

In July 2008 OFSTED published **The Changing Landscape for Languages**, which evaluated primary languages in 60 schools across the country. Where progress was judged good or outstanding:

- at least **two year groups** were learning a language;
- schools had a clear rationale for introducing languages and there was a very strong **commitment** from the head teacher;
- there were plans for sustainability with action plans used to set priorities for development and review;
- there were well developed **partnerships** with local secondary schools;
- head teachers were planning well for the **training** of teachers;
- coordinators were effective and well informed;
- **local authorities** had provided strong support;
- schools allocated the recommended 60 minutes a week.

The report highlighted how much the pupils **enjoyed** learning a new language and how they **understood its importance**. It also stated how teachers applied their **general knowledge** of primary teaching to the teaching of a new language and strengthened pupils oracy and literacy through links made with English.

There is more information about OFSTED and primary languages on the NACELL website (www.nacell.org.uk).

The Changing landscape for languages, OFSTED, July 2008 is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk



‘High standards and a rich curriculum go hand in hand. Literacy and numeracy are vital building blocks, and it is right to focus attention on them. But it is important that children have a rich and exciting experience at primary school, learning a wide range of things in a wide range of ways. My school has an extended curriculum which is rich and broad and includes modern languages.’

**Nick Warren, Head teacher,
Parkroyal Primary School,
Macclesfield, Cheshire**

Useful websites:

www.cilt.org.uk

CILT, the National Centre for Languages

www.nacell.org.uk

National Advisory Centre for Early Language Learning

www.primarylanguages.org.uk

Primary Languages Training Zone

www.all-languages.org.uk

Association of Language Learners

www.qca.org.uk

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

www.britishcouncil.org.uk

British Council

www.tda.gov.uk

Training and Development Agency for Schools

Primary languages What head teachers need to know



CILT The National
Centre for
Languages

Answers to your questions, including:

What does OFSTED say about primary languages?

How can languages support our main priorities?

How do I make it sustainable?

Will there be any assessment for primary languages?

Will it become statutory?

What does OFSTED say about the primary language entitlement and sustainability?

OFSTED inspects the provision of primary languages as both part of a general inspection and in specialised subject inspections. OFSTED is looking to see if schools fulfil specific criteria which are identified in the Inspection Framework for Schools. In a subject inspection the school is asked to provide a timetable for the subject inspector which includes:

- an **introductory meeting** with the head teacher/subject coordinator to provide a contextual overview of the quality and effectiveness of languages in the school and views of the subject's impact;
- an **observation** of language lessons;
- a review of any subject documentation, such as schemes of work and subject policies or handbook; it is useful if any assessment data and monitoring records are also made available.

Primary **subject inspections** last for one day and inspectors are language specialists.

In a general section five school inspection the above may not be included but a school will be expected to demonstrate how its current provision sits with the plans the school has for **sustainability and capacity building**. It is advisable to include a reference to your primary languages work in your **self evaluation form (SEF)** and to celebrate the **benefits** language learning brings to your school curriculum and the contribution it makes to addressing the outcomes of **Every Child Matters** and **Excellence and Enjoyment**.

How can languages support our main priorities and targets?

Language learning is **an inclusive learning experience** for all children and teachers are developing their understanding of how working with the **Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages** can have benefits across the curriculum.

- **Sir Jim Rose in his Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum:** interim report (December 2008) makes five recommendations on languages in primary schools. He recommends that the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that we want children to acquire should be situated under the area of learning English, Communication and Languages. This includes the proposal that teachers and pupils exploit the links between English and the new language.
- The recommendations made by Sir Jim Rose are already supported through the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages. Many schools are now using language lessons to focus on the **speaking and listening** strands of the **Primary Framework for Literacy**.
- Through the decoding texts in the new language, children are consolidating skills such as reading and interpreting texts that are integral to the Primary Framework for Literacy.
- Schools are finding that revisiting **concepts from other subject areas** in language lessons using simple language, can be very beneficial.
- **The Language Learning Strategies** discussed in the Framework support the principles of effective learning and teaching in schools.
- Children's **curiosity about languages and how they work** is being aroused through the **Knowledge about Language** strand of a primary language lesson.
- Children can develop their **spelling strategies** by learning about the derivation of words.

For more information contact the CILT primary team by emailing claire.cooper@cilt.org.uk

How can I make it sustainable?

- With support and training there are many aspects of a language learning experience that class teachers can teach effectively. This is what is already in place to support you and your teachers.
- Help is at hand from the **Primary Languages Training Zone** – an online toolkit for teaching and learning languages in Key Stage 2. This exciting website is full of video clips showing what language teaching looks like in the primary classroom. There are audio files to support teachers' own language development as well as advice and support for head teachers. www.primarylanguages.org.uk
- Local authorities are now well placed to support the development of primary language learning. The vast majority have a specialist **local authority primary languages adviser or consultant** to support you and your teachers.
- There are **40 training institutions** which include language teaching as part of their primary undergraduate and postgraduate courses. To date there are approximately 3,700 teachers who have graduated from such a course. There are also plans to introduce languages as a component of all primary training courses, predicting a further 2,400 trainees coming into schools in 2009. Contact the **Training and Development Agency for Schools** for more information.
- A **linguistic upskilling framework** to develop the language skills of primary teachers will shortly be available for local authorities and training institutions.
- **Specialist Language Colleges** receive funding to support their local primary schools. This provides an opportunity for collaboration and a sharing of expertise between the two sectors.
- The British Council is keen to place **Foreign Language Assistants**, native speakers in the language delivered in your school, into primary schools.

Will there be any assessment for primary languages?

- Assessment for learning strategies are equally applicable to primary languages as to other subjects. There are excellent examples of assessment for learning on the Primary Languages website www.primarylanguages.org.uk
- **The Languages Ladder** is a voluntary recognition scheme linked to the Common European Framework and to the existing national qualifications system. Progression through the stages is linked to objectives in the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages and is assessed in four separate skill areas. The Ladder can support assessment for learning in any language and the 'can do' statements provide short term motivational goals for the learner.
- **The Junior European Language Portfolio** is another assessment document which places the learner at the centre. This also uses the 'can do' statements in self, peer and teacher assessment. Children record their own progress and keep examples of work to build up a portfolio of their primary language learning experience. www.cilt.org.uk/books/portfolios.htm#jnr
- **Some** individual local authorities have developed their own assessment guidelines. Contact your **local authority adviser or consultant** for primary languages for more information.

Will it become statutory?

Recent research shows that **84%** of all primary schools are delivering a language at Key Stage 2 in curriculum time. The figure for schools meeting full entitlement i.e. teaching languages right across Key Stage 2 has risen to **54%**. **The Languages Review** (2007) recommended that languages become part of the statutory curriculum for Key Stage 2 in primary schools, when it is next reviewed. Key points of interest from this review include:

- Advising **against any one tightly prescribed approach** to teaching.
- Recognising that the languages taught will be predominantly **French, German and Spanish**.
- Predicting increasing interest in other **world languages**. It also highlights the importance of **valuing community languages** in which, in many localities, children will have a high level of speaking and listening skills.
- Recommending **formative assessment** of every child's learning towards the end of Key Stage 2 by reference to the Languages Ladder to ensure teachers in Key Stage 3 are well informed about children's prior learning.
- Recommending that teaching and learning in Years 6 and 7 should be viewed as a **continuum**. The report also recommends the formation of primary and secondary schools clusters, with appropriate leadership from local authorities.

The Languages Review can be found through www.teachernet.gov.uk