are used to listening to the target language and confident about using what they know to make informed predictions.

**Year 6 ‘Oumarou’ story:** In this task, Year 6 groups also listened to a narrative and demonstrated comprehension by sequencing related pictures; in addition they were then asked to retell the story in the target language.

In 2008/09, three Year 6 groups could understand and sequence the photo story, demonstrated a good understanding of the story at text level and gave accurate word and sentence level examples to illustrate why they had chosen particular pictures for each section of the text. Two groups demonstrated a gist level understanding of the story, and three groups could not sequence the illustrations. In 2007/08, achievement on this task had been similar.

When invited to re-tell the same story in target language, half of the Year 6 groups in both years could respond to most pictures with sentences and phrases, and most of the remaining groups could produce some sentences and phrases, with support. Three groups could produce isolated words and phrases only. The best 2007/08 performances showed children's ability to construct sentences that they had not previously heard, for example 'J'habite en Afrique. J'habite un village. J'ai un jardin.' German data included 'Das ist Oumarou wo wohnst in Afrika', suggesting an attempt to construct a subordinate clause. Other sentences in German show the intention to create affirmative and negative statements, for example, 'Es gibt eine Mutter. Es ist kein Vater.' Table 8.5 shows a sample 2009 collective performance from a high achieving group.

**Table 8.5 - Sample Year 6 story re-telling performance**

<p>Je m'appelle Oumarou.          J'habite au Burkina Faso en Afrique.          Trois sœurs. Moi, j'ai trois sœurs.          Ma mère et deux petits frères.          Le jardin          Elle arroser légumes.          Le mercredi au marché salades, les choux, les pommes.</p>	<p><i>(Year 6 School A 2008/09)</i></p>
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## **8.4 Literacy achievement in Years 3-6**

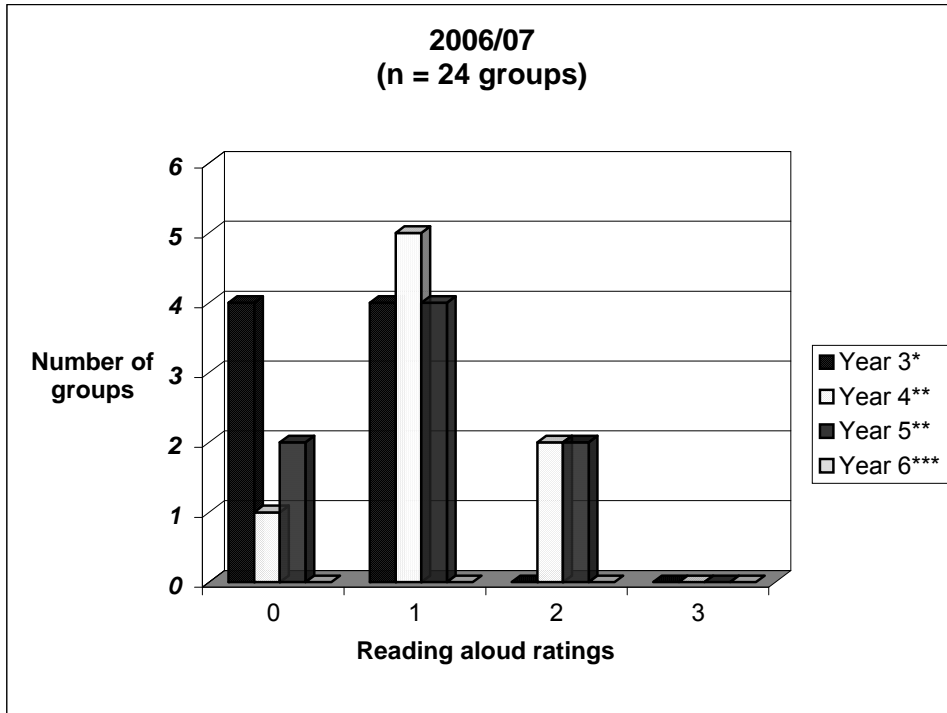
This section describes the literacy achievement documented for Years 3-6 in French, Spanish and German. In line with the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, the literacy tasks undertaken by the different year groups were more sharply differentiated than the oracy tasks. Where reading was concerned, Year 3 read at word level while Years 4 and 5 read simple texts in different genres and answered comprehension questions on these. Year 6 read a longer and more complex text and answered comprehension questions, as well as sorting texts by genre and using knowledge about language cues in support. Concerning writing, Year 3 were asked to complete partly written words, Year 4 were asked to label pictures with single words, and Years 4 and 5 completed gapfill exercises on simple narrative texts. Year 5 also undertook a sentence building task (sorting out sets of jumbled words provided on cards to form target language sentences). Year 6 constructed a written response to a pen pal message, using a writing frame. While progressively more challenging tasks were undertaken with each year group, it seemed most useful to treat literacy achievement under a set of common themes: reading aloud, reading comprehension, and target language writing.

### **8.4.1 Reading: overview of achievement Years 3-6**

#### ***Reading aloud***

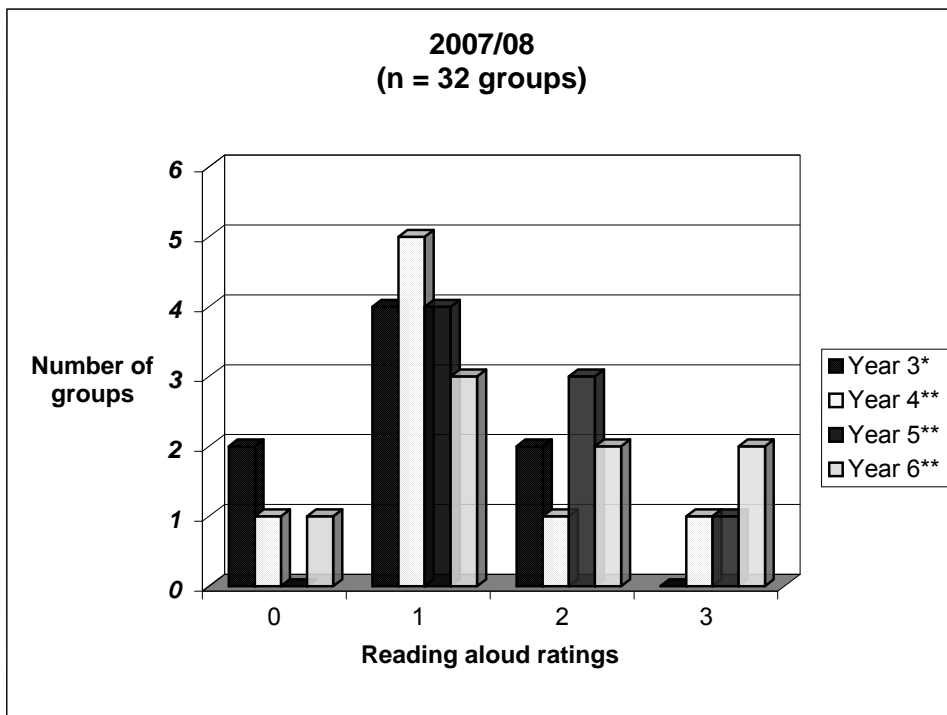
Reading aloud is an important skill in early foreign language literacy (as in the first language), as it gives children practice in developing an understanding of phoneme-grapheme correspondences (PGCs) in the new language, and also provides evidence of their knowledge of this code. Accordingly all children were asked to read target language material aloud, both as groups and individually, though the material they read differed by year group. Figures 8.13-8.15 give an overview of assessors' ratings of children's control of target language PGCs for each year group. The four point rating scale used was defined as follows: 3, "Children show good independent knowledge of TL phoneme-grapheme correspondences (PGCs)"; 2, "Children show good knowledge of TL PGCs, with assessor modelling"; 1, "Children show some knowledge of TL PGCs"; 0, "Children use mostly English PGCs".

**Figure 8.13 - Reading aloud, 2006/07 cohort**



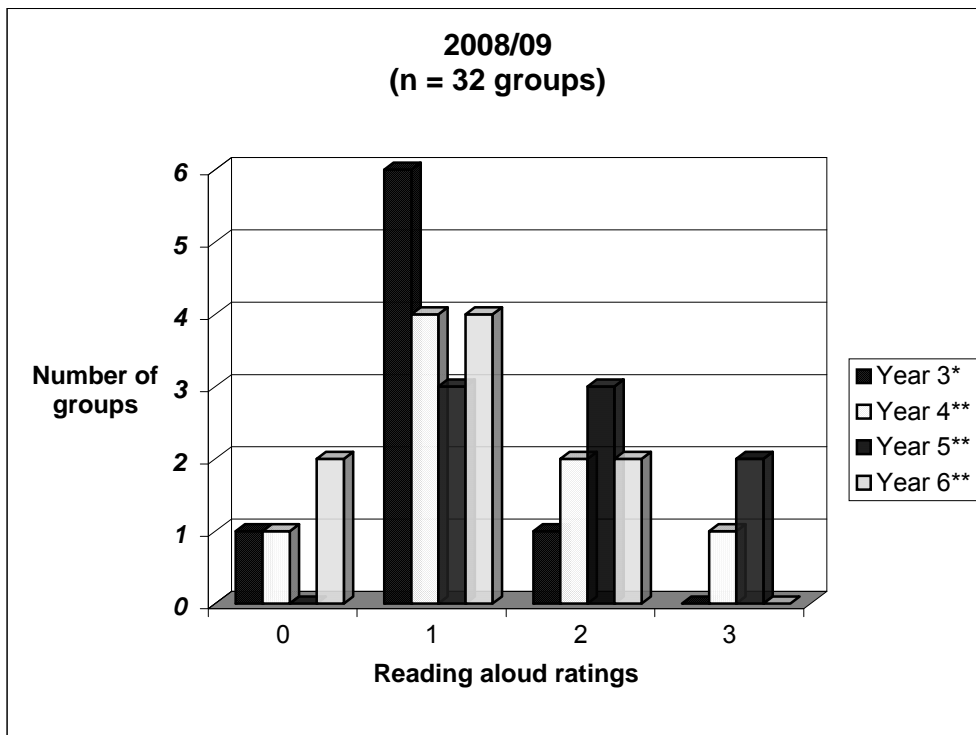
\* reading at word / phrase level  
 \*\* reading at text level  
 \*\*\* Year 6 did not undertake group assessments in 2006/07

**Figure 8.14 - Reading aloud, 2007/08 cohort**



\* reading at word / phrase level  
 \*\* reading at text level

Figure 8.15 - Reading aloud, 2008/09 cohort



\* reading at word / phrase level  
 \*\* reading at text level

In 2006/07, no group demonstrated a good independent knowledge of PGCs, while in 2007/08 and 2008/09, some groups did so. Overall the tables show that most children have begun the acquisition of target language PGCs, but have not yet confidently mastered these, with a broadly similar picture of overall achievement in each year of the study. There is however a positive trend across Year groups within each year of the study, with limited knowledge in Years 3 and 4 in each cohort, but improved knowledge in Year 5 and 6. (It should be noted in addition that the texts read by Years 5 and 6 also contained a higher proportion of unfamiliar words, so in order to read successfully they could not rely primarily on sight recognition of familiar words.)

There is a small ‘tail’ of groups where children used mostly English PGCs when reading aloud; this tail has diminished over time, but is still evident. One possible reason is the very limited attention given to literacy in some schools (discussed elsewhere in this report). However the results suggest overall that the acquisition of target language PGCs is a slow business under present conditions, and is by no means complete by the end of primary languages learning. (Recent research with Year 7 learners indicates continuing problems in this domain: Woore, 2009.)

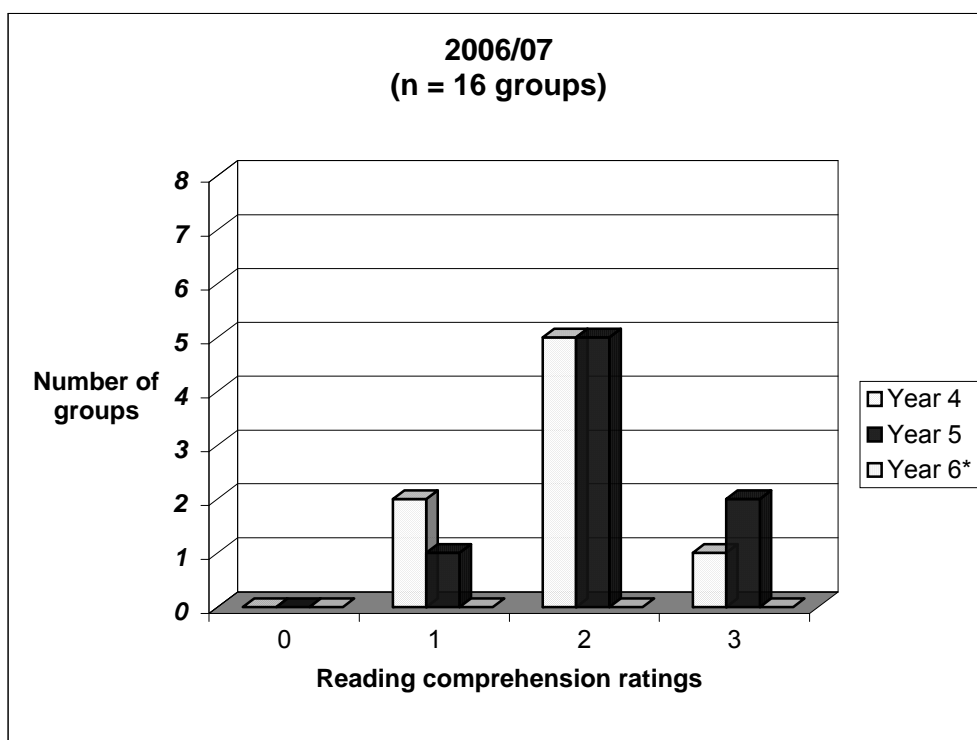
There were slight indications that French PGCs may be harder to master than those of Spanish. (While French PGCs are more regular than English, they are much less transparent to English readers than those of Spanish.) In 2008, for example, three of the four groups rated ‘0’ on the reading aloud scale were learning French (the fourth was learning German), and this was also the case in 2009. In two out of the eight schools in 2008, no year group was rated higher than ‘1’ on the reading aloud scale; again, these two schools were teaching French. Common interference from English PGCs noted with French reading included a tendency to pronounce silent consonants at the ends of words (and related problems with nasal vowels), initial ‘ch’ as in ‘chaise’ pronounced /tʃ/ as in English, ‘ll’ as in ‘fille’ pronounced /l/, ‘de’ pronounced /di:/. All the children learning Spanish did better, usually

sight reading familiar words correctly including some with distinctive Spanish PGCs, e.g. 'cinco', 'lápiz', 'un perro', 'niña'. Graphemes presenting some difficulties in German included devoiced final consonants as in 'Hund' /hunt/, 'ch' as in 'Mädchen', 'j' as in 'Junge', all of which were sometimes pronounced as in English. Postvocalic 'r' as in 'der' or 'Uhr' was often omitted in reading aloud, again in line with Southern British English PGCs.

### **Reading comprehension**

Regarding reading comprehension, Year 3 were required to match a set of 15 word cards with pictures; this group activity was not formally rated, but achievement broadly reflected word knowledge patterns already documented in the oracy analysis. Years 4, 5 and 6 answered comprehension questions orally in English, on short texts. Figures 8.16-8.18 provide an overview of the outcomes for Years 4, 5 and 6. The four point rating scale used to assess reading comprehension was defined as follows: 3, "Children can answer a range of comprehension questions on a simple TL written text"; 2, "Children can answer some comprehension questions on a simple TL written text, with interlocutor scaffolding"; 1, "Children pick out words and phrases they know from a TL written text, with interlocutor support"; 0, "Children show little or no comprehension of TL written text".

**Figure 8.16 - Reading comprehension, 2006/07 cohort**



\* Year 6 did not undertake group assessments in 2006/07

Figure 8.17 - Reading comprehension, 2007/08 cohort

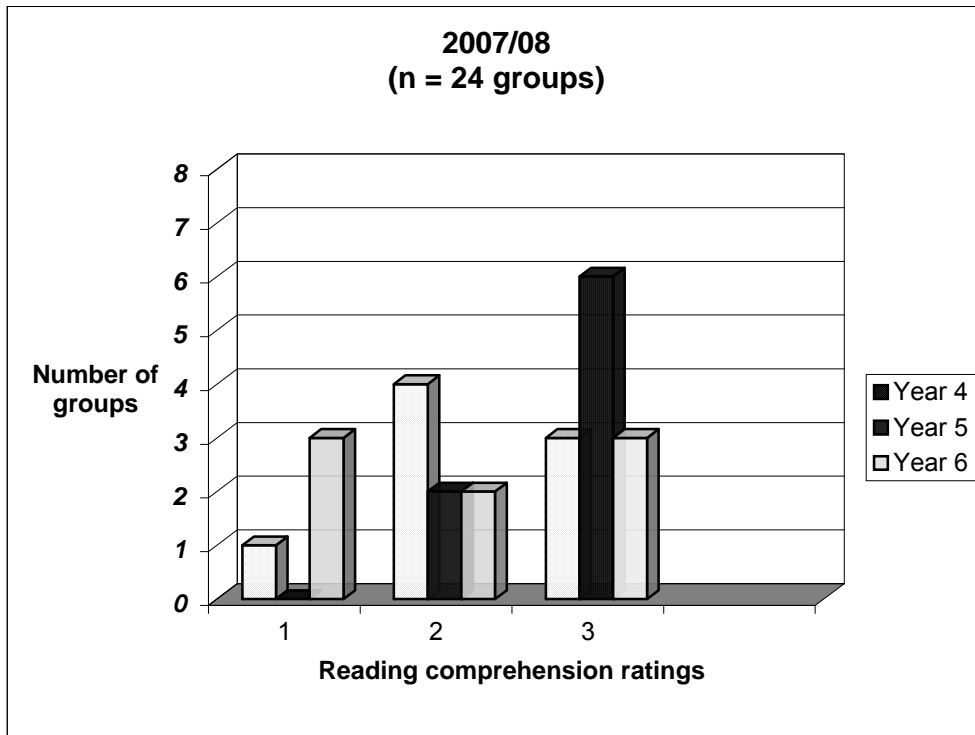
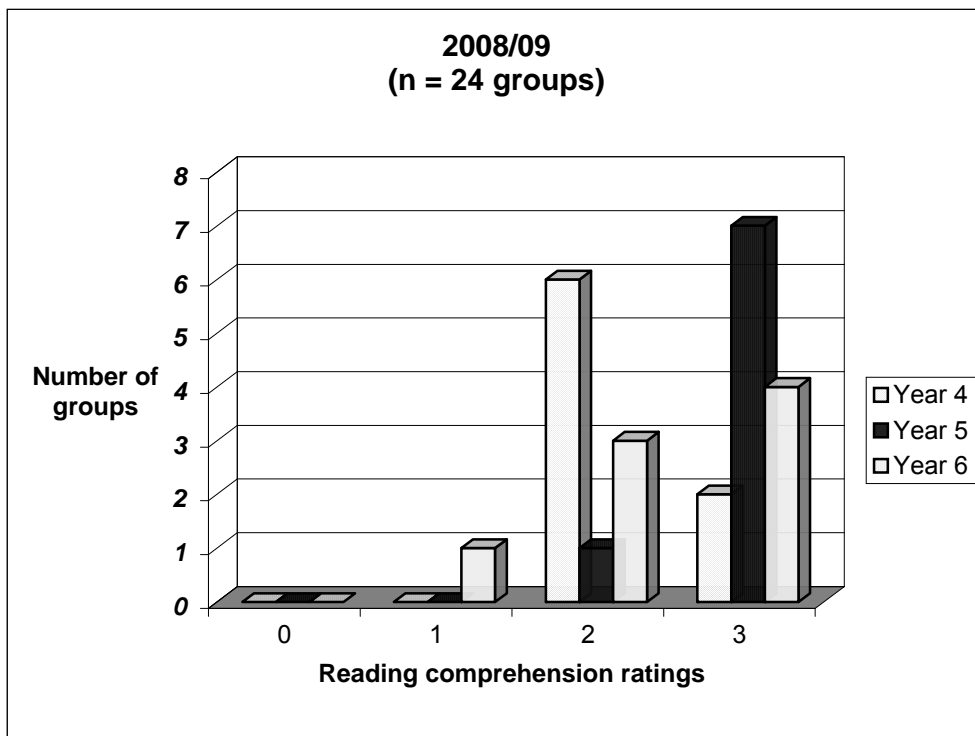


Figure 8.18 - Reading comprehension, 2008/09 cohort



The overall level of performance in reading comprehension is good, with half or more of the groups being rated at level '3' in 2007/08 and 2008/09. The more recent performances of Years 4 and 5 show an improvement over 2006/07, when a majority of groups (10/16) were rated '2', reading the same texts. In interpreting the performance of Year 6, it should be



remembered that the reading comprehension text for this Year was deliberately designed to include language likely to be unfamiliar to the children.

Reading in any language requires a combination of top down inferencing and predicting strategies, and bottom up decoding strategies. The Year 4 children answered comprehension questions largely by scanning the text looking for familiar words, and made predictions based on partial understanding. The Year 5 children added to these strategies, spotting and sounding out possible cognates (e.g. in French, 'boule' = 'ball' 'construit' = 'constructs', 'récréation' = 'recreation').

The highest achieving Year 6 groups could answer a wide range of comprehension questions on their longer and more complex text. They used their knowledge of language features developed through general literacy in English to recognise the text type, i.e. an introductory pen pal letter, and reach a text level understanding of the context. They then drew on their knowledge of key words, cognates and sentence structures to identify more detailed meaning. Children picked out numerical facts about the school being described, such as its 400 children and the times of the school day. They worked out the meaning of more complex cognates and near cognates such as 'merveilleux', 'haut', 'sympa', 'professeur', 'village', and subjects of the school curriculum like 'maths', 'sciences'. They also translated some relevant sentences.

As seen in Figures 8.17 and 8.18, a few Year 6 groups were not able to answer questions from the text even with scaffolding from the interlocutor, e.g. directing their attention to relevant paragraphs. However, all children could identify words and phrases from the letter with some support. For example, the 2007/08 German group confidently identified familiar questions in the letter such as 'Wie ist deine Schule' and 'Wie ist das Wetter?'

#### **8.4.3 Reading in Year 6: text identification task**

Year 6 children undertook a distinctive activity which explored their reading strategies more fully, and in particular attempted to capture the extent to which skills developed through literacy in English are transferable to the learning of subsequent languages. The activity required the children to engage with three different types of target language text, to match them with pictures, and to identify the genres. The texts share the theme of 'Wolves'; they were a short information text, a poem, and the bedroom scene from 'Little Red Riding Hood'.

All the Year 6 groups could identify the three text types. A majority of groups were also able to give well reasoned explanations for their choice of genre (five groups in 2007/08, four groups in 2008/09). The children discussed the texts in groups of three and referred to language features such as the layout and style of the writing. They looked for punctuation and syntactical clues like speech marks and paragraph structure. The French groups picked out cognates and near cognates, such as 'dangereux', 'prédateur', 'grand public', 'enfant'; rhyming patterns, such as 'tout', 'doux', 'pas du tout', 'loup'; sentence structures, such as 'C'est pour mieux écouter/voir'; and noun phrases, such as 'grandmère', 'grandes oreilles', 'grands yeux', to help them identify the text types and engage with the content of the extracts. They recognised the adjective 'rouge' and building on the adjectival cue could then identify the word that must mean 'riding hood', i.e. 'chaperon'. The 2007/08 German group, and some of the Spanish groups, were also able to pick out possible cognates (" 'caperucita' must mean 'cape!'"), identified rhyming words in the poem (e.g. 'dormiendo'/ 'haciendo') and searched for key words in the story such as 'Augen', 'Ohren', 'Grossmutter'; 'abuela', 'ojos tan grandes'. In the information text they used their knowledge of the kinds of language that would feature in this genre, seeking out opinions, facts and figures and observing the use of authentic photographic material to illustrate the information described. A minority of the Year 6 groups could also offer basic reasons for their decisions but had a more limited grasp of language features.

#### 8.4.4 Writing: overview of achievement in Years 3-6

The writing tasks for each year group were the only ones to be attempted individually by all participating children. Tables 8.6-8.8 provide a summary overview of writing achievement in each year of the study. They show the mean scores achieved by the participating children within each of the eight schools A-H, on the writing task(s) for each Year group, converted to percentages. (See Annex B for further details of the scoring system.)

**Table 8.6 - Target language writing, 2006/07 cohort**

Year Group	Task	School								All
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
3	Word completion	85.0%	36.7%	72.2%	71.1%	57.8%	51.1%	80.0%	54.4%	62.9%
4a	Labelling (word level)	98.3%	47.2%	86.7%	51.1%	72.8%	76.1%	79.4%	86.7%	73.7%
4b	Gapfill (text)	61.3%	15.0%	42.5%	08.3%	35.8%	48.3%	06.7%	22.5%	29.0%
5	Gapfill (text)	60.0%	-*	36.0%	-*	55.0%	41.7%	38.3%	36.3%	44.6%
6**	Completion of writing frame	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

\*Task not attempted

\*\* Year 6 did not undertake writing assessments in 2006/07

**Table 8.7 - Target language writing, 2007/08 cohort**

Year Group	Task	School								All
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
3	Word completion	68.3%	54.4%	84.4%	72.2%	53.3%	55.6%	96.7%	64.4%	68.8%
4a	Labelling (word level)	78.3%	62.2%	88.3%	81.7%	57.8%	67.8%	76.1%	87.2%	74.6%
4b	Gapfill (text)	31.3%	27.5%	46.7%	10.0%	30.0%	38.3%	34.2%	48.3%	33.1%
5	Gapfill (text)	61.3%	17.5%	55.8%	18.3%	29.2%	28.3%	20.0%	36.7%	32.3%
6	Completion of writing frame	75.8%	42.8%	78.9%	73.9%	30.0%	39.4%	47.3%	51.7%	54.4%

**Table 8.8 - Target language writing, 2008/09 cohort**

Year Group	Task	School								All
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
3	Word completion	82.2%	86.7%	75.6%	86.7%	67.8%	54.4%	72.2%	76.7%	75.3%
4a	Labelling (word level)	58.3%	64.7%	82.8%	76.1%	74.4%	90.6%	90.0%	81.1%	77.4%
4b	Gapfill (text)	36.7%	16.0%	39.2%	31.7%	37.5%	45.0%	40.1%	35.0%	35.6%
5	Gapfill (text)	45.0%	13.3%	31.7%	22.5%	44.2%	33.3%	45.0%	59.2%	36.7%
6	Completion of writing frame	73.9%	63.9%	73.3%	63.9%	41.1%	54.2%	77.8%	35.7%	60.9%

The range of achievement in writing shown is fairly wide, though there is a tendency towards improvement over the three years of the study. In Year 3, performance in word completion clearly improved; the mean score for the whole cohort rose from 62.9% in 2007/08 to 75.3% in 2008/09. In Year 4, scores for word level writing were more consistent, with the cohort mean score rising from 73.7% in 2006/07 to 77.4% in 2008/09.

Children's performance on the text based gapfill tasks completed by Years 4 and 5 remained comparatively weak. In Year 4, cohort mean scores improved from 29.0% in 2006/07 to 35.6% in 2008/09. In Year 5, the best cohort mean score was recorded in 2006/07 (44.6%), but the sample was somewhat skewed as two groups omitted this particular task. The apparently weaker 2007/08 performance (33.1%) included all eight Year 5 groups, and improved slightly in 2009 (to 35.6%). The main weakness affecting scores in both years was children's inability to supply verbs, e.g. in Year 4 (2007/08), half the groups could not provide any verbs at all. In other groups, some verbs were known but children could not spell them correctly. In Year 5 (2007/08) similarly, 5 groups produced no verbs. However, children in other groups could supply relevant parts of 'jouer', 'être' and 'avoir' in French; the only verb part frequently supplied in Spanish was 'es', though there were isolated occurrences of 'practicar' and 'jugar'. (It is interesting to compare children's ongoing difficulties with verbs in writing with their oral performance, where rather more verbs were produced.)

#### 8.4.5 Writing in Year 6: use of writing frame

The Year 6 scores presented in Tables 8.7-8.8 seem to show positive evidence of development, compared with the writing achievement of Years 4 and 5 (as well as some improvement from 2008 to 2009). More detail is therefore provided here on the Year 6 children's writing task.

This activity required children to reply to a lengthy letter (183 words) containing familiar and unfamiliar material about a partner school, and illustrated with authentic photos. The children were given a writing frame to support their reply. The task was explained briefly in English, but all prompts within the writing frame were in the language of study. There were twelve stages to the reply including opening and closing greetings, and children's performance at each stage is summarised in Table 8.9.

**Table 8.9 - Year 6 writing performance (with French writing frame)**

Task instructions	Writing frame	Commentary on performance
Choisis une salutation	Salut/ Bonjour/ Cher Laurent	The majority of children could choose an appropriate opening greeting and reproduce this accurately in writing. Some children did not attempt to write their responses but merely circled the choice of language from the model e.g. selecting and circling 'Salut'.
Phrase d'introduction	Comment ça va ? Merci de ta lettre.	Children could choose an appropriate opening sentence and reproduce this in writing without error.
Nom de ta classe, nom de ton école	Ma classe s'appelle ..... Mon école ..... .....	All children could complete a simple sentence by supplying the name or number of their class. However, few children supplied the verb to complete the simple sentence, <i>My school is called</i> .....despite its appearance earlier in the writing frame.
Description de mon école	Il y a ..... C'est .....	Most children could supply an adjective following <i>It is</i> to describe their school. Although this did not require inflection, many children wrote adjectives

		with feminine endings, in particular 'grande/petite'. Most children could give a number in figures in response to a question about the number of children in the school, although the numbers supplied were not always credible. Very few children could complete a sentence relating to the location of the school, despite the presence of appropriate target language prompts, e.g. German 'Wo?'.
Qu'est-ce tu fais à l'école ?	Je ..... les maths, ..... .	Most children could produce the names of certain subjects in the curriculum but very few were able to produce a verb to introduce the sentence. In some cases children did produce accurate forms of the verb 'faire' and spelled the names of school subjects very accurately. (In these cases, it seems that 'school' had been a topic in the Scheme of Work used with the children.) Other children used phonetic or mixed spellings when attempting to list school subjects, e.g. 'le Histrie'.
Attitudes envers le français	Je déteste/ aime un peu/ beaucoup ..... .	All children could say that they enjoyed or disliked languages learning and used the first person present tense of a range of verbs with varying degrees of accuracy. In French most children observed the need for elision of 'je' and 'aime'. Some used an apostrophe, others wrote a composite word 'Jaime'. Where children attempted to express negative attitudes, most used the verb 'détester' and therefore avoided the need for the negative particle. However, one child used a combination of the negation 'non' and 'pas' – 'je Non jud à pas le français'.
Comment est ton professeur ?	Elle/Il ..... sympa/ intelligent(e)/ féroce/ intéressant(e) .	When asked to write a sentence describing their teacher, children could reproduce the noun for <i>teacher</i> and choose appropriate adjectives. In most cases however they did not provide the present tense of the verb 'to be' to complete the sentence. There was also little evidence of children attempting to produce the gender concord appropriate to their particular teacher.
Description de ma ville.  Est-ce qu'il fait beau dans ta ville ?	Ma ville est grande/ petite/ industrielle/ agricole/ commerciale/ au bord de la mer.  Il fait beau, chaud, froid/il pleut/il fait du vent .	Most children could produce an accurate sentence describing their town, selecting and reproducing adjectives from the model. In most cases children linked their ideas by supplying the connective <i>and</i> . They could also choose an expression describing the weather in their town and represent this accurately in writing
Pose une question à Laurent !	??? ..... ..... .	Children either re-used questions from earlier stages in the writing frame or made up their own question. Where children chose to produce independent questions, the spelling was usually phonetically acceptable and would have been recognised by a sympathetic native reader.
Finis la lettre	Mes amitiés/ très	Most of the children concluded their letters

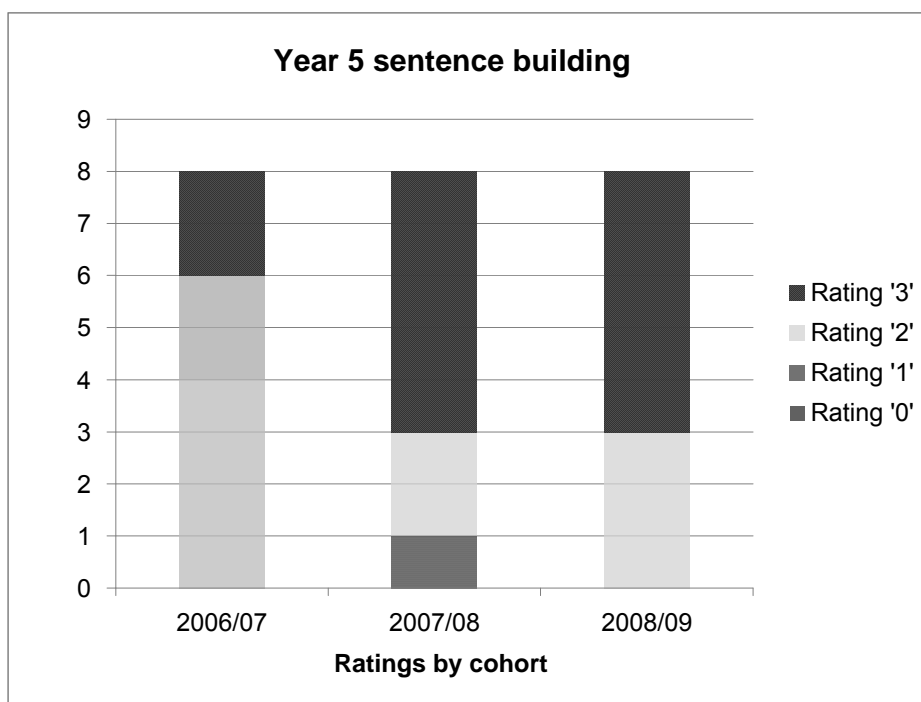
gentiment	amicalement/ répons bientôt	appropriately, choosing and circling an expression from the range provided in the model. Few children chose to reproduce one of these expressions in writing.
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Overall this qualitative analysis suggests that Year 6 children were keen to write, and could select and reproduce appropriate material at word level, and at sentence level where material is familiar. However they had difficulties with inflecting and using familiar verbs in writing, and building their own sentences independently (see Macaro, 2007 for similar comments on Year 7 writing).

#### 8.4.6 Sentence building in Year 5

The last part of the literacy assessments to be reported here is the card based sentence building task undertaken with Year 5 only. Children were presented with a number of jumbled sentences on cards and asked to reassemble them in the right order; this task related directly to children’s knowledge of the underlying target grammar system, as manipulation of pronouns, negative particles and other function words was required as well as recognition of content word classes (verbs and nouns). Group performances were rated on a 4 point scale, defined as follows: 3, “Group creates a range of correct TL sentences”; 2, “Group creates 3-4 sentences”; 1, “Group creates 1-2 sentences”; 0, “Group cannot create any sentences”. Results for Year 5 performance on this task in all three years are presented in Figure 8.19.

**Figure 8.19 - Sentence building task (Year 5)**



The figure shows some improvement between cohorts, suggesting that Year 5 children are becoming somewhat more aware of target language sentence patterns (even if they cannot yet create these reliably in writing without lexical support, as suggested in section 8.4.4 above).

## 8.5 Asset Languages assessments

Initial plans for the documentation of children's language attainment involved the use of Asset Languages Breakthrough tests with Year 6 children, and all eight enhanced case study schools registered as Centres for the tests. For the Speaking tests, to maximise consistency of test administration, it was agreed that external assessors would be provided by the research team. Other tests would be administered by the schools themselves in line with Asset Languages procedures. However it became clear that as they developed a fuller understanding of what was involved, schools had increasing reservations about entering complete cohorts for the external tests. Their initial concerns centred round possible lack of 'fit' between test content and children's varying experience of languages in terms of topic areas, and around the level of challenge presented by the tests for Year 6 cohorts who had in many cases not yet had a consistent languages experience throughout Key Stage 2. After discussion, the schools committed themselves to undertaking the following range of tests in 2006/07:

Listening:	6 schools
Speaking:	7 schools
Reading:	2 schools
Writing:	1 school.

The Speaking test (a short oral interview) was administered to individual children in May and June 2007 by external assessors, and the tests of Listening, Reading and Writing were administered by the schools in June and July 2007. All data was forwarded to Asset Languages in the normal way, for moderation and assignment/ confirmation of grades. Results were returned by Asset Languages to the schools in summer 2007.

### 8.5.1 Results of Breakthrough Tests (2006/07)

The results for the various Breakthrough tests for 2006/07, as reported formally by Asset Languages to the schools, are presented in Tables 8.10-8.13.

Table 8.10 shows the numbers of children taking the Breakthrough Speaking test in French, German or Spanish in 2006/07, together with grades awarded. The table shows that of 171 children who attempted the individual Speaking Breakthrough test, 15 (8.8%) were ungraded, while the remainder received a grade. The modal grade was Grade 1, achieved by just over half the children (51.5%), and a quite small proportion (7.6%) achieved the maximum Grade 3, i.e. produced a secure performance at Breakthrough level including both asking and answering questions, and giving a short target language presentation (Jones, 2007).

**Table 8.10 - Asset Languages June 2007 Breakthrough Speaking results**

School	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
A	French	0	0	4	4	8
B	French	0	32	0	0	32
C	French	4	15	27	0	46
D	French	0	1	4	3	8
E	Spanish	1	8	7	2	18
F	German	10	17	4	0	29
G	French	0	15	11	4	30
TOTAL		15	88	57	13	171
%		8.8%	51.5%	33.3%	7.6%	100%

There is some variation across individual schools in terms of patterns of achieved Breakthrough Speaking grades. This may have been influenced by the selection principles used by schools, where they did not enter intact classes. However there is also some evidence that where achievement was low, teaching provision had been limited or disrupted. At School B for example, according to reports in teacher interviews, the teaching of Year 6 French had been suspended during national curriculum assessments, and the Year 6 children had consequently had little French practice at the time of testing. Even this limited evidence suggests that continuity of provision is essential for satisfactory achievement at Breakthrough level in the Speaking skill.

Table 8.11 presents the 2006/07 results from Breakthrough Listening for the 157 children from 6 schools who took this test.

**Table 8.11 - Asset Languages June 2007 Breakthrough Listening results**

School Number	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
A	French	0	0	0	8	8
C	French	0	6	22	23	51
D	French	1	4	7	14	26
E	Spanish	0	0	6	17	23
F	German	0	3	12	14	29
H	Spanish	0	5	7	8	20
TOTAL		1	18	54	84	157
%		0.6%	11.5%	34.4%	53.5%	100%

The listening test involves matching aural information in the target language (sentences and short exchanges) with English sentences, and answering true/false questions. Here the results are considerably better than for Speaking, with a majority of the children (53.5%) achieving the maximum Grade 3. Clearly in this skill, the Breakthrough level as measured by Asset tests is more easily achievable by current Year 6 cohorts than it is in Speaking.

Table 8.12 shows the results achieved in two schools for Breakthrough Reading. The reading test involves matching words and sentences with pictures, and answering simple comprehension questions in English. School A entered their complete (though small) Year 6 cohort, and all achieved the highest Grade 3. School D entered a complete class for this skill (as they did for Listening), and achieved very similar results in the two skills. Given the small

amount of data no general conclusions can be drawn, but these performances suggest that Breakthrough Reading as measured by the Asset test is achievable for Year 6 children.

**Table 8.12 - Asset Languages June 2007 Breakthrough Reading results**

School Number	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
A	French	0	0	0	8	8
D	French	0	8	3	15	26
TOTAL		0	8	3	23	34
%		0.0%	23.5%	8.8%	67.6%	100%

As can be seen from Table 8.13, just one school (School D) undertook the Breakthrough Writing test in 2006/07, which involves both copywriting and writing simple sentences with varying prompts. Again the school entered a complete class, all of whom achieved a grade, with Grade 2 the modal grade. This school's achievement is encouraging, but in the absence of other entries no firm conclusions can be drawn about the wider attainability of Breakthrough Writing.

**Table 8.13 - Asset Languages June 2007 Breakthrough Writing results**

Code Number	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
D	French	0	9	15	2	26
TOTAL		0	9	15	2	26
%		0.0%	34.6%	57.7%	7.7%	100%

### **8.5.2 Results of Asset Breakthrough Tests (2007/08 and 2008/09)**

In 2007/08 and 2008/09, despite the relatively positive results achieved in the 2006/07 Asset Languages tests, fewer of the enhanced case study schools wanted to enter children for these tests. The concerns expressed included problems in matching Asset Languages content with schools' schemes of work, and the administrative procedures attaching to external assessment. In particular, an individual speaking test with an external assessor was seen as stressful for children taking part. (Asset Languages offer an option for teachers themselves to run the Speaking tests, but this was not an appropriate solution from a research perspective.) Instead, as explained above, the research team devised their own set of assessment tasks for Year 6 oracy and literacy and these were used successfully in 2007/08 and 2008/09.

In 2007/08, four schools entered varying numbers of children for some Asset Languages tests. The 2007/08 entries and results are presented in Tables 8.14-8.17, confirming the trends seen in 2006/07. Most children again did well or very well in the Listening test, with the Speaking test presenting a bigger challenge. The single school entering children for the Breakthrough Reading and Writing tests in 2007/08 achieved very creditable results for the second time.



**Table 8.14 - Asset Languages June 2008 Breakthrough Speaking results**

School	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
B	French	5	27	7	0	39
F	German	0	18	9	0	27
H	Spanish	0	11	15	0	26
TOTAL %		5 5.4%	56 60.9%	31 33.7%	0 0.0%	92 100%

**Table 8.15 - Asset Languages June 2008 Breakthrough Listening results**

School	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
B	French	3	3	10	21	37
D	French	0	3	10	25	38
F	German	0	8	12	8	28
H	Spanish	0	0	1	23	24
TOTAL %		3 2.4%	14 11.0%	33 26.0%	77 60.6%	127 100%

**Table 8.16 - Asset Languages June 2008 Breakthrough Reading results**

School	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
D	French	0	5	18	15	38
TOTAL %		0 0.0%	5 13.2%	18 47.4%	15 39.5%	38 100%

**Table 8.17 - Asset Languages June 2008 Breakthrough Writing results**

School	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
D	French	0	3	29	6	38
TOTAL %		0 0.0%	3 7.9%	29 76.3%	6 15.8%	38 100%

Two schools entered Year 6 children for selected Asset Languages tests in 2008/09. They produced a similar pattern of results, shown in Tables 8.18-8.21.

**Table 8.18 - Asset Languages June 2009 Breakthrough Speaking results**

School	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
D	French	2	0	8	1	11
F	Spanish	0	14	16	0	30
TOTAL %		2 4.9%	14 34.1%	24 58.5%	1 2.4%	41 100%

**Table 8.19 - Asset Languages June 2009 Breakthrough Listening results**

School	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
D	French	2	5	15	18	40
F	Spanish	0	2	12	16	30
TOTAL %		2 2.9%	7 10.0%	27 38.6%	34 48.6%	70 100%

**Table 8.20 - Asset Languages June 2009 Breakthrough Reading results**

School	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
D	French	1	8	10	21	40
TOTAL %		1 2.5%	8 20.0%	10 25.0%	21 52.5%	40 100%

**Table 8.21 - Asset Languages June 2009 Breakthrough Writing results**

School	Language	Ungraded	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total taking test
D	French	0	1	15	7	23
TOTAL %		0 0.0%	1 4.3%	15 65.2%	7 30.4%	23 100%

## 8.6 Summary

The achievement patterns for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 in eight enhanced case study schools, and of Year 6 Asset Languages tests in a smaller number of schools, are broadly consistent over the three years of the study. It is encouraging that in almost all areas where comparisons can be made, achievement has either remained stable or improved somewhat. Following sub-sections review overall achievement in oracy and literacy, with reference to the expectations of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*.

### 8.6.1 Achievement in oracy

#### *Sounds and words*

As far as oracy is concerned, project evidence was positive regarding children's target language pronunciation, with a large majority of children attempting to use target language phonology by the end of the period, and a considerable degree of success being achieved. Children's oral production of target language vocabulary also became more consistent, and there was a clear developmental trend in the range of vocabulary known and produced, across the Key Stage. There was a continuing bias towards nouns in the vocabulary known, though better verb knowledge was demonstrated orally than in writing, where very few verbs were used. (A similar bias is noted in the interim report on the *Early Language Learning in Europe* project: Enever et al., 2008.)

### ***Sentences and interaction***

Regarding production in speech of target language sentences, there was again a clear developmental trend across the Key Stage, with the best Year 6 children producing an impressive range of simple sentences. However most sentences produced were formulaic or semi-formulaic and children were still only beginning to break these down so as to produce creatively constructed utterances. (Again similar reliance on formulaic language is noted by Enever et al., 2008 in a range of European settings.) In this challenging area, as in that of conversational interaction, children's performance remained essentially stable through the study.

### ***Listening strategies***

Children in Year 5 and Year 6 undertook similar listening comprehension tasks, listening to a story and demonstrating comprehension by ordering pictures. In both Year groups the children showed they could use a good range of strategies during this task, using knowledge of story structure, and spotting familiar words and cognates.

## **8.6.2 Achievement in literacy**

### ***Reading aloud***

As indicated in section 8.4.1, most children made some progress with the acquisition of target language phoneme-grapheme correspondences, but had not yet confidently mastered these. There was however a positive trend across Year groups, with limited knowledge in Years 3 and 4, but a majority of Year 5 and Year 6 groups showing good knowledge.

### ***Reading comprehension***

Overall performance in reading comprehension was good, with some improvement over the period. Children used an increasing range of reading strategies with age, from identifying familiar words to spotting cognates and translating whole sentences.

### ***Working with different genres***

The Year 6 children had an impressive ability to transfer knowledge about language gained (presumably) in English literacy work, to the analysis of target language texts. A majority of groups not only identified different genres but explained their reasoning, and supported their views with some detailed evidence from the texts, including recognition of punctuation and layout conventions, rhymes, cognates, and familiar vocabulary.

### ***Writing***

Target language writing remained the most challenging area for these early learners. Achievement differed across schools and across Year groups, suggesting differing amounts of attention being given to this skill in class. Word level writing improved somewhat over the period in Years 3 and 4, to a generally good standard. However text completion activities remained difficult for most children, with the inability to generate verb forms in writing a particular weakness. It was interesting that the Year 5 children were more successful when asked to build sentences using word cards, suggesting that intermediate instructional stages are needed for the writing skill to develop successfully.

### 8.6.3 Overall achievement

Overall the evidence indicated that current achievement in terms of the expectations of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* was variable, though with a trend towards improvement, and with somewhat stronger performance in oracy than literacy overall. Given the novelty of languages, and of the Framework in particular, for participating schools this was unsurprising. The next section briefly explores some key background factors which appeared to influence these overall patterns of achievement in languages.

## 8.7 Factors influencing achievement in languages

A major factor which can be seen as potentially limiting children's achievement overall, is the amount of instructional time actually received in languages. The expectations of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* for achievement in oracy and literacy are based on the assumption that children will receive an hour's instruction each week. Experience in Europe suggests that at least 80 hours of regular instruction are normally required, to bring learners to Breakthrough/ A1 level on the *Common European Framework* (Winkler, 2009). Where provision falls below this level, as documented for many schools in this study, it is unsurprising that achievement is correspondingly more limited.

Nonetheless, some individual schools in the study stood out as having achieved more consistently than others in the language assessments. This section comments briefly on how far achievement in these schools can be related to patterns of target language provision over time.

Analysis of the oracy ratings for individual schools (details not shown) make it clear that two schools (A and C) were particularly consistent in promoting learner progression. The Year 3 children in these schools performed similarly to most others, in all years of the study, but in Years 4, 5 and 6 these schools consistently produced the highest levels of oracy achievement. Notably, in each year of the study, the oracy performances of their Year 6 children were rated at the highest level on every dimension studied. Children from both these schools also performed well on the 2007 Asset Languages tests in Speaking and Listening. The pattern with regard to literacy performance is more complex but again, it is noticeable that the Year 6 writing performances from these two schools were among the highest in both 2007/08 and 2008/09.

These two schools operated different models for the provision of languages. School A had a head teacher who was very supportive of languages, and two class teachers acted as providers from 2006/07 to 2007/08. The languages co-ordinator was a senior teacher in the school with a high level of competence in French, who also played an active role in the local authority as a languages specialist. She herself taught Years 5 and 6 while a colleague taught Years 3 and 4. Years 5 and 6 received a timetabled hour of French each week, while Years 3 and 4 received 40 minutes. In 2008/09 the pattern of teaching changed, because of the departure of the languages co-ordinator, and a visiting specialist teacher was employed in Years 5 and 6, but the school commitment seemed sufficiently strong to sustain children's oracy development through this change.

Again the head teacher of School C was highly supportive of languages. This school used two specialist teachers (a French native speaker for Year 3 and a fluent French speaker for Years 4-6) to deliver French in Key Stage 2 throughout the three years of the study. French was a timetabled subject, delivered by the specialists during PPA time, for a minimum of 40 minutes each week for the younger children and 50-60 minutes for the older children.

Contrasting with these two schools, there were others where the children's performance during the three years of the study was not so consistent. In one case, a school using a class teacher model of provision whose children performed very well in 2006/07 and 2007/08 oracy assessments, performed less well in 2008/09. This could be plausibly linked to the loss of two well qualified teachers in 2007/08, and their replacement with less experienced staff (an NQT and an FLA). Conversely, another school offering class teacher provision had a steadily improving profile, with very good Year 6 achievement in 2008/09. Staffing had remained stable, the languages co-ordinator held a degree in languages, and it seemed the school's developing experience was reflected in children's improving performance.

Finally there was one enhanced case study school whose children's performance on most measures remained low during the three years of the study. This school was committed to languages, but was in the process of moving from a specialist model to a class teacher model of delivery and seeking to develop staff capability from within. The main issue seemed to be the lack of class teachers within the school, with good personal competence/ qualifications in the language taught, so that teachers' limited proficiency was in turn limiting the challenge for children.

Overall it can be concluded that while differing staffing models can deliver successful progression, teacher expertise and consistency of provision including commitment to maintaining timetabling of languages through Year 6 are - not surprisingly - essential underlying factors.

## **8.8 Cross-curricular impact of learning languages**

The analysis of the data collected in 2006/07 to explore the cross-curricular impact of languages learning in the enhanced case study schools and the control schools did not yield significant findings. Children's attitudes to learning were similar in both groups of schools. Children's word and sentence level knowledge was also broadly similar and there were no significant differences in their ability to construct English sentences or punctuate them correctly. However, there were some indications that children in the enhanced case study schools were able to create a wider variety of negative sentence forms in English, and to more accurately identify word classes e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives etc. There were no indications of any differences related to gender and school-type, so it is possible that the differences found for these questions were due to some effect of the enhanced schools, although it is not possible to attribute this directly to the fact that the children were learning another language at school.

In 2007/08, it proved impossible to retain the matched sample from 2006/07 as control schools withdrew from the study or began teaching languages and it proved difficult to recruit new schools who could be matched with the enhanced case study schools, but were not teaching languages. Coupled with the inconclusive findings from 2006/07 a decision was made to seek alternative ways of exploring cross curricular impact and as a result literacy co-ordinators were interviewed for their perceptions of impact in 2008/09. Their views have been incorporated into the findings and discussion in section 4.

## **9 Challenges in implementing and sustaining languages learning and teaching**

### **9.1 Introduction**

This section reports on the challenges of implementing and sustaining languages provision at Key Stage 2. Overall, the schools in the study had introduced languages teaching and sustained it over a number of years. This section explores how these schools have managed to do this, and what they believed threatened teaching and learning of languages in the longer term. The section draws on data from all three years of the study, focussing on head teacher, languages co-ordinator and class teacher interviews with supporting statistical data. Sub-sections deal with the introduction of languages (9.2), with the challenges involved in sustaining and developing languages (9.3), and with key characteristics of sustainable provision (9.4).

### **9.2 Introduction of languages**

In the first year of the study, data were collected on each school's approach to introducing languages provision. The majority of these schools had begun to implement languages ahead of the main body of schools nationally and could thus be described as 'early adopters'. As described in section 6, by 2008/09 approximately half of the schools in this study had been offering languages in Key Stage 2 for between four and six years, with many of the remainder having a long history of languages teaching (see also section 2.4.3, table 2.12). This sub-section explores the general advice from head teachers and languages co-ordinators on establishing languages provision, in the light of their own earlier experience.

In 2006/07, head teachers were asked to comment on what they believed were the most important steps required in order for languages to become established. Their answers were based on their experiences to date of providing languages and referred to a range of factors:

- clear leadership and vision, with commitment from senior management and governing bodies;
- sustainable staffing with teachers developing the relevant skills, confidence and willingness to teach languages;
- establishing a sustainable delivery model for teaching;
- drawing on all available language expertise;
- finding time and ways to ensure that languages learning links with the rest of the curriculum and enriches it;
- purchasing ICT-based resources which support language teaching;
- ensuring that languages learning is enjoyable;
- continued government commitment to the subject, including money for on-going training and support;
- clearer guidance from policymakers in order to clarify what is expected of primary schools in their languages work;

- making languages learning real by organising visits, exchanges and international links;
- better communication between primary and secondary provision.

In 2007/08, languages co-ordinators were invited to offer advice to schools, based on their own experiences, on how best to move towards a languages entitlement for all Key Stage 2 children. They concurred on the importance of having a clear whole school approach to the subject, which filtered down from the head teacher. They stressed the importance of creating a sustainable model right from the beginning rather than accommodating a disjointed, short-term approach. Time, resources and training were commonly mentioned as key elements of such a model. Time was needed for planning, training and support, in addition to actual teaching time. The choice of resources depended on schools' stage of development; in particular it was suggested that schools new to teaching languages might want to consider purchasing a main resource which provided support for both non-specialist and specialist teachers. Co-ordinators felt that such a resource could help with pronunciation, offer a range of activities and support teachers with aspects of intercultural understanding. In many cases interactive, ICT-based resources were favoured (see section 6). In addition, a small number emphasised the importance of some broader aspects such as connecting languages from the beginning with the rest of the curriculum:

*I would make language co-ordinators aware of topic work curriculum themes and areas to enable language schemes of work to reflect in other parts of the curriculum.*

(Class teacher interview 2007/08)

Acknowledging the potential problem of teachers' lack of language skills, head teachers in 2007/08 spoke of the need to draw flexibly on all available language expertise both in school and in local partnerships / clusters of schools. This included tapping into other languages networks and national / international organisations. Many co-ordinators talked about the need to enthuse all teachers and staff members and to give them confidence in their ability to take on the new subject. Referring to the early days of implementation, from this inclusive perspective, co-ordinators talked about 'starting small' and offering staff short, useful phrases to support their teaching. Languages co-ordinators also took the view that if the teaching was undertaken by a specialist (internal or visiting external) then the class teacher should remain in the lesson in order to develop their skills and to be able to revisit some of the target language before the next lesson. They thus questioned the PPA model, where the class teacher was always absent.

### **9.3 Sustaining languages - challenges and solutions**

This sub-section explores specific issues impacting on the longer term sustainability of languages at Key Stage 2 and possible solutions. It deals with:

- key people driving the subject
- staffing models: who teaches languages?
- staff expertise: the competence and confidence of those teaching languages
- staff recruitment and retention
- finding the time for languages
- curriculum links
- funding

### 9.3.1 Key people driving the subject

It was evident that successful implementation and on-going development of languages was driven by the vision and leadership of the head teacher. Almost all head teachers also underlined the importance of having a key member of staff who was responsible for the subject, usually the languages co-ordinator. As described in section 6, these key people were the drivers of the subject, offering support and training to other members of staff, developing schemes of work as well as liaising with partners within and beyond the locality; in some instances this person did all the teaching.

Section 6 detailed head teachers' expectations about the role of the languages co-ordinator. It was evident that head teachers' expectations of their languages co-ordinators were high, matching their expectations of other subject co-ordinators, and covered a wide range of content, activities and skills. The role was summed up by one head teacher:

*a consultant, as a guide, as a trainer, as support to teaching staff to enable them to teach effectively and also being in a position to model good practice.*  
(Head teacher interview 2008/09)

Unsurprisingly, some head teachers identified fluency in the chosen language as a required attribute of the languages co-ordinator. However, many also talked of the co-ordinator's ability to inspire and lead, a minority saw this as possibly more important than total linguistic fluency. Many head teachers told of their fear that provision would be at risk if this key person left the school, and talked of the need to replace like-for-like:

*It doesn't look at the moment, touch wood, that (the language co-ordinator) is going anywhere ... there isn't a natural successor to her at the moment, but I would need to be looking at getting somebody in with similar qualities to drive it because... the subject manager is key and if you take that person away it does have an impact and we couldn't survive without an effective subject leader.*  
(Head teacher interview 2008/09)

Solutions to the issue of losing a key teacher also included looking for languages expertise whenever recruiting teaching staff; organising for another teacher to work alongside the current languages co-ordinator post holder; searching for FLAs to supplement the languages teaching or approaching specialist language colleges or the local authority for support.

### 9.3.2 Staffing models: who teaches languages?

The need to decide who is going to teach languages was a key issue for head teachers, and various approaches to staffing have been described in section 6.

Head teachers who had a clear vision of the model of provision they wanted tended to be proactive on the question of staffing. This meant empowering class teachers to teach languages through practical commitment to training and support, or employing a dedicated specialist to teach the subject across the school.

The head teachers who selected a class teacher approach often made claims for this as the most sustainable model. Importantly, it was also explained as part of the overall vision for the subject where commitment to languages from all members of staff and the governing body works in tandem with an international outlook. This was the case in one school where the teaching model changed over four years (2006-2009), from a visiting teacher to all class teachers teaching the language. This school provided an example of the class teacher model working well, within the context of adequate funding for projects as well as day-to-day



teaching and training; a range of international links, partnerships and visits; and an active languages co-ordinator who planned lessons and produced supporting resource packs for other staff. The class teacher model was also being maintained in this school despite some staff changes; this happened predominantly through targeted recruitment. In addition, teaching staff members were encouraged and enabled to take part in a range of training courses, including local authority twilight sessions; CILT day courses, local cluster meetings and longer courses. International visits were extended to include teaching assistants and non-teaching staff members, in order to unite the complete school staff in the overall vision of the subject. When a new member of staff was appointed at the beginning of the academic year, they did not begin teaching languages until after Christmas. This allowed them time to up-skill linguistically and to become more comfortable with the task to come. Until that time, the class was taught by another teacher.

Another head teacher pointed out that by using one dedicated teacher to teach the language, the class teachers were denied an important, long-term development opportunity:

*I did consider the possibility of bringing in someone to do French ... The danger with that is you then de-skill people; they don't get the skills because they know somebody else will do it, and also then it's self-contained ... I think we're best resourcing and training and keeping it as it is, trying to build the confidence of people at the moment.*  
(Head teacher interview 2008/09)

Conversely, a small number of head teachers felt that a specialist model contributed to the sustainability of the subject:

*I have no problems, because I'm going down the specialist route. If it was a class teacher route, I'd have more worries about whether it's sustainable, because one teacher might be able to do it; that person might go on maternity leave or leave, and then you're starting from scratch, retraining somebody else. I find that the route I've chosen is more sustainable.*  
(Head teacher interview 2007/08)

Those favouring specialist models of provision acknowledged possible problems, e.g. that sometimes children reacted to external teachers in a similar way to supply teachers and did not work so well. One solution seen as sustainable was to follow an in-house specialist route; this person was often already a member of staff in the school known to both teachers and children, with the necessary linguistic competence. Often, training had been invested in this individual, and *'it made sense to spread his expertise across the school.'* Spreading the load by sharing the delivery of languages between such a specialist and class teachers who *'consolidated'* the language work throughout the week or between lessons was felt to improve teachers' confidence and thus assist sustainability even where specialist provision was in place.

However, the head teacher last quoted also recognised that when one specialist teacher was responsible for the teaching, the loss of that teacher was a threat to provision:

*There are no issues as long as I keep my teachers. If (visiting native speaker specialist) was to go I would be devastated, because I think she would be very hard to replace, to get somebody of that calibre with that enthusiasm and that way of managing the younger children. That would be really difficult. But, at the moment, I feel fairly secure that it's sustainable.*  
(Head teacher interview 2007/08)

Therefore, whilst either approach to teaching might be justified by individual head teachers, many also acknowledge the fragility of an approach that relies on one teacher to undertake all of the teaching.

### **9.3.3 Building staff expertise: the competence and confidence of those teaching languages**

Across the three years of the study, head teachers and language co-ordinators acknowledged the challenge of achieving sufficient staff competence and confidence for teaching languages. Positive attitudes were identified as crucial for effective teaching and to sustain provision; areas of concern included teachers' knowledge of the language (fluency, pronunciation, accuracy of grammar etc); knowledge of subject appropriate teaching approaches and general confidence to teach the subject.

Accessing training was seen as key to addressing issues of staff competence and confidence. As discussed in sections 4 and 6, training was accessed from a range of internal and external sources, and in the main was deemed beneficial for enabling and supporting the ongoing teaching of languages. Head teachers spoke highly of individuals in local authorities who provided support and training, usually the languages advisor. The available national and regional training was broadly praised for its quality and relevance, and therefore was seen as a key aspect of sustaining the subject. Occasionally, co-ordinators commented that the training on offer was too basic for the school, which confirmed their practice rather than taking their provision forward. They acknowledged that this was because they were ahead of other schools in terms of established provision. Even so, they were now keen to continue moving forward and said they would like to receive guidance from the local authority in order to do so. In a few instances, schools mentioned training in more specific aspects such as cultural knowledge or setting up international links. For example, one co-ordinator reported attending a day's training on hosting an FLA.

Sections 4 and 6 identified that the majority of the out-of-school sessions took place after the end of the school day and demanded extra commitment from the teachers in terms of time and study undertaken at home; for a range of reasons this was not always possible. Where class teachers were generally not yet involved in language teaching such external training opportunities were viewed as the preserve of the co-ordinator and therefore not taken up. In-house training tended to be during dedicated staff meeting time or in planned twilights, though this was sometimes limited where languages were not the current focus of school development.

Where teachers participated in language up-skilling courses, the subsequent impact of this training was evident in a number of ways (see section 4). A turning point for one school was the attendance by five staff at language up-skilling classes put on by the secondary school which gave the boost in confidence needed for the school to start.

The opportunity to develop language expertise supported staff and went some way to tackle the issue of staff turnover. However the success of these opportunities depended on the teachers' willingness to take on something new:

*We're very fortunate here that we kind of have the attitude of just doing it and going for it and it's absolutely no problem. We don't have an issue with any staff, so I think they're going to take up those training opportunities.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

In their most recent comments on sustainability (2008/09), the continuing need for on-going staff development was made clear by head teachers and languages co-ordinators and this has funding implications. Some head teachers were concerned that funded support for the promotion of languages might not continue in the future; already, for example, two schools were not able to continue employing a foreign language assistant as the external funding had not continued.

Continued promotion of languages was affected by its place on the overall school development plans. For some of the case study schools, it had moved from being a key focus to being just another subject. This could be seen as a positive sign that languages had truly become a part of the curriculum, equal to other foundation subjects. However, some participants clearly believed the subject needed more of a long term, whole school focus to be sustainable. In the view of some languages co-ordinators and head teachers, training needs will continue in the longer term, for example, and will require careful on-going tracking of requirements and of outcomes.

### **9.3.4 Staff recruitment and retention**

Throughout the study, the issue of ensuring adequate staffing for languages was a key challenge. In 2008/09, eight head teachers still spoke about staff turnover being a major concern. In a few of these schools, very stable, established provision had become threatened by staff changes, such as the loss of the languages co-ordinator. The issue of maintaining suitable staff had been predominantly addressed by active recruitment of experienced practitioners. Head teachers expressed the expectation that all teachers entering the profession as Newly Qualified Teachers will have been trained in languages as part of their courses. By the final year of the study, 14 head teachers reported that language expertise would be part of their recruitment criteria when interviewing:

*It's always a very conscious decision to employ staff in the school who could deliver Spanish, so when we appointed (NQT) we actually advertised for somebody who had experience of teaching primary Spanish, and that's a strategy that I think will continue. I think we need to build up our bank of staff so that we're not just relying on that one person, so that when they go, which they inevitably do, it all falls down.*  
(Head teacher interview, 2008/09)

However, five head teachers asserted that they would not be giving priority to any languages-specific criteria when interviewing, mostly due to pressures coming from the national focus on the core subjects and the standards agenda.

### **9.3.5 Finding the time for languages**

In 2006/07, many head teachers saw finding time for languages as a major challenge. By 2008/09 however, very few heads or languages co-ordinators mentioned time as an issue and it seemed that solutions had been found as to when to teach languages and for how long. (Time allocated to languages is discussed in detail in section 6).

Over the three years of the study, schools had tackled the 'time problem' in a variety of ways. This had primarily involved identifying a set time on the class timetable, sometimes by using PPA time. Some had offered a combination of dedicated lesson time with extra language teaching provided outside the timetabled slot. This additional time was however sometimes incidental, unplanned and opportunistic. Languages work was also sometimes part of everyday routines such as taking the register and for giving classroom instructions. Some staff members talked of cross-curricular links offering extra time for languages beyond the dedicated lesson.

Table 9.1 shows the reported weekly time allocation for languages in 2008/09, in schools where time allocation was consistent across year groups (28 schools):

**Table 9.1 - Time allocation for languages**

Number of minutes per week	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60 / 60+
Number of schools (out of 39)	2	10	7	1	8

By 2008/09, eight schools reported offering 60 minutes per week to all year groups. Three of these eight schools said they split this time allocation across the week, with the dedicated lesson itself lasting between 30 and 45 minutes.

Table 9.1 does not include the 11 schools that reported offering variable provision across their Key Stage 2 year groups. Of these, seven schools increased the time allocation as the children got older, while one decreased the teaching time in Year 6. Others varied the amount of time, but seven out of these 11 schools said they offered 50-60 minutes to some year groups, typically to Years 5 and 6.

It is notable that although very few schools cited time as a challenge by 2009, only eight were offering an hour of languages teaching to all year groups in Key Stage 2. So although the case study schools saw time as less of an issue, they had not yet fully addressed the challenge of an entitlement of 60 minutes per week for all children.

### 9.3.6 Curriculum links

As many schools nationally work towards using cross-curricular themes in their planning, the integration of languages into this model is also becoming an issue confronting schools. The challenges facing the case study schools as they attempted to link languages with the rest of the curriculum fell into three broad categories:

- the ability of the specialist teacher to capitalise on possible links;
- class teachers' confidence and linguistic knowledge needed to make appropriate subject links;
- the level of language needed by the children to make meaningful subject links.

In the case of one school where the head teacher believed there was a truly sustainable model, the languages co-ordinator explained that they linked languages extensively with other aspects of the curriculum:

*As an example, I know Year 5 best ... after Christmas we do 'Keeping healthy' as our science unit, so that is why we are doing the healthy eating unit then, because it is an obvious link. In the summer term we do 'Earth sun and moon' as the science unit, so we do a lot of work on the planets and the order from the sun and things like that. In Year 6 because they are getting ready to leave school, the last one we did was 'Notre école', so again they will be sort of summing up their experiences in school for several things, we thought it was quite a nice one for them to end doing one on our school.*  
(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

As suggested in section 6, the person doing the languages teaching could impact on making meaningful subject links. For example, an external or even an in-house specialist who taught languages to one or more classes on a weekly basis was not as well placed as a class teacher to capitalise on possible cross-curricular links. They were not teaching the whole curriculum to those children, were not so aware of useful links, and only saw the class once a week. It was possible to address this to some extent through good communication with class teachers and through collaborative planning, which was seen in some schools where the specialist teacher was well established.

When the class teacher undertook the teaching, subject links were in principle much easier to make. However, some languages co-ordinators were concerned that making meaningful subject links in the target language might be challenging in terms of the teacher's linguistic confidence and competence.

By 2008/09, twenty-three languages co-ordinators reported links being made between languages and the rest of the curriculum. These links often remained very general and in the majority of cases it was the co-ordinator themselves making the links in their lessons, though co-ordinators also spoke of individual class teachers who used their initiative to make links between subjects. As noted in section 6, most co-ordinators acknowledged that this was still unlikely to be happening school-wide. However, the overall movement towards the considered inclusion of languages in cross-curricular planning was ongoing in 2008/09; it was evident that subject integration was viewed increasingly positively by head teachers and languages co-ordinators.

But throughout the study, from a class teacher perspective, many of those interviewed did not always feel they were able to make links easily, and very occasionally teachers stated their feeling that the subject should stand alone.

There was very little evidence of any of the schools attempting to teach another subject in the target language. Some schools had not considered this yet. One head teacher, who was undertaking the co-ordination of the subject as well as most of the teaching, had not encountered the idea of teaching a subject entirely or partly through the target language but seemed positive that it might be possible in the future:

*it might be a bit too early for us on that one; it's quite possible though; it's a nice thought isn't it?*

(Head teacher interview 2008/09)

Where teachers were aware of the concept, some felt the cognitive demands of subject content were too advanced for the children's linguistic skills:

*Do you know I probably wouldn't, at the moment, no I probably wouldn't teach another subject. It sounds strange but especially at Year 6 level if you're thinking about maths and your geography content and your history they haven't got the vocabulary that would extend to that. You know you might maybe like in a PE lesson be able to say jump or those kind of words, or in DT give them the word for cutting or something but I don't feel that when time is so precious, it sounds terrible to say, but that you've got to chance to then make that lesson longer because you're doing the French within it.*

(Languages co-ordinator interview 2008/09)

Overall, even schools who spoke of using French in other subjects were not using a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) model. Barriers to teaching a subject partly or totally in the target language were seen as: lack of staff confidence and linguistic competence; the need to focus on one subject at a time (in terms of clear learning intentions

and assessment) and the danger of forcing links when they were not necessary. However, none of these case study schools had undertaken specific CLIL training or identified it as an area of immediate development. One head teacher spoke about CLIL as an aspiration:

*Currently we're looking at the creativity and the cross-curricular links, and our hope is that we will be able to take a topic, for example, and actually be able to teach that in the modern foreign language, in French, so if a group of children are being supported, then that language actually needs to come into that, and the concepts and all of that, that needs to come into that. Also another vision is actually to use the children's expertise to actually help us in planning that. So, you know, because we've got such a rich environment of different languages, but it's actually starting quite small and then making it bigger.*

(Head teacher interview 2008/09)

One school felt that their link with a Spanish school had impacted directly on how they might approach the teaching of the language in the long run. The work undertaken by the Spanish school to develop a CLIL-based approach to languages may well influence the curriculum model of this English school:

*One of the interesting developments was with our Barcelona school who have dropped their formal language scheme for teaching English and they're actually teaching English now through our community project so they're using that as the stimulus for the whole project, so the text books have gone. So it's quite interesting monitoring and looking at some of the things that they're doing because I think it's something that as we get up-skilled, it will probably start to find its way into some of the things that we might do.*

(Head teacher interview 2008/09)

This was an example of a head teacher who was confident that the school could move from a secure base to developing the subject in an innovative way in the future.

### **9.3.7 Funding**

Funding was an integral feature of many of the challenges already described, such as staffing, training and resourcing.

In 2006/07, many head teachers felt that they had access to generous amounts of funding. However, some also expressed concerns about future funding and also noted an uneven distribution of monies for languages provision across schools.

In 2007/08, a number of languages co-ordinators reported feeling satisfied with the funding their schools gave them for languages; this was especially the case in schools that considered themselves to already be well-resourced for the subject (in some instances, this came through their previous involvement in the Pathfinder project). Some thought or knew definitely that the amount they were allocated was comparable with the budget given to Foundation subjects. A number of schools had obtained, or benefitted from, extra funding through being a leading school in the local authority, being part of a network or cluster or from their links with a specialist language college. For example, one school's free access to training from the local specialist language college meant they did not have to find additional money from the school budget.

Over the lifetime of this study, the issues surrounding funding, as highlighted by head teachers and languages co-ordinators, remained largely unchanged. The major financial concerns raised by head teachers and teachers included the difficulty of affording supply

cover for staff to attend training courses, the costs of training new staff when existing trained staff left a school, and the high cost of employing an FLA. Staff in two schools reported that the withdrawal of some funding or it not being allocated to languages teaching has resulted in provision changes, particularly the loss of the FLA contribution.

#### **9.4 Key characteristics of sustainable provision**

From the study as a whole, it was possible to identify key aspects of sustainable provision, as suggested by head teachers, languages co-ordinators and class teachers:

- a committed head teacher with a clear whole school vision for languages;
- a positive school ethos, which acknowledges the place of languages in the curriculum;
- appropriate staffing, with competent and confident teachers who are committed to the subject;
- a recruitment policy which includes the ability to teach languages, or at least the willingness to be involved in languages teaching, as essential or desirable criteria;
- sufficient funding allocated by government, local authority and school
- relevant and accessible training;
- availability of appropriate resources, which are used well;
- secondary sector links and support;
- international partnerships, links and visits.

The head teacher of one school in particular, where many of the characteristics listed above had been developed over time, expressed strong confidence in the sustainability of provision in his school:

*Well in this school at the moment, it has got everything in place for it to be completely sustainable. You have got a fantastic subject leader, you have got a history of it being in place, there is a lot of motivation, there is a lot of enthusiasm. Most of the staff are teaching and there is not a huge drain on the resources in terms of the budget, it is not as if we have a specialist teacher who goes and teaches everyone. So from that point of view, I think it is completely sustainable.*

(Head teacher interview 2008/09)

#### **9.5 Summary**

Many of the case study schools had moved towards sustainable provision by establishing a school-wide vision for the subject. This originated with the head teacher and was mediated, supported and taken forward by the languages co-ordinator, with an informed and supportive governing body. All teaching staff members needed to be committed to languages as a subject that had status on the curriculum and they needed to be open to trying out ideas and attending training. Adequate funding was important; as was the selection of a key resource to support both class teachers and specialist teachers (whether in-house or external). Criteria relating to languages expertise needed to be part of the school's policy for recruitment. All avenues of support needed to be explored, including local and national networks, local authority advice and support from specialist language colleges where possible.

It could be said that schools who have moved forward the most towards embedded, secure provision were those that capitalised on a wide range of languages-related opportunities to the greatest extent. Such schools demonstrated real engagement with a range of activities, including local networks; ongoing training; international partnerships; short and long term projects and local and national sources of funding and award schemes. These schools also made good use of any staff members with languages expertise as well as seeking out support within the wider school community. Frequently, key staff in such schools were leading the subject in their local context as well as being active in a range of initiatives. Such indicators of successful provision in the long term linked back directly in every case to strong leadership which was highly committed to the future of the subject.



## 10 Conclusion

The findings in this report document developing provision and practice and children's achievements in a sample of primary schools that have chosen to introduce languages teaching ahead of statutory requirements. This study examined the approaches and mechanisms these schools were using to maintain and develop learning and teaching, teachers' and children's attitudes towards languages learning and perceptions of its impact on the primary curriculum, and children's current achievement in languages. Through visiting the schools three times over a three year period it has been possible to identify some of the challenges schools are facing and the steps that they are taking to overcome them. Schools have developed their provision to meet their own individual circumstances and the purpose of this study is to exemplify this practice. The findings do not suggest that one approach is more effective than another. It is hoped that the findings will be of interest to all those concerned with policy and practice in languages provision.

### 10.1 Provision for languages teaching

The schools in the study typically offered a discrete timetabled lesson of 30-40 minutes to most Key Stage 2 year groups, with more time allocated to Years 5 and 6, a pattern of provision similar to that identified by Ofsted (2008a) and Wade and Marshall (2009). Some children were receiving additional teaching in class time, but this often varied from class to class within an individual school. Very few schools were providing an hour of language teaching per week as suggested in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005).

French was the most common language taught, followed by Spanish and German, and the majority of schools taught one language throughout Key Stage 2. These findings concur with those of Muijs et al. (2005), Ofsted (2008a), Wade and Marshall (2009). As in the studies by CILT (2007) and Wade and Marshall (2009) there was minimal evidence of the teaching of other European or world languages in curriculum time or of children experiencing encounters with other languages.

In these schools delivery of languages can be described in terms of three broad models: class teachers teaching their own classes, one or two internal or visiting external specialists teaching languages throughout the school, and a mixture of these two approaches. However, when compared with the national picture reported by Wade and Marshall (2009), more of the schools had elected to follow a specialist model (over a quarter as opposed to less than a fifth. The number following a model where the class teacher worked alone (a third) was broadly similar to the national picture and the number following a mixed model was lower (though the categorisations used were slightly different in the two studies). The greater use of specialists in the case study schools reflected, to some extent, historical situations in these schools as early adopters of languages teaching, and concerns about teacher confidence and expertise, particularly with respect to ensuring progression in learning for children who had experienced languages teaching from Year 3.

### 10.2 Staffing

Staffing for languages, both in terms of quantity and quality, was a key concern of head teachers and influential in determining the delivery model adopted. The arguments head teachers used to support their decisions reflect those noted in the literature in favour of a class teacher model and a specialist model (see Low et al., 1995; Low, 1999; Blondin et al., 1998; Driscoll, 2000; Martin, 2000; Chesterton et al., 2004; Driscoll et al., 2004b; Muijs et al., 2005; Ofsted, 2005; Welsh Key Stage 2 Pilot).

Schools that had made a clear decision that class teachers should teach languages cited contextualising languages as part of children's whole school experience, which they felt could be achieved most effectively through class teachers' involvement with the lesson delivery. Other schools adopted the same approach they used for other curriculum subjects: teams of teachers working together to take responsibility for the subject. Some schools that had moved towards a class teacher model initially employed a specialist to teach languages. Over time, as the confidence of the regular class teachers grew they became increasingly enthusiastic to try teaching languages to their own classes and the schools moved to a class teacher model. In most schools adopting this model the languages co-ordinator played a key role in supporting provision.

In schools following a specialist model, the head teachers felt that they had an established staffing and curriculum model that was working well, that met the needs of children's learning because it ensured children learnt correct pronunciation and made progress in their acquisition of language forms and structures and that met the needs of the school because it did not place an extra burden on teachers.

The remaining schools argued for a mixed approach, drawing on the language teaching expertise of one or more staff to deliver core provision, while at the same time encouraging class teachers to take more responsibility for languages as their confidence and expertise developed (see also Sharpe, 2001 and the Welsh Pilot Project).

Staff mobility was a concern in some schools and the fragility of provision was evident especially when expertise or leadership rested with one or two individuals. A number of head teachers said that they were actively recruiting teachers with language expertise and that a facility in languages was now a criterion in job descriptions.

### **10.3 Training**

There was clear evidence that training was impacting on teaching and that teachers and schools valued the training opportunities available to them both locally, through the internet, and through national conferences, a finding in line with Wade and Marshall (2009). The support offered by local authorities through advisory staff, regional support groups and cluster meetings was particularly appreciated although the timing of sessions and where they took place was an issue for some staff. Support from the secondary sector was less apparent but there were some examples of successful collaborations and two-way sharing of knowledge and expertise.

Training sessions covered a variety of topics relating to pedagogy and the organisation of languages. The findings suggest that an increased focus on developing teachers' approaches to cross-curricular learning, intercultural understanding and the learning and teaching of reading and writing would be helpful. There is also an ongoing need for further training to develop teachers' personal language skills. Many respondents noted the need for ongoing training as the staff profile changed, particularly in order to ensure progression in children's learning. This means that funding for continuing professional development will be needed for a considerable time and further consideration will need to be given to the place of languages in initial teacher education.

### **10.4 Children's attitudes and motivation**

Children were enthusiastic about their learning experience in the majority of the case study schools and appreciated the teaching approaches their teachers used, in particular, the interactive nature of the teaching and the wide variety of game-like activities which made languages fun. The majority of children also clearly accepted languages as an appropriate part of their education at primary school and their education and life in the future. A minority

of children made comments about aspects of the teaching that they felt impacted negatively on their learning and enjoyment. These included excessive repetition of content, lack of challenge and limited opportunities for individual work and reading and writing, and are worthy of further consideration in developing a teaching approach that takes account of the needs of all learners.

Many children who experienced difficulties in literacy in English and across the curriculum, appeared more assured in lessons learning the new language and gained confidence through their involvement in constant repetition and interaction which was varied in format. Staff believed that this was of considerable value to their self-esteem.

## **10.5 The Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages**

There was evidence that schools were now drawing on the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005) to inform planning for languages. Learning objectives were being incorporated into schemes of work especially those for oracy and literacy. A significant number of schools were relying on commercial schemes of work to cover the strands in the Framework rather than drawing explicitly on the Framework guidance. Most languages co-ordinators were familiar with the Framework but it was not widely used by class teachers. The QCA schemes of work (QCA, 2007) were starting to impact on practice and in some instances they were being used to develop more cross-curricular approaches to teaching and learning.

## **10.6 Teaching aims and approaches**

In common with other research findings (Wade and Marshall, 2009) staff in the case study schools cited developing children's enthusiasm for languages learning, and their listening and speaking skills, as key aims for languages learning and teaching. Both teachers and children mentioned fun and enjoyment as key motivational factors (see also Muijs et al., 2005; Barton et al., 2009). Wade and Marshall (2009) noted a significant number of respondents citing learning about and understanding other cultures, developing knowledge about language and developing strategies for learning languages as other key aims. In the case study schools these aims were also important to teachers. There was less evidence of them being articulated in practice, although this may be due to teachers prioritising other aspects in the lessons observed.

Teachers were combining language teaching methodology with elements of primary pedagogy. That is, they employed a range of rapidly changing, largely oracy based, activities to maintain children's interest and enthusiasm. These included chants, rhymes, songs, game-like activities and role-plays, often with visual support. Most children were following a largely topic based scheme of work that was unrelated to the rest of the primary curriculum although a few schools were planning further integration.

Teachers were drawing increasingly on commercial resources (DVDs, schemes of work, web based materials, IWB resources) to inform their planning and provide resources to support their teaching and children's learning. The extent to which these reflect the underpinning aims of languages learning in the primary school, including the development of more cross-curricular approaches to languages learning, would warrant further investigation and research.

## **10.7 Oracy**

In common with practice reported elsewhere oracy was considered the main aim of languages learning by teachers in the case study schools. The focus on oracy began in Year 3 and largely involved the word level naming of objects and short question and answer

routines. These were frequently revisited as children expanded and added further information to their utterances. Pedagogy centring on the topic-related teaching of vocabulary and sentence forms to express personal information or describe events persisted throughout Key Stage 2. An emphasis on memorisation rather than experimentation was evident as was the ability of the majority of children to produce memorised language items and formulaic phrases rather than their own independent sentences. Some of the older children, who have experienced continuous teaching, were able to engage in sustained dialogues and draw on previous learning to enhance question and answer routines.

## **10.8 Literacy**

Children engaged in more literacy activities as they moved through Key Stage 2. Older children were involved in more work at sentence level and, in some instances, at text level. Older children also received greater visual support for oracy work in the form of written words and sentences. Although literacy activities did not form a substantial part of most lessons, as noted in other studies (Ofsted, 2005), there was evidence of an increase in the type and length of literacy activities over the three years of the study. Teachers suggested that the length of lessons constrained the amount of time they spent on literacy activities. It may also be the case that teachers who were still developing their linguistic knowledge felt less confident teaching literacy and that less attention was paid to this aspect in the training attended.

## **10.9 Intercultural understanding**

Teachers were beginning to include objectives relating to the teaching of intercultural understanding in their languages lessons. In line with findings elsewhere (LACE, 2007) children's were learning factual knowledge and expressing attitudes, e.g. about similarities and differences between practices or institutions in different European countries. There was little evidence of children developing the other *savoirs* referred to by Byram (1997) (see section 3.4.3), and no evidence of assessment of objectives relating to intercultural understanding. For resources relating to intercultural understanding, teachers were drawing increasingly on commercially produced material. A number were integrating contributions from native speakers, including foreign language assistants or visiting students, or staff who have visited the country.

There was evidence of an increase in the number of whole school events focusing on developing children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures and languages, and of the development of international links and partnership projects which supported the development of intercultural understanding, although these were not usually related directly to the objectives in the Framework. A need for further professional development in this area was evident (see also Evans and Fisher, 2009). Staff need to be well informed and confident in order to encourage discussion and reflection and to ensure children are provided with a range of perspectives with clear implications for both initial teacher education and ongoing professional development. Developing their own knowledge and understanding, through training, encounters and experience is of fundamental importance for all primary teachers whatever their role in languages.

## **10.10 Cross-curricular links**

There was some evidence of an increase in cross-curricular links over the three years of the study although many initiatives were at individual class teacher rather than whole school level. Where links were being made the following subjects were most frequently mentioned: mathematics; physical education; geography; science; art and drama. However the instances where these were systematically linked into schemes of work or topics were infrequent. Links were generally more apparent when class teachers were teaching languages and there

were indications that teachers were beginning to think about how languages could be integrated into more holistic, cross curricular schemes of work; further guidance around this issue would be useful.

### **10.11 Progression**

There was some evidence of progression in children's languages learning where children had experienced languages consistently throughout Key Stage 2. However, considerable work remains to be done in this area, in terms of curriculum planning, the development of shared expectations about learning outcomes for different year groups, and assessment practices. Teachers were concerned about ensuring adequate progression in children's learning and were beginning to address these issues. The employment of specialist teachers to teach older children was considered necessary by managers in some schools, to ensure progression and differentiation at least until class teachers had developed the necessary knowledge and confidence.

### **10.12 Children's achievement in languages learning**

In each year of the study, assessment activities were carried out by the research team with children from each Key Stage 2 year group in eight schools. Performance across the schools was variable, but findings indicate that children can achieve levels in listening, speaking and reading in line with national expectations (equivalent to Year 6 outcomes in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2005) and/or Asset Languages Breakthrough) after four years of learning one language. Writing remains the most challenging area for these learners; the best performances were found where children had received consistent provision, where teachers were experienced and where teachers' linguistic skills were strong.

Between Years 3 and 6 there was evidence of developments in children's pronunciation, oral production and range of known vocabulary although nouns were more frequently known than verbs (see also Enever et al., 2008). Year 5 and 6 children demonstrated a range of listening strategies including drawing on their knowledge of story structure, identifying familiar words and cognates.

Overall performance in reading comprehension was good and children demonstrated they were able to draw on a range of strategies including identifying familiar words and cognates and translating whole sentences. Over the three years improvements in word level writing were evident especially in Years 3 and 4. However, text completion activities remained a challenge for most children, partly because children's knowledge of verbs and verb forms was limited.

These findings should make a significant contribution to understanding of children's attainment and provide guidance for the planning of coherent progression from year to year.

### **10.13 Leadership and management**

The enthusiasm, commitment and vision of head teachers were critical in establishing and sustaining provision through funding for physical and human resources, active recruitment policies, releasing staff for training, capitalising on other funding streams and general encouragement. Effective subject leadership was also vital to provide staff with support and training through developing schemes of work, selecting resources, modelling practice and providing one-to-one advice and suggestions as well as liaising with the LA and other bodies. Effective co-ordinators were a source of up-to-date expertise who kept languages on the school agenda among competing priorities and were relied upon for guidance by busy staff. However, many language co-ordinators were working largely in isolation from other areas of the primary curriculum, and this issue will need to be addressed for the long term sustainability of the subject, for curriculum integration and for effective cross-curricular teaching of languages to become a reality.

### **10.14 Transition and transfer from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3**

In common with other recent studies in England (Bolster et al., 2004; QCA, 2005; Ofsted, 2008a; Wade and Marshall, 2009; Evans and Fisher, 2009) transition and transfer from Key Stage 2 to 3 were ongoing concerns.

There was some evidence that transition was beginning to receive greater attention in that a number of teachers in the study were involved with transition projects in their LAs. This issue needs to be prioritised if continuity and progression are to be ensured. As Hunt et al. (2005) noted, an emphasis on transferable languages learning skills may help improve performance where children begin a new language at secondary school. Evans and Fisher (2009) noted that some secondary schools were beginning to take into account children's prior learning and the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*. This development needs to be nourished across the secondary sector.

### **10.15 Sustainability**

In general the schools involved in this study had a school-wide vision for the subject. This originated with the head teacher and was mediated, supported and taken forward by the languages co-ordinator, and by the willingness of class teachers to engage with languages and to attend training in a new subject. Funding for training and for physical and human resources had been significant in enabling this development, as had the support and training opportunities provided by LAs, various networks and some secondary schools. However, in some schools, there was still a degree of uncertainty about the place of languages in the curriculum and on the timetable.

Schools who have moved farthest towards embedded, secure provision were those that capitalised on a wide range of languages-related opportunities, including local networks; ongoing training; international partnerships; short and long-term projects and local and national sources of funding and award schemes. These schools made good use of any staff members with languages expertise as well as seeking out support within the wider school community.

A commitment to languages teaching at both school and individual teacher level is of paramount importance if languages are to become an embedded part of the primary curriculum. This requires an understanding of the intrinsic and extrinsic value of being able to communicate in another language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well as an understanding of how languages can contribute to and enhance children's learning in other areas of the curriculum. Schools have an expectation that funding for training and ongoing professional development will be maintained and that training to teach languages becomes an integral part of initial teacher education; head teachers in the study clearly expect to be able to recruit staff with this expertise in the future.

## **11 Points for consideration**

This section is intended to provide brief recommendations for the main issues to be taken into consideration by different groups involved in the provision of languages, arising from the research study.

### **11.1 Schools at an early stage of introducing languages**

- Establishing a school wide commitment and strategy towards teaching languages which draws on and validates local knowledge and expertise (children, staff, parents, community members);
- Selecting the delivery model which best suits the current situation and which takes into account existing and potential staff expertise and confidence;
- Supporting teachers in language upskilling and developing basic skills in languages pedagogy;
- Identifying local and national funding and using this to support training, resource selection and the development of international links and partnerships.

### **11.2 Schools with established provision**

- Ensuring a secure place for languages in the curriculum and on the timetable and the provision of 60 minutes per week teaching time across Key Stage 2;
- Ensuring that progression in children's learning is built into schemes of work and that arrangements are in place to monitor and assess children's learning and development;
- Supporting teachers, through training if necessary, in developing their knowledge and skills in teaching literacy and intercultural understanding;
- Developing cross-curricular learning of languages and links with other areas of learning including literacy;
- Establishing effective relationships with secondary schools to exchange knowledge and expertise in languages teaching and learning and support children's transition from one phase to the next.

### **11.3 Local Authorities**

- Maintaining high quality support for languages teaching in primary schools through a range of training, advice and networks;
- Facilitating collaboration through cross phase partnerships and cluster groupings;
- Supporting the employment of Foreign Language Assistants and involvement in international partnerships.

#### **11.4 Secondary schools**

- Entering into learning partnerships with primary school colleagues to share and develop knowledge and expertise;
- Reviewing the school's languages curriculum in the light of the objectives for children's learning in primary schools;
- Deciding how children's prior achievements in languages can be built on in secondary schools to maintain children's enthusiasm for languages learning.

#### **11.5 Initial Teacher Education providers**

- Ensuring that teachers are adequately prepared and trained to teach a language as part of their initial teacher education, including language upskilling where needed;
- Reviewing both general and specific programmes of study to ensure teachers are enabled to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to develop children's intercultural understanding;
- Enabling teachers to explore the links and synergies between literacy and languages teaching.

#### **11.6 Policy makers**

- Ensuring adequate long-term funding for the ongoing training needs of staff in primary schools, including language upskilling;
- Establishing a common and agreed approach to the languages training needs of teachers with other government agencies e.g. QCA, TDA with respect to initial teacher education (ITE) in particular;
- Ensuring that all ITE trainees have a basic understanding of the requirements of teaching languages before they qualify;
- Promoting further research and development in key areas such as transition, intercultural understanding and assessment for learning in languages.



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## **Technical annexes**

### **Annex A: Strand 2 - setting up the study, data collection and analysis procedures**

#### **Selecting the case study schools**

In the first few months of the study, in consultation with local authority advisors, Ofsted inspectors, teacher education providers and other experts with knowledge of primary languages teaching a sample of 80 primary schools were identified and contacted by the research team to gauge their willingness to participate in the research project. Subsequently 40 primary schools were selected to form a cohort of case study schools for Strand 2 of this three-year longitudinal study. A sample size of 40 was considered to be appropriate for reflecting the variety of approaches to, and perspectives on, languages likely to be found in primary schools already providing languages learning at Key Stage 2 in England. In addition, this allowed data gathering to be spread across a relatively large number of schools thus ensuring minimal intrusion and burden on individual schools, staff members and children. Although schools were asked to indicate their willingness to be involved for all three years of the study this sample size also allowed for the possibility of schools withdrawing due to unforeseen circumstances, as indeed happened in three instances. Principal selection criteria were an existing commitment to providing languages learning at Key Stage 2 and there being a sufficiently developed structure in place such that the research team could expect continuity of commitment for at least the duration of the study.

#### **Ethics procedures**

In line with The Open University's ethics protocols, the research team asked individual schools to take responsibility for informing parents about the research project and for obtaining their consent to their child's participation. To assist schools with this, the research team drafted a letter for schools to send to parents on their own letter-headed notepaper; schools were free to choose whether to use this letter. Prior to any visit by a researcher, each school was asked to confirm in writing how they had informed parents. This procedure was carried out in each year of the study.

#### **Administration of data collection instruments**

In the first year of the project, 2006/07, all 40 schools were visited; in 2007/08 two schools withdrew from the project but were replaced by two new schools. Two further schools were unable to accommodate a visit due to industrial action and staff illness; however, both schools stated clearly that they wished to continue participating in the project. In the 38 schools visited in 2007/08 the same types of data were collected as in 2006/07, but using the amended class teacher interview schedules which included specific questions for the schools' languages co-ordinators. In 2008/09, one school was unable to participate due to staffing issues; the 39 remaining schools were all visited (see Annex C for details of the total lesson observation, questionnaire, interview and focus group dataset gathered in each year of the study).

#### **Foci of the Strand 2 research instruments in each year of the project**

Research instruments incorporated advice from the Steering Group: a group of experts in the field set up by the DCSF to advise and comment on aspects of the research, and were then piloted; amendments were made in light of both sets of feedback before being used with the case study schools.

One of the key aims of this research was to track changes and development in schools' languages provision over the three years of the project and therefore each year all instruments for Strand 2 were reviewed and amended to pursue emergent issues. In order to promote consistency in the use of the research instruments, specific training in their use was provided each year for every member of the research team involved in data gathering.

In 2006/07, the key themes explored in the semi-structured interviews were:

- awareness of and commitment to Key Stage 2 languages provision - what does the model in each case study school look like?;
- the pedagogic approach for languages;
- the influence of the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages;
- perceptions of the potential of languages learning;
- influences on provision (short- and long-term).

In 2007/08, the key interview themes were changes and/ or developments since 2006/07 with regard to:

- planning for languages in the primary curriculum;
- languages pedagogy;
- fun and enjoyment in languages learning;
- the intercultural dimension in languages learning;
- cross-curricular teaching of languages;
- the Year 6 learning experience;
- sustainability issues surrounding languages provision.

In 2008/09, the key themes were changes and developments since 2007/08 with regard to:

- staffing models for languages and CPD;
- curriculum, planning and assessment;
- Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 transition;
- involvement in additional languages activities (international projects, partner school(s) abroad, visits abroad, language clubs);
- finances;
- sustainability issues surrounding languages provision.

## **Approaches to analysis**

With agreement from participants, interviews and focus group discussions were digitally audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis purposes. The quality of the transcriptions for each school was checked by the researcher responsible for visiting that particular school. All data was subsequently anonymised. *NVivo*, a software package designed to support the analysis of qualitative data, has been used each year to assist thematic analysis of the observation, interview and focus group data. The primary transcriptions were first transferred into standard templates designed by the research team. Upon completion, these documents were subject to quality assurance checks by project manager at the three institutions before being imported into the *NVivo* program. In 2006/07, key themes were analysed by individual respondent type (i.e. head teacher; class teacher etc.); in 2007/08 and 2008/09, identified and emerging themes were explored by looking across the data from different respondent types. The observation data have been further supported by quantitative analysis of fieldworkers' systematic observations. The children's questionnaire data, collected in the first and second year of the project, was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and analysed with support from the package. In each year of the study, in the main the data have been analysed by either pairs or small groups of researchers.

## **Annex B: Strand 3 - setting up the study, data collection and analysis procedures**

### **Selecting the enhanced case study schools**

During the first Strand 2 visits, the 40 case study schools were each asked to indicate their willingness to participate in Strand 3 of the study. Of those who agreed, eight were selected and thus became designated as 'enhanced' case study schools. The 'enhanced' sample was constructed so as to include schools teaching French (5 schools), Spanish (3 schools) and German (1 school).

### **Selecting 'control' schools**

A sample of eight schools, who were not currently teaching languages, was selected to act as 'control' schools for the Year 6 investigation of the cross-curricular impact of languages learning in 2006/07. Every effort was made to match this sample with the sample of enhanced case study schools, in terms of school and pupil characteristics. However, in 2007/08, three of the 'control' schools withdrew from the research, and proved impossible to replace as the number of schools not teaching languages was rapidly decreasing. Further investigation showed that other 'control' schools had also begun to teach languages, and it thus proved impossible to provide a 'control' sample matching the enhanced case study schools in 2007/08. In 2008/09 this aspect of the study was replaced with telephone interviews with literacy co-ordinators who agreed to be interviewed following the Strand 2 visits in 2008/09.

### **Ethics procedures**

As per the Strand 2 fieldwork and again to conform with The Open University's ethics protocols, in 2006/07 and 2007/08 the 'enhanced' and 'control' schools were asked to take responsibility for obtaining parental permission for their child's participation in this research project. The 'enhanced' schools were asked to take responsibility for obtaining parental permission for their child's participation in 2008/09. (The same type of research activities were not repeated in the 'control' schools in 2008/09, as stated above.)

### **Design of data collection instruments: oracy and literacy**

Oracy and literacy tasks were specially designed for administration to small groups of children from each of Years 3-6, in line with the language learning objectives described in the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* for each year group. The tasks were designed and piloted in French, and parallel versions were then produced in Spanish and in German. All oracy tasks were designed for group administration. The Year 3 groups undertook an interactive role play with a large sized doll as stimulus, answered questions about a series of pictures, and sang songs and rhymes. The Year 4 groups engaged in conversation with the researcher on personal topics, undertook an interactive role-play with prompt cards as stimulus, and answered questions about a series of pictures, including a subset of questions designed to explore their understanding of grammatical morphology (e.g. singular vs plural). The Year 5 groups also engaged in conversation and interactive role-play with prompt cards as stimulus and answered questions about pictures. In addition they answered questions about likes and dislikes, and in 2007/08 and 2008/09 they also undertook a more extended listening comprehension activity (listening to a story and sorting out a series of accompanying pictures to match the narrative). The Year 6 groups engaged in interaction and a more complex interactive role-play with prompt cards as stimulus. They undertook an extended listening comprehension activity (listening to a story and sorting accompanying pictures). They then reconstructed the story orally in the target language.

In line with the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages*, the literacy tasks undertaken by the different year groups were more sharply differentiated than the oracy tasks. Where reading was concerned, Year 3 read aloud at word level as a group and matched word cards with pictures, while Years 4 and 5 read aloud simple texts in different genres as a group and answered comprehension questions on these. Year 6 read aloud a longer and more complex text as a group and answered comprehension questions. Year 6 also undertook a group problem-solving task, identifying the genre of 3 different texts (poem, story and information text), and justifying their decisions through explanation of language clues and reading strategies. Concerning writing, Year 3 were asked to complete partly written words (15 items), Year 4 were asked to label pictures with single words (15 items), and Years 4 and 5 completed gapfill exercises on simple narrative texts (each 10 items). Year 5 also undertook a sentence building task (sorting out sets of jumbled words provided on cards to form target language sentences: 8 items). Year 6 constructed a written response to a pen pal letter, using a 12-stage writing frame. All writing tasks were undertaken by individuals except for the Year 5 sentence building task.

Full descriptions of all assessment tasks used with each Year group are provided in the web based Technical Appendices.

### **Administration of data collection instruments**

Each year, a team of assessors with appropriate language skills was identified and trained to run the assessment programme for oracy and literacy (including Asset Languages Speaking tests, where these were used). The assessors were members of the research team plus a small number of external consultants. A trained assessor visited each enhanced case study school for 1-2 days in the summer term to administer the assessment tasks.

For the assessments of oracy and literacy, schools were asked to provide a gender balanced group representative of the relevant class(es), normally 6 children. Schools were asked to provide a separate quiet room where the assessor could work with each group in turn, with a target time of 30-40 minutes for Year 3 and Year 4, and up to 60 minutes for Year 5 and Year 6. School cooperation was excellent, and the assessment programme ran successfully in all three years. All oral activities were digitally audio-recorded for later analysis.

In 2006/07, the specially devised instrument to measure the cross-curricular impact of languages learning with Year 6 children was administered to at least one intact Year 6 class in each of the eight enhanced case study schools, and the eight 'control' schools. Year 6 Key Stage 2 national curriculum assessment data for English, Maths and Science was also collected from these schools; this information was expected to contribute to the investigation of the cross-curricular impact of languages learning.

### **Literacy co-ordinator interviews**

For the reasons outlined at the beginning of this annex, it proved unfeasible to continue with the Year 6 investigation of the cross-curricular impact of languages learning in 2008/09 (the final year of the study). However, in a continued effort to explore this aspect, the literacy co-ordinators in the case study schools were asked to take part in a supplementary interview survey. Fifteen literacy co-ordinators agreed and were interviewed about their perceptions of the relationship between languages and literacy, the links between languages learning and teaching and literacy learning and teaching, and their observations about transferable knowledge and skills which may be attributable to children's languages learning experiences.



## Approaches to analysis

Detailed scoring schemes were devised for the group activities used with each Year group, to assess performance in oracy and literacy in French, Spanish and German. These aimed as far as possible to provide comparable information across year groups, as well as across the three years of the project. As far as oracy was concerned, therefore, the complete performance of each group, undertaking a variety of tasks, was scored on a number of shared dimensions using common 4-point rating scales (0-3). Scales were created for the following dimensions of oracy:

- Target language pronunciation
- Target language vocabulary production
- Production of target language phrases and sentences
- Target language conversational interaction.

Scales were also created for rating group performance on two dimensions of literacy:

- Reading aloud
- Reading comprehension.

Children's target language writing was scored individually. To facilitate comparability of results across Year groups, mean percentage scores were calculated separately for each school/ Year group, and results are presented in this form in section 8.

In line with the expectations of the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages* the assessment tasks for each year group included one or two distinctive activities which were rated separately and are reported on individually in section 8. As described above these included 'rhyme and song' (Year 3); use of morphological information (Year 4); sentence-building (Year 5); identification of text types (Year 6).

The scoring/ rating schemes described above were applied to the data by three members of the research team. (Two members acted as raters throughout, the third took part in the 2007/08 and 2008/09 assessments). Checks on inter-rater reliability were carried out involving double ratings of a proportion of the data; any inter-rater differences were resolved through discussion.

Data from the 'Attitudes to languages' and 'Knowledge about Language' instrument administered to Year 6 children in the enhanced case study schools and control schools in 2006/07 were entered into SPSS and a range of statistical analyses were carried out.

## Annex C: Summary overview of Strand 2 dataset

Table summarising dataset gathered in each year of the study:

Type of data	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Total
Year 3 observations	8	11	6	25
Year 4 observations	10	7	10	27
Year 5 observations	6	10	9	25
Year 6 observations	11	6	9	26
Mixed year group observations	9	12	11	32
<b>Total no. of observations</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>135</b>
Year 3 questionnaires	136	144	--	280
Year 4 questionnaires	139	146	--	285
Year 5 questionnaires	141	152	--	293
Year 6 questionnaires	142	143	--	285
<b>Total no. of questionnaires</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>1143</b>
Head teacher interviews	38	33	37	108
Languages co-ordinator interviews	20	37	35	92
Class teacher interviews	59	56	42	157
Teaching assistant interviews	8	8	--	16
Foreign language assistant interviews <sup>2</sup>	--	--	9	9
<b>Total no. of interviews</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>397</b>
Year 3 focus groups	27	35	--	62
Year 4 focus groups	23	36	--	59
Year 5 focus groups	22	36	38 <sup>3</sup>	96
Year 6 focus groups	20	34	39	93
Year 3&4 focus groups <sup>4</sup>	16	--	--	16
Year 5&6 focus groups	13	--	--	13
<b>Total no. of focus groups</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>344</b>

<sup>2</sup> In 2007/08, a number of staff interviews had highlighted the importance of their foreign language assistant's input to languages lessons; therefore in 2008/09, the research team decided to interview those foreign language assistants working in the case study schools wherever possible (rather than teaching assistants)

<sup>3</sup> In 2008/09, focus group discussions were carried out with groups of Year 5 and Year 6 children only

<sup>4</sup> Mixed years' focus group discussions were carried out in 2006/07 only (Year 3&4; Year 5&6)

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