

Routes into Languages Event Evaluations in England 2013-2014

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Executive Summary

- 1 This report presents the findings of an evaluation survey of Routes into Languages activities in England in 2013-14. It set out to collect information on learners' experiences of Routes activities and to measure indications of attitudinal change in the immediate aftermath of events. The survey follows on from similar previous surveys in 2011-12 and 2012-13.
- 2 Data for the report came from all nine regional consortia in England and consisted of 4861 learner pre-event questionnaires, 4646 learner post-event questionnaires and 355 teacher post-event questionnaires.
- 3 Responses to learner pre-event questionnaires showed that most respondents had positive attitudes to language learning. Approximately three quarters of them enjoyed language learning, enjoyed meeting people from other cultures and perceived that languages would help them to get a job. More than half of respondents indicated that they would like to continue with language study.
- 4 Attitudes were found to vary according to several different factors: gender (boys had more negative attitudes than girls), year group (learners in years 7, 9 and 11 had more negative attitudes than those in other year groups) and the type of school attended (learners in disadvantaged schools had more negative attitudes than those in other schools).
- 5 Learners in year 11 were the least likely to express interest in carrying on with language study.
- 6 A small proportion of participants were found to have hostile attitudes to languages.
- 7 Post-event questionnaires showed that participants had been involved in a wide range of different Routes into Languages activities. 'Why study languages?' and cultural events were the most frequent of these.
- 8 Responses to post-event questionnaires revealed that most learners rated Routes activities highly and they valued the information they received. All Routes activities attended were evaluated as excellent or good by the vast majority of participants.
- 9 Indications of positive attitudinal change were found in all areas after events. There was an increase of 5.2% in the proportion of learners who reported enjoyment of language learning; an increase of 6.1% in the proportion of learners who reported interest in meeting people from other cultures and an increase of 7.9% was found in the proportion of respondents who perceived languages would be useful for jobs.
- 10 The percentage of learners who agreed that they would like to carry on with language learning rose by 6.1% in the post-event survey.
- 11 Post-event responses appeared to show indications of greater attitudinal impact of Routes events among particular groups of learners. Particularly striking was an increase of 8.2% in the proportion of year 9 learners who expressed interest in continuing with language study in post-event questionnaires and a similar 7.7% increase among respondents from disadvantaged schools.

- 12 Events were not enjoyed by everyone and a small proportion of respondents continued to demonstrate negative attitudes to language learning in the post-event survey.
- 13 Responses to teacher post-event questionnaires indicated that almost all teachers perceived Routes activities to be very positive experiences and valuable sources of information for their students.
- 14 More than three-quarters of teachers believed that activities were likely to change attitudes to language learning.
- 15 Overall, survey findings suggest that Routes into Languages activities across England are highly valued by pupils and teachers and that they are providing an immediate motivational lift. Although it is important not to confuse these findings with evidence of longer-term impact, they do contribute to the growing body of evidence that Routes into Languages activities are associated with positive attitudinal change.
- 16 The motivational impact appears to be more pronounced among year 9 learners as well as those from disadvantaged schools and indicates that Routes activities are effectively targeting these groups.

1 Introduction

Routes into Languages is a national programme aimed at increasing participation in language learning across England and is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). It consists of nine regional consortia of universities in England working together to promote languages in schools and colleges in their local areas by organising a wide range of outreach activities and events. This report presents the findings of evaluation surveys conducted with pupils and teachers involved in Routes events in England during 2013-14. The purpose of these surveys was to explore participants' experiences of Routes into Languages activities, to measure indications of learners' attitudinal change towards languages after events and to elicit the perspectives of teachers on the usefulness of Routes activities and their likely attitudinal outcomes. Similar surveys were also carried out in 2011-12 and 2012-13.

The report begins with an explanation of the methodology used, which is then followed by the findings of learner pre-event, learner post-event and teacher post-event surveys.

2 Methodology

Routes into Languages consortia have all been using standard learner pre-event, learner post-event and teacher post-event questionnaires to collect data on the immediate impact of activities since 2011. As Routes has a remit to widen participation in language learning, consortia actively recruit disadvantaged schools to participate in events and in all schools they specifically request for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to be included by teachers. Most activities take place either in universities or in schools. It is possible that participation at university events involves an element of self-selection on the part of students but this is far less likely to be the case for events located in schools.

The pre-event survey set out to elicit learners' perspectives on language learning prior to engagement with a Routes into Languages activity. It consisted of a series of rating-scale statements with which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement and disagreement on a five-point scale. These statements encompassed some key components of motivation including enjoyment of language learning and enjoyment of meeting people from other cultures, which overlap with an integrative motivational orientation¹ (a positive attitude towards speakers of the language and a desire to communicate with them) and an Ideal L2 self² (a desire to speak the language because it is associated with the person we would like to become). Statements also covered the usefulness of languages for jobs, which has links with an instrumental motivational orientation³ (interest in the potential rewards associated with proficiency in the language) or an Ought-to L2 self⁴ (a desire to meet

¹ Gardner (1985, 2001); Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant & Mihic (2004)

² Dörnyei (2005)

³ Gardner (1985; 2001)

⁴ Dörnyei (2005)

expectations and avoid negative consequences) as well as the difficulty of language learning. A final open question (Is there anything else you would like to say about learning languages?) was included in order to give respondents the opportunity to provide a perspective on language learning in their own words.

Pre-event questionnaires were completed either at the beginning of an event or a few weeks prior to an event in cases where consortia sent questionnaires to schools in advance.

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

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

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

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

Teacher questionnaires were completed at the end of the activities.

Findings presented in this report focus on the quantitative data collected. Responses from open questions are not included and are being utilised separately for the development of qualitative case studies of schools and colleges.

Due to the nature of the methodology employed in collecting data from the learners, it has not proved possible to link each pupil pre-event and post-event questionnaire. However, it is believed that the two population samples (pre and post) consist mainly of the same individuals although not everyone who completed a pre-event questionnaire also completed a post-event questionnaire and vice versa. Although these differences between the pre- and post-event samples will have produced errors in the final results, it is considered that such errors will have been minimal due to the large size of both samples and because all schools have been matched across the pre- and post-event data. Data from schools that could not be matched has been discounted. Learners' responses have also been analysed by gender,

year group and type of school/college attended. In a number of such cases the samples created have remained large (i.e. around 1000) but in other cases, samples are much smaller and, therefore, the information may be less reliable in the smaller samples. An additional complicating factor with this part of the analysis is that it is apparent that some learners elected to provide more information about themselves in one questionnaire than they did in the other (e.g. gender).

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

Due to the significant variations in the year group sample each year, it would not be reliable to compare overall survey findings year on year. However, where possible comparisons between this year's survey findings and previous findings are highlighted (for example, year 9 results can be considered across all surveys).

3 Characteristics of learner sample

A set of 4861 pre-event and 4646 post-event questionnaires from 264 schools and colleges in England were returned by all nine regions. As stated above, all schools represented in pre-event questionnaires were also represented in post-event questionnaires but the numbers of returns from individual schools were not always the same. The largest number of questionnaires came from the South East, followed by Yorkshire and The Humber and the South West. These three regions accounted for 55% of pre-event and 55.4% of post-event questionnaires.

All year groups between 7 and 13 were represented in returns. Learners in Key Stage 3 (KS3) were far more frequent respondents than those in older age groups. This is accounted for by similarly large samples from years 8 and 9, which means that responses of these two year groups can be considered more reliable than those of other year groups.

Table 1: Respondents' Key Stages					
Pre-event questionnaires			Post-event questionnaires		
Year	Responses	%	Year	Responses	%
KS3	3349	68.9	KS3	3135	67.5
KS4	939	19.3	KS4	928	20.0
KS5	573	11.8	KS5	583	12.5
Total	4861		Total	4646	

There were more female students (55.1% pre-event and 50.9% post-event) represented in the survey than males (40.8% pre-event and 36.5% post-event). This is not unexpected given evidence that girls are more likely to study languages in post-compulsory age groups.⁵ In both questionnaires, some respondents did not provide gender information and this was more pronounced in the post-event survey.

3.1 *Types of schools and colleges attended*

As Routes into Languages has a remit to widen participation in language learning, state maintained schools attended by respondents were analysed according to widening participation (WP) criteria including free school meals, Pupil Premium, GCSE achievement etc.⁶ with the result that schools were placed into one of three categories:

- WP Category 1 schools are those which meet widening participation criteria (i.e. disadvantaged schools)
- WP Category 2 schools are those which meet some widening participation criteria (i.e. partially disadvantaged schools)
- WP Category 3 schools are those which do not meet widening participation criteria (i.e. schools which are not disadvantaged although it is acknowledged that they are likely to include some disadvantaged learners)

Information of this kind was only available for state maintained schools and so independent schools (i.e. fee-paying) and sixth form and further education colleges were regarded as separate categories. As this is a school-level analysis, it does not reveal anything about the circumstances of individual learners who participated in Routes into Languages activities. Nonetheless, it does provide useful information about the range of schools and colleges engaging with Routes and shows that schools in widely differing socio-economic circumstances are involved in Routes activities.

As can be seen in Table 2, activities in 2013-14 involved a full range of schools and colleges. However, there is greater representation of WP3 schools in this survey.

⁵ Carr & Pauwels (2009); Taylor & Marsden (2014)

⁶ Data provided by the East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership

Table 2: Respondents' school categories				
Categories	Pre-event respondents	%	Post-event respondents	%
WP Category 1	1014	20.9	935	20.1
WP Category 2	1132	23.3	1115	24.0
WP Category 3	2121	43.6	2009	43.2
Independent schools	376	7.7	320	6.9
Sixth form/further education colleges	217	4.5	265	5.7
Missing	1	0.0	2	0.0
Totals	4861		4646	

4 Findings: pre-event questionnaires

4.1 *Attitudes to language learning*

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

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

For the purposes of this report, agree and strongly agree responses have been collated in the text but can still be seen separately in the corresponding figures and tables. Percentages have been rounded up ($\geq 0.5\%$) or down ($\leq 0.5\%$) in the figures.

Responses to the statements showed largely positive attitudes to language learning as 74.3% of learners agreed (i.e. agreed and strongly agreed) that they enjoyed learning languages; 75.9% agreed that they liked meeting people from other cultures and 71.1% agreed that languages would help them to get a job.

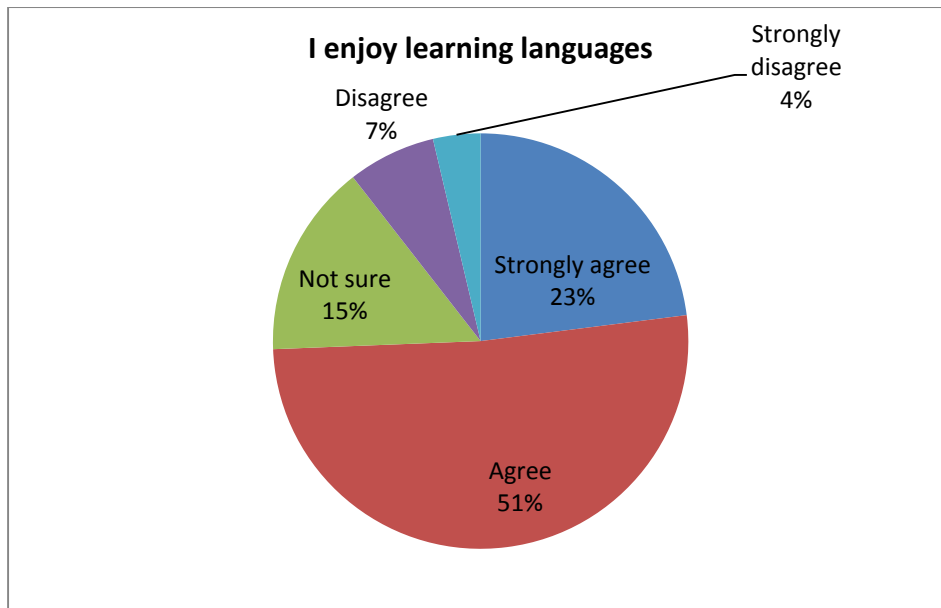


Figure 1: I enjoy learning languages (pre-event)

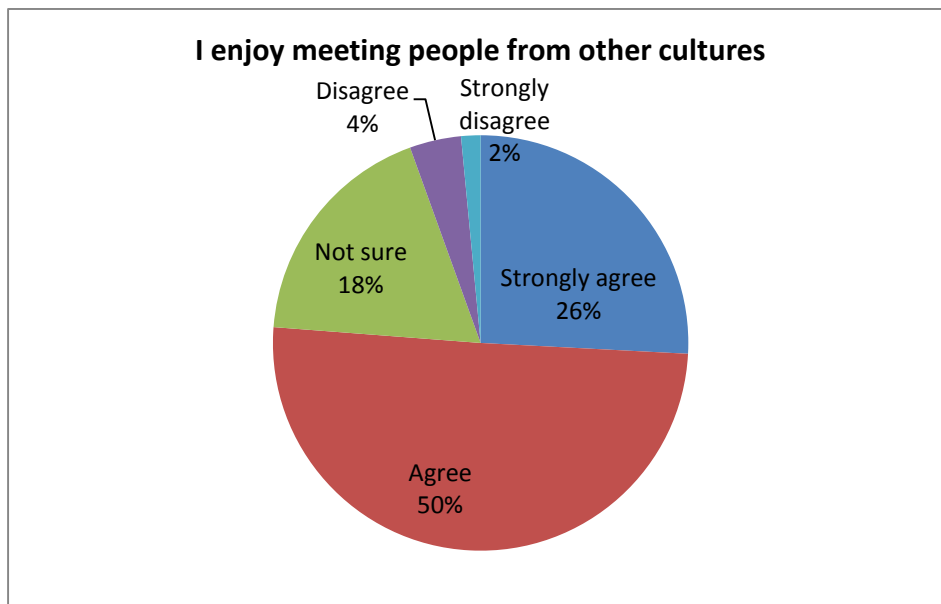


Figure 2: I enjoy meeting people from different cultures (pre-event)

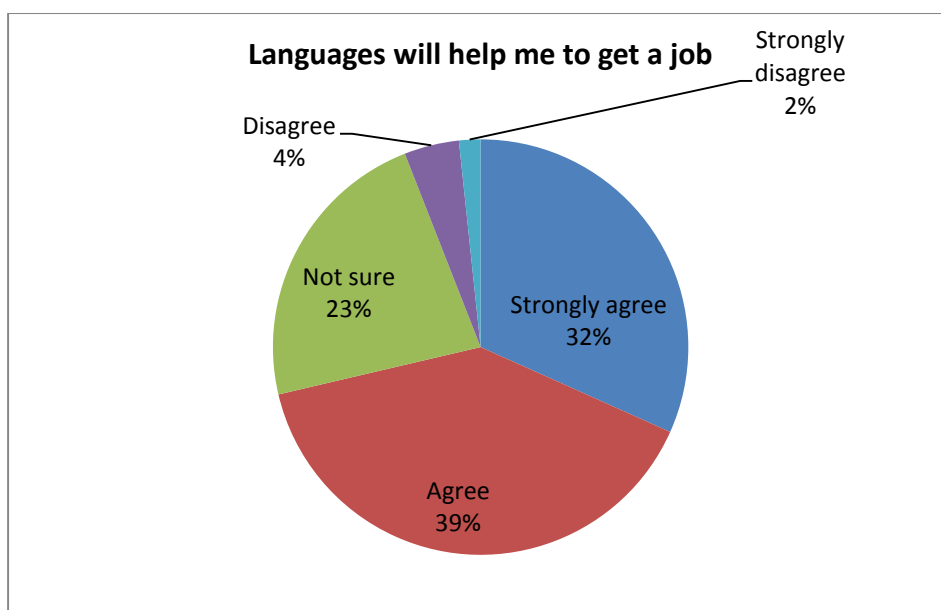


Figure 3: Languages will help me to get a job (pre-event)

Levels of enjoyment of language learning seem high when compared to earlier research studies which have reported that learners do not enjoy languages⁷ and which have drawn attention to negative societal attitudes in the UK.⁸ However, they align closely with previous Routes into Languages surveys.⁹ The reported interest in meeting people from other cultures is also very similar to findings in other Routes surveys and may point to the existence of an integrative motivational orientation or identification with an Ideal L2 self.¹⁰ Support for the idea that languages are useful for jobs suggests that most learners in the survey also possessed an instrumental motivational orientation or identified with an Ought-to L2 self.¹¹ This type of motivation has been associated with UK learners in earlier studies.¹²

As in 2011-12 and 2012-13, survey respondents were less likely to agree that they would like to carry on with languages although this was still supported by 59.5%. As with our previous findings, this seems to suggest that some students who enjoy learning languages do not want to continue studying them.

⁷ e.g. Barton (2003); Watts (2003)

⁸ e.g. Taylor & Marsden (2014)

⁹ e.g. Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010); Gallagher-Brett (2012b; 2014)

¹⁰ Gardner (2001); Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011)

¹¹ Gardner (2001); Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011)

¹² e.g. Coleman, Galaczi & Astruc (2007)

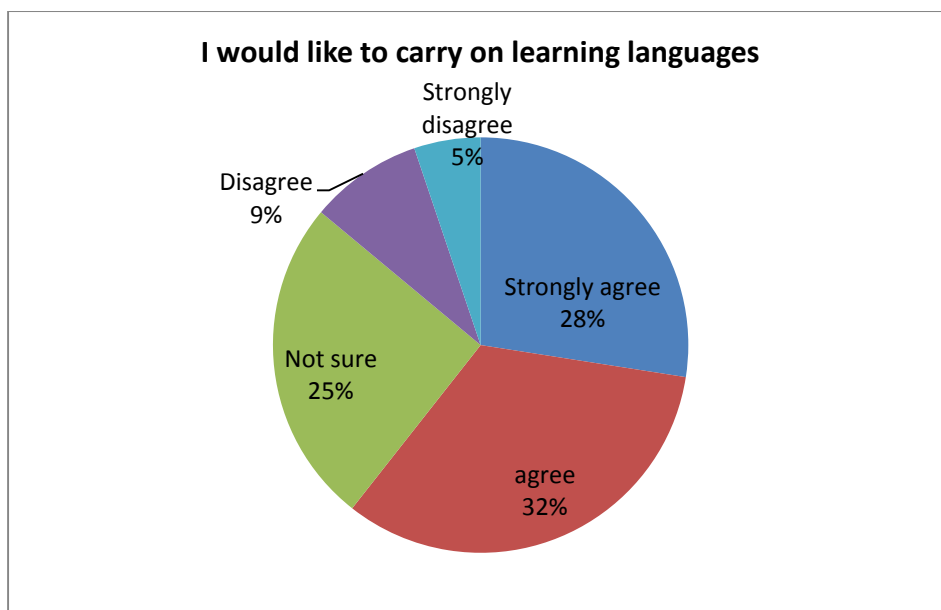


Figure 4: I would like to carry on learning languages (pre-event)

As can be seen in the figures above, all statements attracted strong disagreement from between 2% and 5% of respondents, possibly indicating a small hard core of disaffection with language learning among those participating in Routes into Languages activities. A few learners (between 0.2% and 1.8%) did not respond.

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

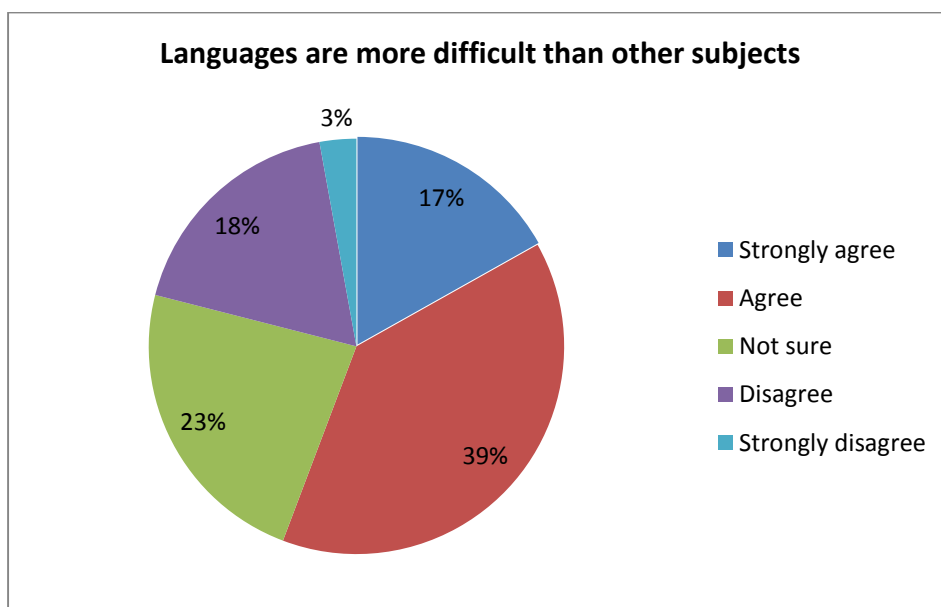


Figure 5: Languages are more difficult than other subjects (pre-event)

4.2 Pre-event responses by gender

Girls generally responded a little more favourably than boys. For example, 78.3% of girls agreed that they enjoyed learning languages compared with 70.2% of boys and 64.7% of girls agreed that they would like to carry on with languages while 55.7% of boys agreed. These findings are similar to those in our previous surveys in 2011-12 and 2012-13 and are not unexpected as research has found that girls tend to have more positive attitudes to languages and are less inclined to be ethnocentric than boys.¹³

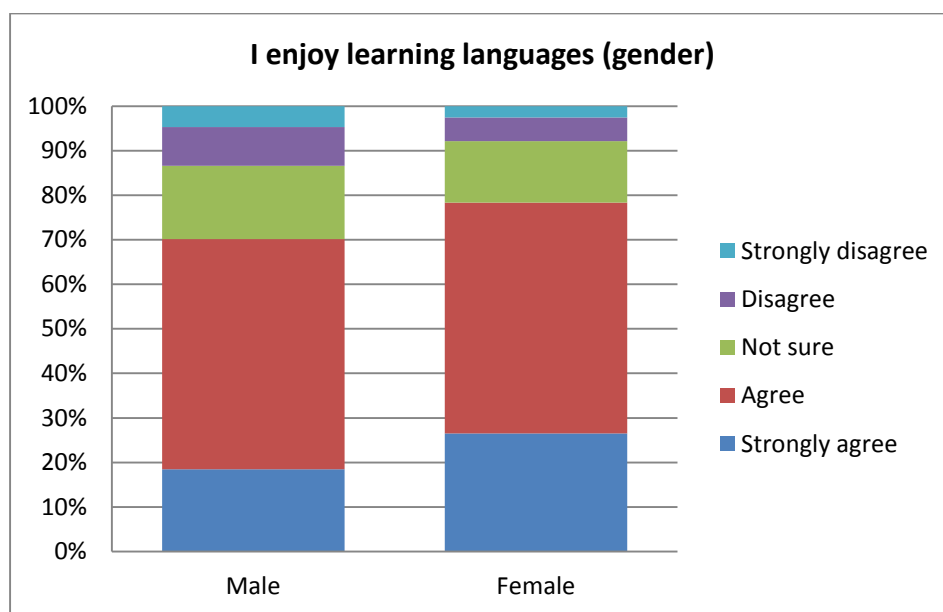


Figure 6: I enjoy learning languages (gender pre-event)

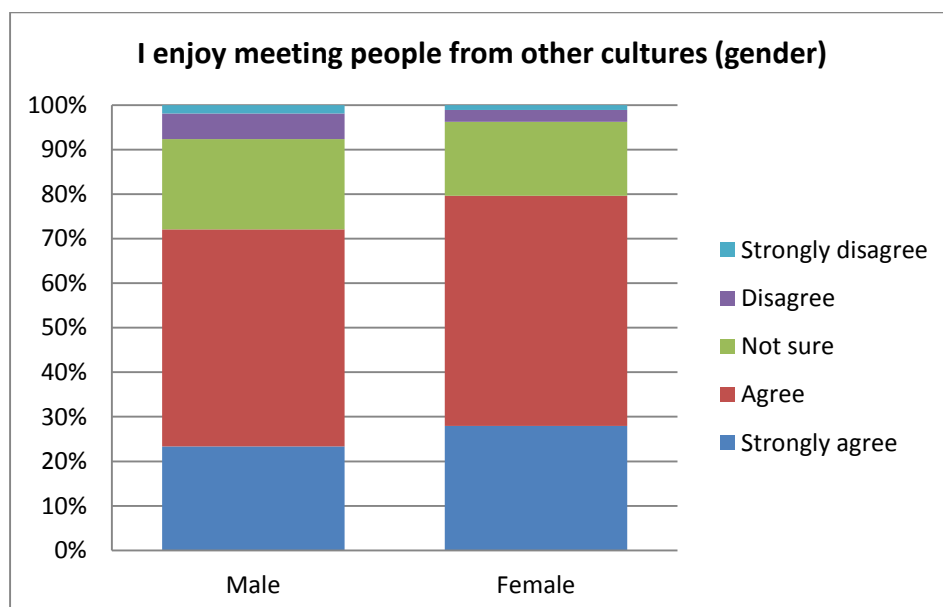


Figure 7: I enjoy meeting people from other cultures (gender pre-event)

¹³ e.g. Carr & Pauwels (2009); Coleman, Galaczi & Astruc (2007)

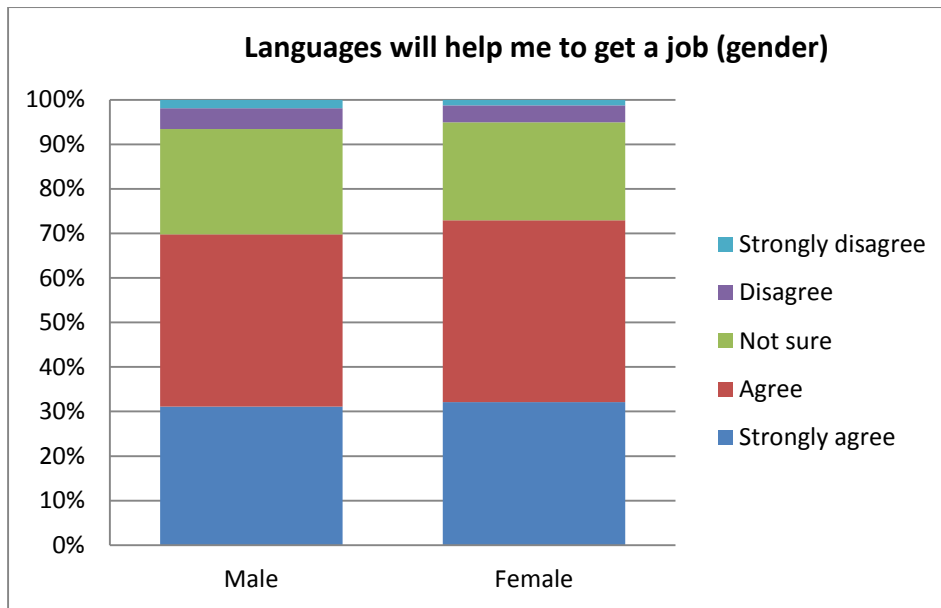


Figure 8: Languages will help me to get a job (gender pre-event)

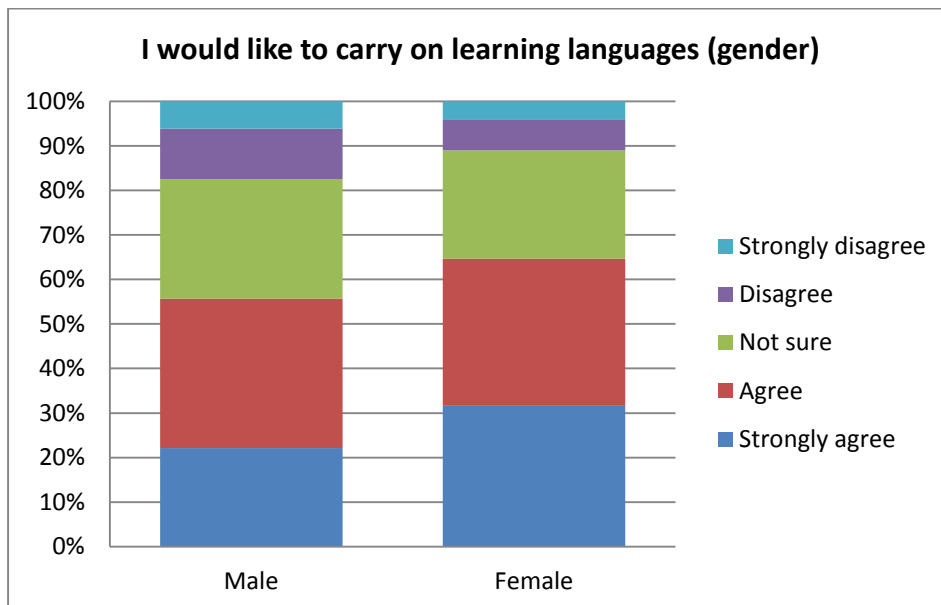


Figure 9: I would like to carry on learning languages (gender pre-event)

4.3 Pre-event responses by year group

As the sample sizes in different year groups varied considerably, caution is needed in interpreting the attitudes of different year groups. The number of year 13 respondents was very small compared with other year groups, especially years 8 and 9. Additionally, findings from our previous evaluation surveys have indicated that questionnaire items relating to continuing with language study and the usefulness of languages for jobs are potentially more hypothetical for young learners in year 7.

As in 2011-12 and 2012-13, respondents in years 12 and 13 showed more positive attitudes than those in other year groups. Almost all of them agreed that they enjoyed learning languages, enjoyed meeting people from other cultures and perceived that languages would be useful for jobs. These findings would seem to point to high levels of instrumental and integrative motivational orientations among these students as well as possible identification with an Ideal L2 self.¹⁴ In addition, 83.2% of year 13s and 80.1% of year 12s indicated that they would like to carry on with languages. Year 13 responses were characterised by high levels of strong agreement. This is likely to be encouraging for the universities in the Routes network as it could suggest the possibility of a high conversion rate to studying languages in higher education. It is difficult to interpret the promising year 12 responses given evidence that languages suffer from a high dropout rate between years 12 and 13.¹⁵ It is possible that participants in these two year groups had, to some extent, self-selected to take part in Routes activities.

Indeed, students in all year groups were found to respond favourably for the most part but in common with earlier evaluation surveys conducted by Routes into Languages, respondents in years 8 and 10 appeared to be consistently more positive than those in years 7, 9 and 11. For example, 79% of year 8 and 83.3% of year 10 respondents agreed that they enjoyed language learning compared with 68.3% of year 7, 66.1% of year 11 and 63.9% of year 9 respondents. Year 7 respondents were particularly unconvinced of the usefulness of languages for jobs (only 49.7% agreement).

With regard to wanting to carry on learning languages, respondents in year 11 were far more negative than those in other year groups. Just 35.6% of year 11 learners agreed that they would like to continue, which is particularly concerning as this is a year group in which important decisions about subject choice are made. As reported in 2011-12 and 2012-13 surveys, year 11 responses showed a large gap between enjoying languages and wanting to engage with other cultures on the one hand and intending to carry on learning languages on the other hand. This could be worthy of further investigation to explore why so many year 11s who enjoy languages do not want to continue learning them.

¹⁴ Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011)

¹⁵ Cambridge Assessment (2009)

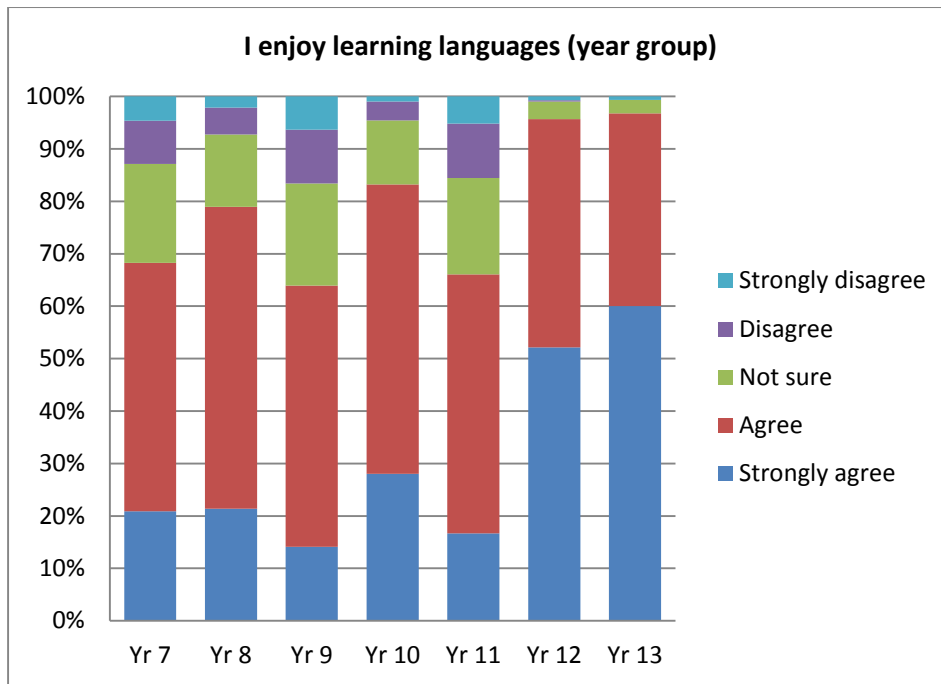


Figure 10: I enjoy learning languages (year group pre-event)

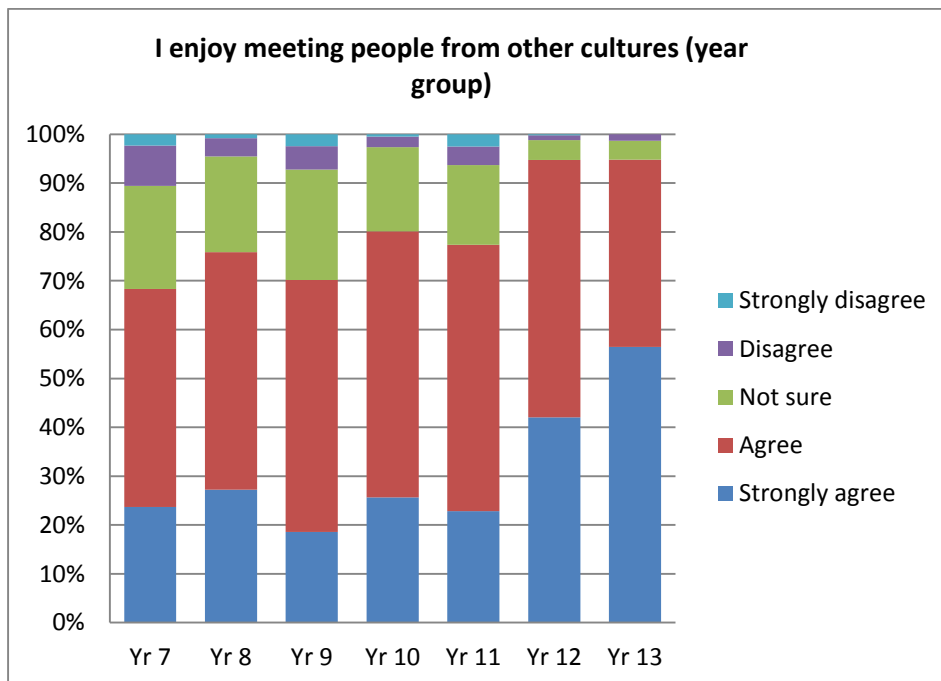


Figure 11: I enjoy meeting people from other cultures (year group pre-event)

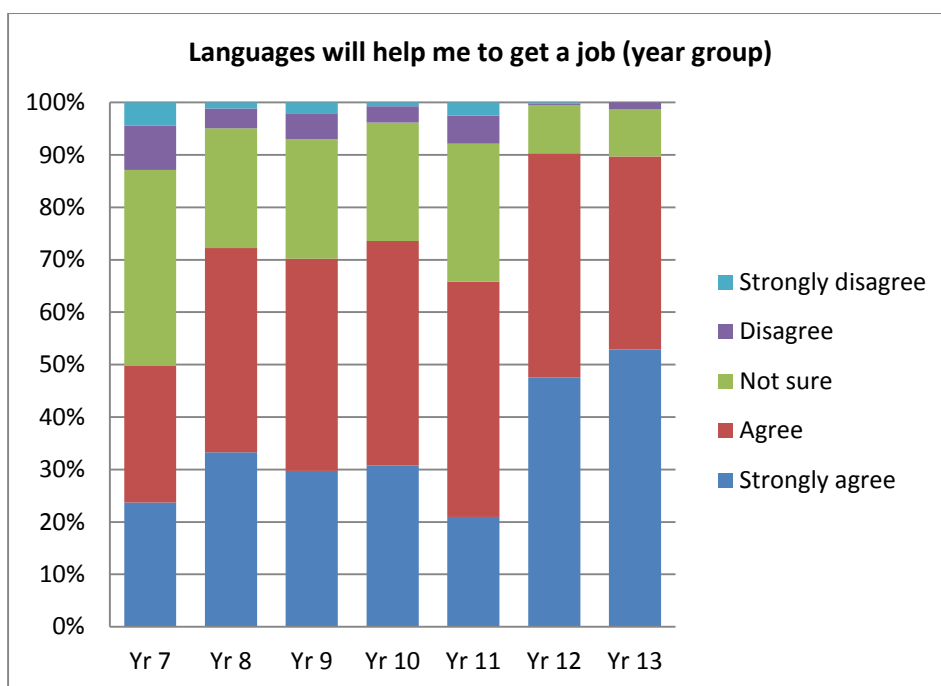


Figure 12: Languages will help me to get a job (year group pre-event)

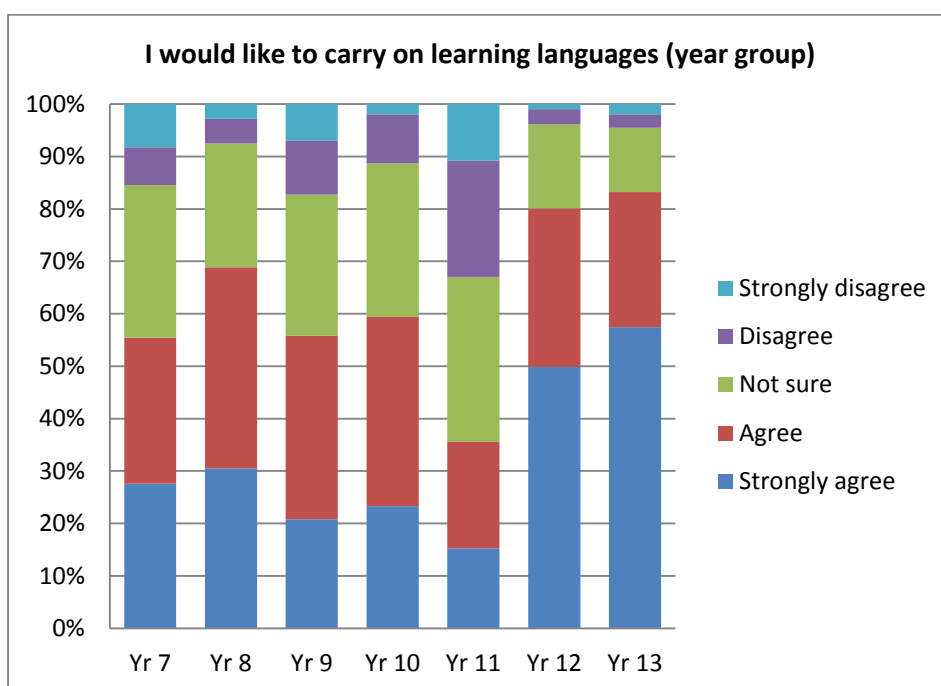


Figure 13: I would like to carry on learning languages (year group pre-event)

Learners in years 7 and 13 were more inclined to agree that languages were difficult compared with other subjects as 65.4% and 63.8% of them agreed this respectively compared with 57.9% of year 11, 56.4% of year 9, 55.6% of year 12, 52.3% of year 8 and 51.1% of year 10 respondents.

4.4 Pre-event responses by school/college category

Attitudes also differed according to school/college category. Respondents in sixth form and further education colleges were significantly more positive than other respondents (in line with years 12 and 13 – these were essentially outliers). Respondents from WP1 schools (i.e. disadvantaged schools) were more negative than those from other schools although differences were not always large. For example, 97.2% of respondents in sixth form/FE colleges reported that they enjoyed learning languages compared with 75.8% in independent schools, 75.9% in WP3, 72.7% in WP2 and 67.5% in WP1 schools. Similarly, 83% of learners in sixth form/FE colleges agreed that they would like to carry on with languages as opposed to 59.6% in independent schools, 64.5% in WP3, 57.7% in WP2 and 51.6% in WP1 schools. These findings would seem to reinforce previous suggestions that languages tend to be socially elitist subjects, which are preferred by students from high performing and socio-economically advantaged schools/colleges.¹⁶

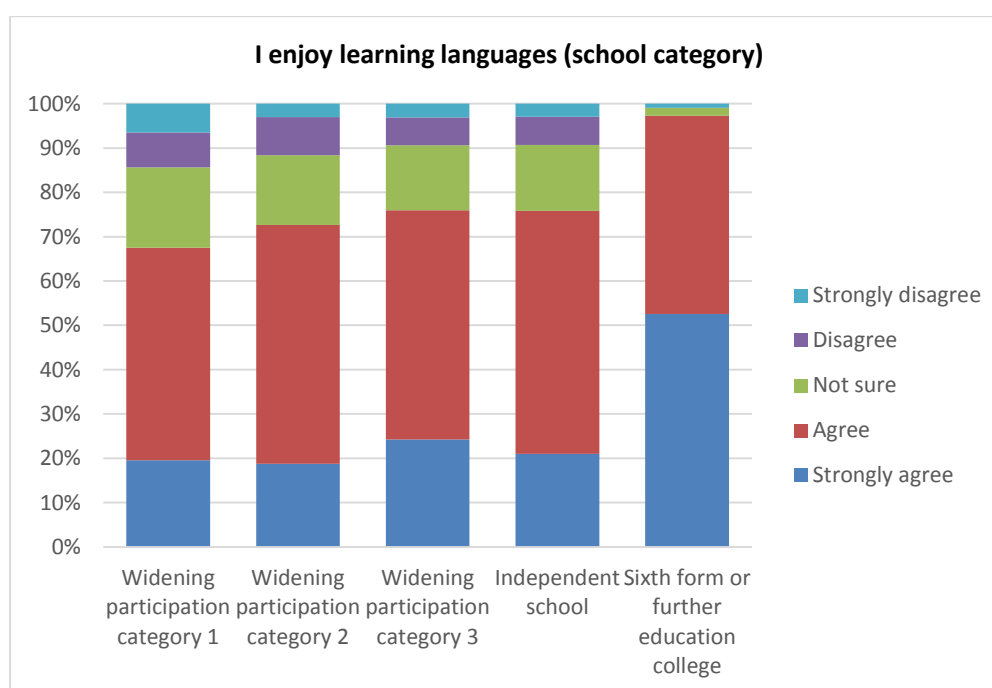


Figure 14: I enjoy learning languages (school/college category pre-event)

¹⁶ Vidal Rodeiro (2009); Gallagher-Brett, Doughty & McGuinness (2014)

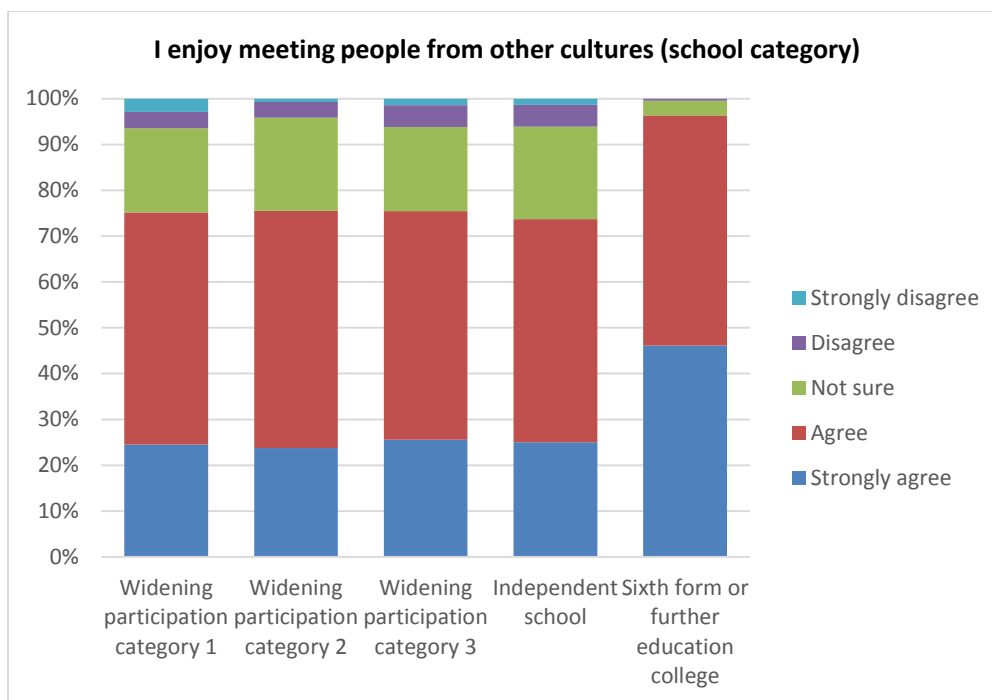


Figure 15: I enjoy meeting people from other cultures (school/college category pre-event)

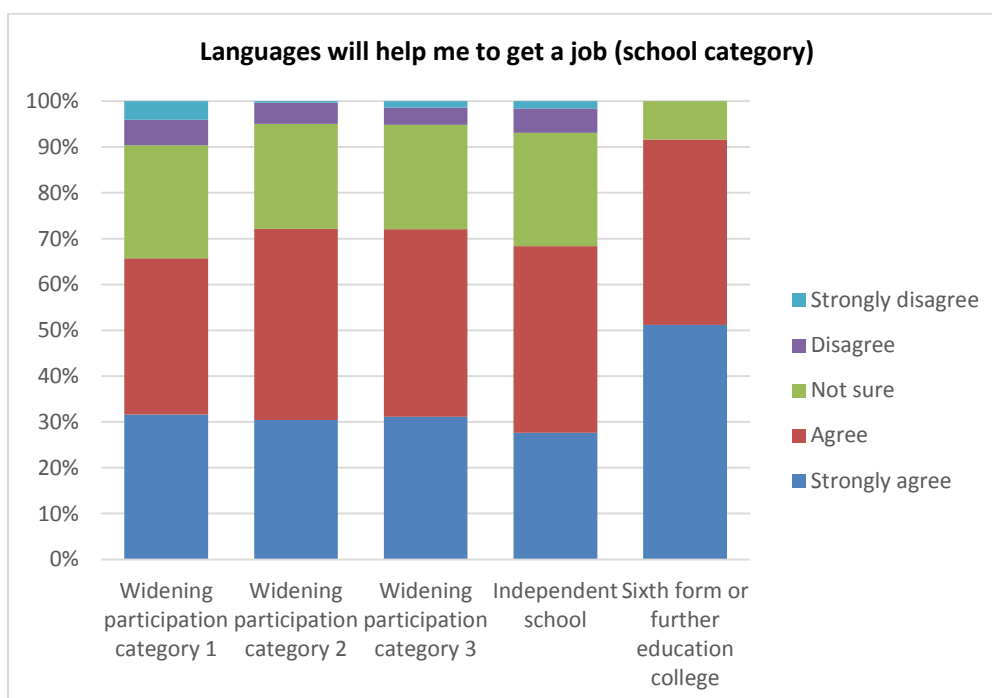


Figure 16: Languages will help me to get a job (school/college category pre-event)

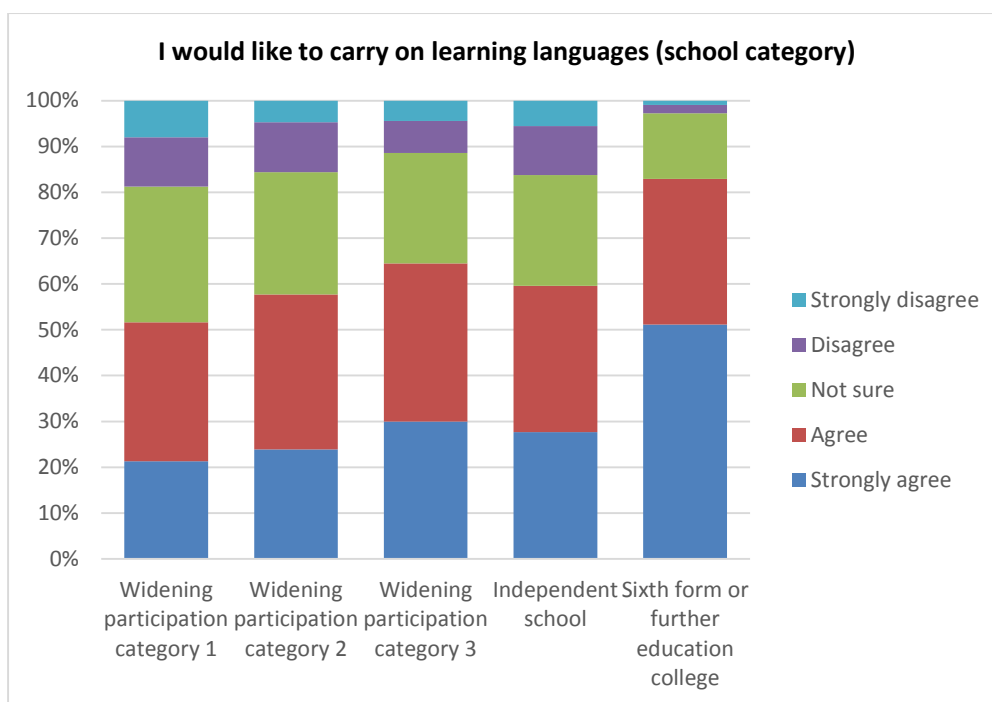


Figure 17: I would like to carry on learning languages (school/college category pre-event)

4.5 Summary of pre-event findings

In summary, responses to pre-event questionnaires indicated that almost three quarters of participants enjoyed learning languages, enjoyed meeting people from other cultures and believed languages would be useful for jobs. Just over half of respondents indicated that they would like to carry on learning languages. A minority of participants expressed less favourable views and a small number appeared to have hostile attitudes. Attitudes were found to vary according to gender (boys were more negative than girls), year group (year 7s, 9s and 11s were more negative than other year groups) and category of school. Learners in disadvantaged schools were more negative than those in other schools whereas learners in sixth form and FE colleges responded much more positively.

5 Findings: post-event questionnaires

5.1 Events attended

Learners took part in a diverse range of Routes into Languages activities, which included revision and study days, languages conferences, cultural events, careers talks, film, media, creative arts and sports events, taster sessions and school visits. Activities took place in different venues but most frequently in schools and universities.

Where possible, activities have been grouped together into categories. For example, World Cup Fever, World Cup 2014 Challenge, Tour de France Carousel, Tour de France Virtuel and Racing with Languages have all been grouped as Sport and Languages. However, it

proved difficult to categorise some activities because they covered more than one topic. A 'languages in higher education day' organised by one consortium, for example, included a year abroad component, information and advice on language degrees and a languages taster session.

As can be seen from Table 3, 'why study languages?' and cultural activities were by far the most frequently attended activities and together accounted for 48.2% of all activity surveyed. These were followed in frequency by language tasters, language enrichment, careers, film and GCSE revision events. Numerous other activities were represented but some only had small numbers of participants (i.e. less than 25) and so comparing attitudes to these and 'why study languages?' events requires a cautious approach.

It is also clear that activities had distinctive aims and purposes such as increasing cultural awareness, raising attainment and providing information, advice and guidance on employability and careers.

Table 3: Activities attended		
Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Why study languages	1191	25.6
Cultural event	1049	22.6
Language Taster	333	7.2
Language Enrichment Event	311	6.7
Careers event	302	6.5
Film event	302	6.5
GCSE Revision	297	6.4
Able Linguist	139	3.0
Student ambassadors in schools	123	2.6
Languages Roadshow	84	1.8
Linguacast Day	78	1.7
A Level revision	76	1.6
A Level study	63	1.4
Film and Culture	62	1.3
Sport and Languages	55	1.2
Languages in higher education	52	1.1
Film School	23	.5
Master class	23	.5
Ambassador e-mentoring	22	.5
Student shadowing	19	.4
Beyond the Classroom	17	.4
Gold Award	13	.3
Music and Languages	10	.2
Summer school	2	.0
Total	4646	

5.2 Experiences of events

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

- Excellent
- Good
- OK
- Poor

Reactions to events overall were very positive with 82.2% of responses excellent or good. Just 2.5% of attendees rated activities as poor. The information received at events was perceived to be excellent or good by 85.8% and poor by 2.3% of respondents. As with the pre-event survey, percentages have been rounded up ($\geq 0.5\%$) or down ($\leq 0.5\%$) in the figures.

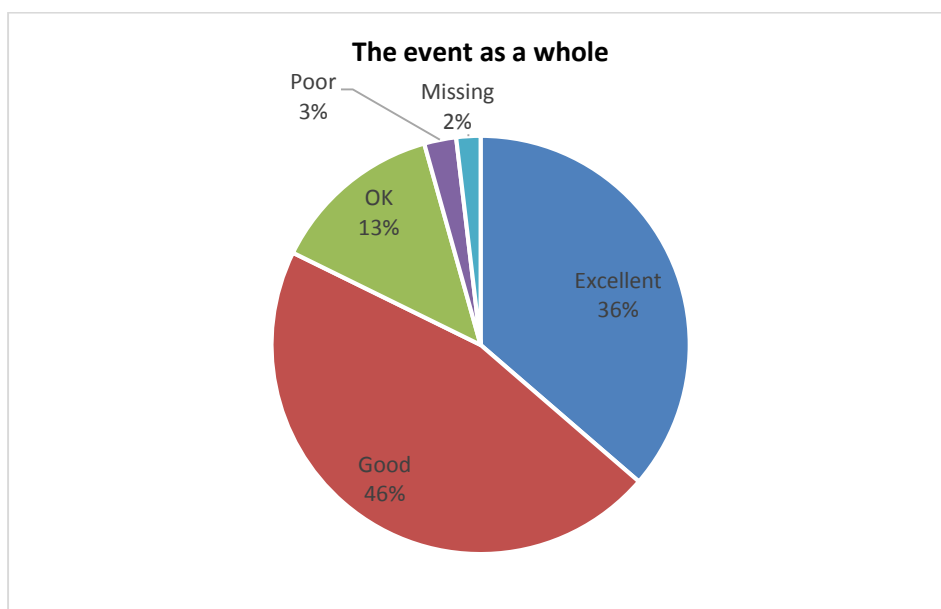


Figure 18: Please rate the event as a whole (post-event)

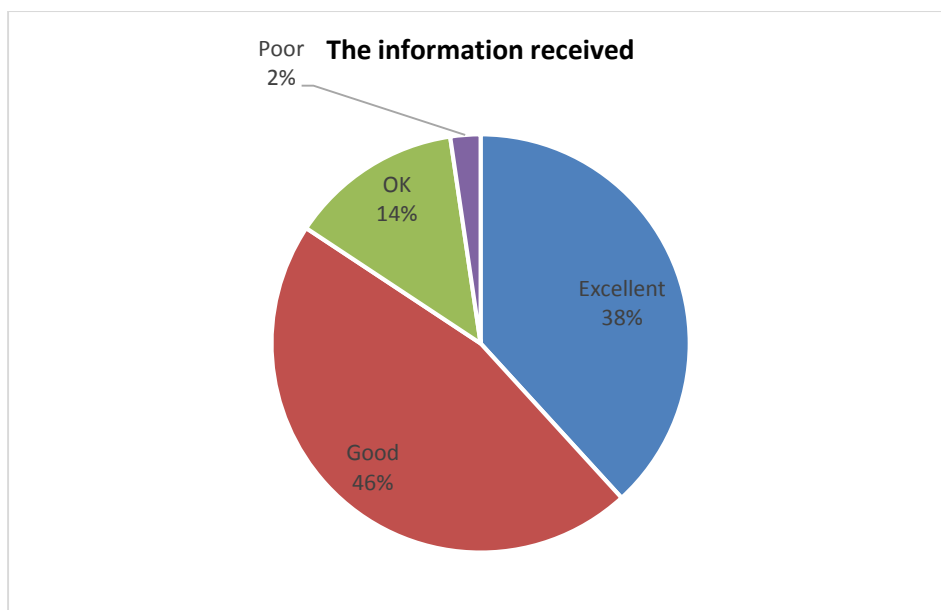


Figure 19: Please rate the information you received (post-event)

These results would seem to suggest that Routes into Languages activities are valued by the overwhelming majority of those participating in them.

5.3 *Experiences of different types of activity*

Respondents' experiences of different activities were analysed. However, as the sample sizes varied so significantly, any attempt to extrapolate cause and effect would be unreliable. Additionally, responses to activities with small numbers of participants could have been influenced by a few individuals. Also, 'why study languages?' included some very short events such as talks at assemblies which clearly could not be expected to have the same impact as activities involving higher levels of engagement.

All activities were evaluated as excellent or good by the vast majority of participants. The activity with the highest overall rating was 'Beyond the Classroom' which forms part of a sustained intervention and which was perceived to be excellent or good by all respondents but this only involved 17 students. Many other activities obtained an approval rating of more than 90% and this included events with large sample sizes.

Table 4: Activities rated as excellent or good by 90%+ of respondents		
Activity	% rating as excellent or good	Respondent no.s
Beyond the Classroom	100%	17
Sport and Languages	96.4%	55
Film School	95.6%	23
Ambassador e-mentoring	95.5%	22
Master class	95.2%	21
A Level Revision	94.7%	76
Careers	94.6%	299
Language Enrichment	92.7%	302
Gold Award	92.4%	13
Able Linguist	91.4%	139
Cultural events	90.5%	1020
Languages Roadshow	90.3%	83
Student ambassadors in schools	90.1%	122

Less popular were 'why study languages?' (71.9%), GCSE revision (74.8%) and events categorised as film and culture (77.4%) but these were still rated as good and excellent by most.

The information received at events was again rated as excellent or good by the vast majority of participants at all activities although it is important to note that not all activities included a focus on providing information. The activities rated most highly for information received were a Master class with 22 participants and a student shadowing activity with 19 participants, which both received 100% approval rating. Many other activities received at least 90% approval rating.

Table 5: Information rated as excellent or good by 90%+ of respondents		
Activity	% rating as excellent or good	Respondent no.s
Master class	100%	21
Student shadowing	100%	19
Languages in HE	96%	50
Film School	95.5%	22
A Level revision	94.7%	76
Beyond the classroom	94.2%	17
Careers	93.9%	299
Languages Roadshow	92.8%	83
Sport and Languages	92.7%	55
Gold Award	92.3%	13
Ambassador e- mentoring	91%	22
Student ambassadors in schools	91%	121
Cultural event	90.6%	1017
A Level study	90.5%	63

Less highly rated was information received at GCSE revision (74.5%), film events (although, interestingly, not film and culture) 75.6% and ‘why study languages?’ (76.2%).

The contrast between experiences of GCSE and A-level revision events is interesting as most of these are run by the same consortia. It appears to be more difficult to impress year 11 respondents.

5.4 Post-event attitudes to language learning

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

Responses to all statements were more positive than in the pre-event questionnaires. For example, 79.5% of respondents agreed that they enjoyed learning languages (+5.2%); 82% agreed that they liked meeting people from other cultures (+6.1%) and 79% agreed that languages would help them get a job (+7.9%). The consistent improvement across attitudinal measures reinforces findings from our 2011-12 and 2012-13 evaluations and suggests that Routes into Languages activities are having an immediate motivational impact.

The percentage of learners who agreed that they would like to carry on with language learning had risen to 65.6% post-event; an increase of 6.1% over pre-event results, which

indicates that some learners appeared to be changing their minds about languages in the immediate aftermath of activity.

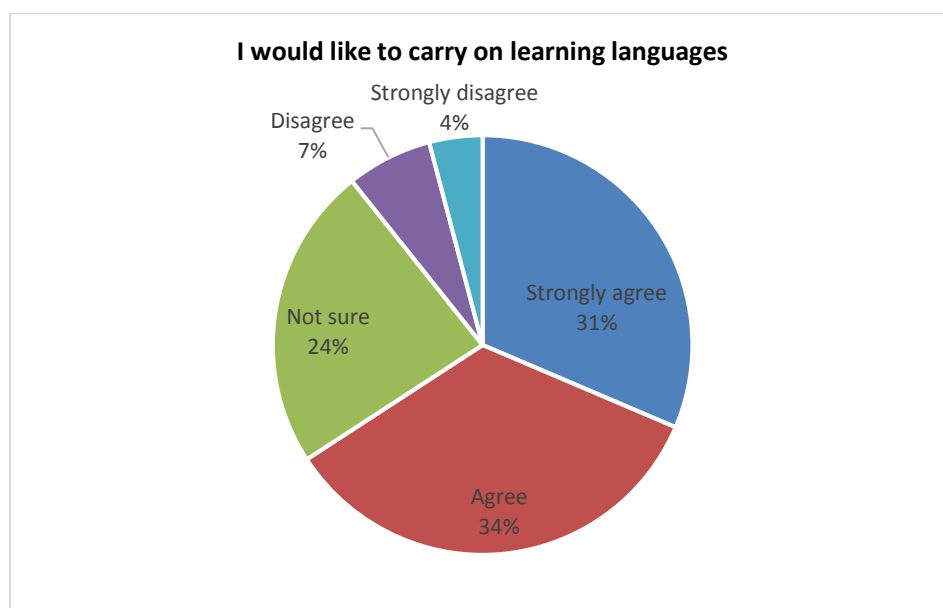


Figure 20: I would like to carry on learning languages (post-event)

Whilst it is possible that some of these alterations in attitudes could be partially linked to ‘post-event euphoria,’¹⁷ other existing evidence indicates that for some learners, Routes events are associated with longer-term attitudinal change and increases in languages uptake.¹⁸

Post-event there remained a small core of disaffection expressed by strong disagreement with the statements above, which suggests that Routes into Languages activities are not reaching some of the learners who take part in them. The level of strong disagreement ranged from 1.1% to 4.1% (it was between 2% and 5% pre-event).

In contrast with the other attitudinal statements, there was little change in perceptions of the difficulty of language learning post-event as 58.7% agreed this post-event (so there was a small increase post-event).

5.5 Post-event responses and gender

There were only small differences between boys’ and girls’ perceptions of activities and the information received. Events overall were judged to be excellent or good by 85% of girls and 82.5% of boys while information received was rated as excellent or good by 85.3% of girls and 83.1% of boys. Boys appeared to be slightly more inclined to express negative views of activities as 3.3% of them rated events overall as poor compared with 2.2% of girls and 3.2%

¹⁷ Handley (2011: 156)

¹⁸ Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010); Handley (2011); McCall (2011)

of boys indicated that the information received was poor whereas only 1.9% of girls suggested this.

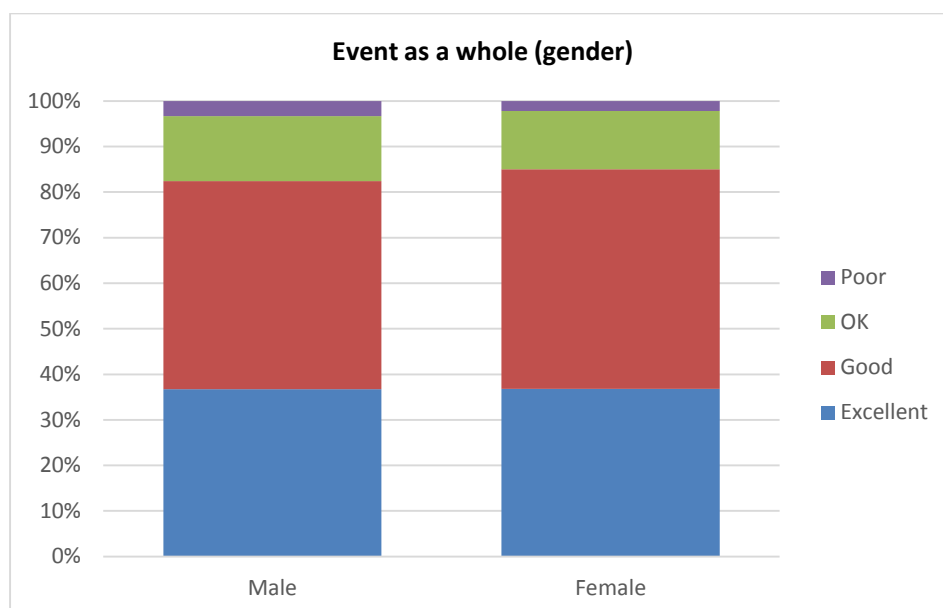


Figure 20: Please rate the event as a whole (gender post-event)

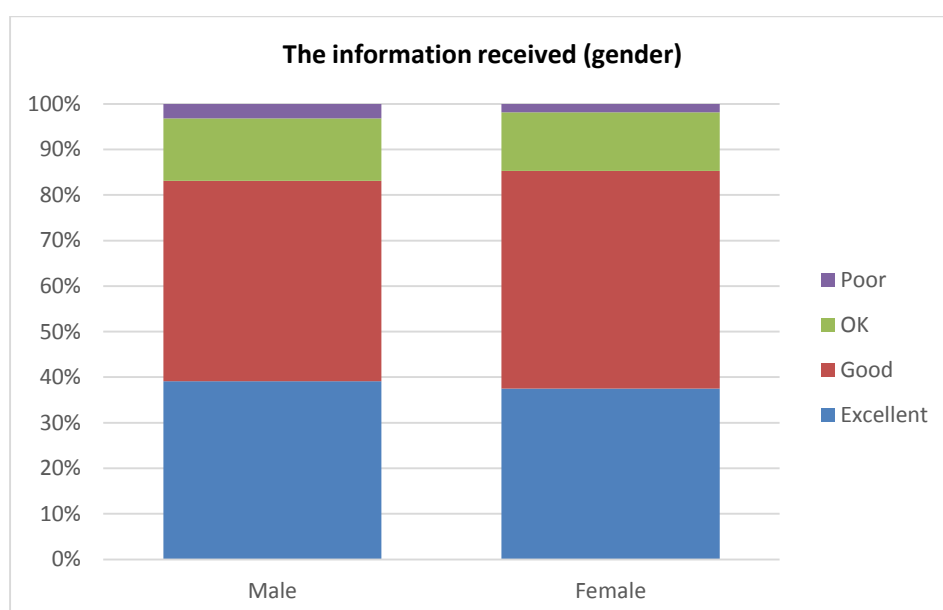


Figure 22: Please rate the information you received (gender post-event)

Analysis of post-event attitudinal statements revealed that girls continued to express more favourable views but also that positive attitudinal change after activities was similar for both boys and girls. This included a 5.5% increase in the percentage of boys and a 4.6% increase in the percentage of girls who expressed a desire to continue with language study (some participants did not provide gender information).

Table 6: Attitudes and gender post-event				
Levels of agreement (strongly agree & agree)	I enjoy learning languages	I enjoy meeting people from other cultures	Languages will help me to get a job	I would like to carry on with languages
Girls post-event	83.3% (+5%)	85.5% (+5.9%)	81.2% (+8.3%)	69.3% (+4.6%)
Boys post-event	75.5% (+5.3%)	79.1% (+7%)	61.5% (+5.5%)	61.5% (+5.5%)

Boys are a target group for Routes because of their under-representation in language learning so these findings are potentially encouraging.

5.6 Post-event responses and year groups

As stated in the section on the pre-event survey, caution is needed in interpreting responses from different year groups because of the vastly different sample sizes.

All year groups expressed encouraging views about events overall and about the information they had received. However, year 11 respondents were less positive than those in other year groups. Respondents in years 7 and 10 seemed to rate events and information received most favourably. Whereas more than 90% of students in years 7 and 10 perceived events overall to be excellent or very good, 72% of year 11 respondents did so. Similarly, information received during activities was judged to be excellent or good by more than 90% of year 7 and 10 and by 74.6% of year 11 respondents. The activities that learners were involved with may have been a complicating variable here.

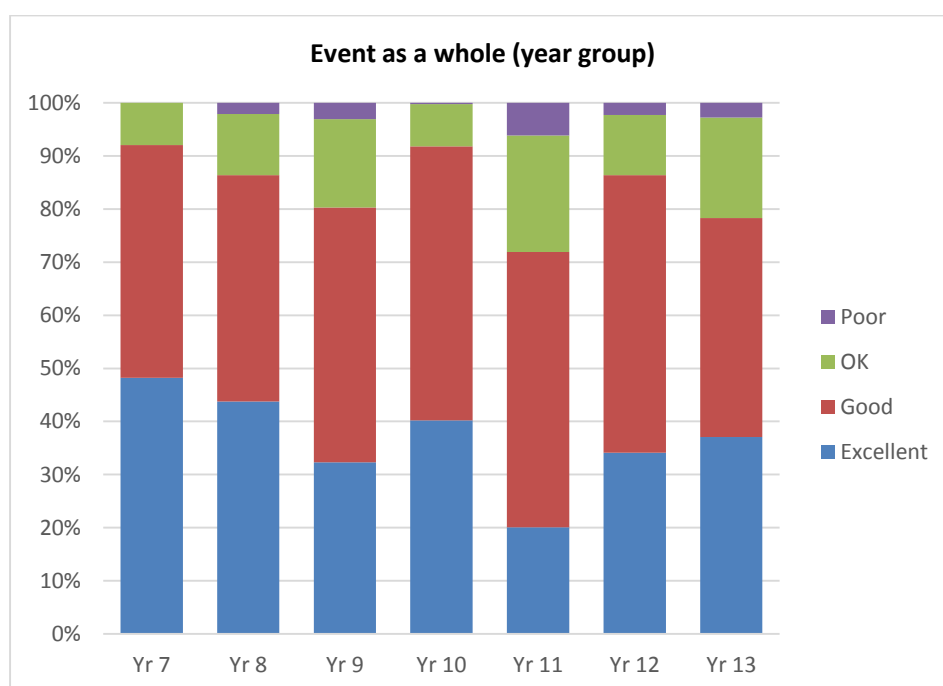


Figure 21: Please rate the event as a whole (year groups post-event)

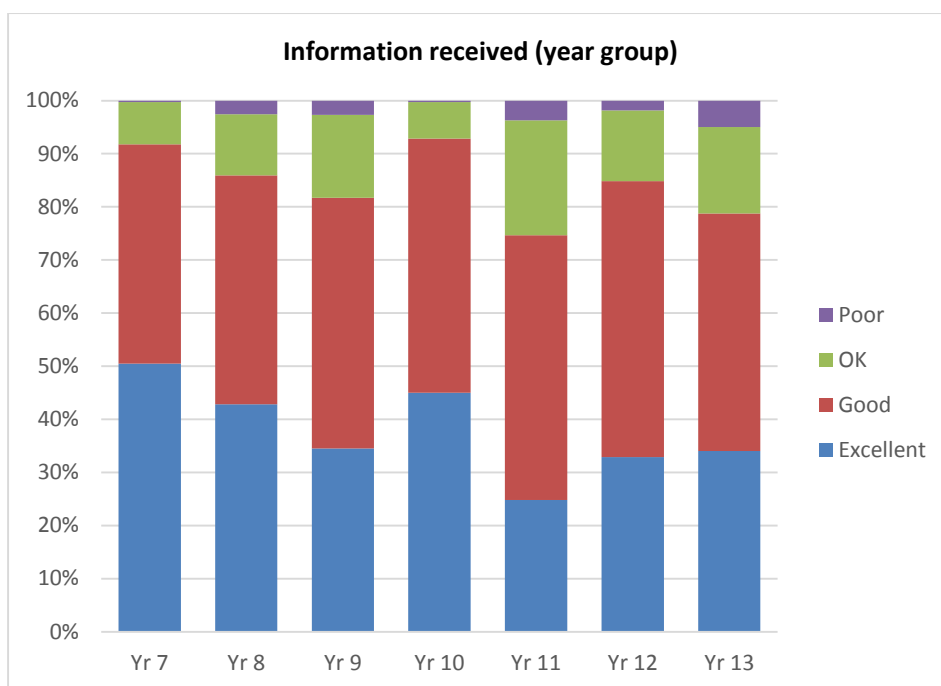


Figure 22: Please rate the information you received (year groups post-event)

Year group responses to attitudinal statements post-event showed improvements in all attitudes measured with one exception. Year 10 respondents (who demonstrated particularly positive attitudes and high levels of satisfaction with activities) did not report greater enjoyment of language learning.

Positive attitudinal change ranged from a meagre 0.4% (i.e. almost no change) to a somewhat more impressive 13.7%. Particularly encouraging were indications of improvements in attitudes among the large group of year 9 participants, including an 8.2% increase in the desire to continue with languages. Previous evaluation surveys have also shown promising findings in relation to year 9 so this year's results further reinforce evidence that Routes into Languages activities are well-targeted and effective with year 9 learners. Also noteworthy were an 11.4% increase in interest in meeting people from different cultures (year 7) and 13.7% increase in the perceived usefulness of languages for careers (year 10).

There could be a variety of reasons for the divergence in year group responses. One possible explanation may be connected with the events attended. Exam revision days, for example, are aimed at years 11, 12 and 13 and are focused more on raising attainment rather than on improving attitudes to culture. This could partially account for the generally smaller changes to attitudes among older learners. Additionally, the time of year could have adversely affected questionnaire responses. GCSE revision days in the sample were held in April and year 11 students are likely to have felt under exam pressure by this stage. For years 12 and 13, attitudes were already very favourable pre-event so there was not a great deal of room for improvement.

Table 7: Attitudes and year groups post-event				
Levels of agreement and strong agreement	I enjoy learning languages	I enjoy meeting people from other cultures	Languages will help me to get a job	I would like to carry on learning languages
Year 7 post-event	73% (+4.7%)	79.7% (+11.4%)	51.5% (+1.8%)	58.9% (+3.5%)
Year 8 post-event	83.2% (+4.2%)	84.8% (+9%)	82.6% (+10.3%)	72.4% (+3.6%)
Year 9 post-event	73.7% (+9.8%)	76.4% (+6.2%)	79.2% (+9%)	64% (+8.2%)
Year 10 post-event	81.2% (-2.1%)	81.2% (+ 1.1%)	87.3% (+13.7%)	64.8% (+5.4%)
Year 11 post-event	67.8% (+1.7%)	77.7% (+0.4%)	71.2% (+5.4%)	39.3% (+3.7%)
Year 12 post-event	97.7% (+2%)	95.2% (+0.5%)	94.5% (+4.1%)	82.2% (+ 2.1%)
Year 13 post-event	98.6 (+1.8%)	95.9% (+1.1%)	95.2% (+ 5.5%)	85.5% (+2.3%)

As previously stated, it is difficult to make comparisons between the results of this survey and our earlier evaluation surveys. However, the consistently large sample size for year 9 across all surveys (i.e. more than 1000) means that findings for this year group are likely to be reasonably reliable. As can be seen in Table 8 below, improvements in attitudes post-event in this important transitional year group appeared to have been promising in all the years surveyed.

Table 8: Year 9 attitudinal change post-event - comparison of surveys				
Percentage change in agreement post-event	I enjoy learning languages	I enjoy meeting people from other cultures	Languages will help me to get a job	I would like to carry on learning languages
Year 9 2011-12	+3.2	+2.6	+14.5	+5.2
Year 9 2012-13	+6.5	+6.0	+11.7	+7.0
Year 9 2013-14	+9.8	+6.2	+9.0	+8.2

It could also be argued that year 11 is a similarly important year group and post-event attitudinal improvement among year 11 students has also been consistent across all surveys. However, the positive changes seem to have been less pronounced than in the case of year 9 but these are with much smaller sample sizes (a few hundred respondents).

Table 9: Year 11 attitudinal change post-event - comparison of surveys				
Percentage change in agreement post-event	I enjoy learning languages	I enjoy meeting people from other cultures	Languages will help me to get a job	I would like to carry on learning languages
Year 11 2011-12	+4.7	+4.7	+7.9	+2.7
Year 11 2012-13	+3.2	+3.0	+5.2	+2.1
Year 11 2013-14	+1.7	+0.4	+5.4	+3.7

5.7 Post-event responses and school/college category

The overall experience of activities and the information received was regarded positively by respondents attending all the different categories of schools and colleges. Caution is needed in comparing respondents because of the small sample sizes from independent schools and sixth form and FE colleges compared with the much larger samples from other schools.

Respondents from WP3 schools (state maintained, not disadvantaged) were more satisfied with events than those from other schools. For example, 88.5% of respondents in WP3 schools agreed that activities were excellent or good compared with 83% of those in WP2 schools, 82% in sixth form/FE colleges, 77.8% in WP1 schools and 76.8% in independent schools. Similarly, information received was rated as excellent or good by 89.1% of respondents in WP3 schools and by 77.5% of respondents in WP1 schools.

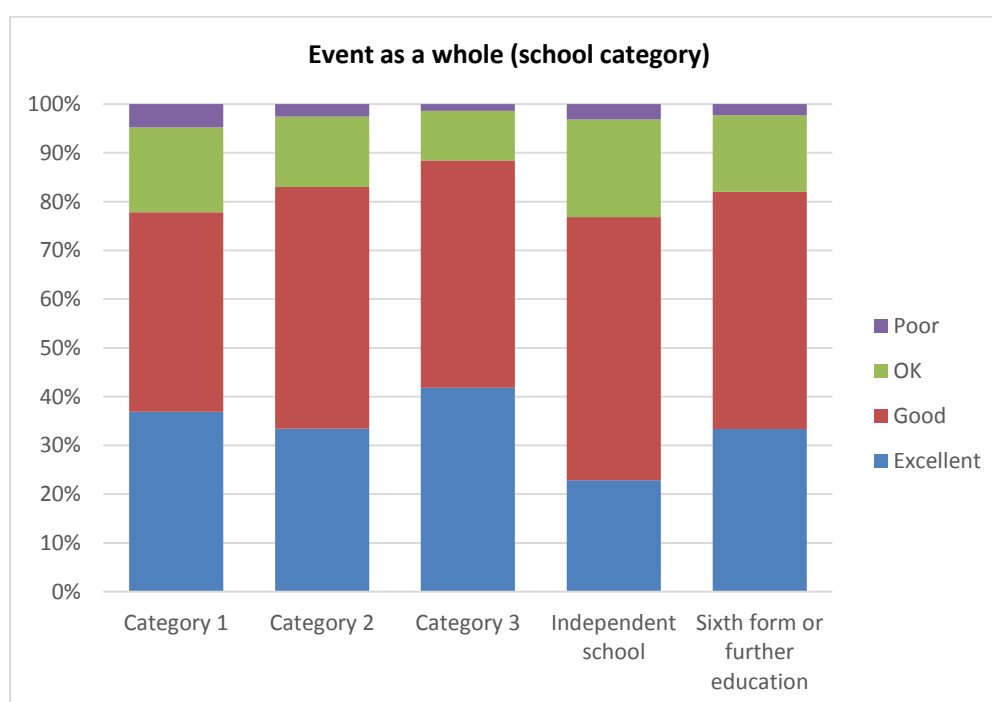


Figure 23: Please rate the event as a whole (school/college category)

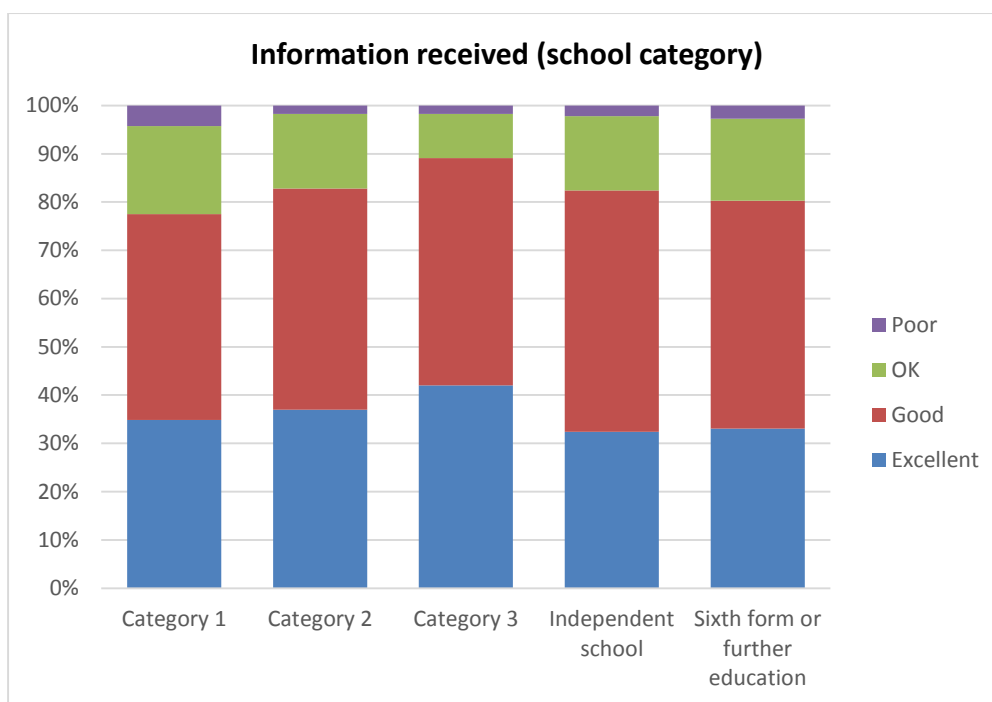


Figure 24: Please rate the information you received (school/college category)

Responses to attitudinal statements post-event continued to show that learners in sixth form and further education colleges held the most positive views about language learning but also that their attitudes had only advanced slightly. Generally greater improvements in attitudes were observed among school respondents although interestingly, independent school respondents did not report as much increased enjoyment of language learning or desire to continue with languages as those in other schools. Particularly encouraging was the 7.7% increase in the percentage of learners who wanted to continue with languages in the WP1 most disadvantaged schools.

Table 10: Attitudes and school/college category post-event				
Levels of agreement and strong agreement	I enjoy learning languages	I enjoy meeting people from other cultures	Languages will help me to get a job	I would like to carry on learning languages
WP1 disadvantaged	72.5% (+5%)	79.7% (+4.6%)	75.7% (+10.1%)	59.3% (+7.7%)
WP2 partially disadvantaged	79.3% (+6.6%)	80.9% (+5.3%)	79.7% (+7.6%)	63.6% (+5.9%)
WP3 not disadvantaged	81.5% (+5.6%)	83.4% (+7.9%)	79% (+6.9%)	68.4% (+3.9%)
Independent	76% (+0.2%)	77.8% (+4.1%)	79.7% (+11.3%)	61.6% (+2%)
Sixth form / FE	97.4% (+0.2%)	96.2% (-0.1%)	93.9% (+2.2%)	83.4% (+0.4%)

5.8 *Summary of learner post-event data*

Learners' reactions to events were extremely favourable and enthusiastic. They rated events and the information they received highly. Their attitudes to languages showed improvements in all areas when compared with the pre-event survey. A higher proportion of participants reported enjoyment of language learning, enjoyment of meeting people from other cultures and that languages would help them to get a job. The percentage of learners who indicated that they would like to continue studying languages had also increased. Findings were particularly encouraging among year 9 learners and those attending disadvantaged schools. Both of these groups are targeted by Routes into Languages as part of its remit to widen participation.

6 **Teacher post-event questionnaires**

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

6.1 *Characteristics of teacher sample*

Questionnaires were completed by 355 teachers in 185 schools in all nine regions. A small number of teachers who completed questionnaires were not working at schools in the pre- and post-event pupil questionnaire sample. These were not discounted as they were considered to contain relevant information about activities. The highest number of returns came from the South East, followed by the West Midlands and Yorkshire and The Humber.

Teachers had attended a wide range of different activities. These have been categorised in Table 9 below.

Table 11: Activities attended by teachers		
Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Why study languages	68	19.1
Able Linguist	18	5.1
Adopt a Class	8	2.2
A Level study/revision	13	3.7
Careers	37	10.4
Film event	28	7.9
Cultural event	66	18.6
Student ambassadors in schools	18	5.1
Film and Culture	5	1.4
GCSE Revision	9	2.5
Gold Award	4	1.1
Student shadowing	3	0.8
Language Taster	13	3.7
Languages in higher education	13	3.7
Sport and languages	17	4.8
Language Enrichment event	19	5.3
Linguacast	4	1.1
Music and languages	2	0.6
Ambassador e-mentoring	1	0.3
Drama and languages	4	1.1
Master Class	1	0.3
Success with French	3	0.8
No information	1	0.3

6.2 Teachers' responses to activities

As in our two previous surveys, teachers' reactions to events were overwhelmingly positive and indicate that they really valued the events they attended. For example, 98.9% of teachers agreed (i.e. agreed and strongly agreed) that events were a positive experience. Additionally, 94.7% agreed that the content was suitable for targeted students and 96.2% agreed that events had provided students with valuable information, which provides further evidence to indicate that Routes into Languages activities are considered to be useful sources of information, advice and guidance by MFL teachers.

As can be seen below, there were relatively high levels of strong agreement with all these items.

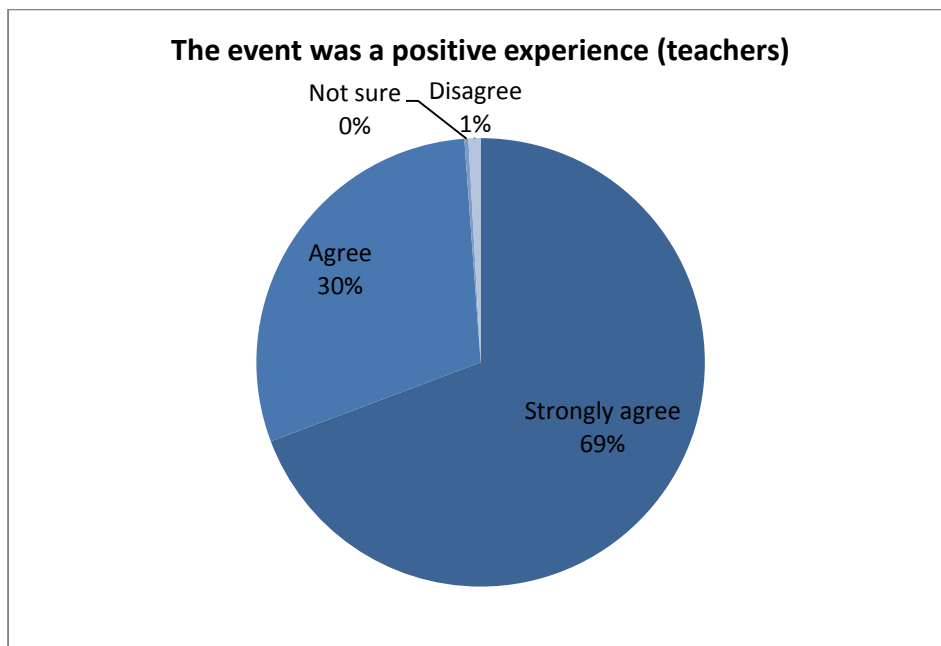


Figure 25: The event was a positive experience (teacher post-event)

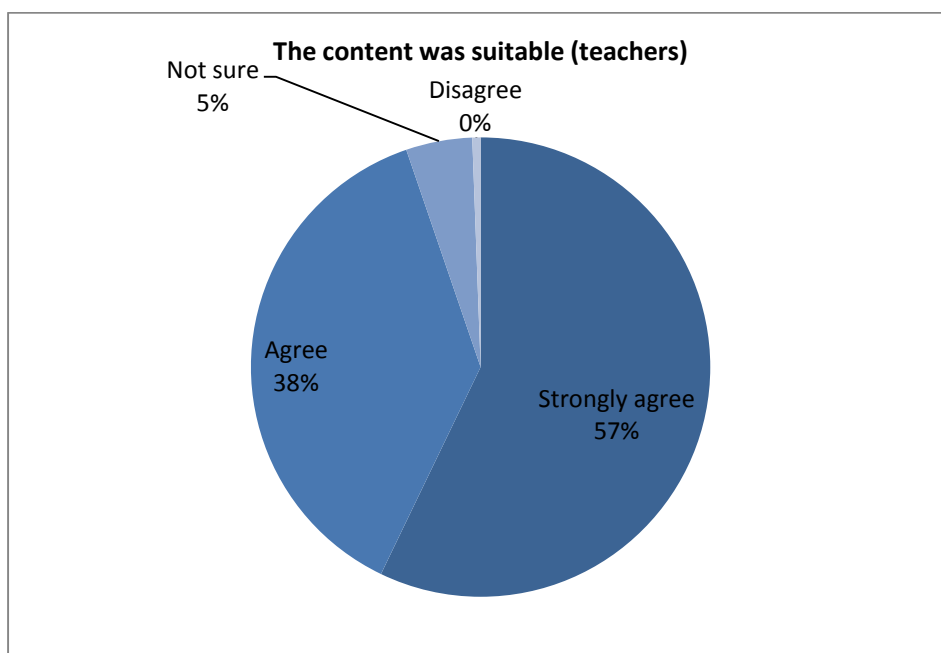


Figure 26: The content was suitable for targeted students (teacher post-event)

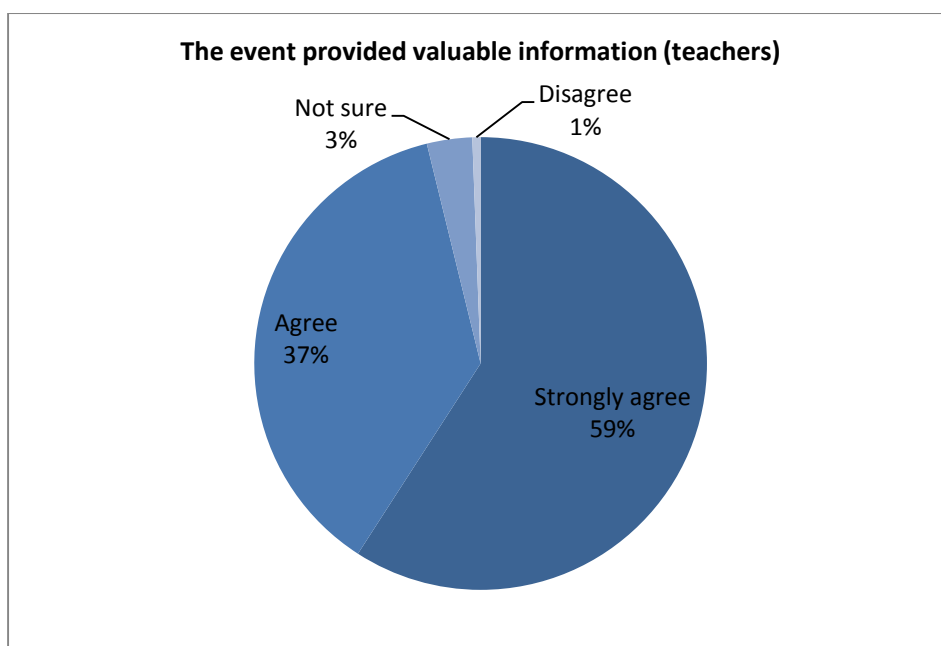


Figure 27: The event provided students with valuable information (teacher post-event)

Of course, variations in the teacher samples make it difficult to compare findings from this survey with those in 2011-12 and 2012-13. However, results over the three years do seem to be relatively consistent.

Table 12: Teachers' views on activities: comparison of surveys			
Opinions	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
The event was a positive experience	98.9%	98.7%	97.1%
The content was suitable for targeted students	94.7%	95%	89.2%
The event provided students with valuable information	96.2%	95%	92.6%

Although teachers were less sure that the activities would change students' attitudes to language learning, this was still agreed by 79.5% of them and this finding is broadly similar to evidence from an earlier Routes survey of teachers and also from evaluation surveys in 2011-12 and 2012-13.¹⁹

¹⁹ Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2011); Gallagher-Brett (2012b; 2014)

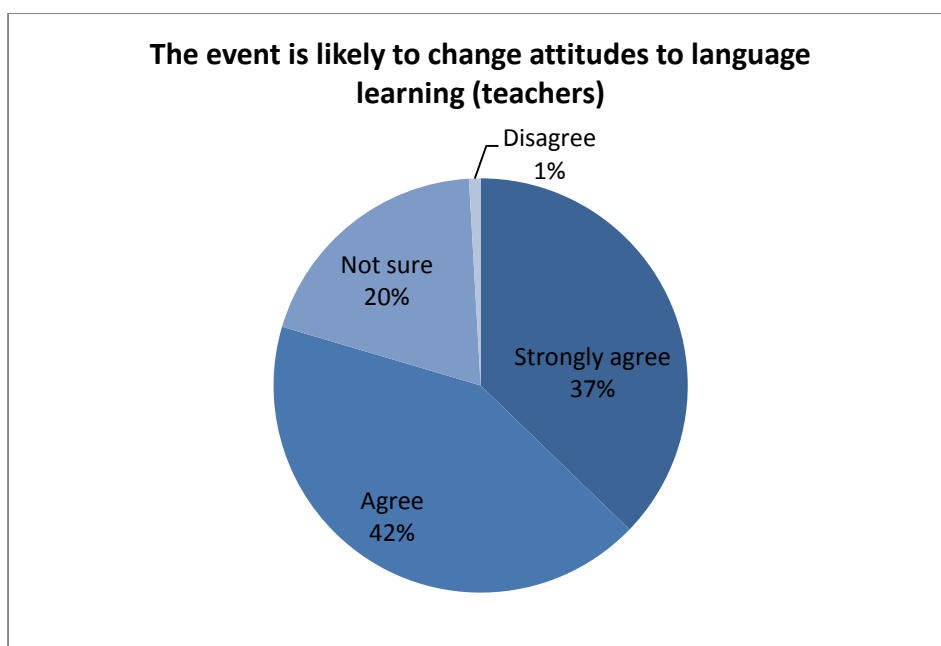


Figure 30: The event is likely to change attitudes to language learning (teacher post-event)

Table 13: Teachers' views on the impact of activities on attitudes: comparison of surveys			
Opinion	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
The event is likely to change attitudes to language learning	79.5%	77.8%	73.7%

6.3 Summary of teacher post-event survey

Teachers were found to have attended a large number of different activities. They were overwhelmingly positive in their reactions to events and they also agreed that they provided learners with valuable information and that they would be likely to change attitudes to language learning. Teachers' views have been remarkably consistent in the different evaluation surveys carried out by Routes and appear to suggest that Routes into Languages activities play an important role from teachers' perspectives both in engaging learners and in providing relevant information and advice.

7 Limitations of the surveys

Although this analysis involves a large data set, variations within the sample (particularly in relation to year groups) make it difficult to compare overall findings year on year. Additionally, the divergence in the numbers of learners attending different types of events means that our ability to assess the effectiveness of the different activities is somewhat limited.

As previously stated, the purpose of the surveys is to provide a snapshot of learners' experiences of Routes into languages activities across England and to gauge evidence of

attitudinal change post-event. However, using the same post-event survey template for all activities regardless of their aims and purposes may not always be wholly adequate. This applies particularly to those events which are focused on raising attainment in language learning, e.g. revision days.

8 Conclusions

A large number of language learners of different ages from a diverse range of schools took part in these Routes into Languages pre- and post-event surveys. Findings show that Routes activities across England are found to be enjoyable and useful by the overwhelming majority of learners who participate in them and these findings are reinforced by the views of teachers. Pre-event attitudes which were largely positive, were found to have improved post-event in key motivational areas (enjoyment of language learning, enjoyment of meeting people from different cultures and perceptions of the usefulness of languages for future jobs) across different groups of learners post-event. The growth in the proportion of learners expressing interest in the possibility of continued language study post-event was also encouraging.

It is clear, however, that Routes activities are not succeeding with everyone as a small proportion of participants demonstrated negative attitudes towards languages and towards events. It is difficult to speculate on what steps could be taken to improve this and whether it is at all possible for this hard core of disaffection to be reached.

Nonetheless, there can be little doubt that Routes events are proving successful at creating an immediate motivational lift. Although it is important not to confuse this with evidence of longer-term impact, these survey findings do contribute to the growing body of evidence that Routes into Languages activities are associated with positive attitudinal change. Existing evidence from other surveys has also pointed to longer-term improvements in attitudes and uptake.²⁰ Indications that Routes activities are having an immediate impact in helping learners to think differently and more positively about languages must be viewed as an important first step in the widening participation process.

²⁰ Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010); Gallagher-Brett (2012b); Handley (2011)

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Appendix A: pre-event questionnaire

What do you think about language learning?

Date: _____

Name of your school / college: _____

Please circle your School/ College Year:

Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Yr 12	Yr 13
------	------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Are you? Male / Female

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

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

Thank you!

Post-event questionnaire

What did you think of the event?

Name of the event: _____

Date(s): _____

Venue: _____

Name of your school / college: _____

Please circle your School/ College Year:

Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Yr 12	Yr 13
------	------	------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Are you? Male / Female

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

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I enjoy learning languages					
Languages are more difficult than other subjects					
I enjoy finding out about other cultures					
Languages will help me to get a job					
I would like to carry on learning languages					

Please rate:

	Excellent	Very good	Good	OK	Poor
The event as a whole					
The information you received					

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

Thank you!

Teacher post-event questionnaire

What did you think of the event? - Teacher evaluation

Your name:

Your school/college:

Activity/event:

Year group(s) involved (please circle):

Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Yr 12	Yr 13
------	------	------	-------	-------	-------	-------

The event in general	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This event was a positive experience					
The content was suitable for the targeted students					
The event has provided students with valuable information					
The event is likely to change students' attitudes to language learning					
Which aspects of the event/activity were most useful?					
Can you suggest any improvements?					
Do you have any further comments?					

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

Thank you