



ESCalate Themed Funding: Work Based Learning Grant Project Final Report

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Project Title An investigation into the impact and effectiveness of beginning and early career primary teachers, trained on a work-based learning route, in the delivery of primary languages at Key Stage 2

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An investigation into the impact and effectiveness of beginning and early career primary teachers, trained on a work-based learning route, in the delivery of primary languages at Key Stage 2

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Contents

<u>Contents.....</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>1. Top line summary</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>2. Project overview.....</u>	<u>4</u>
<u> 2.1 Project background and aims.....</u>	<u>4</u>
<u> 2.2 Methodology</u>	<u>4</u>
<u> 2.3 Results</u>	<u>7</u>
<u> 2.4 Project impact and concluding discussion.....</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>3. Outputs</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>5. Expenditure profile</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>6. Journalistic summary</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>7. References.....</u>	<u>23</u>

1. Top line summary

Five universities providing the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) participated in the study. A questionnaire assessed provision of training in primary languages, trainees' and teachers' foreign language proficiency and teaching confidence. 12 respondents were followed up with interviews to investigate their school environment and explore their language teaching experience. We also conducted four in-depth case studies in primary schools, including observations of language teaching and interviews with the GTP-trained teacher, the head teacher or deputy head and, if possible, the languages coordinator.

We found a generally basic proficiency in foreign languages, with the language most frequently spoken being French; this translated into low teaching confidence. The GTP training was evaluated very favourably by almost all trainees, although the languages input was only one day at most and this was considered insufficient. The interviews and case studies revealed that many school environments are supportive of primary languages teaching and provide language-rich environments. This enabled GTP-trained teachers to develop their interest and professional expertise further. However, schools where language teaching was not developed could inhibit this development. Recommendations to improve the programme include more opportunities to observe language teaching, improved communication between training providers and schools and more direct training in both contexts.

2. Project overview

2.1 Project background and aims

The project builds on previous research by the team (Griffiths, 2007 & 2011; Driscoll et al., 2004) which explores teachers' professional development on the Graduate Teacher Programme and primary languages respectively.

The statutory requirement to introduce languages in Key Stage 2 (7-11 year-olds) from 2010 (DfES, 2005) aimed to increase language diversity and intercultural awareness through focused language teaching in primary schools as well as integrated language approaches (Griffiths & Driscoll, 2010). However, previous studies (Driscoll et al. 2004; Ofsted, 2008) found a mixed picture of initial training in primary languages, with some good quality training but often limited opportunities to observe good teaching. Therefore we considered that primary languages were an important focus for a study of work-based learning in schools.

Aims of the project (slightly revised from original)

- To investigate the extent to which beginning and early career primary teachers, trained on the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), participate in primary languages teaching.
- To identify the work-based learning factors that affect beginning teachers' experiences in primary languages, such as school context and school-based training, as well as GTP provider and centre/university-based training.
- To highlight ways in which GTP provision in primary languages can be enhanced, at school or university, and how employing schools can best build on this in primary teachers' early careers.

2.2 Methodology

The study employed a mixed methods approach. This enabled the research team to collect and analyse some factual information on primary GTP and school languages provision, as well as explore participants' experiences and responses to these.

Five universities offering the primary GTP in different geographical regions of England were chosen as the starting point for the investigation.

2.2.1 Online survey

Primary trainees and early career primary teachers (first to third years of teaching), who trained since 2007, were invited to complete an online survey about their initial training and experiences of teaching primary languages. We collected the questionnaire data, either online using the Bristol Online Survey facilities, or directly at three providers using a paper and pencil questionnaire, in order to obtain as full a sample as possible (responses then uploaded on to the online site). 160 GTP

trainees and 50 GTP-trained early career teachers (N=210) responded to the questionnaire.

2.2.2 Interviews

Follow up interviews were carried out with those teachers willing to take further part in the research (N=12). These were conducted by telephone and email to enable easy access in teachers' own time and explore in more depth the issues that were raised in the survey.

Seven interviews were conducted by telephone and five via email due to timing and availability constraints for the GTP trainees. The telephone interviews took place in June and July 2011. In order to increase the response rate, we sent out emails with the interview questions in early July 2011 and received the five further responses. In total, we interviewed nine GTP trainees and three GTP-trained teachers. For the breakdown per provider, see Table 1 below.

Table 1 Interviewees by provider

GTP Provider	Female GTP trainees	Male GTP trainees	Female GTP-trained teachers	Male GTP-trained teachers	Total
Provider 1	2	2	2	0	6
Provider 2	0	1	0	0	1
Provider 3	2	0	0	0	2
Provider 4	1	0	0	0	1
Provider 5	1	0	1	0	2
Total	6	3	3	0	12

2.2.3 Case study school visits

We carried out four in-depth case studies, consisting of visits to schools employing the teachers, interviews with language coordinators and head teachers, and some observation of teachers as appropriate, to collect further evidence of languages teaching and teachers' impact on their pupils and schools.

From the interviews, one GTP trainee (now a newly qualified teacher) and one GTP-trained teacher agreed to be followed up with a school visit in the autumn 2011. Many of the interviewees declined school visits owing to current unemployment or employment uncertainty for the school year 2011/12. Hence, we contacted a number of other GTP-trained teachers from the survey respondents, assuming that already-qualified teachers were more likely to have a more stable employment situation. Via this route, we were able to recruit two more teachers for case studies, although we were not able to cover all the providers in the study as we had hoped. All the teachers visited were female; all school visits took place in November 2011.

Table 2: Case study school visits

Schools and linked providers	NQT	Teacher and years of teaching
School A: provider 5	-	3 years (GTP elsewhere)
School B: provider 1	-	2 years (+ GTP year)

School C: provider 4	-	2 years (+ year as TA + GTP year)
School D: provider 1	Yes	- (GTP elsewhere)

School A is a first school operating within a three-tier system in the Midlands. The school has 422 children from reception to Year 4 and 20 teachers. Most of the children are white British. The school is not involved in training GTP students but trains PGCE students. The GTP-trained teacher received her initial GTP training at a different local school and has been at school A for three years.

School B is a small village school in south east England. The school takes in 104 pupils aged 5 – 11 years. There is 1 ½ form entry divided into four mixed-age classes: Reception, Years 1 and 2, Year 3 and 4, Years 5 and 6. There are five teachers. The head teacher has been at the school for eight years. The GTP- trained teacher received her initial training at this school and has been teaching at the school on and off for approximately two years owing to some time on a temporary contract.

School C is an all-through primary school with 400 children, in a largely middle class area near a large town in the Thames Valley. 27 languages (mainly Arabic and Asian community languages such as Urdu and Gujarati) are represented in the school. Some children are multilingual, speaking two or three community languages as well as fluent English. According to the head teacher, there are high expectations from parents and the children are high achievers. The school offers placements to PGCE students and second placement experiences to GTP trainees. The GTP-trained teacher had been at the school for four years: one as a teaching assistant, one during her GTP training and two years as a trained teacher.

School D is a primary school in a small coastal town in south east England. It has trained five GTP trainees over the past ten years but the current GTP-trained NQT received her training at a different school. The school has 370 children in 14 classes, including a very small proportion of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL). Forty-three per cent of the children at the school receive free school meals, although a higher proportion of children qualify for receiving them.

2.2.4 Changes to methodology

It took longer than anticipated (three months) contacting GTP providers and obtaining their agreement to participate in the project, which delayed the start of the online survey. Once we had agreement from providers, data collection was relatively quick. In the end, we worked with one more provider than originally planned.

Likewise, it took us longer than we anticipated to set up interviews. Although a quarter of the sample expressed initial agreement to take part in an interview, most were unavailable when first contacted, probably because of the intensity of GTP timetables. Because of these difficulties, we only interviewed a 5% sample of the GTP trainees who responded to the survey, rather than 10%, though we did interview 10% of the teachers who responded.

Once the interviews were conducted, the case studies were relatively quick to set up. A slight change was that we only undertook four case studies not eight, and in schools linked to three of the five providers rather than all. Because of the time delays, we were only able to make one rather than two visits to the schools. Follow up communication will be carried out later.

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Questionnaire data

As outlined in the interim report, just under three quarters (73%) of the survey sample have some knowledge of two or more languages, while approximately one quarter (27%) speaks only English. Roughly half of the questionnaire respondents have some knowledge of French (51%), 81 per cent of whom judge their French proficiency as basic. Non-European languages spoken by the study participants include Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic, Japanese and Chinese.

Approximately three quarters of the survey sample (76%) had observed language lessons taught as a separate subject, while half (50%) had observed an integrated approach. Observations of cross-curricular approaches, thematic approaches, after school clubs and other approaches such as trips abroad had been observed to a lesser extent (between 10% and 20% of the sample). Over half of the trainees (54%) had the opportunity to teach languages, often using integrated approaches such as calling the register or singing songs. As identified in the interim report, problems reported by the questionnaire respondents included the lack of relevant resources and adequate support.

The next sections will focus on aspects of GTP trainees' and teachers' language subject knowledge; the GTP training and early teaching experiences; and the school contexts for primary languages. Interview and case study school data will be brought together in these sections.

2.3.2 Language subject knowledge

In terms of the interviewed trainees' and teachers' foreign language proficiency, the levels of language skills were varied and included not only French but also Spanish, German and Latin. To some extent, the trainees'/teachers' language skills seemed not only to depend on formal training in their educational career but also training sought by the interviewees out of personal interest and motivation. Some of the trainees/teachers had formal language qualifications, others undertook training without a formal qualification; sometimes both applied, as in the following:

“I did French at secondary school but I didn't take it as a GCSE so it kind of stopped when I was about 14 I think, or when you go on to GCSE, but Spanish I took lessons as an adult, I went to evening classes for a period of

time and I feel more comfortable with that because I have had probably longer tuition.”

A third group had no formal qualifications and indicated only basic levels of language proficiency:

“My ‘2nd’ language is French, but it’s been a long time since I’ve put it into practice. I would describe my fluency and aptitude as at a ‘conversational’ level. I would be able to order in a restaurant and make purchases in a shop for example. I would be able to gather the general gist from a newspaper, film or the news but wouldn’t understand it completely. As for writing a letter - I think I would find that more difficult - my grammar isn’t what it should be!”

Unsurprisingly, it appeared that some of the interviewees were more confident while others were less confident in their language skills and language teaching skills. As one said,

“MFL, I feel, is a very specialised area and I do feel that you either get languages or you don’t. If you don’t then a teaching swap or a specialist teacher would be best for the children. I find my strengths are my sciences so another teacher might find that area more difficult so perhaps it is relative!”

Many of the GTP trainees and teachers did not feel confident in delivering modern foreign languages (MFL) in the classroom, often explaining this lack of confidence with a lack of foreign language proficiency; for example, one said:

“I’m really paranoid about it because I can’t speak the language because it’s French that we do at my primary school. I’m very aware and conscious of how I pronounce. “

Yet, several of the interviewees also reported high levels of MFL teaching confidence, especially when they felt that they were sufficiently proficient in the target language (usually French) to teach it to the level required at Key Stage 2:

“At that level I felt very confident, that was fine. I don’t think I’d want to teach it at GCSE level or anything like that, I’m certainly not proficient enough for that but certainly in primary school I felt fine.”

In the case study example that follows, the GTP-trained teacher’s prior knowledge of French, coupled with her enthusiasm for languages, enabled her to take a lead role in languages at her school, although her knowledge was supplemented by further training once she qualified.

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Case Study

The GTP trained teacher at **School D** is currently completing her NQT year and teaches French at Key Stages 1 and 2. She undertook additional training in teaching French with two external trainers. She has a formal qualification at GCSE level in French, but feels that she has largely improved her French skills during repeated visits to France.

D. describes her teaching approach with the children as interactive and teaches each class for 35 to 40 minutes following a scheme of work, which often she develops herself. She uses many repetitions in her French lessons and considers the written strand as less important than spoken aspects of the language. She helps the children's pronunciation through games and listening activities and sometimes uses assessments within lessons. Other teachers in the school follow up on her lessons by using French in integrated activities such as calling the register. In addition, a Portuguese teaching assistant focuses on the cultural aspects of languages.

D. has been earmarked to become the school's MFL coordinator once she has completed her NQT year. Already now she is responsible for all the discrete French teaching as well as the organisation of resources in the school. Once a year parents receive reports on their children's progress in which D. reports on every child's progress in French.

D. has a passion for teaching languages and believes that children who may not be as good in the core subjects can find a successful outlet in languages. She feels that languages give children enthusiasm for something that they can take forward in life and provide less successful children with an opportunity to shine.

The above example is interesting because the GTP-trained teacher brought prior experience in French to her teaching, albeit originally at a fairly low level. This was supplemented by training external to the school as well as visits to France. Thus in her case, language teaching skills cannot be related to the GTP or learning in the school context, but are largely due to her own interest and commitment to languages.

2.3.3 Training on the GTP and early experiences of teaching in schools

The trainees and GTP-trained teachers' experiences of teaching primary languages fall broadly into three categories across the interviewees and case study teachers: observing language teaching, teaching languages themselves and mobilising resources available from pupils and parents to teach languages.

Several of the interviewees reported observing MFL lessons taught by a colleague. Many of the GTP trainees and GTP-trained teachers had been teaching assistants (TAs) for a number of years prior to training, yet they seem only to have observed languages teaching during these TA appointments rather than during their GTP training, as these examples illustrate:

"I did see some French being taught. At one school it was by a Higher TA who happened to be more fluent in French and I have seen a few sessions in my own school, one by the MFL Leader. She was very confident and delivered a fabulous lesson. The other lessons were more reliant upon Interactive whiteboard programmes."

"I was a TA at [school] we had a PGCE student from [university] and she was Modern Foreign Languages for her speciality and I was supporting children in her class."

Many of the interviewees referred to the fact that they were teaching children either at reception stage or Key Stage 1 and that at this stage, MFL is not a curriculum priority. Some interviewees indicated no involvement in languages teaching at all:

"Well the job I'm doing now will be teaching Reception and [...] it's not high priority at that age, they teach them from Key Stage 2 up."

However, some interviewees integrated MFL into daily routines despite languages not being formally timetabled:

"Every so often I will throw in to my general teaching French phrases such as counting in French, and instructions such as silence, listen or sit down."

Moreover, some of the interviewees reported using language skills available from pupils in their classes and the parents, initiating school visits by non-English parents to support the learning of cultural and language aspects and relying on children who were native speakers of a foreign language, for example: "They can speak fluent French, one of them is from the Cameroon and the other girl is from [...] Algeria. They know most of the language so they help me out."

"Her dad spoke French. [...] so we had our French day [...] and I'd do the Register in French. Then we did a Norwegian day and a mum came in and we did Norwegian customs and they taught us a little bit of Norwegian [...] we had a Polish mum came in as well [...] my aim was to develop an awareness

of different cultures and languages alongside our own. It wasn't specifically teaching French or another language."

Case Study

A, the GTP trained teacher from **School A**, commented that she found the GTP training a fantastic route into teaching, which enabled her to continue working and being employed. Yet, she felt glad to have moved on from the training. A. felt that during her GTP training she had a brilliant tutor, lots of support and always received positive advice and no criticism. She particularly appreciated her training school's attitude that mistakes were not mistakes but opportunities for learning and improving skills.

Even though it initially intimidated A., she valued that the head teacher of her training school moved her out of her comfort zone and into a Year 4 class with behavioural difficulties and low achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This enabled her to explore new ways of teaching and she increased her confidence as a teacher due to the higher levels of responsibility given to her.

Although A. did not have the opportunity to teach languages during her GTP training at school, she feels that her training institution provided her with the necessary tools to teach languages, including resources and websites.

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In our interviews we also came across some less positive experiences, often referring to the placements at the alternative school during the GTP training. This example is from B. at **School B**:

B. did not enjoy her alternative placement since she felt that the swap was poorly organised and the teacher to whom she was allocated struck her as not the best example to learn from. Moreover, B. did not get the opportunity to teach languages at the alternative school, since an external specialist covered all language teaching. D. was disappointed only to have had the opportunity to observe this external specialist for 15 minutes. She felt that her GTP provider blamed her for the disappointing placement, but experienced her 'home' school as very supportive.

2.3.4 School contexts for primary languages

School environments experienced by the interviewees seemed to vary widely. While in some schools languages were not part of the curriculum and/or depended solely on the individual teacher's initiative - *"I only work in an infant school unfortunately so we don't actually teach any languages but in my classroom I have put in some flash cards"* - in other schools the school environment was largely supportive of implementing language teaching, even as early as at reception stage.

In the following case study, we see how a school introduced languages from an early age and used languages teaching as the basis for teachers' professional development. For GTP-trained teachers, who may have had little or no languages input during the course, such in-service provision may be vital as a way of introducing approaches to teaching languages as well as improving their own knowledge about language.

Case Study

In **School C**, with many multilingual children, languages are introduced from the Reception class upwards. Visiting specialists teach Spanish in Key Stage 1 and French in Key Stage 2, paid for out of the school budget. The head teacher considers it important that class teachers sit in on and observe expert role models teaching, so that they learn alongside the children and can gradually take over some of the teaching.

The specialist teachers use mainly oral, interactive approaches, including songs and games, carefully building children's knowledge about language through a phonics-based approach. The children clearly enjoy these lessons and are confident about speaking the languages. Lessons are reinforced by class displays and interactive whiteboard activities, which encourage reading. The specialist teachers also prepare lesson plans which the teachers can follow in between their visits. As well as separate lessons, class teachers also use Spanish or French to take the register, line children up and at the beginning and end of the day.

The GTP-trained teacher, who has French and German at GCSE level, had no languages input on the GTP as she trained before languages were included, but she learnt from observing French being taught in all three schools where she undertook her GTP. Since qualifying, she has taken part in the weekly lessons by the visiting French teacher - "The children love it...they grow in confidence and are very language aware" - gone on two courses led by the same specialist and had a week-long visit to Toronto, where she visited eight schools and saw French being used to teach a range of subjects - "a fantastic experience." Last year she took a Year 4 class and got to the stage where she was taking the French lesson every other week. This year she is teaching Year 5, so she is observing the specialist teacher again in order to build higher level vocabulary and approaches.

In addition, as the following case study shows, it is not only the school context that matters with reference to the teaching of primary languages, but also the wider network of families and society. The box below describes the experiences of the acting deputy head teacher at **School D**, a school that is No 26 on the local deprivation index.

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Case Study

School D is in a very deprived area of the UK; in fact it is based in one of the poorest areas within Europe. According to the acting deputy head teacher, the school often needs to deal with social problems before focussing on children's learning.

She pointed out that some children enter school not speaking English despite the proportion of EAL children being very low within the school. Therefore, the school employs two speech and language assistants who are fully timetabled and have links with speech and language clinics. In addition to the problems the children have in speaking English, French can be quite difficult for them; however, the children enjoy responding to the register in French and using French appears to introduce an even playfield for children who are behind on other subjects.

A large proportion of the children seem to not have travelled far beyond their home town and many of the children do not have an understanding of how close France is to the south east of England. Many families cannot afford to travel and the school has temporarily stopped school trips to ease the financial burden on the parents. In order to meet government targets, the school currently focuses on maths and English to improve literacy and numeracy, and subjects like music and French are temporarily 'sitting on the backburner', but do have subject coordinators who also receive teaching release to promote these subjects.

Place in the primary curriculum

A major priority in many schools was a focus on teaching and reaching targets in the core subjects, which could tend to squeeze languages out. Generally the primary curriculum was perceived as very packed and MFL seemed to be a subject that could easily fall off the agenda:

“I think there’s so much focus on phonics and early reading and bringing children’s skills up in IT skills and numeracy as well that sometimes, you know all the other subjects we’ve got to teach as well, they kind of get pushed behind in a sense so you’re trying to fit all of them in and with this focus on phonics then as you say the schedule is really [...] tight but you just got to try and do what you can I suppose.”

Case Study

The head teacher of **School A** emphasised the importance of the core subjects for teaching and learning. According to her, the focus on basic skills is really important and there is the danger that, with the development of the creative curriculum, some schools lose focus on the core subjects. She thought that losing sight of providing the children with basic skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT and science is doing the children a disservice.

In addition, she stressed that it was mainly about striking the right balance: the children are very confident, creative and expressive and some children may not excel in the core subjects but in other subjects. Yet, she explained, the focus on the core subjects needs to be maintained because they provide the underpinning skills for all of the children in other areas and the results in core subjects are the results on which schools are judged.

Rather differently, the head teacher at **School C** considered languages to be vital for the children:

“The children are very motivated and enjoy the languages enormously [...] Languages broaden their experience and tune them into other cultures. The parents are very positive too. The multilingual children are outstanding and achieve higher overall than the white children. The EAL children make very good progress in languages once they have mastered English, though most are fluent already.”

The head teacher was committed to keeping quality language provision in the school and was prepared to invest in this. She was also working hard to ensure that the transition to secondary school was smooth and was concerned about children becoming demotivated by having to start French all over again.

Timetabled languages teaching

Amongst the interviewees and case study teachers, several experienced timetabled MFL teaching, as we have already illustrated in several of the case study examples. This teaching tended to be covered by specialists or externals, while some GTP-trained teachers used additional integrated approaches as well:

“At the school [...] we’re at now, a lady comes in and she teaches French once a week to key stage 2 children.”

“We do a half an hour French lesson every week. I do sort of take the register in French and sometimes I add some Spanish just because I like it, but generally we just do the register in French, but it’s mainly just that half an hour slot every week.”

Integrated languages/language-rich environment

Several interviewees and case study teachers reported language-rich school environments in school. One interviewee invited non-English parents into the school and suggested a French and a Norwegian Day for her school. According to her account, her school encouraged Spanish in higher year groups in addition to French as a foreign language, but it was largely down to the teachers’ own expertise and interest to promote it:

“I’m teaching in Reception. I’m teaching 4 to 5 year olds. So my interest was how to encourage some interest in the language and part of the profile for early years is to develop a cultural awareness of themselves and of others around the world [...]The other thing they did further up the school was do Spanish. Spanish in Years 4 and 5 as well as French and that was along the lines of taking the register in that language, learning to count in those languages, or maybe colours. I think the school encouraged it, but it was more along the lines of if the teacher was competent and wanted to try it then it happened.”

Case Study

Each year in **School C** there is a Spanish day and a French day which, as the head teacher explained, enhances provision and links to the wider curriculum in terms of traditions, culture, food and music. There are also French and Spanish assemblies for the parents. In Year 6, there is a French breakfast to which parents are also invited. Year 6 pupils serve breakfast of orange juice and croissants to the whole school; each class has a day and the hall becomes a cafe.

The GTP-trained teacher valued all these experiences, but was not always confident enough in her own language abilities on these occasions outside the timetabled lessons taken by the specialist teachers; for instance, she did not always know what phrases to use when making ‘croque monsieur’ for the French day and wanted reassurance about her pronunciation.

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2.3.5 Recommendations

Throughout the interviews and case study visits, we asked for ways in which the GTP training and further development of GTP-trained teachers could be improved, either in relation to the university training or the input of the schools. This final section of the results focuses on recommendations the GTP trainees themselves made to improve the GTP training at university and in their training schools. The section concludes with views of the case study school head teachers and includes their recommendations for better provider-school interactions.

As we have already seen, GTP trainees' and teachers' experiences prior and during training as well as in schools varied greatly, and their recommendations reflect this variability: a recommendation from a teacher from one provider or school may already be implemented in another context.

Recommendations for GTP providers

The recommendations provided by the GTP trainees and GTP-trained teachers centred around two main topics: the need for more language training and more contact with language specialists/opportunities to observe high quality language teaching.

“I think they could offer the opportunity to have a short course in a language. Maybe if it was perhaps just a day purely to teach you how to speak a language or maybe a few evenings or something, something like that.”

“[...] potentially to have teachers that are on the shop floor delivering the lessons, coming in as guest speakers to bring in the resources that their

school use to show the job in hand. Also to have the GTP students go out into a school where a language is seen as a part of the everyday.”

Another trainee suggested opportunities for approaching their university to specifically request teaching observation in schools that are known for having good practice in language teaching. Such opportunities were already taking place in some contexts.

Recommendations for schools

In a similar vein, the GTP trainees emphasised the importance of observing good quality language teaching and getting feedback from others:

“I support maybe having a network as such so that I could go in and observe other teachers then they could come in and see me and give suggestions.”

Moreover, one GTP trainee pointed out practices which we found implemented in some of the case study schools, namely, the introduction of an external languages specialist who would train teachers directly in the classroom:

“I think what is always good is if somebody would come into the school and deliver a few sessions that you could participate as well and that would give you ideas to use on your own once they’d gone.”

As well as ideas to use in lessons, the GTP-trained teacher in **School C** emphasised the need for other continuing support; she said that she would find it helpful to have tape recordings of the songs and spoken phrases used by the visiting specialists, to make sure that her pronunciation was correct.

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Head teacher voices

Case Study

The head teacher of **School A** emphasised that the communication and amount of contact between the training provider and the schools could be improved. She acknowledged that the workloads for university tutors is probably high but emphasised that it would be beneficial to have more of a dialogue to reflect on placements.

This head teacher also pointed out that the involvement of head teachers and teachers working on the ground in the formation of the training programme may be beneficial for training outcomes.

The head teacher of **School B** would prefer more university time e.g. an increase of a block of at least two weeks at the beginning of the course to provide more input on subject knowledge, deconstruction of practice, classroom management and strategies to help with a less strong training school.

A similar point was made by the acting deputy head teacher of **School D**: Since the GTP training to her appeared to be very packed and intense, she suggested either stretching it over 18 months or introducing a preliminary course looking at certain theoretical aspects of the training rather than doing this in parallel to the teaching.

In addition, the acting deputy head of School D pointed out that the GTP training programme has changed a lot over the past years and that it would be desirable if schools were given more flexibility to work with the trainees.

The head teacher of **School C** emphasised the fact that GTP trainees are usually older than other entrants to teaching; therefore they are further away from their own language learning in school and other original education. They have to be very determined and motivated because the majority of the training is school-based. Because of this, the head teacher stressed the importance of strong school-based training contexts and the need to include GTP trainees in all in-service training and professional development opportunities alongside the qualified teachers.

She and the visiting MFL specialists were concerned about the uncertainties surrounding the future of languages teaching in primary schools, owing to changes in funding arrangements and government policy. They were hopeful that primary languages would continue to have a high priority but aware that much depended on the commitment and enthusiasm of individual teachers and head teachers. Such views were expressed by teachers in other schools and by other interviewees.

2.4 Project impact and concluding discussion

In terms of the impact of GTP-trained teachers on primary languages, we have identified a mixed picture, which depended largely on the interaction between prior experience, enthusiasm and a supportive school context. Although GTP training itself was regarded positively by our respondents, its brevity could not by itself provide a sufficient basis for primary language teaching or maintain GTP-trained teachers' interest. Because of the centrality of work-based learning on the GTP, much depended on trainees being employed by schools in which languages were flourishing, together with in-school learning and further external training. As we have seen from the interview and case study school data, some contexts were extremely positive in terms of GTP-trained teachers' continuing professional development in languages and they were therefore able to make a good contribution to, and impact on, languages teaching in their schools.

In a few cases such as the NQT in school D who was playing a lead role in primary languages in her school, GTP-trained teachers' expertise in or commitment to languages actually led to the introduction of languages in some schools; in these cases the GTP teacher's impact was therefore considerable, but might be harder to sustain without an existing infrastructure for languages in schools. In such instances, the schools had to be receptive to the introduction of languages and we were concerned to learn about a few examples where a GTP trainee had had considerable impact on languages in their training school, only to find this curtailed by a non-receptive school in their NQT year.

In terms of the impact of the research project itself, at the present moment it is in its early stage and will hopefully unfold within the next six to twelve months. To achieve further impact we will need to undertake additional data analyses and research dissemination through conferences and journal articles (see 4. Details of any future planned dissemination activities). The main reason for limited project impact so far is that the research was somewhat delayed early on (see 2.2.4 Changes to methodology), particularly at the stages of recruiting GTP training providers and interviewing GTP trainees and GTP-trained teachers. As mentioned earlier, these difficulties had a knock-on effect on the analysis and dissemination of the findings.

One major impact we hope to achieve is raising awareness. At the mid-project stage, we provided all participating university departments with the interim report in anonymised form, but such that GTP providers were able to identify the information about their own organisation. Responses were positive and we hope gave providers some useful insights. In addition, this final report will be sent to all participating universities and schools. In sending out this report, we hope – in line with the recommendations of one of the interviewed head teachers – to improve communication and exchange of ideas between GTP trainees, schools and universities.

With a similar aim in mind, we are inviting participating GTP-trained teachers and staff from their schools to dissemination events that are scheduled to take place in

February and June 2012 at Canterbury Christ Church University. Again, this may enable a dialogue on how to improve the delivery, planning and coordination of primary languages on GTP training, which is particularly important in the light of possible changes in future initial teacher education.

In order to enhance the chances of achieving impact, we have included a section (2.3.5) on recommendations by the GTP trainees and GTP-trained teachers for the improvement of the GTP training and, more specifically, the training and support for teaching primary languages. In addition, we have added a brief section on head teachers' voices, more generally on the topic of cooperation between schools and universities within teacher training as well as on GTP and languages. We also have additional data which have not yet been analysed and which may lead to important 'hands-on' feedback for training providers.

Further recommendations also arise from the interview data of the trainees, teachers and several MFL coordinators with regard to emerging policies on the core curriculum in KS1 and KS2 and the role of primary languages within it. There is already considerable uncertainty about the future of primary languages in schools and, as we write, about the UK's place and role in the European Union. Many interviewees perceived the UK education system as deficient with reference to MFL teaching and expressed concerns about future disadvantages for British children in a globalised world. Therefore the continuation of primary languages is seen to be vital as a way of giving children access to a broader international context as well as localised language cultures.

3. Outputs

Outputs so far include the interim report for Escalate and two conference papers:

Griffiths, V., Tingey, C. & Thomae, M. (2011). *Language teaching in primary schools: Effective preparation?* Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference 2011, London, UK, 6th – 8th September 2011

Griffiths, V., Tingey, C. & Thomae, M. (2011). *Teacher education for primary languages: Higher education's role in employment-based routes.* Paper presented at the 2nd TEAN Conference, Manchester, UK, 20th May 2011

4. Details of any future planned dissemination activities

A dissemination event for schools and GTP tutors will be held in February 2012 at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU).

We will present conference papers at:

- Languages conference at CCCU, June 2012.
- International teacher education conference at CCCU, July 16-18 2012.
- BERA conference, University of Manchester, September 4-6 2012.
- ECER conference, Cadiz, September 17-21 2012.

We have been invited to write an article on this research for the TEAN journal and are planning on writing an academic article for an international journal (e.g. *Teaching and Teacher Education* or *Journal of Education for Teaching*).

5. Expenditure profile

A final budget sheet outlining major costs associated with the project is attached separately.

6. Journalistic summary

The 'Primary languages and work-based learning' project aimed to investigate the experiences of beginning and early career primary teachers, trained on the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), in teaching languages in schools. 160 trainees from five GTP providers across England completed a questionnaire on primary languages training and language teaching experience; 50 early career teachers completed a similar questionnaire (total N=210). We also interviewed 12 questionnaire respondents and conducted four in-depth case studies in schools.

Generally, the GTP-trained teachers' knowledge of foreign languages was basic and their teaching confidence correspondingly low. Almost all trainees evaluated the GTP training favourably, although the maximum input on languages was one day, which most considered insufficient. Many school environments are supportive of primary languages teaching, enabling GTP-trained teachers to develop further. However, schools where language teaching was not prioritised inhibited this development. Recommendations to improve the programme include more opportunities to observe language teaching, better communication between training providers and schools, and more direct training in both contexts.

The Bristol online service aided the analysis of survey data. Factors critical to the success of this project were the participation of GTP providers for access to their trainees and early career teachers; and the positive involvement of teachers and schools. We experienced some initial difficulties in recruiting GTP providers to the research and in contacting GTP trainees and teachers for interviewing (particularly during term time), which led to delays at the start of and during the project.

We have already reported on the findings of this project in national and international conferences and further dissemination events will take place in 2012. Project findings will be built into revisions of our own GTP, and recommendations from the GTP trainees, teachers and their schools will be used to spark a wider dialogue on how to improve the role of primary languages within this work-based route into teaching, which we consider particularly important in the light of pending policy changes.

7. References

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