2004 Report: ICT in schools – the impact of government initiatives

Secondary modern foreign languages

HMI 2191

May 2004

Document reference number: HMI 2191

Web site: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction

This report is based on subject-specific evidence from visits to secondary schools made as part of the inspection of the impact of government ICT initiatives between April 2002 and December 2003 and supplemented by evidence from other school visits where appropriate. This contributed to the main report, *ICT in schools*, which is available from the Ofsted publications centre (07002 637833) or via the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Main findings

- In one in three departments in the sample, the impact that using ICT had on teaching and pupils' achievement was at least good; in one in twelve it was very good. In approximately one in six departments its use was unsatisfactory. This represents a slowly improving picture since 2002.
- Pupils' entitlement to use ICT is rarely systematically addressed in departmental planning. In almost all schools, even where the impact of using ICT in lessons is satisfactory or better, not all pupils benefit equally. In only one in eight schools did all pupils in each year group receive their entitlement to use ICT to help them learn.
- The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) ICT training rarely met its objective of meeting the pedagogical needs of teachers and supporting them to use ICT to enhance language learning. However, it was more successful in developing teachers' personal ICT skills and often acted as a catalyst, generating interest and an increased demand for access to ICT for modern foreign languages (MFL) teaching and learning.
- Access to accommodation and hardware for MFL departments has gradually improved over the last five terms. Although one in six departments in the sample had unsatisfactory access, the majority of these were awaiting new accommodation and/or equipment.
- National Grid for Learning (NGfL) funding has supported the development of ICT in MFL indirectly. The increased hardware that it has funded in schools has generally helped MFL departments to gain more access. The most significant impact of NGfL for MFL has been in broadband connectivity, with its speedy and secure access to the internet which has given MFL teachers the confidence to use it in language lessons.

The impact of the initiatives

Teaching and learning in modern foreign languages

The majority of MFL teachers' personal competence in a variety of ICT applications is now good. These skills are often used in lesson planning, including the preparation of professionally produced worksheets, the identification of authentic resources and language learning websites from the internet, and the use of spreadsheets to record and analyse pupils' attainment.

A growing number of teachers put these skills to good use in classrooms. The best examples of teachers' planning and pupils' use of ICT in the sample of lessons observed were:

- using a word processor to edit stored text files to raise pupils' awareness of structure and form; or to draft text and redraft it for accuracy, and sometimes for a different purpose
- using presentation software to prepare oral presentations for an audience
- interrogating the internet for a specific purpose, broadening the range of authentic reading material and learning resources pupils have at their disposal.

Some of the most effective lessons incorporated a presentation by the teacher using an interactive whiteboard or data projector, followed by pupils using ICT to further develop their understanding. In the following example, a Year 10 mixed-ability class, the teacher used presentation software to introduce the patterns of reflexive verbs in the perfect tense, including the use of sound to indicate what is of special note. Pupils then worked on word processors to redraft a text:

> *Pupils were excited and interested by the presentation. They all volunteered answers to questions, showed good understanding of previous learning about reflexive verbs in the present tense and applied this knowledge to deducing answers in the past tense. The teacher built into the presentation increasingly demanding examples with missing elements which the pupils had to complete. They rose to the challenge and were particularly gratified by the electronic applause that indicated a correct solution.*
>
> *In the second part of the lesson, pupils worked individually at computers redrafting a model text from the present tense to the perfect tense, applying their knowledge and understanding from the previous part of the lesson. They referred back to the earlier presentation, if necessary, since that was stored in their area of the network. Those pupils who finished ahead of time checked out their work with the teacher and then mentored others who were puzzling over some of the verbs in the passage. Pupils were asked to write a passage in the perfect tense, with reflexive verbs, for homework. They were given the option of emailing it to their teacher to highlight pointers for improvement before redrafting for accuracy a final version to hand in.*

There was good provision in school for those pupils who did not have access at home to use computers outside lessons.

The use of ICT here supported pupils' understanding of grammatical structure in a novel way. It highlighted language patterns memorably and at the same time provided an electronic reference that they could consult at any time, enabling all learners to revise their understanding both in class time and outside it and so achieve well. Access to their teacher via email also provided these pupils with the opportunity to revise their knowledge and understanding and produce as accurate a piece of work as possible.

In a Year 7 French lesson, a class of boys used simple ICT tools in a word processor to enhance their language awareness. On the topic '*En ville*' the objective of the lesson was to consolidate knowledge of places in town, to raise awareness of accented characters, gender, *l'* before vowels, and *près du/de la* and *de l'*, and to support pupils' understanding of redrafting text for accuracy:

Pupils loaded-up a file with a 'wordsnake' and they separated out the words, all places in a town with definite articles. Then they identified all those words needing accents and inserted accented characters, deleting redundant characters. Then they cut and pasted the text to make two lists – masculine and feminine, and demonstrated the reason for l'. After revising briefly 'près de' with the teacher, they made three columns of phrases with the placenames using 'près du, de la and de l'. Finally, pupils loaded-up another file and unjumbled words to make sentences such as 'Yves habite près de la piscine'. Pupils were constantly on task, well supported and challenged by the class teacher, and the Advanced Skills Teacher who supported the lesson. Both knew when to intervene and when not. All tasks had a time limit which spurred pupils on. The teacher kept to these time limits and got pupils to feed back their results after each task, sometimes using the overhead projector and getting pupils to use it to demonstrate to their peers.

The lesson was very well planned to reach the objectives, lively and very well managed. All pupils were very motivated and challenged, kept up well, worked intently, and made good progress in consolidating and improving their knowledge of the language, including the letter sound of accented characters. Interesting discussions about language could be overheard. The teaching and learning never lost sight of how to use ICT as a tool to support the overall aim of learning French. The teacher finished the lesson very well, checking on what pupils had learned, and, overall, this lesson demonstrated very well how word-processing tools, simply used, can enhance pupils' language awareness.

In the majority of schools visited, interactive whiteboards had been installed. Where teachers had been given good training, they were beginning to embed the use of these into their teaching practice. In the best examples, these were effective in increasing pace and variety in teaching and involving pupils interactively in their language learning. Pupils commented that language 'is more memorable' when taught using interactive whiteboards or digitally projected and in every lesson where it was used pupils were very focused and responded well, as in the following examples:

In a Year 7 German lesson, use of an interactive whiteboard and an interactive website enhanced a starter activity. As pupils arrived intermittently from far corners of the school in the first five or so minutes of the lesson they came to the front and matched visuals to previously learned vocabulary. Pupils were timed in this activity. They were purposefully engaged with the target language and enthused from the word go.

In the second half of a Year 10 French lesson the teacher had prepared a game to revise and expand vocabulary and phrases on the topic of the environment. This was projected onto the interactive whiteboard and pupils competed in teams to give the correct answers. Pupils enjoyed trying to score perfect marks, which were clearly displayed on the screen, and they completed a lot of work as the game encouraged them to work quickly. A key element of the success of this game was that the pupils discussed possible answers, using their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to justify their answer to the rest of the team. After the lesson the teacher put the exercise on the school's website so that pupils could refer to it later, or at home if they wished and so that any pupils who had been absent could complete it in their own time.

In a Year 11 Spanish lesson the teacher had designed a game in the format of 'Who wants to be a Millionaire?' in Spanish, which was displayed on the interactive whiteboard. This was used to increase the pupils' understanding of the conditional tense, using the topic of the environment. Pupils were expected to complete sentences about how to protect the environment and had multiple choice answers, in the style of the game show, using the conditional tense. For example, they had to complete the sentence: 'En un mundo ideal….' with, for example, 'no produciríamos residuos tóxicos.' The questions were asked at speed and pupils were very enthusiastic. It was very motivating as the four multiple choice answers were revealed one by one on the whiteboard adding to the sense of tension as pupils competed good-naturedly to get the correct answer and so increase their score of imaginary money. The lesson involved a high level of challenge and pupils discussed possible answers using their knowledge of grammar as well as vocabulary to work out the correct version.

In many lessons, ICT supports learning through consolidation and practice; in some lessons this is very effective. For example, in a very low ability set of six boys and five girls (two pupils had statements and all were identified with special educational needs (SEN)), the teacher used ICT to consolidate pupils' knowledge of how to talk and write about their hobbies. The lesson took place in the computer suite where each pupil had access to a computer. Two classroom assistants supported the pupils with statements very well:

The lesson started with a revision of pupils' oral knowledge of hobbies using projected images and symbols as cues on the whiteboard. Pupils responded eagerly to each newly projected picture. When they had responded, the teacher dropped in the text which they then read aloud in chorus, and then individually. The teacher paid very good attention to accents and pronunciation, which accounted for these pupils' unusually good pronunciation at such an early stage. While this presentation could have been done with an overhead projector and cut up transparencies, the electronic

presentation enabled the teacher to swiftly and smoothly move from image to image, back and forth as needed, providing intensive practice and moving the lesson on at a good pace. The pupils concentrated intently and were clearly motivated by the professional and colourful images and text.

This session was followed by a brief presentation on screen of what pupils were to do next, individually at the computers. Pupils retrieved a file which had a number of sentences about hobbies with no punctuation and spaces between words. They read these sentences aloud to themselves, matching sound to the written form, before inserting the spaces, learning from some mistakes as they went along. This enabled them to gain a better understanding of the form and structure of the written sentences. The teacher paid vigilant attention to supporting pupils' progress and needs as they worked individually, as did the two support assistants. Towards the end of the lesson, three boys moved on at their own pace to write their own sentences or to combine pictures that they retrieved themselves with their own text into a simple presentation. Pupils felt safe to write and edit their text knowing that they could eventually print out copy that they could be proud of. One boy demonstrated his presentation, speaking the captions to his pictures, before they dropped onto the screen. There was a definite sense of accomplishment.

Where learning support was provided in lessons, as was the case in this lesson, the role of that person in supporting pupils to make progress in language learning using ICT is mostly well thought out.

The use of ICT to develop pupils' independent language learning is increasing slowly and there were examples of pupils' use both in and out of school. Quite often homework using ICT was set (or had been set prior to the lesson), with pupils developing their research skills or their creative writing away from the classroom. Several teachers encouraged pupils to email their written work to them so that corrections could be highlighted and pupils could improve their accuracy and style. In the following example, a class of able Year 9 boys, who were to be entered for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Year 10, worked independently at computers to draw together a piece of written coursework in German on tourism and accommodation, with the teacher supporting and challenging them where appropriate:

The pupils had various pieces of work on the topic in different applications (word processor, spreadsheet, presentation software and information downloaded from the internet) saved over the last two years in their network area. They spent time deciding what they wanted to use, improve and combine into their coursework. They were all enthusiastic about their German work, knowledgeable about the ICT applications they used, and could work very well independently. They all did different things – for example, some redrafting to improve on previous work and combining different sorts of information; another creating new text and researching the internet to find local information to translate subsequently into German. They talked knowledgeably about how ICT helped them learn, for example: 'redrafting makes you think', 'seeing real German language … broadens the scope … narrow in course book'; being able to continue and refine work at home; emailing it to the teacher, who highlights areas for improvement.

Whereas there are now many good examples of ICT use in MFL, often the full potential of ICT is not recognised, usually because of the teachers' inexperience with particular applications, as in this mixed ability Year 7 French lesson:

> *Pupils used a text manipulation program confidently and independently to consolidate their recent learning of time phrases and daily routines. They worked on an activity in which they had to predict the next word in a sentence from a group of words at the bottom of the screen. They concentrated intensely – one could hear a pin drop! However, they began to mark time when they finished as the teacher's understanding of how the program could further support language learning was limited and the second activity they were set was not fit for purpose. Moreover, higher-attaining pupils could have moved on quickly to creating and word-processing their own texts, having worked with the models in the initial text manipulation exercise.*

A significant number of lessons using ICT were unsatisfactory. The planning to use ICT to fulfil learning objectives was often not secure and it was not always clear why ICT was being used other than as a motivational tool. In some lessons in the sample the use of ICT hindered pupils' language learning or slowed their progress. For example, pupils were asked to copy-write from their exercise books into a word processor to produce work 'in best' or for display, or copy it into presentation software. Sometimes too much time was spent on the font and style or importing pictures to the detriment of learning the language. Language learning websites were used which had not been thoroughly checked, which resulted in confusion or wrong answers. Sometimes the hardware or software did not work and valuable language learning time was wasted.

Worryingly, the use of ICT is still frequently at the expense of teachers' and pupils' use of the modern foreign language in lessons. On the whole, teachers do not plan lessons to ensure that pupils speak in the language in lessons where they use ICT, and they often miss exploiting unplanned opportunities which present themselves. Even the notion of a plenary in the respective language to demonstrate what pupils have learned is not regularly built into such ICT lessons.

Standards and achievement in modern foreign languages

In almost half the lessons observed, pupils achieved well because the ICT helped them to do so. Examples of this were where pupils improved their:

- knowledge and understanding of grammatical functions
- accuracy, range and length of written work
- communication in writing, and occasionally in speaking
- cultural awareness of the target languages, countries and communities.

Good achievement in knowledge and communication was evident in a Year 9 German class, where pupils revised language in preparation for role play. The teacher had prepared an electronic presentation of key language on the topic of illnesses, using quirky pictures that strongly appealed to the pupils' sense of humour:

Pupils were encouraged to expand their language and go beyond the prompts on the screen. For example, a picture of a badly bleeding finger with a plaster next to it was designed to elicit the responses: 'My finger hurts' and 'You need a plaster'. In fact, pupils decided that the wound was too bad for a plaster and so learnt the phrase 'You need to go to the hospital'. Pupils also responded spontaneously to the pictures on the screen, giving opinions such as 'That's terrible!' and 'What a shame!' which they had learnt previously. The teacher had carefully designed the presentation to build up the language in small chunks, gradually removing the written prompts so that pupils eventually worked on the dialogue from the picture prompts on screen. The pupils were given several different ways of saying the same thing so that the resulting dialogues were both personalised and interesting. The teacher was quickly able to refer back to any element of the lesson by calling up the relevant part of the presentation and this enabled pupils to remind themselves of key aspects, and so they made very good progress.

Although use of ICT to support speaking skills is infrequent, good examples were seen of pupils using presentation software very realistically to create cues for oral presentations. In ensuing oral presentations it was clear that the pupils were developing an understanding of presenting to an audience. For example:

In a top set Year 10 German lesson, pupils spent 15 minutes in pairs or threes refining and adding to presentations they had written in the previous lesson, prior to giving their presentations orally. The teacher reminded pupils that their oral presentation should be prompted by their slides but should not be the sum of what they say. Pupils presented first to another group and then to the class. During the presentations, the rest of the class had been asked to listen out for the differences between the prompts and what the presenters said as well as to assess their peers for oral accuracy and the tenses used. The pupils were very attentive and listened hard. The presenters added in description, opinions, reasons for choices as well as using the past, present and future tenses. All this was picked up by the other pupils when the teacher asked them for feedback on the presentations.

Good achievement was demonstrated where word-processing was used to draft and redraft text, as in the following example where a fast track Year 10 Advanced Supplementary (AS) class used a word processor in Punjabi for a newspaper article about healthy lifestyles. Pupils had prepared ideas at home and they shared these and ideas for improving and refining their writing with each other and the teacher, who also gave pointers for language improvement, before they began:

They identified ways of writing with greater complexity for AS level as opposed to their GCSE work – using argument, anecdotal evidence, factual evidence, and thinking carefully about audience. The pupils were very focused on word-processing their article, despite the time-consuming process of identifying the Punjabi characters from a paper 'keyboard', and the teacher continued to challenge them every step of the way. The advantage of the word processor was that they could improve, redraft and edit their work as they went along and each pupil produced a creditable and reasonably accurate article in 30 minutes.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the countries, communities and living conditions of target language speakers can be enhanced through the use of relevant and up-to-date internet sites. In the following example, Year 7 pupils, who in a previous lesson had learned to talk about the weather in French, accessed a French website describing the weather in several French towns and completed a worksheet which tested their understanding of key weather vocabulary in writing:

> *The information was for a real French audience, which enhanced the value and authenticity of the exercise. Pupils also improved their knowledge of geography as they consulted an online map of France and noted down on their worksheet the positions of the towns. They went on to use the school's intranet to do an exercise stored there, matching captions and images of weather and seasons, and then dragging and dropping words to make sentences about the weather. All this was done at a fast pace and completed in a 35-minute period.*

Pupils often have opportunities to exercise choice more often when they use ICT in language learning than they do otherwise. For example, in one lesson, Year 10 pupils chose information from a set of websites to use in their own writing about a town in Germany.

In a very small minority of schools, pupils' understanding of cultures was enhanced by videoconferencing, which was used to enable pupils to communicate with native speakers. For example:

> *In one middle school every day throughout the school year three Year 7 pupils, on a rota basis, spent 10 minutes in a videoconference with their partner school in France. They answered questions and sought information from their French peers about their daily lives at home and school. They noted down answers to questions to use in their French lessons. The link was smoothly established and reliable and pupils benefited from talking to native French speakers on a regular basis.*
>
> *In another school, Year 13 students were working on the topic of alcohol use and abuse. They used a videoconference link in Munich to discuss this topic with a German adult. They had prepared relevant vocabulary and questions but their interaction with the native speaker became increasingly spontaneous as she interrupted and asked them questions. This led to higher levels of language use and some humour as students described their own experiences.*

Such good examples notwithstanding, in a significant proportion of lessons ICT neither hindered nor helped pupils' achievement. In such lessons teachers were often not sufficiently clear how they wanted the ICT to help pupils to make progress. Sometimes pupils did work harder and were motivated to write more because they could correct it easily and present it well. Occasionally ICT hindered pupils' progress. This was the case, for example, where tutorial software or web-based exercises were pitched at too low a level, or held inaccuracies that confused pupils; where able pupils copied work into a word processor with no challenging task; or where pupils spent most of their time on the presentation of written language and little time on creating and amending.

Implementation in schools

Leadership and management

The leadership and vision of the head of department are very significant in the systematic development of ICT in MFL. In the sample of schools visited the use of ICT was markedly better where the head of department led by example and utilised well the expertise of other staff, often newly appointed or recently qualified teachers or support staff. However, leadership and management of ICT in MFL have not improved significantly since 2002. In only one in eight schools visited were leadership and management in MFL good to the extent that all pupils received their entitlement to use ICT to enhance their language learning. In one of the schools where provision was good, this was because the MFL department helped to deliver the ICT curriculum and what they did was well thought out to support language learning as well. In others it was generally as a result of very good leadership in the MFL department combined with ICT-competent and confident staff and supportive senior management.

Development planning for ICT in MFL was generally weak. It either relied on whole-school development planning or was concentrated on hardware and software acquisition, not on pedagogic training for the systematic use of ICT in the classroom and the development of pupils' entitlement.

Even in departments where ICT use was good in some respects, it was rarely well integrated into schemes of work. Only half of the schemes of work suggested resources and activities for ICT. Although these were generally better in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4, in almost all cases references to ICT were limited and did not highlight how it should be used to enhance pupils' learning and raise their achievement. Sometimes ICT was implicit in suggestions, for example where pupils could choose how to produce a piece of work at the end of unit. This was usually not monitored and so some pupils might always choose to use ICT and others never do so. There were limited links to the National Curriculum and the requirements of the Programme of Study. At least half the schemes of work in the sample did not include ICT, although sometimes there was a separate statement and some suggestions were offered for use in departmental documentation. These sometimes included using ICT for homework activities.

Monitoring of the use of ICT in MFL lessons and the evaluation of its outcomes were rare and, coupled with the paucity of long-, medium- and sometimes even short-term planning, this was a key hindrance to the development of ICT as a tool to raise standards. Monitoring was more common than evaluation. For example, one department was monitoring the use of the interactive whiteboards, but not their effectiveness. Some departments spent time in meetings sharing what they had done with ICT and passing on ideas. Mostly this was informal, not systematic or planned.

Just over half of the departments used spreadsheets to record pupils' attainment. A few of these used them to analyse results and to plan; a tiny minority was developing tracking systems. Electronic evidence was still not often used to contribute evidence for assessments in MFL.

Staff development

NOF-funded ICT training has had little impact on teachers' understanding of the pedagogy of using ICT in language learning. It was, however, successful in some cases in improving MFL teachers' personal ICT skills, particularly where a school effectively supported the delivery of the chosen scheme. It also acted as a catalyst for development, for example in prompting MFL departments or individual teachers to request access to ICT, more equipment and further training.

In the very few departments in the sample that had trained with a subject specialist provider, teachers sometimes had better understanding of what pupils might achieve by using ICT in their language learning, and a better grasp on planning lessons to reach language learning objectives through using ICT.

Mostly, teachers have benefited more from in-school training, although this rarely focuses on pedagogy. They have also benefited from working together, peer support and technical support. Relatively few MFL departments have their own strategy for professional development in ICT. As a consequence, the competence and confidence of all teachers in any one department to use ICT in their teaching remain very variable and this militates against pupils' entitlement.

Where MFL teachers had their own laptop, whether provided by the 'Laptops for Teachers' scheme or by the school, it was instrumental in developing their competence and confidence to use ICT personally and in the classroom. Those MFL teachers who had regular access to data projection or an interactive whiteboard in their classrooms, and had been trained well to use it, had developed their confidence in using ICT.

Over time, and in later visits, many more teachers found that ICT helped them to teach more effectively. While many teachers still cite motivation as the key factor, those who plan explicitly to use ICT to support specific aspects of pupils' language learning can give sound reasons for this, adding that it is a key way to differentiate learning as well as to enable teachers to work with individuals or groups of pupils. Teachers who now use ICT regularly for presentation and whole-class work judge that it speeds up their teaching and pupils benefit from the challenge and access to a rich variety of resources that enables them to practise more intensively and enjoy their learning. On the whole, sample lessons observed corroborated these views.

Resources and accommodation

The impact of NGfL funding on MFL teaching and learning was almost always indirect. For example, the increase of hardware in the schools had generally provided better access, and the provision of broadband had provided speedier connections to the internet. Funding from other sources, such as becoming a specialist language college, had provided much more than NGfL.

Overall, access to accommodation and hardware for MFL teachers and pupils has improved since 2002. Three quarters of MFL departments had at least satisfactory access to accommodation and computers for regular use of ICT. More MFL departments now have dedicated use of an ICT area or hardware installed in an MFL classroom. The

best provision in the sample was in specialist language colleges. Where there was no dedicated provision, booking systems for MFL use were mostly at least satisfactory and more schools have computer rooms that are dedicated to subject use than previously. There were more lessons observed in this sample where pupils could work individually at a computer where it was more effective to do so. Where teachers in MFL departments lacked sufficient access, this had had a negative impact on teachers' motivation and attitudes to training and on departmental plans to use ICT.

The layout of computers and the shape and size of accommodation were not always as good as they could be. Accommodation was sometimes cramped, with no space for pupils to work away from the computer, or laid out in such a way that the teacher had difficulty keeping track of all pupils, or some pupils had difficulty seeing the whiteboard. Such factors militate against, for example, pupils' interaction in the target language: teachers' own use of the target language; teachers' planning for lessons to include a starter, presentation, practice, communicative activity and a plenary; and teachers' assessment for learning. For example:

> *In the second half of a Year 8 German lesson, pupils moved to the dedicated ICT area for MFL. Pupils did two text manipulation exercises to practise using the nominative and accusative rules revised in the first half of the lesson. While the clues built into the exercises provided good support for most pupils, who were able to progress at their own pace, some pupils guessed at answers at first rather than trying to work them out from the rules learned and the clues. It was very difficult for the teacher to observe this owing to the layout of the computers in a corridor-like space, and these pupils consequently wasted some time.*

Teachers in at least one in three departments had been provided with laptops or had regular access to them. Interactive whiteboards and data projectors had been installed in MFL classrooms in over half the schools visited. In the early visits, teachers were awaiting training and they were little in use, but in recent visits they were generally being planned for and used effectively.

The potential of generic software, particularly in relation to word-processing and presentation tools, is now more systematically explored for use in MFL than previously, both for pupils' use and for teaching presentations. In some instances, sound is being incorporated effectively. In one school Year 7 pupils had individually produced presentations in French of personal information, incorporating sound and digital pictures they had taken themselves. The use of ICT in community language teaching is increasing but appropriate software is expensive and sometimes pupils have to make do with relatively unwieldy resources which slow their pace of work.

There was less evidence of MFL-specific software in use, except in specialist language colleges, where tutorial software was often installed and used for practice and revision in their computer language laboratories. Some departments had found incompatibility between software they had used to good effect in the past and newer hardware: for example, some text manipulation applications. This is disappointing, given the efficacy of such in developing pupils' understanding of form and structure and reading and writing skills. A few departments in the sample used web-based authoring applications effectively, but they were relatively underexploited. Recently, the use of e-learning

credits to purchase subscriptions to web-based MFL materials and publications was reported.

The installation of higher bandwidth into schools has had a good impact on the use of the internet in MFL teaching and learning. Teachers felt much more confident to plan its use into their teaching and pupils' were very aware of it as a resource for practising their language skills, for example via revision websites, and for getting to know more about the country and communities they were studying. The internet has brought a wealth of resources to modern language learning which schools otherwise could not afford. Even so, in the sample there was little use made of authentic texts to develop reading skills. Pupils appreciate the authenticity of real resources from the countries of the languages they study. Three schools were developing online language materials for teachers to use in lessons, and for pupils' independent use 'anywhere, anytime'. One of these is very usefully targeting the initial development at community languages to compensate for the relative paucity of relevant software for its pupils, and for those in the region.

There was relatively little use of email to communicate with target language countries, with only one in eight departments using it, and the idea of using class email is underexploited. One school used email effectively for pupils to communicate with their German exchange school in preparing for their visits. In two schools, sixth formers made good use of it to exchange or request information for target language projects. In another school, a longstanding and effective link with Spain came to a halt with the departure of the Spanish school's English teacher. Email was also used by pupils to send work to their teachers for comment and correction.

Access to computers before and after school supported pupils' independent use of ICT in MFL in most schools and some MFL departments were beginning to make use of this, and pupils' access at home, to set homework using ICT, for example creative written work or research on specified websites.

In almost all schools, MFL teachers were well supported by ICT technicians. This support had increased teachers' confidence to use ICT in MFL and in turn had increased pupils' opportunities to use it.

In conclusion, pupils reported that they enjoy using ICT in MFL. They concentrated very well in lessons where it was used and were generally very productive. Many pupils are keen to continue their work out of class and are very aware of how it can help them learn a language.