

# Routes into Languages Event Evaluations in England 2014-2015

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## Executive Summary

- 1 This report presents the findings of an evaluation survey of Routes into Languages activities in England in 2014-15. 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, 2012-13 and 2013-14.
- 2 Data for the report came from all nine regional consortia in England and consisted of 5348 learner pre-event questionnaires, 5488 learner post-event questionnaires and 292 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 and enjoyed meeting people from other cultures while two thirds perceived that languages would help them to get a job. Just over half of respondents indicated that they would like to continue with language study.
- 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 partially disadvantaged schools had more negative attitudes than those in other schools).
- 5 As in previous years, 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. For the third successive year, '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.
- 9 All Routes activities attended were evaluated as excellent or good by the vast majority of participants.
- 10 Indications of positive attitudinal change were found in all areas after events. There was an increase of 3.9% in the proportion of learners who reported enjoyment of language learning; an increase of 3.6% in the proportion of learners who reported interest in meeting people from other cultures and an increase of 10.3% was found in the proportion of respondents who perceived languages would be useful for jobs.
- 11 The percentage of learners who agreed that they would like to carry on with language learning rose by 6.6% in the post-event survey.
- 12 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 7.8% in the proportion of year 9 and 13.4% of year 11 learners who expressed interest in continuing

- with language study in post-event questionnaires. Similarly, there was an increase of 7.5% in wanting to continue language learning among learners from disadvantaged schools.
- 13 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.
- 14 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.
- 15 Approximately three-quarters of teachers believed that activities were likely to change attitudes to language learning.
- 16 As in the previous years of the survey, these findings strongly indicate 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 further contribute to the growing body of evidence that Routes into Languages activities are associated with positive attitudinal change.
- 17 The motivational impact appears to be particularly encouraging among year 9 learners as well as those from disadvantaged schools and indicates that Routes activities are effectively targeting these groups.

## Acknowledgements

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East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership

## 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 2014-15. 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, 2012-13 and 2013-14.

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. Routes has a remit to widen participation in language learning so 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. This is because of the narrow social profile of languages students in England.<sup>1</sup> 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 orientation<sup>2</sup> (a positive attitude towards speakers of the language and a desire to communicate with them) and an Ideal L2 self<sup>3</sup> (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 orientation<sup>4</sup> (interest in the potential rewards associated with proficiency in the language) or an

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<sup>1</sup> Gallagher-Brett, Doughty & McGuinness (2014); Tinsley (2013)

<sup>2</sup> Gardner (1985, 2001); Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant & Mihic (2004)

<sup>3</sup> Dörnyei (2005); Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011)

<sup>4</sup> Gardner (1985; 2001)

Ought-to L2 self<sup>5</sup> (a desire to meet expectations and avoid negative consequences) as well as the difficulty of language learning. An additional open statement referred to the desire to continue with language study. 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 clear 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

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<sup>5</sup> Dörnyei (2005); Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011)

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 in the year group sample each year, it would not be reliable to compare overall survey findings year on year. Where possible however, 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 5348 pre-event and 5488 post-event questionnaires from 306 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 exactly the same.

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 a particularly large sample from year 9 (1892 pre-event and 1891 post-event), which means that responses of this year group can be considered more reliable than those of other year groups.



<b>Table 1: Respondents' Key Stages</b>					
<b>Pre-event questionnaires</b>			<b>Post-event questionnaires</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
KS3	3332	62.3	KS3	3466	63.2
KS4	827	15.5	KS4	839	15.3
KS5	1059	19.8	KS5	1058	19.3
No response	130	2.4	No response	125	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5348</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>5488</b>	

As in previous surveys, there were more female students (56.0% pre-event and 48.0% post-event) represented in the survey than males (40.0% pre-event and 36.0% post-event). This is not unexpected given evidence that girls are more likely to study languages in post-compulsory age groups.<sup>6</sup> In both questionnaires, some respondents did not provide gender information and this was particularly 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Carr & Pauwels (2009); Taylor & Marsden (2014)

<sup>7</sup> Data provided by the East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership

Although a full range of schools and colleges were involved in activities in 2014-15, there was greater representation of WP Category 3 schools (as in previous years).

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Pre-event respondents</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Post-event respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
WP Category 1	1020	19.1	1091	19.9
WP Category 2	1312	24.5	1190	21.7
WP Category 3	2203	41.2	2298	41.9
Independent schools	275	5.1	320	5.8
Sixth form/further education colleges	352	6.6	393	7.2
School information missing (WP6)	186	3.5	196	3.6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5348</b>		<b>5488</b>	

## **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 (+0.5%) or down (-0.5%) in the figures.

Responses to the statements showed largely positive attitudes to language learning as 71.6% of learners agreed (i.e. agreed and strongly agreed) that they enjoyed learning languages; 73.0% agreed that they liked meeting people from other cultures and 66.8% agreed that languages would help them to get a job.

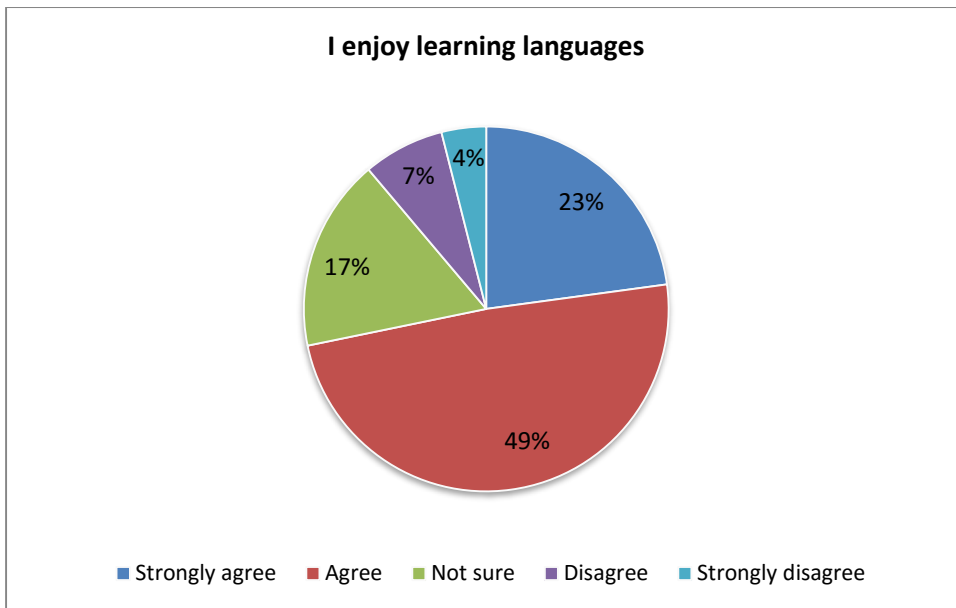


Figure 1: I enjoy learning languages (pre-event)

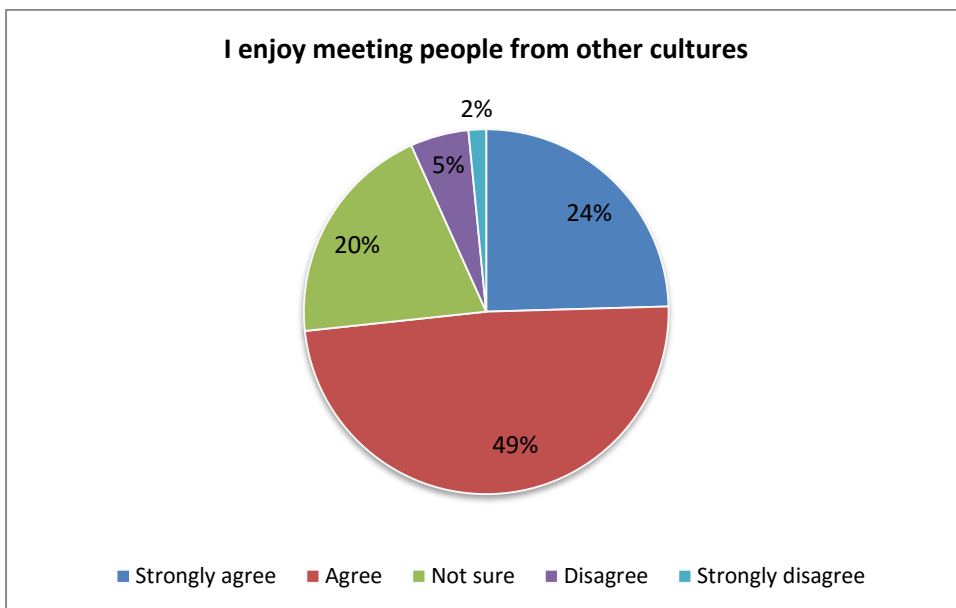


Figure 2: I enjoy meeting people from different cultures (pre-event)

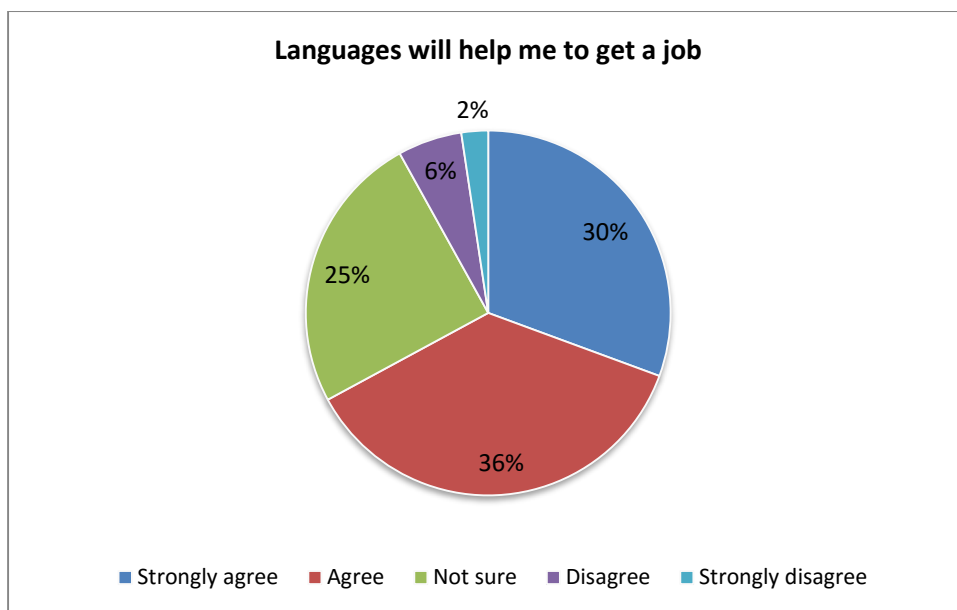


Figure 3: Languages will help me to get a job (pre-event)

Levels of enjoyment of language learning seem high when compared to earlier research studies which have reported that learners do not enjoy languages<sup>8</sup> and which have drawn attention to negative societal attitudes and a lack of public understanding in the UK.<sup>9</sup> However, they align closely with previous Routes into Languages surveys.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> This type of motivation has been associated with UK learners in earlier studies.<sup>13</sup>

As in 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14, survey respondents were less likely to agree that they would like to carry on with languages although this was still supported by 57.2%. As with previous findings, this indicates that some students who enjoy learning languages do not want to continue studying them.

<sup>8</sup> e.g. Barton (2003); Watts (2003)

<sup>9</sup> e.g. Worton (2009), Taylor & Marsden (2014)

<sup>10</sup> e.g. Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010); Gallagher-Brett (2012; 2014; 2015)

<sup>11</sup> Gardner (2001); Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011)

<sup>12</sup> Gardner (2001); Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011)

<sup>13</sup> e.g. Coleman, Galaczi & Astruc (2007)

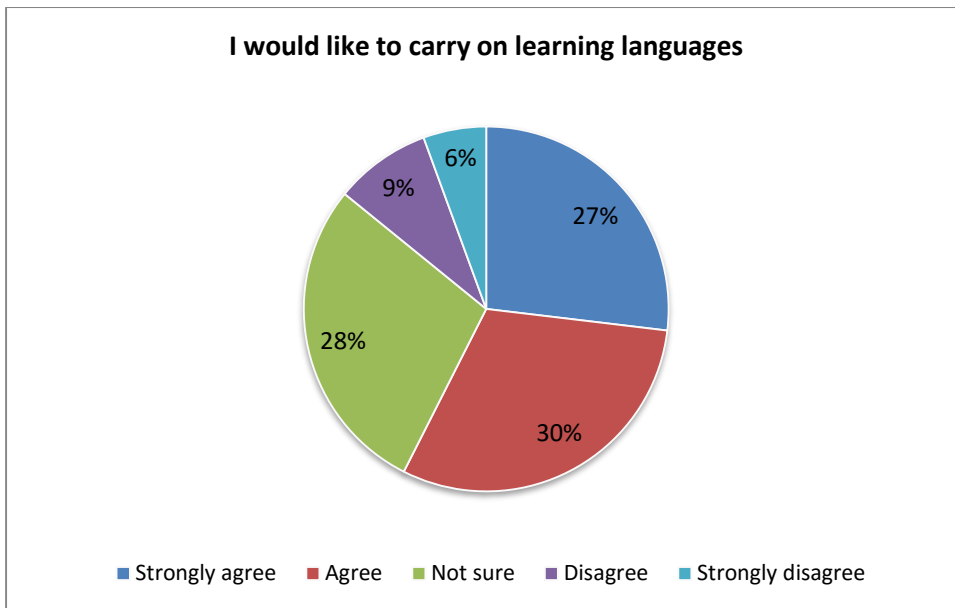


Figure 4: I would like to carry on learning languages (pre-event)

As can be seen in the figures above, all statements attracted strong disagreement from between 2% and 6% of respondents, which seems to indicate the existence of a small hard core of disaffection with language learning among those participating in Routes into Languages activities. A few learners (between 0.2% and 1.0%) 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.

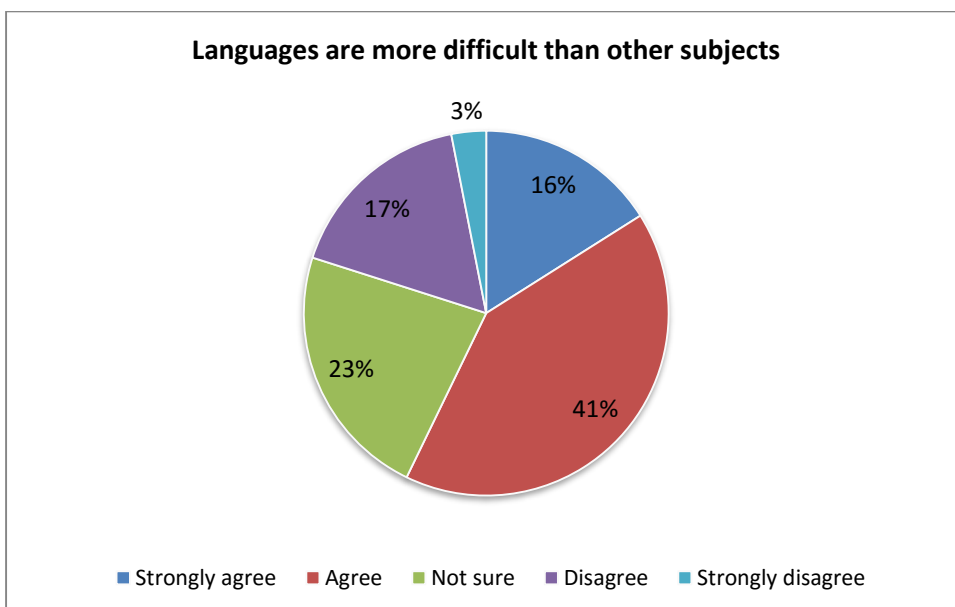


Figure 5: Languages are more difficult than other subjects (pre-event)

## 4.2 Pre-event responses by gender

Girls generally responded more favourably than boys. For example, 77.2% of girls agreed that they enjoyed learning languages compared with 64.7% of boys and 61.5% of girls agreed that they would like to carry on with languages while 51.9% of boys agreed. These findings are similar to those in our previous surveys in 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 and are not unexpected as research has found that girls tend to have more positive attitudes to languages and are more likely to be interested in studying them.<sup>14</sup>

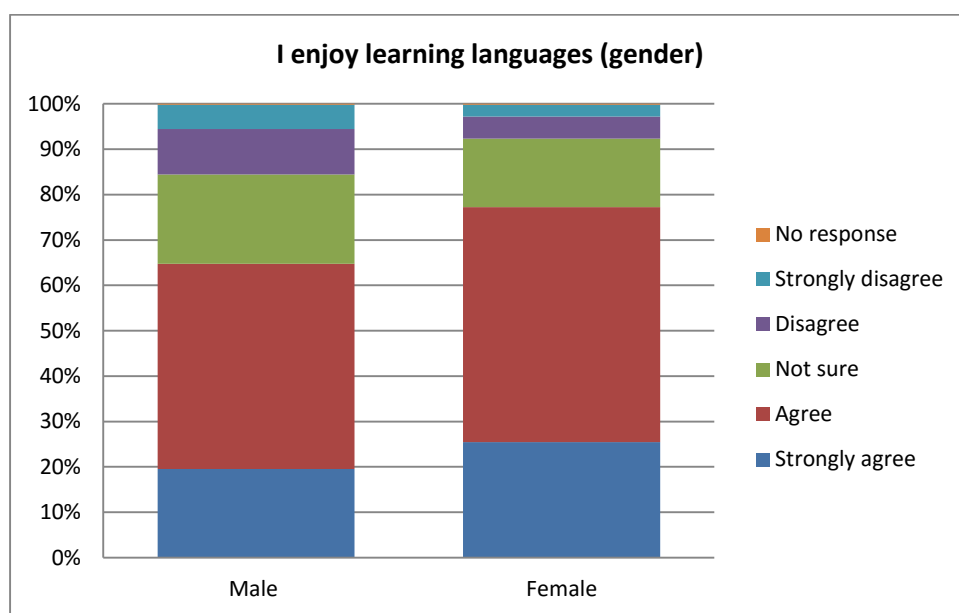


Figure 6: I enjoy learning languages (gender pre-event)

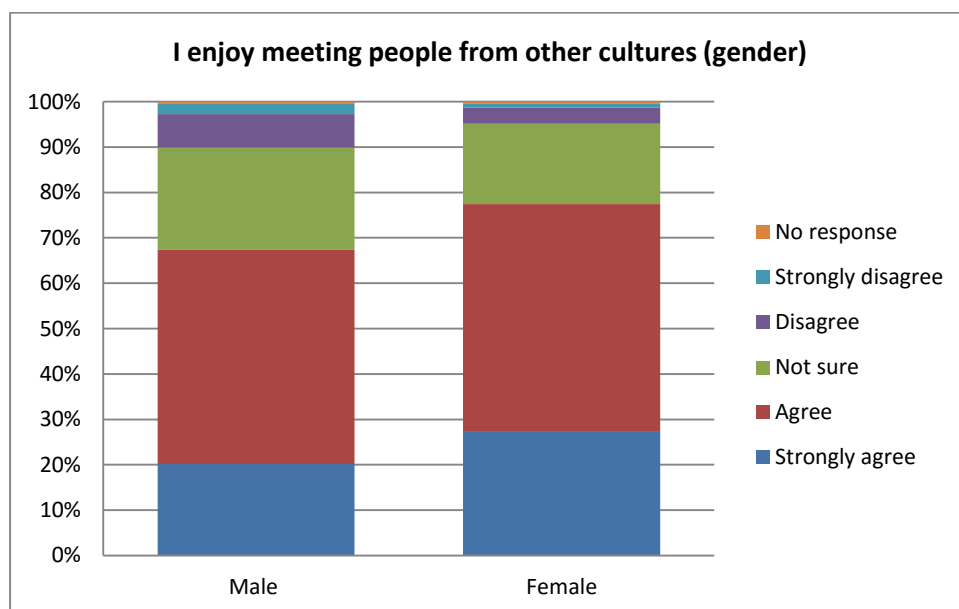


Figure 7: I enjoy meeting people from other cultures (gender pre-event)

<sup>14</sup> e.g. Carr & Pauwels (2009); Coleman, Galaczi & Astruc (2007); Coleman (2013)

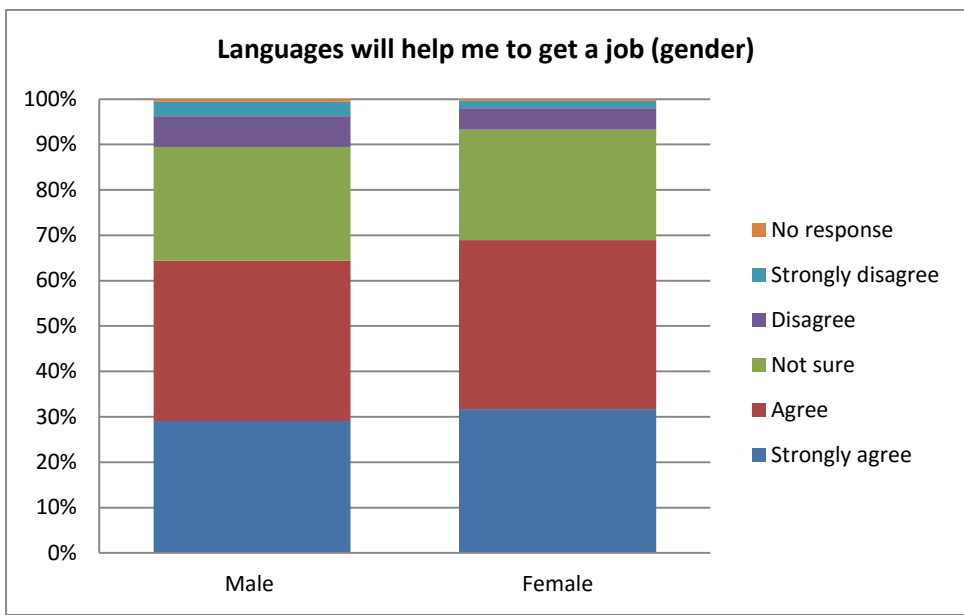


Figure 8: Languages will help me to get a job (gender pre-event)

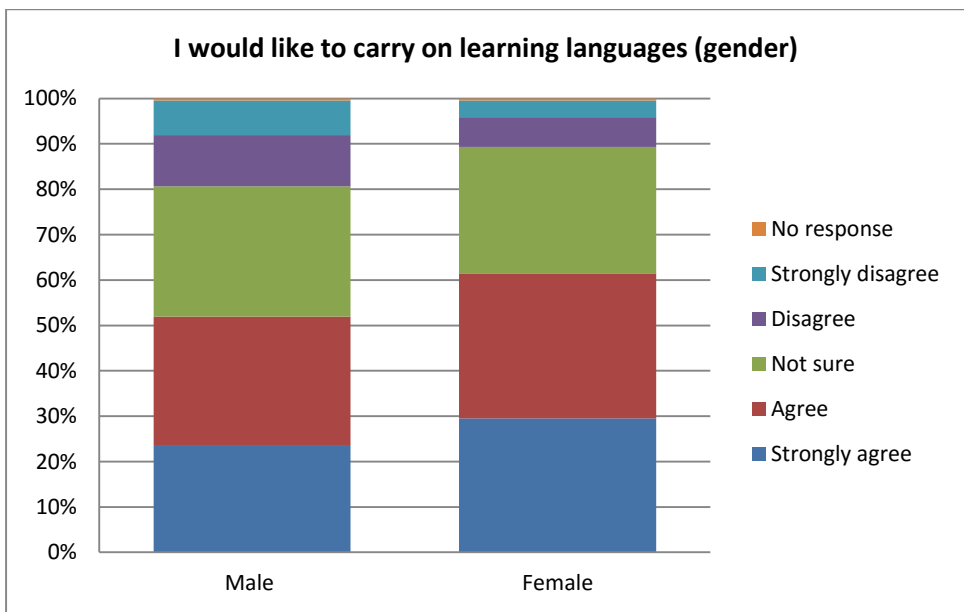


Figure 9: I would like to carry on learning languages (gender pre-event)

### 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 small compared with other year groups, especially year 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 previous years, 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.<sup>15</sup> In addition, 84.8% of year 13s and 73.7% of year 12s indicated that they would like to carry on with languages. Year 13 responses were characterised by significant amounts 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 have suffered from a particularly high dropout rate between years 12 and 13.<sup>16</sup> 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, 74.7% of year 8 and 74.9% of year 10 respondents agreed that they enjoyed language learning compared with 60.0% of year 7, 61.3% of year 9 and 62.0% of year 11 respondents. As always, year 7 respondents were particularly unconvinced of the usefulness of languages for jobs (only 48.2% agreement).

With regard to wanting to carry on learning languages, respondents in year 11 were far more negative than those in other year groups (as in 2013-14). Just 29.8% 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 our previous 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 is worthy of further investigation to explore why so many year 11s who enjoy languages do not want to continue learning them.

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<sup>15</sup> Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011)

<sup>16</sup> Cambridge Assessment (2009)



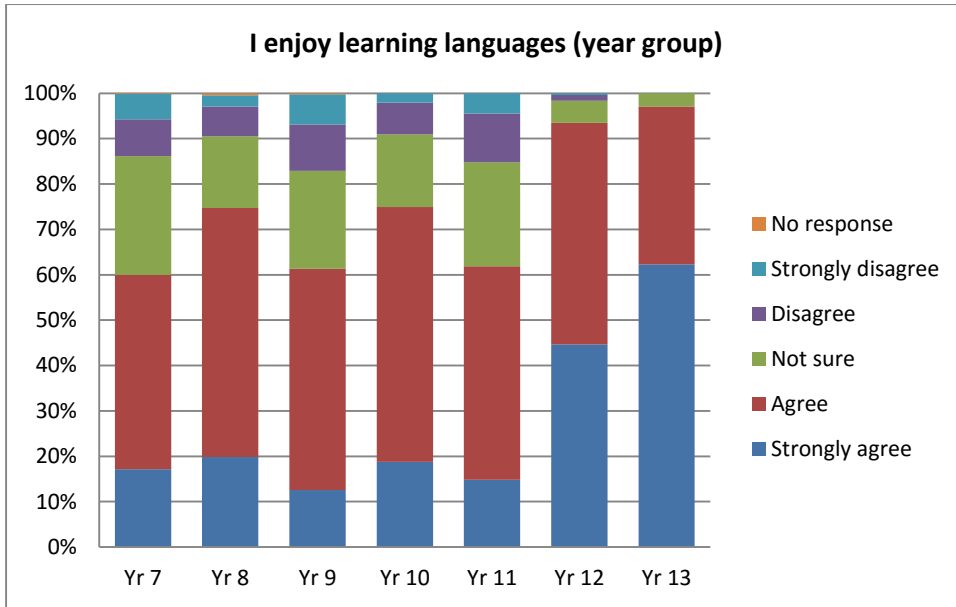


Figure 10: I enjoy learning languages (year group pre-event)

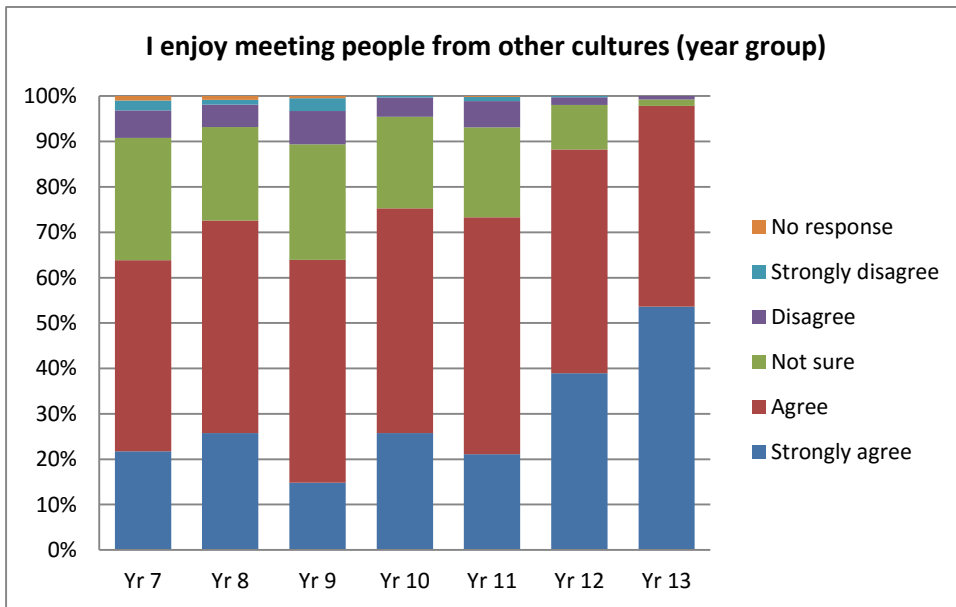


Figure 11: I enjoy meeting people from other cultures (year group pre-event)

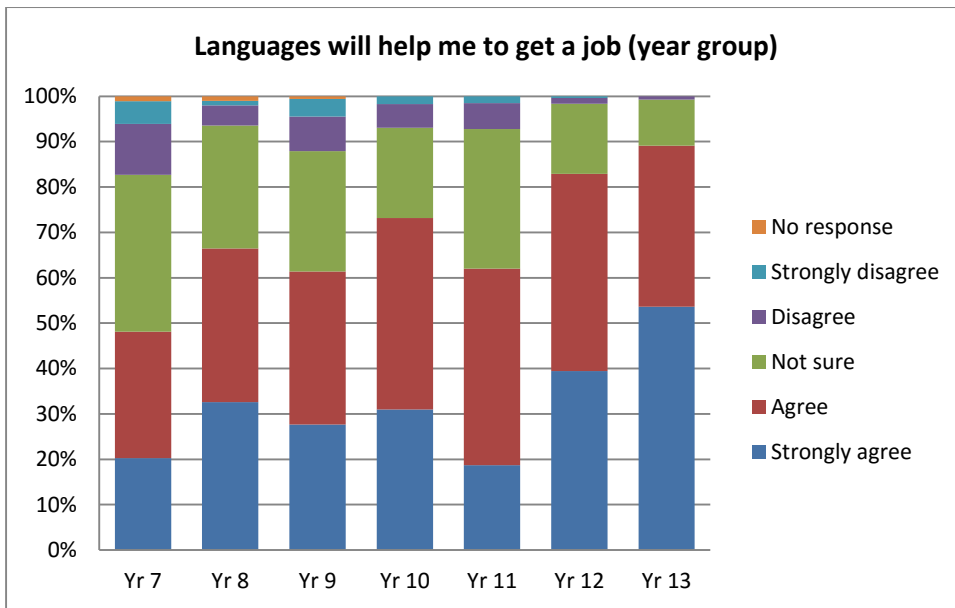


Figure 12: Languages will help me to get a job (year group pre-event)

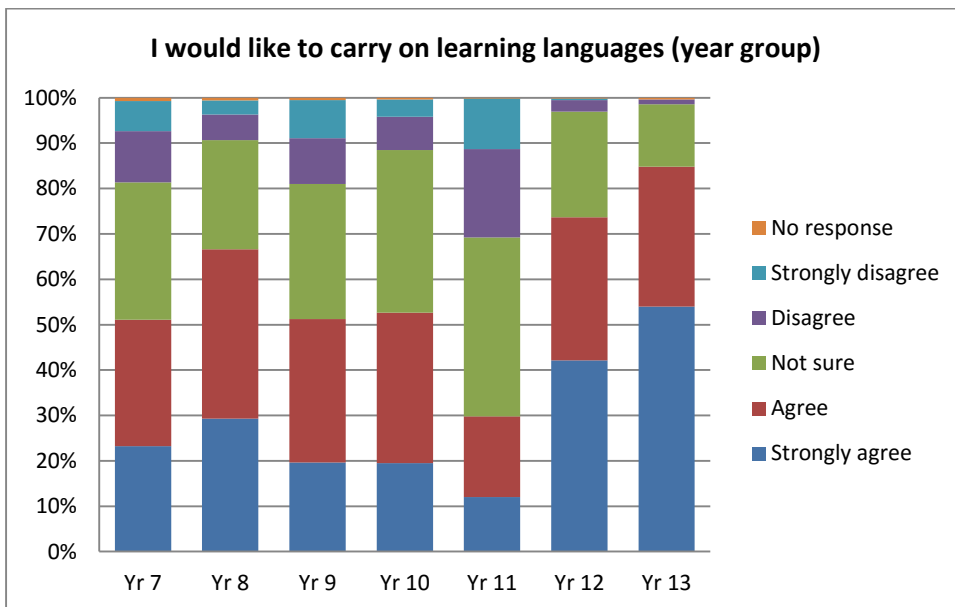


Figure 13: I would like to carry on learning languages (year group pre-event)

Learners in years 7, 10 and 13 were more inclined to agree that languages were difficult compared with other subjects as 63.5% of year 7, 64.5% of year 13 and 69.0% of year 10 respondents agreed this compared with 58.5% of year 11, 57.5% of year 9, 55.6% of year 8 and 47.5% of year 12 respondents. So the apparent reluctance of year 11 learners to continue with languages does not seem to be associated with particularly pronounced perceptions of difficulty.

#### 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). Smaller sample sizes from sixth form/FE colleges and from

independent schools means that these results need to be interpreted cautiously. In contrast with previous years, respondents from WP1 schools (i.e. disadvantaged) were not found to be more negative than those from other schools rather it was those in WP2 (partially disadvantaged) who held the least favourable attitudes.

For example, 96.3% of respondents in sixth form/FE colleges reported that they enjoyed learning languages compared with 90.2% in independent schools, 71.3% in WP3, 70.2% in WP1 and 60.8% in WP2 schools. Similarly, 80.1% of learners in sixth form/FE colleges agreed that they would like to carry on with languages as opposed to 77.8% in independent schools, 56.9% in WP3, 56.2% in WP1 and 46.4% in WP2 schools.

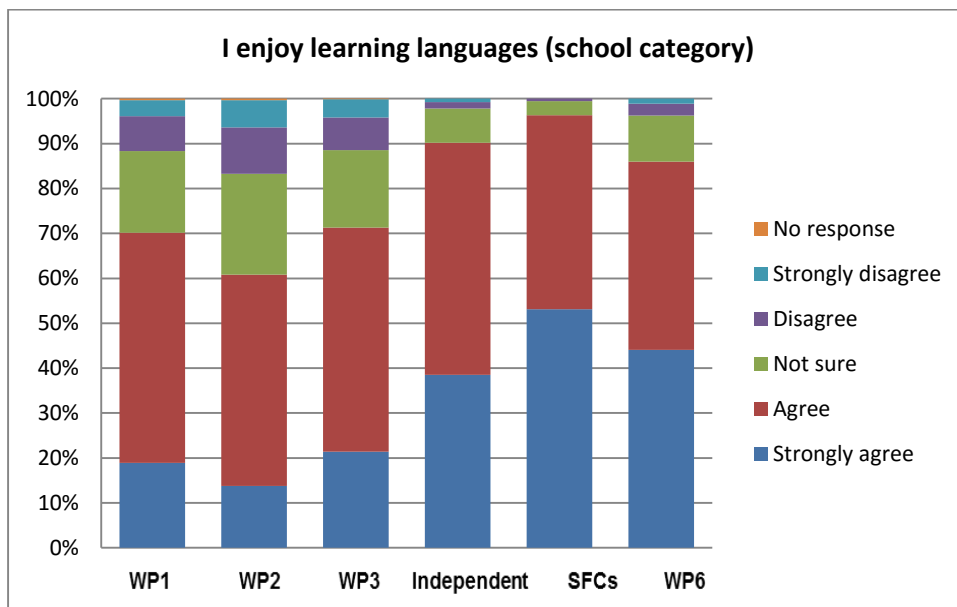


Figure 14: I enjoy learning languages (school/college category pre-event)

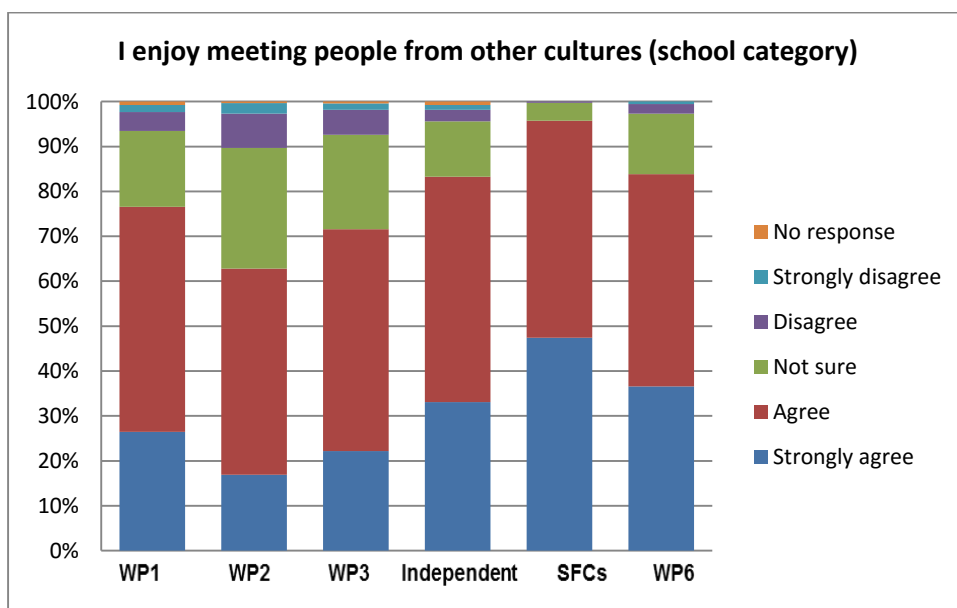


Figure 15: I enjoy meeting people from other cultures (school/college category pre-event)

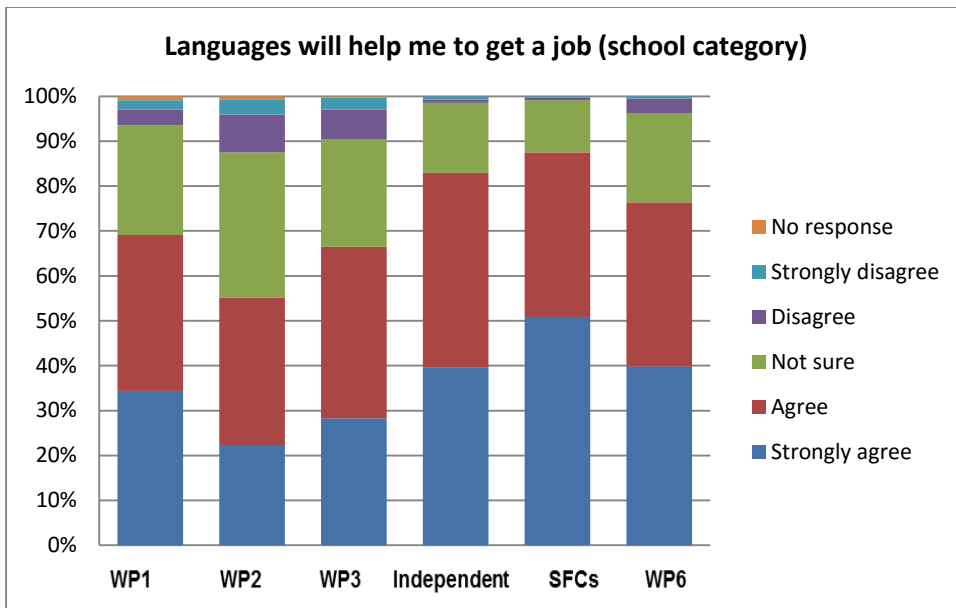


Figure 16: Languages will help me to get a job (school/college category pre-event)

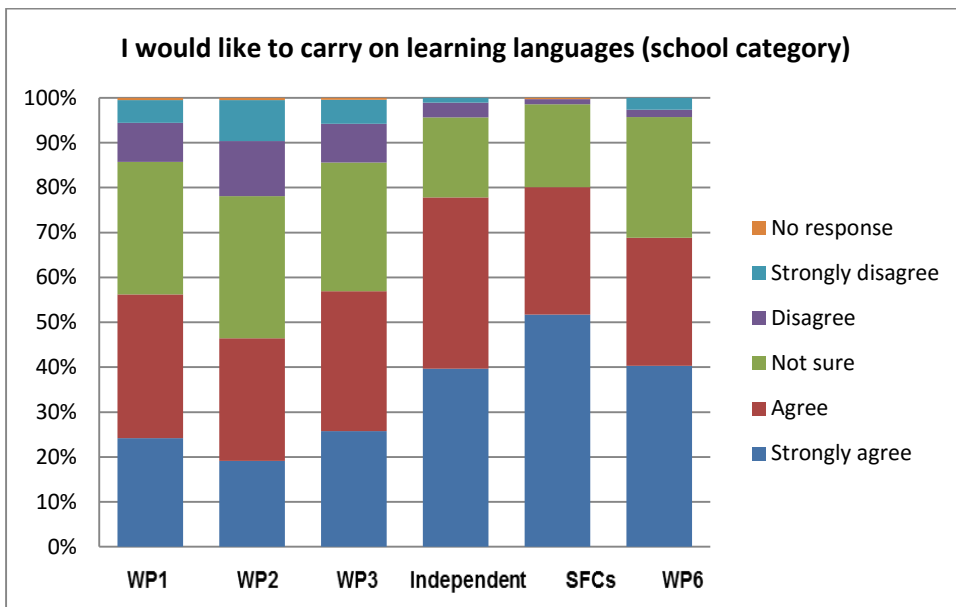


Figure 17: I would like to carry on learning languages (school/college category pre-event)

#### 4.5 Summary of pre-event findings

In summary, responses to pre-event questionnaires indicated that almost three quarters of participants enjoyed learning languages and enjoyed meeting people from other cultures. Around two thirds 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 partially 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, Japan Day, Day of the Dead, Easter in France and Festival of International Culture are among those grouped as cultural events. 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?' events were by far the most frequently attended activities and together accounted for 25.7% of all activity surveyed. These were followed in frequency by cultural events, student ambassadors in schools, film and careers 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.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Why study languages?	1410	25.6
Cultural event	794	14.5
Student ambassadors in schools	724	13.2
Film event	412	7.5
Careers event	393	7.2
Able Linguist	219	4.0
Language taster	180	3.3
European Day of Languages	167	3.0
GCSE Revision	164	3.0
Languages in HE	146	2.7
Beyond the Classroom	133	2.4
Study day	126	2.3
Widening Participation day	125	2.3
A level study day	90	1.6
Baking and languages	72	1.3

Drama and languages	64	1.2
Language Enrichment Event	62	1.1
Creative learning strategy training	40	0.7
Language challenge	39	0.7
Summer school	35	0.6
Film and Culture	28	0.5
Masterclass	27	0.5
Eurolink	22	0.4
Ambassador training	9	0.2
Adopt a Class	7	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5488</b>	

## 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 encouraging with 80.2% of responses excellent or good. Just 2.0% of attendees rated activities as poor. The information received at events was perceived to be excellent or good by 80.3% and poor by 1.8% of respondents. As with the pre-event survey, percentages have been rounded up (+0.5%) or down (-0.5%) in the figures.

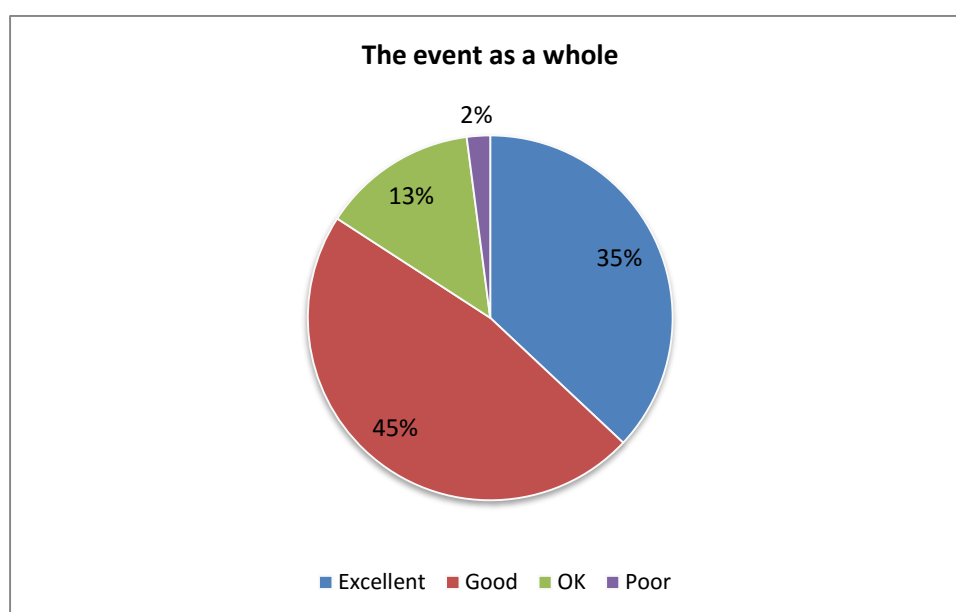


Figure 18: Please rate the event as a whole (post-event)

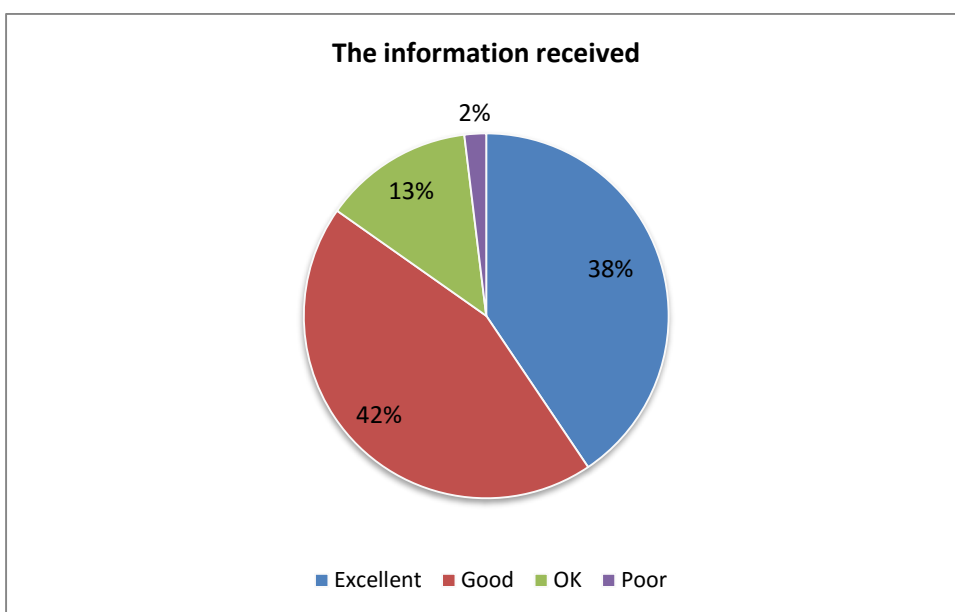


Figure 19: Please rate the information you received (post-event)

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 activities with the highest overall rating were a summer school, a film and culture event, a master class and adopt-a-class, which were perceived to be excellent or good by all respondents but these only involved small numbers of students. As in previous surveys, many other activities obtained an approval rating of almost 90% and this included events with large sample sizes such as cultural events (88.0% excellent or good rating), student ambassadors in schools (83.0%), film events (87.4%) and careers events (87.8%).

Table 4: Activities rated as excellent or good by 90%+ of respondents		
Activity	% rating as excellent or good	Respondent no.s
Summer school	100	35

Film and culture	100	28
Master class	100	27
Adopt-a-class	100	7
Creative learning strategy training	97.5	40
Drama and languages	93.7	64
Able Linguist	92.7	219
Baking and languages	91.7	72
Languages in HE	91.1	146
A-level study days	91.1	90

Less popular were ‘why study languages?’ (70.3%), GCSE revision (67.7%) and GCSE study events (67.5%) 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, an ambassador training event and adopt-a-class, all of which received a 100% approval rating. Many other activities received almost 90% approval rating, including cultural events (87.9%), careers events (89.3%), able linguist events (87.7%) and language enrichment events (88.7%).

<b>Table 5: Information rated as excellent or good by 90%+ of respondents</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>% rating as excellent or good</b>	<b>Respondent no.s</b>
Master class	100	27
Ambassador training	100	9
Adopt-a-class	100	7
Summer school	97.1	35
Film and culture	96.4	28
Eurolink	90.9	22
Languages in HE	90.4	146
A-level study days	90.0	90

Less highly rated was information received at GCSE revision (71.3%) and ‘why study languages?’ (73.9%).



As in the 2013-14 survey, the contrast between experiences of GCSE and A-level revision events is interesting given that 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, 75.5% of respondents agreed that they enjoyed learning languages (+3.9%); 76.5% agreed that they liked meeting people from other cultures (+3.6%) and 77.1% agreed that languages would help them get a job (+10.3%). The consistent improvement across attitudinal measures reinforces findings from our 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 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 63.8% post-event; an increase of 6.6% over pre-event results, which is very similar to the 2013-14 findings (+6.1%) and indicates that some learners appeared to be changing their minds about languages in the immediate aftermath of activity.

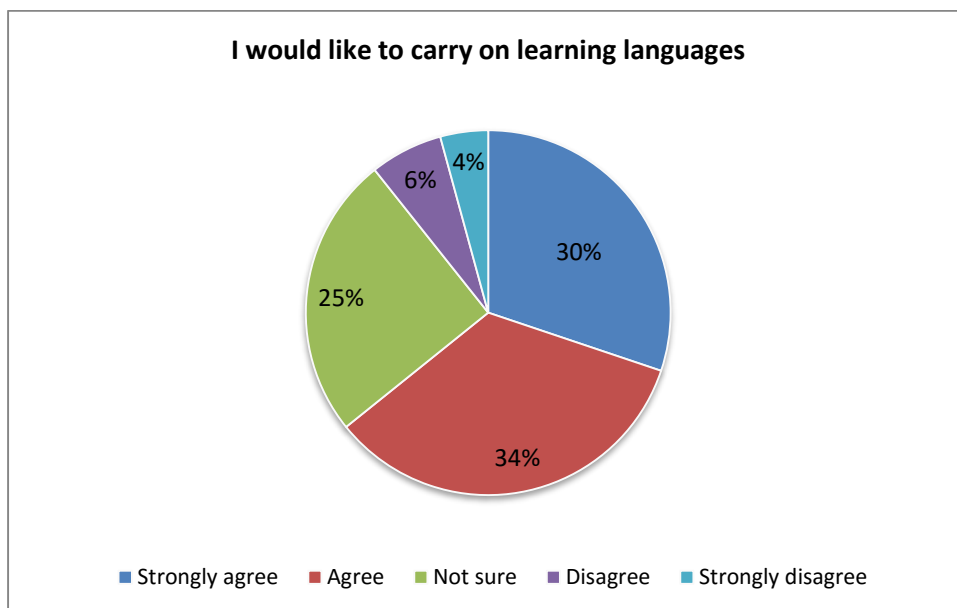


Figure 20: I would like to carry on learning languages (post-event)

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

Post-event there remained a small core of disaffection expressed by strong disagreement with the statements, 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 2% and 4%.

In contrast with the other attitudinal statements, there was little change in perceptions of the difficulty of language learning post-event as 58.5% agreed this post-event as opposed to 57.1 pre-event (so there was a very slight increase post-event).

#### 5.4 Post-event responses and gender

There were small differences between boys’ and girls’ perceptions of activities and the information received. Events overall were judged to be excellent or good by 82.5% of girls and 78.0% of boys while information received was rated as excellent or good by 82.7% of girls and 77.3% of boys. Boys appeared to be very slightly more inclined to express negative views of activities as 2.8% of them rated events overall as poor compared with 1.4% of girls and 2.6% of boys indicated that the information received was poor whereas only 1.2% of girls suggested this.

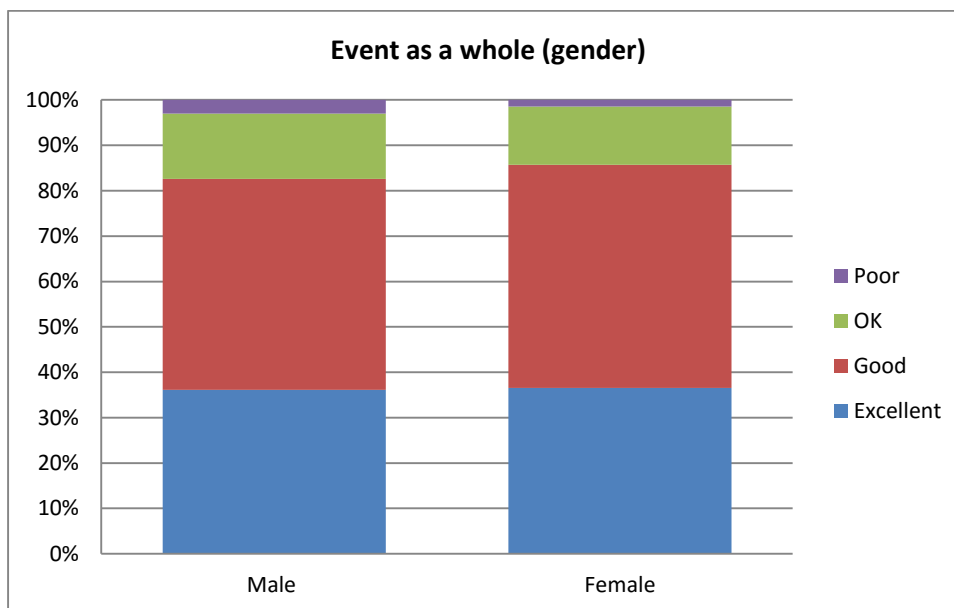


Figure 21: Please rate the event as a whole (gender post-event)

<sup>17</sup> Handley (2011: 156)

<sup>18</sup> Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010); Handley (2011); McCall (2011); Gallagher-Brett, Doughty & McGuinness (2014)

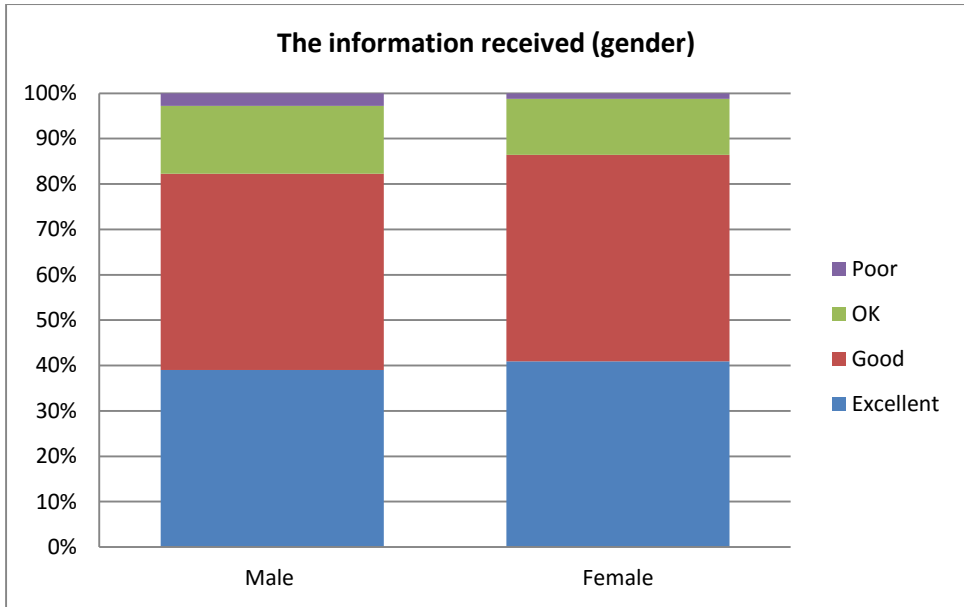


Figure 20: Please rate the information you received (gender post-event)

Analysis of post-event attitudinal statements revealed that girls continued to express more favourable views but also that positive attitudinal change after activities was slightly higher for boys. This included an 8.4% increase in the percentage of boys and a 7.2% increase in the percentage of girls who expressed a desire to continue with language study.

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	81.2% (+4.0%)	82.2% (+4.8%)	80.6% (+11.6%)	68.7% (+7.2%)
Boys post-event	71.6% (+6.9%)	72.7% (+5.4%)	75.4% (+11.0%)	60.3% (+8.4%)

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

### 5.5 Post-event responses and year groups

As previously stated, caution is needed in interpreting responses from different year groups because of the vastly different sample sizes.

All year groups expressed favourable views about events overall and about the information they had received. However, respondents in years 9 and 11 were less positive than those in other year

groups. While 89.5% of year 12 and 87.8% of year 8 respondents perceived events overall to be excellent or good, 76.5% of year 9 and 71.3% of year 11 respondents did so.

Similarly, information received during activities was judged to be excellent or good by 88.3% of year 13 and 87.7% of year 10 respondents compared with 78.3% of year 9 and 73.5% of year 11 respondents. It is possible that the activities that learners were involved with may have been a complicating variable.

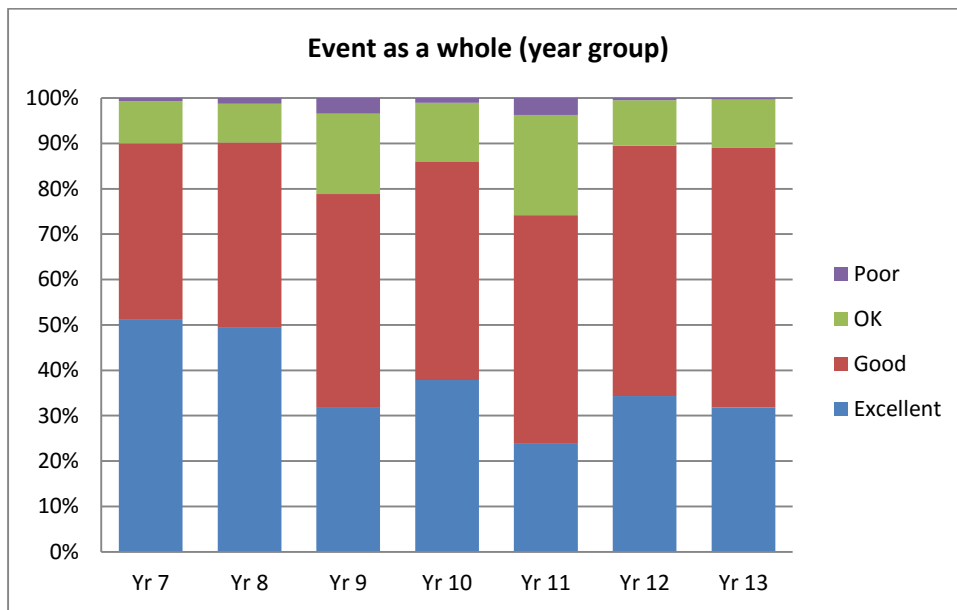


Figure 21: Please rate the event as a whole (year groups post-event)

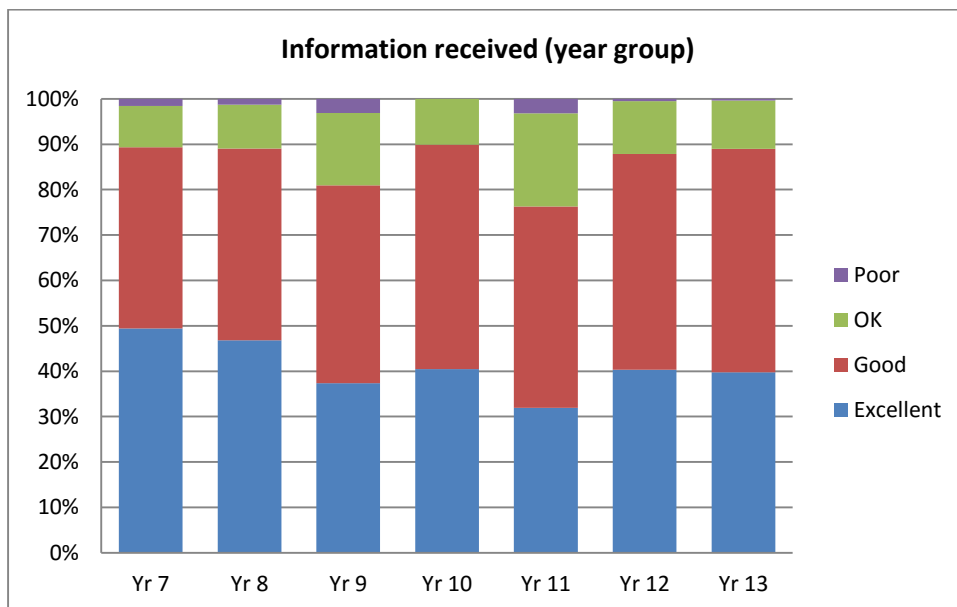


Figure 22: Please rate the information you received (year groups post-event)

Year group responses to attitudinal statements post-event showed improvements in almost all areas.

Positive attitudinal change ranged from a meagre 0.1% (i.e. almost no change) to a somewhat more impressive 13.4%, which represented the increase in the desire to continue with languages among year 11 respondents. This group has consistently appeared to be the most difficult year group to influence with Routes activities. Also noteworthy were 9.0% and 7.8% increases in expressions of interest in carrying on with languages among year 10 and year 9 respondents respectively. Year 9 learners also recorded an increase of 12.6% in the perceived usefulness of languages for careers. Previous surveys in 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 have also revealed particularly positive findings among year 9 respondents so this year's results provide further consolidating evidence to show that Routes activities are particularly well targeted with this year group.

Smaller improvements in attitudes were apparent in the year 12 and 13 responses as in our previous surveys. However, attitudes here were already very positive pre-event so there was not a great deal of room for improvement. There was one example of a post-event attitudinal decline (a 2.5% decrease in cultural interest among year 11s).

<b>Table 7: Attitudes and year groups post-event</b>				
<b>Levels of agreement and strong agreement</b>	<b>I enjoy learning languages</b>	<b>I enjoy meeting people from other cultures</b>	<b>Languages will help me to get a job</b>	<b>I would like to carry on learning languages</b>
<b>Year 7 post-event</b>	67.3% (+7.3%)	69.6% (+5.8%)	60.4% (+12.3%)	54.5% (+3.4%)
<b>Year 8 post-event</b>	82.6% (+7.9%)	77.3% (+4.7%)	76.8% (+10.3%)	69.8% (+3.2%)
<b>Year 9 post-event</b>	65.2% (+3.9%)	70.1% (+6.2%)	74.0% (+12.6%)	59.0% (+7.8%)
<b>Year 10 post-event</b>	78.9% (+4.0%)	79.2% (+ 3.9%)	82.4% (+9.2%)	61.6% (+9.0%)
<b>Year 11 post-event</b>	64.1% (+2.1%)	70.8% (-2.5%)	73.0% (+11.0%)	43.2% (+13.4%)
<b>Year 12 post-event</b>	93.6% (+0.1%)	89.4% (+1.2%)	91.8% (+8.9%)	80.1% (+ 6.4%)
<b>Year 13 post-event</b>	98.1 (+1.0%)	98.5% (+0.7%)	91.3% (+2.2%)	85.3% (+0.5%)

It is difficult to make comparisons between the results of this survey and our earlier evaluation surveys because of variations in the sample. 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 have been promising in all the years surveyed.

<b>Table 8: Year 9 attitudinal change post-event - comparison of surveys</b>				
<b>Percentage change in agreement post-event</b>	<b>I enjoy learning languages</b>	<b>I enjoy meeting people from other cultures</b>	<b>Languages will help me to get a job</b>	<b>I would like to carry on learning languages</b>
<b>Year 9 2011-12</b>	+3.2	+2.6	+14.5	+5.2
<b>Year 9 2012-13</b>	+6.5	+6.0	+11.7	+7.0
<b>Year 9 2013-14</b>	+9.8	+6.2	+9.0	+8.2
<b>Year 9 2014-15</b>	+3.9	+6.2	+12.6	+7.8

It could also be argued that year 11 is a similarly important year group and post-event attitudinal improvements 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). However, this year's findings are more positive for year 11 apart from the slightly diminished interest in meeting people from other culture post-event.

<b>Table 9: Year 11 attitudinal change post-event - comparison of surveys</b>				
<b>Percentage change in agreement post-event</b>	<b>I enjoy learning languages</b>	<b>I enjoy meeting people from other cultures</b>	<b>Languages will help me to get a job</b>	<b>I would like to carry on learning languages</b>
<b>Year 11 2011-12</b>	+4.7	+4.7	+7.9	+2.7
<b>Year 11 2012-13</b>	+3.2	+3.0	+5.2	+2.1
<b>Year 11 2013-14</b>	+1.7	+0.4	+5.4	+3.7
<b>Year 11 2014-15</b>	+2.1%	-2.5%	+11.0%	+13.4%

### *5.6 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.

Respondents from sixth form colleges and independent schools were more satisfied with events than those from other schools. For example, 89.6% of respondents in sixth form colleges and 88.7% of those in independent schools agreed that activities were excellent or good compared with 82.3% of those in WP3 schools (not disadvantaged), 77.5% in WP1 schools (disadvantaged) and 71.7% in WP2 schools (partially disadvantaged).

Similarly, information received was rated as excellent or good by 87.8% of respondents in independent schools and by 72.6% of respondents in WP2 schools.

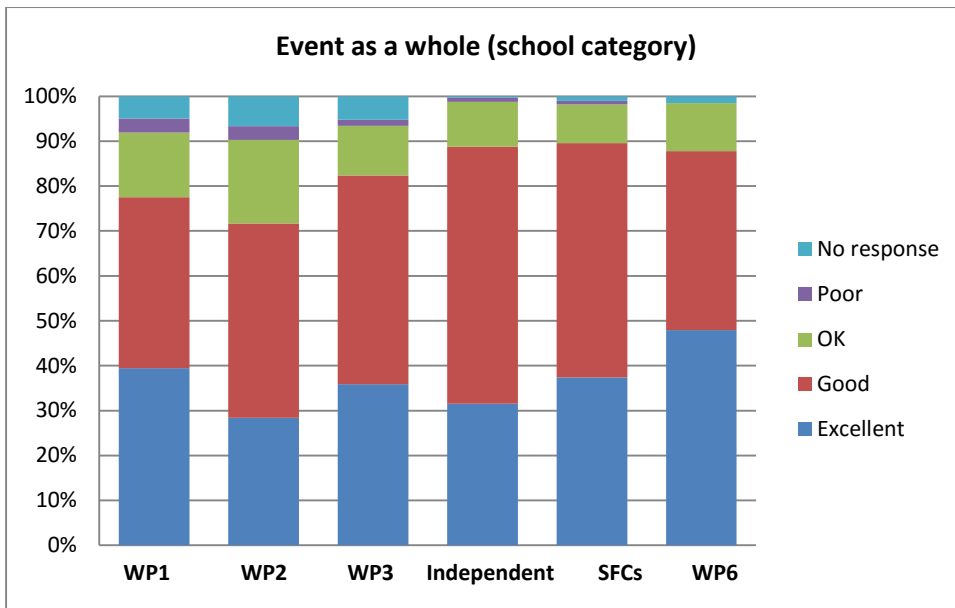


Figure 23 Please rate the event as a whole (school/college category)

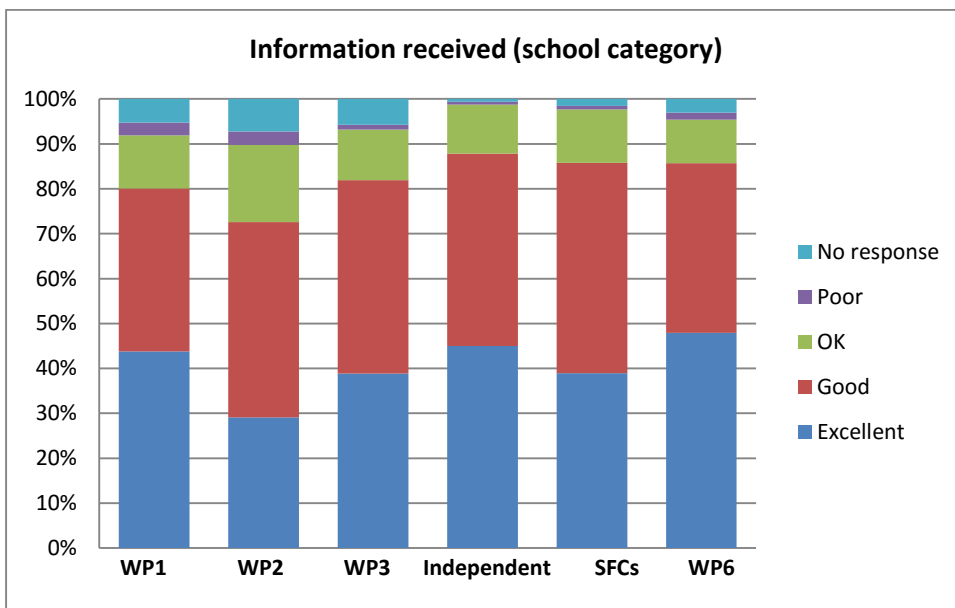


Figure 24: Please rate the information you received (school/college category)

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 were the increases of 7.5% in the percentage of learners who wanted to continue with languages in the WP1 most disadvantaged schools and of 15.3% in the

percentage of learners who agreed that languages would be useful for jobs in the WP2 partially disadvantaged schools.

<b>Levels of agreement and strong agreement</b>	<b>I enjoy learning languages</b>	<b>I enjoy meeting people from other cultures</b>	<b>Languages will help me to get a job</b>	<b>I would like to carry on learning languages</b>
<b>WP1 disadvantaged</b>	75.0% (+4.8%)	78.8% (+2.2%)	77.6% (+8.5%)	63.7% (+7.5%)
<b>WP2 partially disadvantaged</b>	66.6% (+6.6%)	66.4% (+3.6%)	70.4% (+15.3%)	53.3% (+6.9%)
<b>WP3 not disadvantaged</b>	74.2% (+2.9%)	75.2% (+3.6%)	76.0% (+9.5%)	63.3% (+6.4%)
<b>Independent</b>	86.5% (-3.7%)	85.6% (+2.3%)	90.3% (+7.4%)	77.5% (-0.3%)
<b>Sixth form / FE</b>	95.6% (+0.6%)	96.4% (-0.7%)	90.6% (+3.1%)	82.7% (+2.6%)

### 5.8 Summary of learner post-event data

As in 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14, 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 respondents in years 9 and 11 and among those attending partially disadvantaged and disadvantaged schools. These groups have been 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. The questionnaire also included three open questions:

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



- Do you have any further comments?

As with the learner questionnaires, responses to open questions are not presented in this report but will be used for the development of qualitative case studies.

### 6.1 *Characteristics of teacher sample*

Questionnaires were completed by 292 teachers in 177 schools in all nine regions.

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

<b>Table 11: Activities attended by teachers</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Cultural event	64	21.9
Careers event	41	14.0
Why study languages	39	13.3
Film event	26	8.9
European Day of Languages	18	6.2
Able Linguist	17	5.8
Languages in HE	14	4.8
Student ambassadors in schools	13	4.4
GCSE Revision	12	4.1
Widening Participation	10	3.4
A-level study	9	3.1
Language Enrichment event	8	2.7
Language Taster	6	2.0
Drama and languages	5	1.7
Beyond the classroom	4	1.4
Eurolink	2	0.7
Language Challenge	2	0.7
Adopt-a-class	1	0.3
Master class	1	0.3
Total	292	

### 6.2 *Teachers' responses to activities*

As in our three previous surveys, teachers' reactions to events were overwhelmingly positive and indicate that they really valued the events they attended. For example, 95.2% of teachers agreed

(i.e. agreed and strongly agreed) that events were a positive experience. Additionally, 91.4% agreed that the content was suitable for targeted students and 94.5% agreed that events had provided students with valuable information, which is similar to previous survey findings and 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 in Figures 26-28 below, there were relatively high levels of strong agreement with all these items.

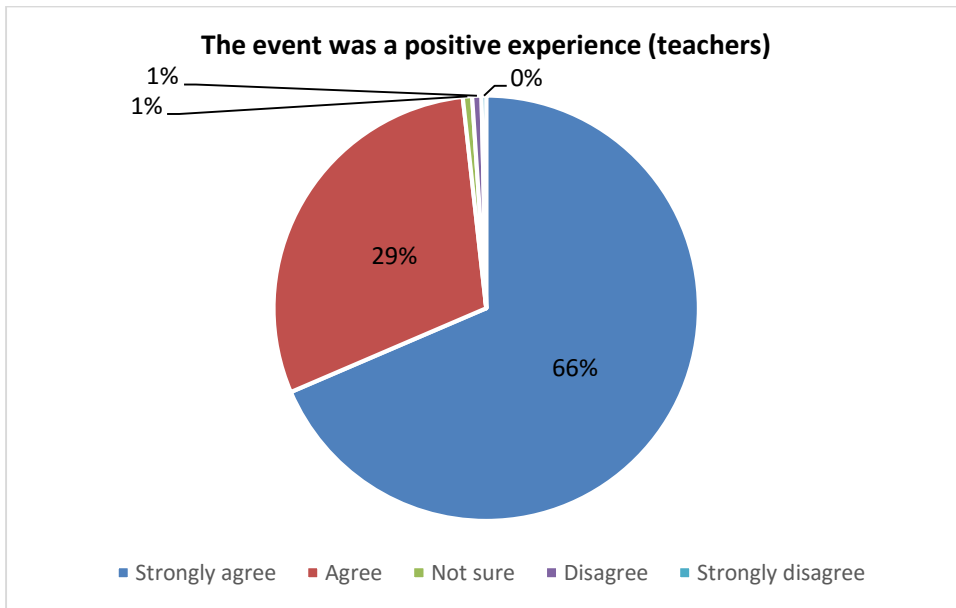


Figure 25: The event was a positive experience (teacher post-event)

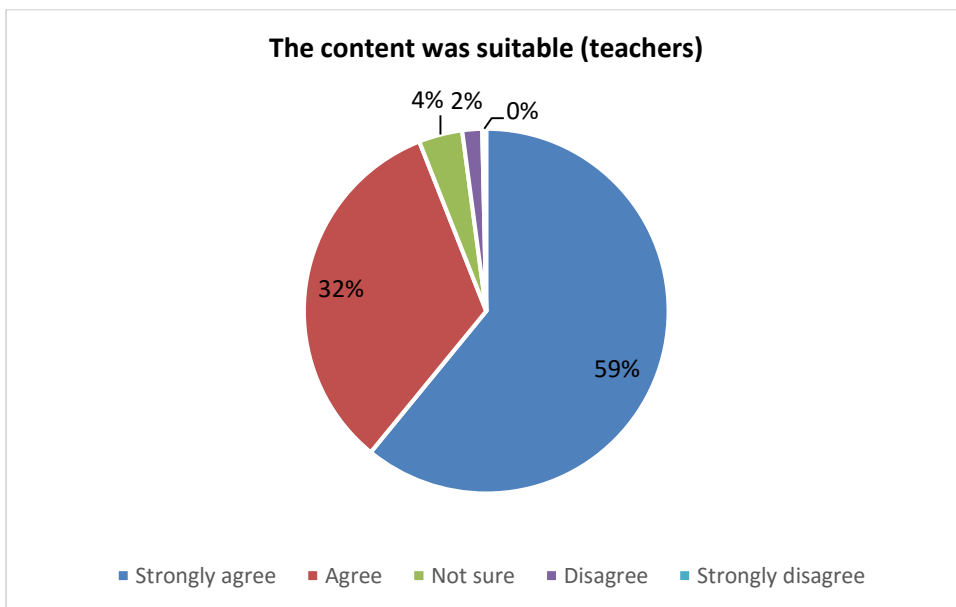


Figure 26: The content was suitable for targeted students (teacher post-event)

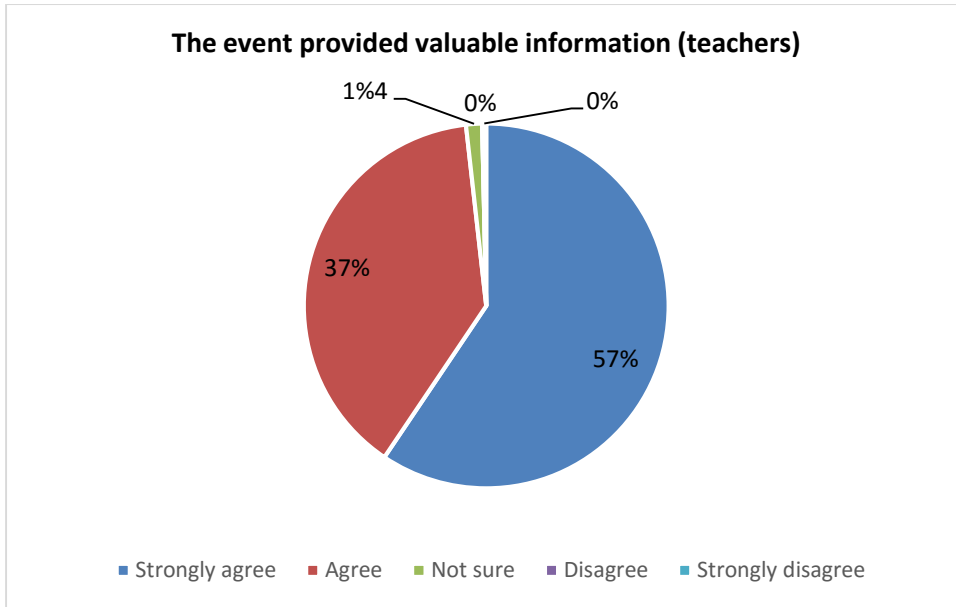


Figure 27: The event provided students with valuable information (teacher post-event)

Of course, variations in the teacher samples make it difficult to compare findings from this survey with those in previous years. However, results over the four years do seem to be relatively consistent although there were slightly lower levels of agreement among this year’s participants.

Opinions	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
The event was a positive experience	95.2%	98.9%	98.7%	97.1%
The content was suitable for targeted students	91.4%	94.7%	95%	89.2%
The event provided students with valuable information	94.5%	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 74.3% 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, 2012-13 and 2013-14.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010); Gallagher-Brett (2012; 2014; 2015)

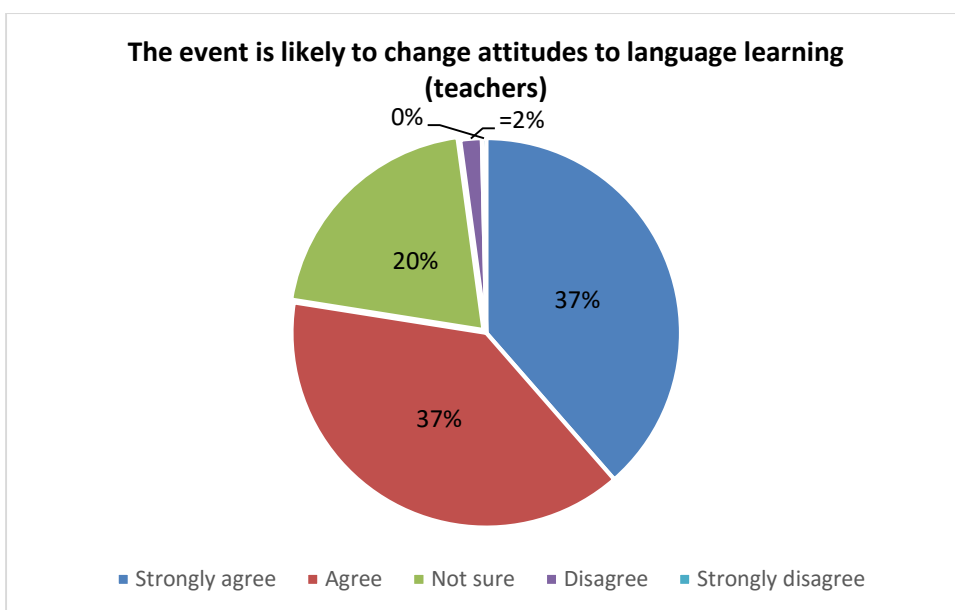


Figure 30: The event is likely to change attitudes to language learning (teacher post-event)

Opinion	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
The event is likely to change attitudes to language learning	74.3%	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 activities 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 both in engaging learners and in providing relevant information and advice.

## 7 Limitations of the surveys

Although the survey consists of a large set of data, 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.

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 but 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 as these are not covered by the attitudinal statements.

## 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. The 6.6% increase 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 have been consistent and they 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 indications of longer-term improvements in attitudes and uptake.<sup>20</sup> 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.

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<sup>20</sup> Canning, Gallagher-Brett, Tartarini & McGuinness (2010); Gallagher-Brett (2012); 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
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**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	Good	OK	Poor
<b>The event as a whole</b>				
<b>The information you received</b>				

**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
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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