

Breaking the Languages Barrier

reform
scotland

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About Reform Scotland

Reform Scotland, a charity registered in Scotland, is a public policy institute which works to promote increased economic prosperity and more effective public services based on the principles of limited government, diversity and personal responsibility. Reform Scotland is independent of political parties and any other organisations. It is funded by donations from private individuals, charitable trusts and corporate organisations. Its Director is Chris Deerin and Alison Payne is the Research Director. Both work closely with the Advisory Board, chaired by Alan McFarlane, which meets regularly to review the research and policy programme.

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i. Executive Summary

Objective

In Reform Scotland's 'Improving Scotland's Business Environment' report from 2015 we set out our belief, and that shared by business organisations such as the SCDI and Chamber of Commerce, that Scotland needed a greater emphasis on learning languages. We pointed to data showing that the number of students studying modern languages had fallen and highlighted how greater languages skills can help grow our economy. Since then there has been a further decline in the number of pupils studying languages at school.

It is recognised that inactivity levels in young people are of a concern, and this contributed to ideas such as the compulsion of two hours of PE a week in schools, as well as initiatives such as the Daily Mile. Children need exercise, it is good for them, it should be part of their school week, but it doesn't need to be examinable. Could the same be said for learning languages?

Do we place too great an emphasis on French and German, despite the fact that a community language such as Arabic is far more widely used around the world and within our own communities?

The aim of this report is to start a wider discussion about how we teach languages in school. We don't claim to have all the answers, but we do believe that out-of-the-box thinking is required. Yes, the number of entries of French and German has declined over a number of years, but this is also true in many other European countries. However, the number of people studying Spanish has jumped and, compared to ten years ago, there are more entries at Higher level for languages. The number of pupils speaking additional languages in their day-to-day lives has also increased. We have communities filled with talented individuals speaking a range of languages and this is a wonderful resource that should be celebrated. Reform Scotland does not think it is true to say young people today value learning languages any less than previous generations, but clearly there is an issue with how we are teaching languages in our schools which needs to be investigated. Ensuring we are teaching and learning languages effectively will benefit individuals as well as wider Scottish society. It can also help Scotland think and act more outwardly and globally, particularly as we head towards Brexit.

Findings

- The UK Government has estimated that £48bn, or 3.5% of GDP, is lost to the economy each year because of poor language skills.
- Although there has been a decline in French and German exam entries in S4, this is part of an on-going trend stretching back beyond the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence. While the dominance of French and German may mean that overall language entries are down in S4, there has also been a big increase in Spanish at all levels and the overall number of language entries at Higher level has increased over the past 10 years.
- The reduction in French and German reflects a trend across Europe. After English, French is the second most frequently learned foreign language, followed by German. However, the proportion of students learning French in a number of countries has declined. For example, in 2005 69.5% of general upper secondary students learned French in the Netherlands. By 2014 this had fallen to 31.1%. There were also declines in the Czech Republic, Germany, Finland, Sweden and Iceland at the general upper secondary levels and declines in Portugal, Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece and Malta at the lower secondary education level.
- In many European countries foreign languages are taught by generalist teachers in primary education, as they are in Scotland, though there are variations within that. For example, in Poland generalist teachers can only teach foreign languages in the first three years of primary school and are replaced by specialist teachers in upper years. In other countries generalist teachers need to prove their proficiency in the specific language before being able to teach it, or have foreign language teaching including as part of their teacher education.
- Most European countries offer some sort of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), whereby a language other than the official language of schooling is used to teach a non-language subject. The objective being to enhance student's proficiency in their additional languages. This sort of teaching is offered in Scotland only through Gaelic Medium Education.
- The Scottish Government's 1+2 Approach policy, with the aim of all children having the opportunity to learn two additional languages before

the end of primary school is similar to the approach to language learning in most European countries.

- The number of language teachers in state-funded secondary schools in Scotland fell from 1,691 FTE in 2007 to 1,294 FTE in 2017.
- The vast majority of council do not employ languages teachers in primary schools, and languages are taught by primary teachers. However, there is no record of what abilities primary school teacher have in order to teach not just one but two foreign languages. This is despite the Scottish Government's Languages Working Group highlighting the need to carry out an audit of such skills.

While there may be some concerns, the outlook is nevertheless positive:

- Scottish Pupils are speaking more languages now than they did before. In 2010, 136 languages were spoken by school pupils at home. Three per cent of pupils spoke a language other than English at home. By 2017 this had increased to 157 languages and 4.5% of pupils spoke a language other than English (or Scots) at home. There have been particular increases in Polish, Urdu and Arabic. We have more bilingual and multilingual pupils and that is to be celebrated.

Policy recommendations

This report does not pretend to have all the answers; rather it aims to help contribute to a wider debate about how we teach languages in schools. While the drop in French and German at SCQF level 5 is certainly disappointing, the data contained in this report highlights that not only is this part of a Europe-wide trend, but more importantly there are increases in other languages, especially Spanish. It is also worth noting the increase in entries in Chinese languages, which may be benefiting from the establishment of the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools. Scottish pupils are also speaking more languages than ever before. That is undoubtedly a good place to start. As a result, Reform Scotland does not believe that there is a crisis in learning languages, or that Scots are failing to recognise the benefit of speaking languages, but there are serious questions about how to translate those positives into our education system. The following are policies that we believe would help in this process:

Add language learning attainment to PISA: There are a number of different systems adopted across Europe for teaching languages, hardly surprising given there are different education systems. However, although the European Commission produces regular ‘Key data’ reports, those reports don’t actually include comparable attainment data, making it difficult to learn lessons from overseas.

It is the OECD, not the European Commission, that operates PISA, which evaluates education systems worldwide by assessing pupils in science, maths, reading, collaborative problem-solving and financial literacy. PISA currently does no comparison of attainment in foreign language learning. Given the value of learning languages, Reform Scotland believes it would be helpful if languages were included in future studies and that Scotland participate in those studies.

Data gaps:

Implement the Languages Working Group’s recommendation and carry out an audit of language teaching capability in primary schools: Given that it is a Scottish Government policy to have primary school pupils learning two foreign languages by 2021, the Scottish Government should have a better idea of the capability of primary sector staff to teach two additional languages. Therefore, we would call on the Scottish Government to implement the Languages Working Group’s recommendation and carry out an audit of the number of primary teachers who are trained in Modern Languages or Gaelic along with looking at how many of those trained are currently engaged in teaching languages.

Review the ‘languages spoken’ question for the 2021 census:

The 2011 Scottish Census question on languages was not particularly helpful. It asked “Do you use a language other than English at home”. Arguably, particularly in the current political climate, some responders may not wish to admit they speak another language at home because the question implies *either/or*. Equally, it assumes people can only speak one language other than English at home. There is also a danger that the way the question is phrased conveys the assumption that speaking a language other than English is a problem rather than a benefit. In today’s multicultural world, there is every possibility that more than two languages are spoken at home, but there is no facility for the census to record that. It would be better to consider asking *what languages, other than English do you use regularly*. This should result in more accurate and meaningful data. The same review of question should be made in relation to the Pupil Census data.

End the distinction between ‘community’ and ‘modern’ languages

Although the reason some languages are classed as ‘modern’ and others as ‘community’ is to do with the learners’ experience and not a judgement on the specific language, Reform Scotland is not convinced that the definition is widely understood. In addition, using that definition suggests that only pupils with certain backgrounds would be interested in studying those languages. Yet Urdu and Chinese are more commonly spoken around the world, and here in Scotland, than French and German, so why wouldn’t someone from outwith the specific “community” want to learn those languages. Scotland has growing Polish, Arabic, Urdu and Chinese communities. This presents a wonderful opportunity not only for pupils to engage with native speakers and learn from their peers, but actually use the language skills they learn. Having more citizens speaking a wider range of languages should be an opportunity for all to learn more and help bring us together. Our education system should acknowledge that, rather than potentially treating some languages as second class.

Community languages could also present an opportunity to the primary sector. There has been a fall in the number of languages teachers in secondary schools and for the 1+2 policy to be implemented we need teachers in primary schools to be able to teach two different languages – yet we don’t know what provision there is to achieve that. The Languages Working Group suggested we should consider how Foreign Language Assistants, native and fluent speakers of other languages, could support teachers - could this be a way to help reach the policy goal, as well as teaching pupils about culture and other aspects of the language? While some native speakers may be used, the focus on teaching remains largely focused on modern languages. Adapting the breadth of languages taught to reflect the change in languages actually being used in Scotland could open up learning opportunities.

Think outside the box – pilot different approaches

If the end goal is that we want more people to be able to speak more languages, or at least have the confidence to try, then simply relying on the exam system will not work. The decline in the uptake of French and German began long before Curriculum for Excellence was introduced, so even if tweaks are made, or more pupils are able to continue sitting seven or eight National 5s, there is no guarantee this would lead to an increase in people studying French and German.

Instead we need to think differently and pilot fresh ideas at local and national levels. For example, all secondary pupils between S1 and S4 currently should

get at least two periods of PE per week.¹ This is non-examinable content but is aimed at ensuring pupils have access to exercise and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Could a similar scheme be adapted for languages? Could non-examinable classes aimed at promoting language-learning and confidence in speaking other languages help with uptake? Could pilots looking at more Content and Language Integrated Learning be tried? At a secondary level this could only initially be used in areas where teachers are sufficiently qualified in the language and other subject, but there are opportunities. Equally, what about the possibility of Foreign Language Medium Primary Schools?

The work of the SCILT and in particular the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools shows how teachers can be supported using new ideas and partnerships, creating new links and helping children develop an interest and understanding in a different culture and as well as the language.

There is no need to panic, *just yet*. The number of pupils studying languages at Higher level is broadly constant and not in decline. There has been a huge increase in the uptake of Spanish. People in Scotland are actively speaking more languages than before. Developments such as the Confucius Hubs highlight new ways of supporting teachers. We have the right building blocks, but we need to start re-organising them now, not just to prevent problems in the future, but also to demonstrate that Scotland is outward-looking and wants to engage on a global level.

¹ <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/schools/wellbeing-in-schools/>

1. Introduction

There are estimated to be 360 million native English speakers around the world and about half-a-billion who speak it as a second language. Behind Chinese and Spanish, English is the third most spoken language.² English is often used for business and for technology; the vast majority of EU countries teach English as a second language in primary schools; the spread of English-speaking media, especially from the USA, means that Scots, as native English speakers have an in-built advantage.

As a result, it is easy for us to make ourselves understood – most people will speak our language, therefore why should we learn others? There are so many of them, they are all so different, and English is so dominant. Isn't it a better use of precious learning time to focus on more "useful" subjects?

This attitude perhaps reflects a reality that, generally speaking, we can just about get by without learning languages - but with increasing globalisation do we truly want to *just* get by. Particularly in the context of Brexit and Scotland's need to attract more people and make new trading links, shouldn't we be doing more to make ourselves more outward-looking and actively engaged with the global community?

It is also interesting to note that while in the UK we have benefited from the USA's spread of the English language through soft culture, in America more and more people are learning Spanish as a second language in response to the growth of native Spanish speakers. Even George W Bush, someone who was often mocked in the UK for his perceived lack of intelligence, has delivered speeches in Spanish, while his brother, a former presidential hopeful, is fluent in the language. Arguably little Britain, beneficiary of all others learning English is gone forever.

There are many benefits of learning a second language, not just for the individual, but for the wider community. As the Scottish Government states on its website:

"It is in Scotland's best interest that young people are attracted to learning languages as it will help to equip them with communication skills, confidence and a better understanding of the international opportunities

² <https://www.babbel.com/en/magazine/the-10-most-spoken-languages-in-the-world/>

available to them. It is estimated that £48bn or 3.5% of GDP is lost annually to the UK economy because of our language skills deficit”³

The Scottish Government has also highlighted the research Professor James Foreman-Peck did for the UK Government in 2014 which suggested poor language skills meant that trade by UK companies in 2006 was lower than it might otherwise have been in Brazil, Russia, India and China, as well as with France, Germany and Japan.

He also noted that language skills don’t only help communicate with potential trade partners, but make businesses more aware of potential barriers created by cultural factors.⁴

In addition, studies have highlighted the cognitive benefits of learning languages. Research has suggested that multilingualism is associated with better cognitive performance; higher academic achievement in children; slower cognitive ageing, including a delayed onset of dementia; and a better cognitive recovery from stroke.⁵

Yet despite these benefits; despite our need to increase our global reach; despite the benefits of language skills to the individual and Scottish society as a whole, there is a concern that learning languages in school is seen as less valued than other subjects, a concern reflected in a decline in entries at SCQF 5 (Standard Grade or National 5 level).⁶

Reform Scotland agrees with the Scottish Government that there are huge benefits and great potential from learning more languages.

This report considers whether we can do things differently.

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<https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20170105052424/http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/LanguageLearning>

⁴ <https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20170105085538/https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-costs-to-the-uk-of-language-deficiencies-as-a-barrier-to-uk-engagement-in-exporting>

⁵ Bak. T & Mehmedbegovic. D, “Healthy “Healthy linguistic diet: the value of linguistic diversity and language learning across the lifespan”, MEITS policy papers, 21 May 2017.

⁶ Statistics detailing entries at each level are set out in the next chapter.

2. Background Statistics

2.1 Learning languages

The SQA exam results published in August 2018 highlighted a decline in the number of people sitting modern languages exams in Scotland at National 5 level. There was speculation that a reduction in the average number of subjects pupils were sitting, following the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, was behind the decline. However, while the decline has been more dramatic in the past year, it traces back beyond the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence. It is also worth noting that while overall figures are down, those studying Spanish and Gaelic are increasing. The overall entries at Higher level for languages has also increased overall over the past 10 years.

The table below looks at changes in entries since 1998. To try and best compare like with like in terms of those choosing to study languages the table includes National 4 entries, because in previous years those pupils would have sat Standard Grade exams at a general or foundation level.

SQA Entries in language exams changes over time

Subject	1998	2008 ⁷	2013 ⁸	2017 ⁹	2018 ¹⁰	Change over 1 year	Change over 10 years	Change over 20 years
French (SG/ NAT4&5)	38,356	30,780	21,146	12,081	10,592	-12.3%	-65.6%	-72.4%
French Higher	4,619	4,602	4,239	3,918	3,780	-3.5%	-17.9%	-18.2%
German (SG/ NAT4&5)	16,019	8,560	4,415	2,507	2,352	-6.2%	-72.5%	-85.3%
German Higher	1,962	1,459	1,051	890	817	-8.2%	-44.0%	-58.4%
Spanish (SG/ NAT4&5)	2,587	3,057	3,815	6,056	6,555	8.2%	114.4%	153.4%
Spanish Higher	874	1,327	1,645	2,809	2,795	-0.5%	110.6%	219.8%
Gaelic (SG/ NAT4&5)	98	199	197	165	195	18.2%	-2.0%	99.0%
Gaelic Higher	54	99	117	126	130	3.2%	31.3%	140.7%
Italian (SG/ NAT4&5)	627	467	211	315	429	36.2%	-8.1%	-31.6%
Italian Higher	201	194	238	264	252	-4.5%	29.9%	25.4%
Latin (SG/ NAT4&5)	976	432	352	376	392	4.3%	-9.3%	-59.8%
Latin Higher	355	257	218	286	226	-21.0%	-12.1%	-36.3%
Chinese Languages (SG/ NAT4&5)	-	-	66	185	242	30.8%		
Chinese Languages Higher	-	-	-	129	152	17.8%		
Urdu (SG/ NAT4&5)	122	135	163	88	69	-21.6%	-48.9%	-43.4%
Urdu Higher	-	58	109	104	103	-1.0%	77.6%	

In 1998 there were no Higher entries in Chinese Languages or Urdu but there were 19 entries for Russian

In 1998 there were no SG entries in Chinese Languages but there were 9 entries for Russian

In 2008 there were no Higher entries in Chinese Languages but there were 15 entries for Russian

⁷ https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/StatsTable_SG08_web.xls (Standard Grades)

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/StatsTable_NH08_web.xls (Highers)

⁸ <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/70787.html>

⁹ [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Attainment_Statistics_\(August\)_2018.xls](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Attainment_Statistics_(August)_2018.xls)

¹⁰ [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Attainment_Statistics_\(August\)_2018.xls](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Attainment_Statistics_(August)_2018.xls)

There are many different ways that these figures could be interpreted but it is important to remember that the exam results data alone does not necessarily give the full picture with regard to the use of foreign languages and multilingualism in Scotland. For example, although the Scottish Government notes that obesity in Scotland has increased since 2003¹¹, at the same time the number of pupils sitting Higher PE has jumped dramatically from 4,095 in 2003 to 10,090 in 2018. In fact, in 2018 PE was the fourth most-popular Higher, behind English and Maths, and only just edged out by History. (The full breakdown of entries for SCQF levels 5 and 6 can be viewed in Appendix 1.) So just as looking at the number of people sitting PE does not give a full indication of the nation's health, simply looking at a fall in the number of people sitting an exam doesn't necessarily reflect Scotland's language skills.

While many more people previously sat languages at Standard Grade, did they actually use those skills? Were people 10 or 20 years ago leaving school and communicating in additional languages more than their successors do today? Does the way we teach languages actually give people the skills and confidence they need to try to communicate in that language after they have left school, and, more importantly, to try communicating in the many other languages the SQA doesn't offer exams in as well?

It is worth remembering that parents have an impact on the subject choices being made by pupils at the end of their Broad General Education. Exam entries show that 30 years ago more languages were being studied at O Grade level than today at Nat 5. Many parents helping choose subjects will have taken an exam in a foreign language. Has their experience of their use of that subject influenced how they guide their children?

There is nothing to suggest today's children are less interested in speaking other languages, especially as many will have grown up hearing a wider range of languages in their daily lives than their parents did – for example through the growth in Spanish language media and culture from the USA, or the growth in different languages being spoken in our communities. Rather than a move away from languages per se, the figures could also suggest simply a move away from French and German. Either way, while the statistics raise many questions, they do not give clear answers.

Therefore, before panicking over exam results, we should be looking at why fewer people want to study French and German, and what we can do instead to encourage greater use of other languages and language learning in general.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Health/TrendObesity>

2.2 Speaking languages

In truth, the exam results give only an indication of what is being studied, not what is being spoken. There is nothing to suggest that pupils choosing not to study a language are not taking the opportunity to try and speak a language when on holiday, or communicating with friends or families in different ways. Scottish Census data gives a basic snapshot of some of the languages being spoken in Scotland. Unfortunately, prior to 2011 the census only asked questions about Gaelic language use, not other languages, so there is no way to use the census to measure change. However the 2011 question was also not particularly helpful. It asked “Do you use a language other than English at home”.

As Thomas Bak and Dina Mehmedbegovic highlight in their article “*Towards an interdisciplinary lifetime approach to Multilingualism*” in the European Journal of Language Policy, there is a danger of politicising such a question that guides people towards certain answers, as opposed to finding out genuine information. Would families feel pressure to answer “English only”? The question implies that if someone speaks a language other than English at home, then they do not also speak English at home. Equally, the question allows for only one language to be spoken at home, whereas in reality many families in our multicultural society may well speak more than two, reflecting different backgrounds of family members. The Scottish Government, as highlighted earlier, clearly values languages skills, so this sort of data should be sought and welcomed. As work is done in preparation for the 2021 census, hopefully a better idea of the language use of the population can be investigated.

Nevertheless, the 2011 consensus data does give some basic information showing the use of languages other than English at home.

Census 2011: Language other than English used at home¹²

Age	All people aged 3 and over	English only	Gaelic	Scots	British Sign language	Polish	Other
Total	5,118,223	4,740,547	24,974	55,817	12,533	54,186	230,166
3 to 4	115,641	103,752	620	622	312	2,068	8,267
5 to 9	269,617	245,820	1,812	1,771	786	3,233	16,195
10 to 14	291,615	271,043	1,415	2,281	814	2,551	13,511
15	62,278	58,196	265	529	163	447	2,678
16 to 17	126,266	118,466	448	1,029	300	829	5,194
18 to 19	142,282	131,675	434	1,046	327	928	7,872
20 to 24	363,940	320,702	1,053	2,556	853	6,073	32,703
25 to 29	345,632	297,890	934	2,566	818	13,739	29,685
30 to 34	321,695	278,244	1,074	2,654	709	10,882	28,132
35 to 39	340,056	305,957	1,411	3,353	874	5,102	23,359
40 to 44	394,698	366,912	1,809	4,130	1,180	2,604	18,063
45 to 49	410,929	388,450	1,770	4,427	1,201	2,104	12,977
50 to 54	375,827	357,104	1,642	4,408	916	1,745	10,012
55 to 59	330,891	315,729	1,706	4,643	755	1,015	7,043
60 to 64	336,522	323,362	1,912	5,227	722	418	4,881
65 to 69	261,198	251,562	1,618	4,378	577	105	2,958
70 to 74	220,594	211,903	1,623	3,821	485	66	2,696
75 to 79	178,114	171,570	1,349	3,000	337	64	1,794
80 to 84	124,525	119,967	1,063	2,010	220	61	1,204
85 and over	105,903	102,243	1,016	1,366	184	152	942

Further information about what languages school pupils speak at home can be taken from the Scottish Government's Pupil Census data.¹³ This latest report shows that there were 158 languages spoken by Scottish school pupils in 2017, the most common after English being Polish, Urdu, Scots, Punjabi and Arabic – together accounting for nearly 5% of the 688,959 pupils. Ninety-two per cent identified English as the main home language.

Scottish Pupil Census, main home language 2017

Language	Number	Language	Number	Language	Number
Number of languages	158	Lithuanian	992	Bulgarian	441
		French	987	Tamil	411
Number of pupils		Bengali/Bangla	940	Nepalese	373
English	632,490	Portuguese	839	Kurdish	364
Polish	15,669	Italian	823	Pashto	356
Urdu	6,031	Latvian	813	Yoruba	341
Scots	5,998	Malayalam	809	Somali	329
Punjabi	3,913	Hungarian/Magyar	616	Farsi/Iranian/Persian	304
Arabic	3,715	Slovak	587	Greek	295
Chinese (Modern Standard/Mandarin)	1,761	Hindi	582	Telugu	293
Romanian	1,598	German	521		
Cantonese	1,200	Turkish	520	Not known/not disclosed	1,003
Spanish	1,169	Gaelic (Scottish)	510		
Russian	1,108	Tagalog/Filipino	443	Other	4,060

¹² <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/standard-outputs.html>

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus/dspupcensus17>

Looking at older records of the Pupil Census gives an indication of how this has changed over time. In 2010, of the 679,140 pupils recorded in the census, 95% of pupils' main home language was English and the top five other languages (Polish, Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic and Cantonese) accounted for 3% of pupils.

However, it should be noted that in 2010 the number of people saying they spoke Scots as opposed to English was dramatically lower, which means that there is a danger of not comparing like with like. If Chinese was counted instead of Scots in 2017, the top five languages still account for 4.5% of pupils, up from 3% in 2010.

Scottish Pupil Census, main home language 2010

Language	Number	Language	Number	Language	Number
<i>Number of languages</i>	136	Malayalam	511	Tamil	246
		Russian	479	Hungarian/Magyar	216
<i>Number of pupils</i>		Lithuanian	446	Swahili/Kiswahili	214
English	642,498	Chinese (Mandarin)	434	Romanian	212
Polish	6,249	Tagalog/Filipino	426	Shona	185
Urdu	4,523	Slovak	416	Pashto	174
Punjabi	4,398	Latvian	407	Sign Language	162
Arabic	1,793	Turkish	406	Bahasa Malaysia	150
Cantonese	1,467	Hindi	331	Thai	149
French	825	Portuguese	321	Kurdish	142
Gaelic (Scottish)	606	Farsi/Iranian/Persian	274		
Bengali/Bangala	593	Scots	265	Not known/ not disclosed	2,090
German	560	Italian	257		
Spanish	522	Somali	251	Other	2,611

The Pupil Census records clearly indicate that school pupils today are actively speaking more languages than in 2010. It is also worth remembering that they only record the main home language, the same problem we find with the main Scottish Census. Many children may speak English at home but be able to speak one or more other languages as well.

It is also worth noting how few children speak French or German at home compared to the many other languages. For example, Arabic is one of the most used languages in the world, considerably more widely spoken than French or German, and the proportion of school pupils speaking Arabic has increased by over 100% in the past seven years, from 1,793 in 2010 to 3,715 in 2017. What message are we sending out to these pupils about their language skills if our schools place greater value on certain languages over all others? Especially when the discussion focuses on a decline in language exam entries, when in reality it is only a decline in French and German.

Arguably, we have an untapped resource of children with skills speaking a number of languages that we are not nurturing or celebrating.

2.3 Plurilingualism

The phrases ‘*bilingualism*’ and ‘*multilingualism*’ are often used when talking about knowledge of additional languages. However, the Council of Europe has spoken of promoting a vision of ‘*plurilingualism*’¹⁴

Thomas Bak and Dina Mehmedbegovic explain the difference in their MEITS Paper “Healthy linguistic diet: the value of linguistic diversity and language learning across the lifespan”:¹⁵

“A multilingual approach is about having many different languages coexist alongside each other, but separately, within individuals or society, with the ultimate aim of achieving the idealized competency of the native speaker in each language. In contrast a plurilingual approach places emphasis on the development of effective communication skills, which draw on all linguistic and cultural experiences in an interactive way. This is promoted as a lifelong activity/engagement, a process of learning the language of home, society and other peoples; developing communicative competencies throughout our lifetime; and flexibility calling in different situations upon different parts of this competence in order to achieve effective communication....plurilingualism removes the ideal of the native speaker as the ultimate achievement and replaces it with the aim of an effective pluralistic communicator.”

In other words, rather than focusing on a goal of reaching native competence in a language, the aim is to be an effective communicator. This is an important distinction. Plurilingualism places value on continued language-learning that enables effective communication. It doesn’t matter if a native-like level is not reached.

Language learning also brings transferable skills. While research suggests learning a second foreign language is often easier than the first, evidence has also shown that children exposed to more than one language tend to perform better academically than monolingual peers.¹⁶

¹⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/language-policy-in-the-council-of-europe>

¹⁵ Bak. T & Mehmedbegovic. D, “Healthy linguistic diet: the value of linguistic diversity and language learning across the lifespan”, MEITS policy papers, 21 May 2017

¹⁶ Mehmedbegovic. D & Bak. T, “Towards an interdisciplinary lifetime approach to multilingualism”, European Journal of Language Policy, Volume 9 Issue 2 2017

Despite the concerns regarding the number of people actually sitting language exams, more people in Scotland are speaking more languages. Every day Scots are exposed to more languages than ever before, and this presents a wonderful opportunity. Language education should not be seen as the preserve of the elite, and yet there is a danger that the languages on offer within the education system are not keeping up with Scottish society.

In Alison Phipps and Gionvanna Fassetta's European Journal of Language Policy paper "A critical analysis of language policy in Scotland"¹⁷, the authors note that "*speaking certain foreign languages was something traditionally reserved for the well educated, a publicly legitimised marker of status and belonging, rather than a tool for communication*".

Is there an argument that by overly focusing on French and German in schools, as opposed to the languages used in our communities, our education system is passing judgement on whether some languages are better to learn than others? Some languages are classed as 'modern languages' and others as 'community languages', due to the learners' experiences. Community language learners have normally had some prior experience of the languages before starting to study them in a formal context. Modern language learners begin studying the language from scratch in a formal context and usually have little or no exposure to the language outside the classroom.¹⁸

However, how well understood is that definition? Is there a danger that the way we are framing French and German within the education setting is suggesting that those languages are more worthy than others. It also suggests that only individuals from a 'community' would want to learn a 'community language'. For example, Urdu is regarded as a community language. Yet, anyone who has no background with the language would be starting to learn it in exactly the same way as they would French or German. Urdu is more widely spoken around the world, and in Scotland, so why wouldn't someone with no background in a community language want to learn it?

There is also an issue that some community languages are offered through SQA, but others are not. For example Polish is not offered despite the huge growth of that language within Scotland.

The attitude that some languages are better than others also comes up with regard to Gaelic and the occasional debate over whether that gets too much in

¹⁷ Phipps. A & Fassetta.G, "A critical analysis of language policy in Scotland", European Journal of Language Policy, Volume 7 Issue 1 2015

¹⁸ McPake. J, "Provision for Community Language Learning in Scotland", SCLIT 2006
<https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2006/09/07093013/0>

terms of resource or attention. Liberal Democrat MSP Alex Cole Hamilton ended up in the middle of such a discussion on Twitter on 10 August 2018, extract below, where some perceived his comments as a complaint that Gaelic was getting preferential treatment.

So while the proportion of multilingual schoolchildren increases and the range of languages spoken in our communities widens, the languages offered by our schools do not reflect that change.

**Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP**
@agcolemilton

Following

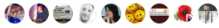
I've no problem with Gaelic, I really don't. But when uptake of French and German drops by **OVER 60 PERCENT** under @theSNP, I'd say we have bigger fish to fry.

P.S. before you 'patriots' @ me, I don't hate Scotland- I just want our kids to have a fighting chance out there

**The Courier** @thecourieruk
Perth summit pledges action to accelerate use of Gaelic language divr.it/QlQ9L8

9:47 PM - 10 Aug 2018

197 Retweets 606 Likes



479 197 606

 Tweet your reply

**Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP** @agcolemilton · Aug 11

To be clear, (particularly to those who've decided I'm alt-right 🤡), I'm not suggesting we row back on Gaelic, a language I'm fond of- and important part of our culture. Instead I'm bemoaning the fact that there is no commensurate strategy for increasing uptake of French&German

3. 1+2 Approach

The Scottish Government's commitment to language learning, and the value it holds for both the individual and society is to be welcomed and is clear through its 1+2 policy, with the aim of children learning two additional languages.

The SNP's 2011 manifesto gave a commitment to enable every child to learn two additional languages, to be delivered over the course of two Parliaments by 2021. Appendix 2 sets out the full set of expected 'Experiences and Outcomes' for language learning under Curriculum for Excellence.¹⁹ This explains what pupils studying a language should be able to achieve by certain stages.²⁰

In 2012 the Scottish Government published "Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach" from the Scottish Government Languages Working Group. The group, chaired by Simon Macaulay, set out a number of recommendations which it felt would help achieve the government's objective as well as the basis for a national languages plan.

The following are some of the main points from that report:

- In an increasingly globalised world, knowledge of the local language as well as cultural protocol practices is essential to (business) negotiations.
- The damaging perception that languages are not important because everyone speaks English has to be challenged.
- An audit of language teaching resources within the education system is required.
- Schools should consider how Foreign Language Assistants, native and fluent speakers of other languages, could support teachers.
- In 2000 English represented 51% of the language used on the internet; by 2011 it had fallen to 26%.
- In the majority of countries, teaching at least one foreign language is compulsory, and the trend for the starting age is now between six and nine years old.
- Learning about the culture of a country frequently arouses enthusiasm for learning a language – as has been evident in teaching Chinese language and culture.
- The SQA currently offers certification in certain community languages and not in others.
- Understanding of language can no longer be the preserve of modern languages teacher in secondary schools and a minority of teachers in primary schools.

¹⁹ https://www.scilt.org.uk/Portals/24/Library/Leaflets/Es&Os_foldout_2015.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/3546/336271>

- Local authorities should plan to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of teachers in schools qualified to teach languages.

Following this report, the Languages Strategic Implementation Group was set up in 2013. The group agreed an implementation plan three years later in December 2016. The expectation was that local authorities should implement 1+2 “such that the first additional language (L1) is provided from P1 onwards and the second additional language by P5 at the latest. This ambition is on a par with the way foreign languages are taught in other European countries. (See section 4 for more details on Europe)

Credit should be given to the Scottish Government for valuing language teaching and looking to learn from what happens overseas. However, the reality is slightly different to the ambition on paper.

By 2021 Scottish children should be learning two different languages, both of which should be started while the pupils are still at primary school. The working group highlighted the need to undertake an audit of the number of primary teachers who have undergone training in teaching modern languages because, more often than not, teaching of the languages will fall to them. Its recommendation stated:

“The introduction of earlier access to language learning from Primary 1 will have planning and resourcing implications for local authorities and schools. Decisions in these areas will be informed by improved knowledge of what resources already exist and the Working Group report recommends that an audit be conducted of the number of primary teachers who are MLPS or GLPS trained along with the collection of information on how many of those trained are currently engaged in teaching languages.”

The Working Group also noted that there is not any languages entry requirement for primary school teaching, something that remains the case. The Scottish Government’s Teach in Scotland website sets out the general entry requirements for an undergraduate in primary education:²¹

“For the four-year combined degree and other undergraduate degree programmes you must have at least:

- *English and two other National Qualifications at SCQF Level 6 (Higher Grade) AND*

²¹ <https://teachinscotland.scot/become-a-teacher/new-to-teaching/primary/>

- *Mathematics and one other subject at SCQF Level 5 (or an accepted alternative, for example, National 5, Credit Standard Grade or Intermediate 2).*

However, individual universities set their own entry requirements and are likely to require four Higher grades (often at AABB)."

Clearly, primary teachers are required to teach a broad range of subjects without having specific exam qualifications in every one. However, the 1+2 policy is a new one, meaning that children are beginning to be taught two languages in primary school for the first time. This means that primary school teachers will now be involved in teaching two languages. It is impossible to advance that policy without first looking at what training and skills current teachers have.

The Scottish Government's Teacher Census records data about some specialisms in primary school, such art or PE, but does not record modern languages teachers in primary schools, nor does it record the number of teachers that have undertaken modern languages training,²² despite the Working Group's recommendation.

We submitted Freedom of Information requests to all Scottish local authorities asking how many modern language teachers they employ in primary schools. The vast majority responded saying that they did not employ modern languages teacher in primaries, and languages were taught by primary school teachers. However, given there is no requirement on students of primary school teaching to have any second or indeed third language qualification, and the Scottish Government, which wants two languages to be taught in primary school, is not recording how many primary school teachers have undergone training in additional languages, how does it expect children to be taught these skills?

The aim of children starting to learn two additional languages is a good one, but the practicalities of who is going to teach it cannot be ignored.

Reform Scotland asked the Scottish Government how many foreign languages teachers were employed in state secondary schools across Scotland in each year since 2007 as well as for a breakdown by each individual language taught. (The point of the question was to get a sense of the range of languages being taught, as most census data records only the "main subject", not all. Many language teachers will be able to teach more than one language).

The responses are detailed in the tables below.

²² <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00532527.xlsx>

Foreign language teachers in publicly funded secondary schools by main subject taught 2007-2017 *FTE*²³

	French	German	Spanish	Italian	Community Languages	Other Modern Languages	Total
2007	1,136	189	66	11	8	282	1,691
2008	1,070	180	64	12	8	290	1,624
2009	1,004	175	66	9	7	297	1,559
2010	952	166	78	10	7	280	1,492
2011	900	153	71	11	8	286	1,428
2012	860	152	71	10	7	299	1,399
2013	826	136	93	8	6	276	1,345
2014	780	128	96	8	6	300	1,318
2015	744	118	96	9	5	313	1,285
2016	716	106	95	7	4	339	1,267
2017	722	100	107	6	5	354	1,294

Foreign language teachers in publicly funded secondary schools by all subjects taught, 2007-2017 *FTE*²⁴

	French	German	Spanish	Italian	Community Languages	Other Modern Languages
2007	1,403	654	288	82	8	311
2008	1,339	616	289	83	8	319
2009	1,267	580	301	80	7	321
2010	1,225	550	330	73	7	305
2011	1,143	499	353	66	8	310
2012	1,105	471	355	64	7	327
2013	1,075	451	368	59	6	308
2014	1,018	397	386	57	6	336
2015	964	364	375	55	5	350
2016	919	325	379	47	4	383
2017	926	312	410	48	5	394

It is worth noting that the decline in the number of teachers of French and German is much steeper than the overall decline in teacher numbers, and there has been a big increase in teachers able to teach Spanish, reflecting the trend in exam entries. However, there has also been a decline in the overall number of languages teachers. As well as impacting on what happens in secondary schools, this will also limit any potential of using secondary school languages teachers to assist with the teaching of languages at primary level.

The Scottish Government's Working Group also highlighted the benefit of using Foreign Language Assistants. However, Reform Scotland's Freedom of Information requests to local authorities revealed at least 16 councils did not employ any such assistants.

²³ FOI Response from the Scottish Government, 12/9/18 Excludes head teachers and depute head teachers

²⁴ FOI Response from the Scottish Government, 12/9/18 Excludes head teachers and depute head teachers; Includes main subject taught ; Those teaching multiple subjects will appear in each relevant column (only subjects that a teacher is timetabled to teach are included).

The Working Group also recommended that a number of pilots of language learning be tried at primary school. Education Scotland published analysis of the pilots in 2014.²⁵ The importance of teacher training and confidence, and the practical limitations of introducing a second additional language at primary level, were highlighted. The benefits of using native speakers or trained visitors were also mentioned:

- If teachers are to deliver an additional language from P1 and embed it into the life of the school, they require adequate and ongoing training. The 1+2 approach hinges on staff confidence in using the language and on their enthusiasm for language learning. Training is essential in instilling that confidence.
- Authorities are aware that it is not reasonable to expect teachers who are just beginning to train in delivering one additional language to deliver a second at the same time. Further training will be required. Currently, many teachers are getting used to integrating one additional language across the stages and to developing their own language skills. Where this has just begun, this should be the priority.
- Flexible ways of introducing a second additional language can be found, through support from native speakers or trained visitors, or sharing resources within clusters for example.

The Scottish Government provides funding to Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT). SCILT helps support schools and local authorities in their development of languages and implementation of the 1+2 policy. This includes the development of a programme of Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) which is aimed at upskilling teachers' languages skills. It includes a 35 week course, developed in partnership with the Open University.²⁶

The Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools is based in SCILT and is funded by the Scottish Government and Hanban/the Confucius Institute Headquarters of China. It was established in 2012 and aims to support and promote development of Chinese language education through Confucius Classroom Hubs in Scotland. They are based in secondary and primary schools, but are a resource to the whole local authority. The Hub concept is supposed to promote joint planning of cultural activities, sharing ideas and resources to stimulate the learning and teaching of Chinese language and culture. There are currently 40 Hubs across 21 local authorities as well as 60 Hanban teachers to support teaching of Mandarin in them. Each Hub school also has a partner school in

²⁵ Education Scotland, 1+2 pilot projects: key messages and next steps, 2014

²⁶ FOI response from Scottish Government, 3.9.18

Tianjin and Hub funding enables partners to carry out school-to-school activities.²⁷

The Hub partnership is a good example of using additional resources and different delivery methods to support teachers in helping children learn additional languages.

²⁷ SCILT, Confucious Classroom Hub Handbook 2018/19,
https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/faculties/hass/scilt/ciss/pdfs/Hub_Handbook_2018-19.pdf.pagespeed.ce.V5mX9ddzEz.pdf

4. Europe

In 2002 the Barcelona European Council suggested that countries should look at teaching at least two foreign languages from a young age.²⁸

The European Commission's report 'Key Data on teaching Languages at School in Europe' gives an opportunity to look at how teaching languages in Scotland compares to other European countries. It examines all EU countries as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey – 37 countries in total.

The 2017 report takes account of the Scottish Government's 1+2 policy.

The first point to note is that in 2014 97.3% of EU students studied English in the entire period of lower secondary school, with 79.4% learning English in primary schools. As a result, English was by far the commonest foreign language learnt by most students, and in those education systems that stipulated which language should be learnt English was mandatory in most.

French was the second most-learnt foreign language, followed by German. However, the proportion of students learning French in a number of countries has declined, similar to the trend in Scotland. In 2005, for example, 69.5% of general upper secondary students learnt French in the Netherlands. By 2014 this had fallen to 31.1%. There were also declines in the Czech Republic, Germany, Finland, Sweden and Iceland at the general upper secondary level,²⁹ while there were declines in Portugal, Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece and Malta at the lower secondary education level.

Some countries have also seen a decline in German in general upper secondary education, with an 11 per cent decline over the ten year period looked at by the European Commission's report.

It is worth noting that while German decline has been less pronounced in Europe than it has in Scotland, especially in comparison to French, German remains a state language in six of the countries studied and has official status in an additional eight. In contrast French is only a state language in four countries and has official status in one additional country. (The full list of languages with official status by country can be viewed in Appendix 4)

²⁸ European Commission Eurydice Report, "Key data on teaching languages in School in Europe 2017 Edition" May 2017

²⁹ The declines were between 6-14 percentage points.

Although no European country specifies Spanish as a compulsory foreign language and few pupils learn it at a primary level the popularity of the language has increased over the last 10 years, again reflecting the same trend in Scotland. At an EU level there was a 5.6% increase in the number of lower secondary students learning the language in 2014, compared to 2005.³⁰

Most countries offer some sort of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), whereby a language other than the official language of schooling is used to teach a non-language subject. The objective is to enhance students' proficiency in their additional languages. This sort of teaching is offered in Scotland through Gaelic Medium Education. In Scotland, 60 primary schools and associated high schools offer Gaelic education. In Gaelic Medium Education there is an initial focus on learning Gaelic until children become fluent enough in the language to enable its use across all subjects and aspects of learning. Then the entire curriculum is taught through the medium of Gaelic³¹, so this is an example of CLIL.

Although CLIL exists in a number of education systems, only in Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Austria, Malta and Liechtenstein is CLIL provision available in all schools at some point.

In half the education systems looked at by the European Commission's report foreign languages are taught by generalist teachers in primary education, as they are in Scotland, though there are variations within that. For example, in Poland generalist teachers can only teach foreign languages in the first three years of primary school and are replaced by specialist teachers in upper years. In other countries generalist teachers need to prove their proficiency in the specific language before being able to teach it, or have foreign language teaching included as part of their teacher education. In other areas generalist teachers are supported by specialist teachers.

For CLIL teaching there are usually additional qualifications placed on the teacher to ensure a good knowledge of the both the subject being taught and the language in which it is being taught.

The European Commission report notes the value of language teachers spending a period of time in the target country during their initial education, something the report notes isn't compulsory in every system. It goes on to highlight that in Scotland, one of the requirements of the professional training for prospective language teachers is that they spend at least six months in a country where their

³⁰ Malta and Sweden require that all lower or upper secondary schools provide the opportunity to learn Spanish.

³¹ [https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/my-school/choosing-a-school/gaelic-medium-education/Gaelic%20Medium%20Education%20\(Foghlam%20tro%20Mheadhan%20na%20G%C3%A0idhlig\)](https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/my-school/choosing-a-school/gaelic-medium-education/Gaelic%20Medium%20Education%20(Foghlam%20tro%20Mheadhan%20na%20G%C3%A0idhlig))

first foreign language is spoken and three months in a country where their second foreign language is spoken.

While half of the European education systems place equal weighting on all four communication skills (listening; speaking; reading & writing) at the start and the end of the teaching of the first foreign language, a significant number begin with a greater emphasis on listening and speaking.

The report makes clear that there are different systems adopted across different countries for teaching languages, and clearly there are lessons that can be learned. However, it is hard to judge which ways are the most affective. While the OECD (not the European Commission) operates PISA to evaluate education systems worldwide by assessing pupils in science, maths, reading, collaborative problem solving and financial literacy, there is no comparison of attainment in foreign language learning.

In addition to attainment, the report also doesn't consider the historical and cultural links to language learning – for example the opportunities to expose pupils to the language and for them to actually put the skills they are learning to use. These factors can't be overlooked.

5. Policy recommendations

This report does not pretend to have all the answers; rather it aims to help contribute to a wider debate about how we teach languages in schools. While the drop in French and German at SCQF level 5 is certainly disappointing, the data contained in this report highlights that not only is this part of a Europe-wide trend, but more importantly there are increases in other languages, especially Spanish. It is also worth noting the increase in entries in Chinese languages, which may be benefiting from the establishment of the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools. Scottish pupils are also speaking more languages than ever before. That is undoubtedly a good place to start. As a result, Reform Scotland does not believe that there is a crisis in learning languages, or that Scots are failing to recognise the benefit of speaking languages, but there are serious questions about how to translate those positives into our education system. The following are policies that we believe would help in this process:

Add language learning attainment to PISA: There are a number of different systems adopted across Europe for teaching languages, hardly surprising given there are different education systems. However, although the European Commission produces regular 'Key data' reports, those reports don't actually include comparable attainment data, making it difficult to learn lessons from overseas.

It is the OECD, not the European Commission, that operates PISA, which evaluates education systems worldwide by assessing pupils in science, maths, reading, collaborative problem-solving and financial literacy. PISA currently does no comparison of attainment in foreign language learning. Given the value of learning languages, Reform Scotland believes it would be helpful if languages were included in future studies and that Scotland participate in those studies.

Data gaps:

Implement the Languages Working Group's recommendation and carry out an audit of language teaching capability in primary schools: Given that it is a Scottish Government policy to have primary school pupils learning two foreign languages by 2021, the Scottish Government should have a better idea of the capability of primary sector staff to teach two additional languages. Therefore, we would call on the Scottish Government to implement the Languages Working Group's recommendation and carry out an audit of the number of primary teachers

who are trained in Modern Languages or Gaelic along with looking at how many of those trained are currently engaged in teaching languages.

Review the ‘languages spoken’ question for the 2021 census:

The 2011 Scottish Census question on languages was not particularly helpful. It asked “Do you use a language other than English at home”. Arguably, particularly in the current political climate, some responders may not wish to admit they speak another language at home because the question implies *either/or*. Equally, it assumes people can only speak one language other than English at home. There is also a danger that the way the question is phrased conveys the assumption that speaking a language other than English is a problem rather than a benefit. In today’s multicultural world, there is every possibility that more than two languages are spoken at home, but there is no facility for the census to record that. It would be better to consider asking *what languages, other than English do you use regularly*. This should result in more accurate and meaningful data. The same review of question should be made in relation to the Pupil Census data.

End the distinction between ‘community’ and ‘modern’ languages

Although the reason some languages are classed as ‘modern’ and others as ‘community’ is to do with the learners’ experience and not a judgement on the specific language, Reform Scotland is not convinced that the definition is widely understood. In addition, using that definition suggests that only pupils with certain backgrounds would be interested in studying those languages. Yet Urdu and Chinese are more commonly spoken around the world, and here in Scotland, than French and German, so why wouldn’t someone from outwith the specific “community” want to learn those languages. Scotland has growing Polish, Arabic, Urdu and Chinese communities. This presents a wonderful opportunity not only for pupils to engage with native speakers and learn from their peers, but actually use the language skills they learn. Having more citizens speaking a wider range of languages should be an opportunity for all to learn more and help bring us together. Our education system should acknowledge that, rather than potentially treating some languages as second class.

Community languages could also present an opportunity to the primary sector. There has been a fall in the number of languages teachers in secondary schools and for the 1+2 policy to be implemented we need teachers in primary schools to be able to teach two different languages – yet we don’t know what provision there is to achieve that. The Languages Working Group suggested we should consider how Foreign Language Assistants, native and fluent speakers of other languages, could support teachers - could this be a way to help reach the policy

goal, as well as teaching pupils about culture and other aspects of the language? While some native speakers may be used, the focus on teaching remains largely focused on modern languages. Adapting the breadth of languages taught to reflect the change in languages actually being used in Scotland could open up learning opportunities.

Think outside the box – pilot different approaches

If the end goal is that we want more people to be able to speak more languages, or at least have the confidence to try, then simply relying on the exam system will not work. The decline in the uptake of French and German began long before Curriculum for Excellence was introduced, so even if tweaks are made, or more pupils are able to continue sitting seven or eight National 5s, there is no guarantee this would lead to an increase in people studying French and German.

Instead we need to think differently and pilot fresh ideas at local and national levels. For example, all secondary pupils between S1 and S4 currently should get at least two periods of PE per week.³² This is non-examinable content but is aimed at ensuring pupils have access to exercise and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Could a similar scheme be adapted for languages? Could non-examinable classes aimed at promoting language-learning and confidence in speaking other languages help with uptake? Could pilots looking at more Content and Language Integrated Learning be tried? At a secondary level this could only initially be used in areas where teachers are sufficiently qualified in the language and other subject, but there are opportunities. Equally, what about the possibility of Foreign Language Medium Primary Schools?

The work of the SCILT and in particular the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools shows how teachers can be supported using new ideas and partnerships, creating new links and helping children develop an interest and understanding in a different culture and as well as the language.

There is no need to panic, *just yet*. The number of pupils studying languages at Higher level is broadly constant and not in decline. There has been a huge increase in the uptake of Spanish. People in Scotland are actively speaking more languages than before. Developments such as the Confucius Hubs highlight new ways of supporting teachers. We have the right building blocks, but we need to start re-organising them now, not just to prevent problems in the future, but also to demonstrate that Scotland is outward-looking and wants to engage on a global level.

³² <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/schools/wellbeing-in-schools/>

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Appendices

A1. Exam entries 2017/18³³

Nat 5 Entries		Higher Entries	
English	44,477	English	36,185
Mathematics	41,590	Mathematics	18,753
Biology	20,928	History	10,296
Chemistry	15,930	Physical Education	10,090
Physical Education	15,397	Chemistry	9,990
History	14,473	Modern Studies	9,334
Physics	13,699	Business Management	8,756
Modern Studies	11,867	Physics	8,280
Geography	9,795	Geography	7,329
Art and Design	9,198	Biology	7,305
French	8,145	Human Biology	5,937
Business Management	7,411	Art and Design	5,299
Music	7,099	Music	5,061
Computing Science	6,442	Graphic Communication	4,134
Graphic Communication	5,434	Computing Science	4,099
Hospitality: Practical Cookery	5,035	Administration and IT	4,052
Spanish	4,937	French	3,780
Administration and IT	4,767	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	3,658
Practical Woodworking	4,748	Psychology	3,495
Design and Manufacture	4,599	Drama	2,946
Drama	4,507	Design and Manufacture	2,820
Applications of Mathematics (Lifeskills Mathematics)*	2,482	Spanish	2,795
Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	2,309	Photography	2,312
German	1,859	Health and Food Technology	1,375
Engineering Science	1,808	Care	1,285
Health and Food Technology	1,474	Accounting	1,254
Hospitality: Practical Cake Craft	1,394	Politics	1,214
Practical Metalworking	1,259	Sociology	1,067
English for Speakers of Other Languages	1,035	Media	1,061
Media	1,007	Engineering Science	1,014
Accounting	896	German	817
Music Technology	883	Childcare and Development	767
Psychology	775	Philosophy	742
Care	645	English for Speakers of Other Languages	732
Dance	558	Music Technology	669
Fashion and Textile Technology	444	Economics	656
Latin	390	Dance	461
Italian	286	Environmental Science	423
Economics	277	Classical Studies	400
Environmental Science	272	Fashion and Textile Technology	370
Philosophy	270	Italian	252
Sociology	206	Latin	226
Chinese Languages	186	Chinese Languages	152
Gaelic	183	Gaelic	130
Practical Electronics	179	Urdu	103
Gaelic (Learners)	107	Gaelic (Learners)	75
Classical Studies	78		
Urdu	45		

³³ [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Attainment_Statistics_\(August\)_2018.xls](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Attainment_Statistics_(August)_2018.xls)

A2. Modern Languages expected ‘Experiences & Outcomes’

The following chart sets out the expected ‘Experiences and Outcomes’ for language learning under Curriculum for Excellence.³⁴ This explains what pupils studying a language should be able to achieve by certain stages³⁵:

	First	Second	Third	Fourth
	To the end of P4, but earlier or later for some.	To the end of P7, but earlier or later for some.	S1 to S3, but earlier or later for some. The Fourth Level broadly equates to SCQF level 4	
Listening and talking				
Listening for information	I explore the patterns and sounds of language through songs and rhymes and show understanding verbally or nonverbally. I am learning to take an active part in daily routines, responding to simple instructions which are accompanied by gesture and expression. I can listen to and show understanding of language from familiar voices and sources.	I explore the patterns and sounds of language through songs and rhymes and show understanding and enjoyment by listening, joining in and responding. I take an active part in daily routines responding to instructions which are accompanied by gesture and expression. I can listen to and show understanding of familiar instructions and language from familiar voices and sources.	I can listen to and show understanding of mainly familiar language and instructions from a variety of sources, where the sentences are longer and where there may be more than one speaker.	I can listen to and show understanding of language from a variety of sources, including unfamiliar speakers, where the sentences are more complex, less predictable, and contain some unfamiliar language or known language used in unfamiliar contexts.
Listening and talking with others	I am beginning to identify key information from a short predictable conversation and react with words and/or gesture I am beginning to share information about myself using familiar vocabulary and basic language structures. With support I am becoming an active listener and can understand, ask and answer simple questions to share information. I enjoy listening to stories, songs, rhymes and poems in the language I am learning by joining in and responding to show my understanding. I can participate in a range of collaborative activities.	I explore how gesture, expression and emphasis are used to help understanding. I can listen and respond to familiar voices in short, predictable conversations using straightforward language and non-verbal techniques as appropriate. When listening and talking with others, I am developing an awareness of when to listen and when to talk. I am learning new words which I use to share information about myself and others. I can take part effectively in prepared conversations by sharing information about myself and others or interests of my choice, using familiar vocabulary and basic language structures. I can ask for help confidently using learned phrases and familiar language. I explore simple songs and rhymes and I enjoy learning with others as we talk and listen together. I can participate in familiar collaborative activities including games, paired speaking and short role plays.	I can listen and respond to others in mainly predictable, more extended conversations using familiar language and non-verbal techniques as appropriate. I can take part effectively in prepared conversations by using a variety of language structures to share information, experiences and opinions and by offering straightforward reasons for having these opinions. I can support a conversation by asking for help, seeking repetition and asking simple questions. I can participate in a range of collaborative activities, including games, paired speaking and structured role plays, in a range of realistic contexts set mainly in a country where the language I am learning is spoken.	I can listen and respond to others, including sympathetic fluent speakers of the language, in extended conversations that are less predictable. I can take part effectively in more detailed conversations using an extended range of language structures to exchange information, experiences, feelings and opinions and by offering more detailed reasons for having these opinions. I can start, support and sustain a conversation by, for example, asking relevant questions and by seeking help when necessary. I can collaborate to prepare and present more open-ended role plays in a wide range of realistic contexts set both in my own country and in a country where the language I am learning is spoken.

³⁴ https://www.scilt.org.uk/Portals/24/Library/Leaflets/Es&Os_foldout_2015.pdf

³⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/3546/336271>

Organising and using information	Through a variety of media, I am developing an awareness of social, cultural and geographical aspects of locations in a country where the language I am learning is spoken.	I can deliver a brief presentation on a familiar topic using familiar language and phrases. I have worked with others, using a variety of media including ICT where appropriate, and can contribute successfully to a presentation in English, supported by use of the language I am learning, on an aspect of life in a country where the language I am learning is spoken.	I have contributed successfully to a group to plan and prepare short talks in the language I am learning on topics of personal interest or linked to an aspect of a country where the language I am studying is spoken. I can deliver an individual presentation in the language I am learning, using a variety of media including ICT where appropriate.	I can, using a variety of media including ICT where appropriate, plan, prepare and deliver an individual presentation in the language I am learning on topics of personal interest or linked to an aspect of a country where the language I am studying is spoken.
Using knowledge about language	I am beginning to explore similarities and differences between sound patterns in different languages through play, rhymes, songs and discussion. I can use my knowledge about language and pronunciation to ensure that others can understand me when I say familiar words and phrases.	I explore comparisons and connections between sound patterns in different languages through play, discussion and experimentation. I can use my knowledge about language and pronunciation to ensure that others can understand me when I read aloud or say familiar words, phrases and short texts.	I can apply my knowledge about language, intonation and pronunciation to: • ensure that others can understand me when I pronounce familiar words or phrases • help me work out how to pronounce unfamiliar words • read a short text aloud with accuracy and confidence.	I can apply my knowledge about language, intonation and pronunciation to: • ensure that others can understand me when I pronounce familiar and unfamiliar words and phrases • help me work out how to read aloud familiar and unfamiliar texts with accuracy and confidence.
Reading				
Finding and using information	I can recognise labels and environmental print. I am beginning to organise images and text. With support, I can sequence images and text to demonstrate my understanding. I can work on my own or with others to demonstrate my understanding of words and phrases containing familiar language.	I work on my own and with others to understand text using appropriate resources, demonstrating my understanding by matching written words to pictures and by reconstructing the text in a logical sequence, for example. I can read and demonstrate understanding of words, signs, phrases and simple texts containing mainly familiar language.	I work on my own and with others to understand text using appropriate resources. I can read and demonstrate understanding of more complex texts which contain familiar and unfamiliar language.	Using a variety of resources, I can independently read text which is more detailed and which contains complex language including a range of tenses, and demonstrate my understanding.
Reading to appreciate other cultures	I am beginning to recognise similarities and differences between Scotland and a country where the language I am learning is spoken, using varied simple texts, visual prompts and media.	I work on my own and with others to read and discuss simple texts in the language I am learning. I can share simple facts about features of life in some of the countries where the language I am learning is spoken.	I work on my own and with others to read and explore texts in the language I am learning. I can demonstrate my knowledge about life and culture in some of the countries where the language I am learning is spoken.	I work on my own and with others to read and research texts in the language I am learning. I can demonstrate my understanding of different cultures and my appreciation of different ways of looking at the world in countries where the language I am learning is spoken.
Reading for interest and enjoyment	I have experienced a variety of simple texts, which may have been adapted for young learners.	I can choose and can read, on my own and with others, a variety of straightforward texts of different types, including nonfiction, short imaginative accounts, prose and poetry, which may have been adapted.	I can select and read for interest and enjoyment a range of texts, including longer imaginative texts in a variety of styles, both prose and poetry, which may have had some adaptation.	I can select and read for interest and enjoyment a range of more detailed texts containing complex language, including imaginative accounts, both prose and poetry, which use familiar and unfamiliar language and may have had some adaptation.
Using knowledge about language	I am beginning to use illustrated word-banks, picture prompts, picture dictionaries and displays to support my understanding of simple texts.	I can understand how a bilingual dictionary works and use it with support. I can make comparisons and explore connections between spelling patterns in English and the language I am learning.	I can use a bilingual dictionary independently to help me understand new language. I can recognise features of words in the language I am learning and use them to make sense of vocabulary and of the connections between words.	I can use my knowledge about language and other strategies to help me to understand and analyse more detailed texts, containing some unfamiliar language and more complex structures.

		I experiment with new language, working out the meaning of words and phrases using vocabulary I have learned so far. I can recognise and comment on other features of my own language which help to make sense of words in the language I am learning		
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Writing

Organising and using information	With support, I am beginning to experiment with writing in the language I am learning	I use the support of others and access appropriate reference materials of my choice to help me plan my writing in ways that engage my reader, using ICT when appropriate. I have opportunities to express myself in writing, exploring and experimenting with words and phrases using resources, to ensure my writing makes sense. I can use familiar language to describe myself and to exchange straightforward information.	I use the support of others and access appropriate reference materials of my choice to help me plan my writing in ways that engage my reader, using ICT when appropriate. I can create, amend and present more extended information about myself and others, my experiences, or a topic of my choice for different purposes. I can express opinions and can offer straightforward reasons for having those opinions.	I use the support of others and access appropriate reference materials of my choice to help me plan my writing in ways that engage my reader, using ICT when appropriate. I can write more extensively over a widening range of topics in a range of formats, using some variety of structures, tenses and linking words. I can write about experiences, feelings and opinions and can offer reasons for having those opinions.
Using knowledge about language		I use my knowledge about language and success criteria to help me, and I can check that I have written familiar words and phrases accurately.	I can check the accuracy of my writing using my knowledge about language, the support of others and appropriate reference materials, including success criteria	I can check the accuracy of my writing using my knowledge about language, the support of others and appropriate reference materials, including success criteria

A3. Top ten spoken languages

There are a variety of different lists of spoken languages, compiled by different organisations, with different rankings depending whether native speakers alone are counted, or everyone who can speak the language. Such lists will always require a number of estimates and assumptions to be made. However, generally speaking the same languages tend to appear in the top ten. The following list is taken from Babbel.com, which is the world's first language learning app,³⁶ and ranked by native speakers.

1. **Chinese:** Numbers vary widely, but the number of native speakers is estimated to be about 1.2 billion, roughly a billion of whom speak Mandarin.
2. **Spanish:** Spanish has about 400 million native speakers.
3. **English:** There are 360 million-odd native English speakers and about half a billion people who speak it as a second language.
4. **Hindi:** India has 23 official languages, with Hindi/Urdu chief among them with about 330 million native speakers.
5. **Arabic:** There are around 250 million native Arabic speakers.
6. **Portuguese:** Portuguese is spoken by 215 million native speakers.
7. **Bengali:** Bengali is spoken by about 170 million Bangladeshis.
8. **Russian:** Spoken by roughly 170 million native speakers.
9. **Japanese:** There are about 130 million native Japanese speakers.
10. **Punjabi/Lahnda:** There are about 100 million native speakers..

³⁶ <https://www.babbel.com/en/magazine/the-10-most-spoken-languages-in-the-world/>

A4. Languages with official status by European country

Extract from European Commission Eurydice Report:

‘Key data on teaching languages in School in Europe 2017 Edition’

Country	State language	Regional and/or minority language with official status	Country	State language	Regional and/or minority language with official status
Belgium	German, Dutch, French		Austria	German	Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, Slovak, Slovenian, Romany.
Bulgaria	Bulgarian		Poland	Polish	Belarusian, Czech, Kashubian, German, Hebrew, Armenian, Karaim, Lithuanian, Romany, Russian, Lemko, Slovak, Tatar, Ukrainian, Yiddish.
Czech Republic	Czech	German, Polish, Romany, Slovak	Portugal	Portuguese	Mirandes
Denmark	Danish	German, Faroese, Greenlandic	Romania	Romanian	Bulgarian, Czech, German, Greek, Croatian, Hungarian, Polish, Romany, Russian, Slovak, Serbian, Turkish, Ukrainian.
Germany	German	Danish, Frisian, Low German, Romany, Sorbian	Slovenia	Slovenian	Hungarian, Italian
Estonia	Estonian		Slovakia	Slovak	Bulgarian, Czech, German, Croatian, Hungarian, Polish, Romany, Rusyn, Ukrainian.
Ireland	English, Irish		Finland	Finnish, Swedish	Romany, Russian, Sami, Tatar, Yiddish
Greece	Greek		Sweden	Swedish	Finnish, Meankieli, Sami, Romany, Yiddish.
Spain	Spanish	Catalan, Valencian, Basque, Galician, Occitan	UK	English	Gaelic, Scots, Welsh
France	French		Bosnia & Herzegovina	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian.	
Croatia	Croatian	Bosnian, Bulgarian, Czech, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Macedonian, Polish, Vlax Romani, Romanian, Rusyn, Russian, Montenegrin, Slovak, Slovenian, Albanian, Serbian, Turkish, Ukrainian.	Switzerland	German, French, Italian, Romansh	
Italy	Italian	Catalan, German, Greek, French, Friulian, Croatian, Ladin, Occitan, Provençal, Slovenian, Albanian, Sardinian.	Iceland	Icelandic	
Cyprus	Greek, Turkish	Maronite, Armenian	Liechtenstein	German	
Latvia	Latvian	Liv (Livonian)	Montenegro	Montenegrin	Bosnian, Romany, Albanian, Serbian, Turkish
Lithuania	Lithuanian		F.Y.R Macedonia	Macedonian	Bosnian, Romany, Albanian, Serbian, Turkish
Luxembourg	German, French, Luxembourgish		Norway	Norwegian (Bokmal & Nynorsk)	Finnish, Kven, Sami
Hungary	Hungarian	Bulgarian, German, Greek, Croatian, Armenian, Polish, Romanian, Romany & Boyash, Rusyn, Slovak, Slovenian, Serbian, Ukrainian.	Serbia	Serbian	Bosnian, Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Montenegrin, Macedonian, Romanian, Rusyn, Slovak, Albanian.
Malta	English, Maltese		Turkey	Turkish	
Netherlands	Dutch	Frisian			

