

DRAFT IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR MAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGES COMPULSORY AT KEY STAGE 2

Title: Consultation on making foreign languages compulsory at Key Stage 2 IA No: DFE0028 Lead department or agency: Department for Education Other departments or agencies: NA	Impact Assessment (IA)		
	Date: 26/04/2012		
	Stage: Consultation		
	Source of intervention: Domestic		
	Type of measure: Secondary legislation		
Contact for enquiries: Jane Bennett (0114) 2742339			

Summary: Intervention and Options	RPC Opinion: AMBER
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Cost of Preferred (or more likely) Option

Total Net Present Value	Business Net Present Value	Net cost to business per year (EANCB on 2009 prices)	In scope of One-In, Measure qualifies as One-Out?	
n/a	n/a	n/a	No	NA

What is the problem under consideration? Why is government intervention necessary?

A modern foreign language currently features as a compulsory subject in the National Curriculum for maintained schools at Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14) **only**. Non-statutory measures have been partially successful in encouraging foreign language teaching in primary schools. However, coverage is not universal and the content of what is taught is highly variable. Feedback received from secondary schools indicates that this variability makes it difficult for them to plan, and that in many cases they have to 'start from scratch', which reduces the benefit of the teaching at primary school and is an inefficient use of secondary school time and resources. Making foreign languages compulsory at Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) will provide consistency of provision and increase the overall amount of languages teaching pupils receive, helping to improve their language skills overall. This in turn will facilitate the realisation of a wide range of economic and social benefits.

What are the policy objectives and the intended effects?

Government intervention is necessary to achieve the following objectives: (1) To reduce the variability in quality and coverage of primary foreign language teaching that currently exists; (2) To provide a firmer basis for secondary schools to build on in terms of planning and developing their teaching; (3) To ensure that, as in other nations, we promote a desire to learn foreign languages at an early stage in childrens' intellectual development. Realising these aims will improve the quality of language teaching in our schools and help to reverse the reduction in young people progressing to take qualifications in languages.

What policy options have been considered, including any alternatives to regulation? Please justify preferred option (further details in Evidence Base)

(1) Retain a modern foreign language as a National Curriculum subject at Key Stage 3 only (do nothing)
 (2) Make a foreign language compulsory at Key Stage 2 of the National Curriculum. This option will mean that all maintained primary schools are required to teach a foreign language according to a statutory Programme of Study (curriculum). This will improve the consistency of teaching of languages in primary schools; result in efficiency savings for secondary schools; and harness more of the individual and wider societal benefits that accrue from language teaching at a younger age.

Will the policy be reviewed?

Plans to evaluate the impact of this policy will be developed as part of the assessment of the wider benefits of the reforms of the National Curriculum review. The impact of this specific measure on the quality of teaching of languages in primary schools (and consequent effects in secondary schools) will be measured, at least in part, through inspection surveys and reports.

Does implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?			N/A		
Are any of these organisations in scope? If Micros not exempted set out reason in Evidence Base.	Micro No	< 20 No	Small No	Medium No	Large No
What is the CO ₂ equivalent change in greenhouse gas emissions? (Million tonnes CO ₂ equivalent)			Traded: N/A		Non-traded: N/A

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I have read the Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impact of the leading options.

Signed by the responsible Minister: _____ Date: _____

Summary: Analysis & Evidence Policy Option 1

Description: Do nothing and retain a modern foreign language as a compulsory subject at Key Stage 3 only.

FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year	PV Base Year	Time Period Years	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: Optional	High: Optional	Best Estimate: 0

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	Optional	Optional	Optional
High	Optional	Optional	Optional
Best Estimate	0	0	0

Description and scale of key monetised costs by ‘main affected groups’

There are no additional costs associated with maintaining the status quo. This option requires no Government intervention and therefore no additional demands on the public purse. Schools will not incur additional financial or resource costs to continue to do what they do now.

Zero.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	Optional	Optional	Optional
High	Optional	Optional	Optional
Best Estimate	0	0	0

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by ‘main affected groups’

There are no monetised or non-monetised benefits associated with maintaining the status quo.

Other key non-monetised benefits by ‘main affected groups’

As above.

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks

Discount rate (%)

With no statutory provision for foreign language teaching in KS2, many primary schools may withdraw or reduce their teaching of foreign languages. The significant investment that the country has made in primary foreign language provision over the last 10 years (totalling over £100m) could be seen as having been a wasted opportunity.

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 1)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:			In scope of OIOO?	Measure qualifies as
Costs: 0	Benefits: 0	Net: 0	No	NA

Summary: Analysis & Evidence Policy Option 2

Description: Make foreign languages compulsory at Key Stage 2

FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year	PV Base Year	Time Period Years	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: Optional	High: Optional	Best Estimate: n/a

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	Optional	Optional	Optional
High	Optional	Optional	Optional
Best Estimate	n/a	n/a	n/a

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'
 More evidence will be gathered during the consultation exercise and published in later versions of the impact assessment in order to provide a fair and accurate determination of the monetary costs of this option. These costs will include training of new and existing primary school teachers and the costs of teaching materials.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'
 There could be an opportunity cost of studying foreign languages as less time/resource is targeted at other KS2 subjects. There may be some one-off administration costs in planning for a new statutory Programme of Study for foreign languages at school level, but we would hope to keep these to a minimum by, for example, allowing an extended lead-in period before this change comes into effect in September 2014.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	Optional	Optional	Optional
High	Optional	Optional	Optional
Best Estimate	n/a	n/a	n/a

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'
 It has not been possible to monetise the benefits of this option at this stage of the consultation process.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'
 Research shows that foreign language teaching improves spoken language and literacy in English and that it has all-round cognitive benefits, resulting in pupils being more receptive to teaching in all subjects. It could also improve attitudes towards and the take-up of languages in later key stages. There is evidence to suggest that children are better able to learn languages, and in particular the sounds of languages, at a younger age. Furthermore, head teachers have said that learning a foreign language plays an important part in community coherence. In their experience it had led to an appreciation of cultural diversity and identity and thus to greater tolerance. There will also be efficiency savings in secondary schools that will not need to standardise language knowledge on entry to Year 7 to the same level as is currently the case. Improved languages skills among school leavers could have significant economic and social benefits.

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks	Discount rate (%)
Assumption - Some KS2 teachers and teaching assistants would need some form of foreign language training although to varying degrees, with some needing less than others depending on their existing capabilities. Risks - Increased demand for foreign language teachers across all Key Stages (already occurring in Key Stage 4 due to the introduction of the English Baccalaureate) will reduce the availability of secondary teachers to help deliver foreign languages in primary schools and thereby increase the demand for primary-specific foreign language teachers.	

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 2)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:			In scope of OIOO?	Measure qualifies as
Costs:	Benefits:	Net:	No	NA

Evidence Base (Summary Sheet)

Problem under consideration and rationale for Government intervention

Research into the curricula in high-performing education jurisdictions, and the evidence review conducted by the National Curriculum Review Expert Panel, demonstrates that we should be more ambitious in aiming to realise the economic and social benefits of learning a language. One way of helping to do this is by ensuring that more children are taught a foreign language at a younger age and so benefit from a greater overall amount of language teaching during their school careers. There is also evidence around cognitive development that suggests that children are better able to learn languages, and particularly the sounds of different languages, when they are younger. In the high-performing jurisdictions we have considered, compulsory foreign language teaching is consistently introduced within the equivalent of our primary phase¹.

England is out of step with other jurisdictions in not introducing compulsory languages earlier than at Key Stage 3. Most tend to introduce compulsory languages teaching towards the end of our Key Stage 2; for example, Finland and Hungary introduce it at age nine and Victoria (Australia) and Ontario at age 10. Some start at around the beginning of our Key Stage 2; for example France at age seven and South Korea at age eight. New Zealand and Singapore introduce languages teaching at age six, and the Netherlands at age four or five².

Foreign languages at Key Stage 2 under the current system:

In the existing National Curriculum teaching a modern foreign language is only statutory in Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14). A system of non-statutory incentives has met with some success in increasing the number of children in primary schools being taught a foreign language, but problems remain.

There has been significant public spending (some £100m) in primary languages over the course of the last few years, focused on engaging specialist expertise at local authority level, buying in foreign language assistants, or procuring resources. This money has now been subsumed into mainstream schools funding (it was previously part of the Standards Fund), so on current plans there will be no dedicated funding to support language teaching from 2013 onwards. This public spending led to an increase in the numbers of primary schools teaching languages. By 2009, 92% of primary schools reported that they were teaching pupils in Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) a language within class time. This is more than double the proportion of schools in 2002/3³. However of these, only 70% taught languages across all four years of Key Stage 2⁴, and responses to the National Curriculum Review Call for Evidence suggest that this may have declined in recent years due to changes in school priorities.

Why is Government intervention necessary?

There are still improvements that can be made in the teaching of foreign languages; public expenditure and the existence of a non-statutory framework for teaching foreign languages have not been enough to ensure universal consistent coverage of teaching. The benefits (described more fully in the consideration of option 2 that follows) are not being fully realised for pupils or for the wider economy. Government intervention will consolidate the efforts that

¹The Framework for the National Curriculum - A report by the Expert Panel for the National Curriculum review (2011); Internal DfE analysis (2010)

² Internal DfE analysis (2011)

³ NFER (2009) Primary modern foreign languages: survey of implementation of national entitlement to language learning at Key Stage 2

⁴ NFER (2009) Primary modern foreign languages: survey of implementation of national entitlement to language learning at Key Stage 2

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teachers have put into primary foreign language teaching to date. Action is necessary to realise the following policy objectives:

1. Reduce the variability in coverage of language teaching at Key Stage 2

We are concerned about equality of opportunity to learn a language in primary school and the effective transition of knowledge between primary and secondary school. If consolidation of primary provision is not improved, the issue of transition will be more difficult to resolve and this could weaken the quality and effectiveness of secondary foreign language teaching⁵.

Successful government intervention at primary level should also have an impact on efficiency; secondary schools should, over time, feel less obliged to spend time and effort establishing what Year 7 pupils have previously learnt, and in equalising the standard of knowledge across all pupils. This extra time could instead be spent on supporting the lowest attaining pupils, and on raising the standard of attainment across the cohort as a whole. It should ensure that all pupils benefit from a greater overall amount of foreign language teaching.

2. Increase the number of children taught languages at primary level and to send a signal to the education system as to the importance of languages

Curriculum reform is viewed as one of the key levers effecting a change to what happens in the classroom and thereby to raising standards⁶. In a school system where more schools are moving towards greater autonomy over their curriculum through Academy or Free School status, there is also a need for a national expectation that acts as a benchmark, to provide parents with an understanding of what progress they should expect, and to ensure that schools which do not pursue Academy status have a National Curriculum to draw on which is clear, robust and internationally respected. Although Academies and Free Schools are not required to follow the National Curriculum, we envisage that many will choose to offer it and all will be accountable to their local communities for any decision to depart from it. We therefore expect that a requirement on maintained schools to teach foreign languages at Key Stage 2 will lead to the majority of primary Academies doing the same, leading to near-universal coverage.

Due to the statutory nature of the National Curriculum, making foreign languages compulsory at Key Stage 2 will necessarily require some regulatory change.

Description of options considered

The following options have been considered; option 2 is the focus of the consultation:

1. Do nothing and retain a modern foreign language as a compulsory subject at Key Stage 3 only; leaving primary schools to decide whether to teach languages as part of their school curriculum. (Status quo)
2. Make a foreign language a compulsory subject as part of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2. (Preferred option)

1) Retain a modern foreign language as a compulsory subject at Key Stage 3 only. (Do nothing).

⁵ The Languages Company (2010); Call for evidence response 5511 (2011); CLT (2011) Language trends survey

⁶ Pepper, D. (2008). Primary curriculum change: directions of travel in 10 countries. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Riddock, G. and Sainsbury, M. (2008). Comparison of the core primary curriculum in England to those of other high performing countries. DCSF-RW048 Department for Children Schools and Families.

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The teaching of one modern foreign language has always been a statutory requirement of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3, while the teaching of languages in primary schools has increased significantly over the last ten years⁷. A non-statutory framework⁸ is already available as a resource for those primary schools teaching languages.

However we are told⁹ that primary language teaching is not yet sustainable in many schools, due in large part to the non-statutory status of the subject. This means that we are not capitalising on the benefits that could be gained from making the subject compulsory at this key stage as described in the evidence summary section above.

Costs

There are no costs associated with maintaining the status quo. This option requires no Government intervention and therefore no additional demands on the public purse. Schools would not incur additional financial or resource costs as they could continue to do what they do now.

Benefits

There are no monetised or non-monetised benefits associated with maintaining the status quo.

Risks

With no statutory provision for foreign languages in Key Stage 2, there is a risk that many primary schools might withdraw from teaching languages or reduce the amount of time spent on it. The significant public spending on primary languages provision over the last 10 years (totalling over £100m) could be seen as having been a wasted opportunity. There is some anecdotal evidence that primary schools started to withdraw from teaching languages when the Government put the decision on making a foreign language compulsory at Key Stage 2 on hold pending the outcome of the National Curriculum Review¹⁰. That trend could continue if we do not move now to make languages compulsory.

2) Make foreign languages compulsory at Key Stage 2

The Expert Panel advising the National Curriculum Review has set out their recommendation that language teaching should be introduced in the National Curriculum earlier than currently, based on international evidence of when other countries introduce language teaching, advice from key stakeholders and responses to the National Curriculum review Call for Evidence. The members of the Expert Panel¹¹ were appointed to provide advice to the Department for Education on how best to achieve a revised National Curriculum that embodies rigour and high standards, and is slimmed down to properly reflect the body of essential knowledge in the key subject disciplines which all children should learn.

The case for action is discussed in depth in the cost and benefit analysis sections below¹². This shows that:

⁷ NFER (2009) Primary modern foreign languages: survey of implementation of national entitlement to language learning at Key Stage 2

⁸ <http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/>

⁹ Speak to the Future campaign (2011). A coherent experience of languages for all children in primary school – briefing note

¹⁰ Under the previous Government it was due to become a statutory requirement that primary schools would offer all KS2 pupils the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language in class time from 2010/11 onwards

¹¹ The terms of reference for the Expert Panel and members' pen pictures can be found at www.education.gov.uk/nationalcurriculum.

¹² Pages 13-16

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- In the existing non-regulatory model, pupils in schools with more challenging circumstances are less likely to be taught a language in primary school, which has implications for equality of opportunity;
- Secondary schools want more assurance over the what language teaching their pupils have already experienced, to support more efficient planning for Key Stage 3;
- Younger pupils are better able to learn a language and it can improve spoken language and literacy in English as well as all-round cognitive benefits. Pupils are also generally very enthusiastic about learning a foreign language at primary school;
- The current position is inconsistent with most other educational jurisdictions where compulsory foreign language teaching is consistently introduced within the equivalent of our primary phase;
- Better foreign language skills are beneficial for the economy and demand by UK firms is set to increase in future;
- Learning a foreign language makes pupils more tolerant of other cultures and helps to counter stereotypes.

Consideration of Non-Regulatory Options

A further, non-regulatory, option that has been considered has been whether we could achieve the same results and effects as option 2 without introducing new regulation, through the provision of Government funding to support the teaching of languages in primary schools.

The feedback we have received from schools is that the statutory curriculum will in most cases be prioritised over the non-statutory. Our assessment is therefore that while incentivising and supporting schools in this way might lead to some increase in languages teaching, the impact would not be as significant as that from making the subject compulsory. This approach would also be less likely to deal with the current issues around transition to secondary school.

We also consider that incentivising schools would be likely to incur the same costs per pupil as option 2. In addition, if we were to offer some form of additional subject support funding to deliver the same objectives in schools where previous support and investment has not worked, this would add an additional cost per pupil. Given that 70% of schools are already teaching languages across the whole of Key Stage 2, albeit to differing levels, additional subject support funding of this kind would have a high financial deadweight cost for the taxpayer.

In addition, we have considered whether there might be other levers which would incentivise provision of foreign language teaching at Key Stage 2. However, such levers are limited in primary schools. At Key Stage 4, we have concluded that we do not need to make foreign languages compulsory as recommended by the Expert Panel for the National Curriculum review, because the introduction of the English Baccalaureate performance measure has helped to deliver a significant increase in the take up of languages at GCSE without regulation. However, we do not have a similar performance measure in Key Stage 2: introducing one would require the introduction of a foreign language statutory assessment which would be more burdensome on schools than simply making it a compulsory curriculum subject.

We have therefore concluded, based on feedback from schools and teachers, that regulation is the only realistic way of achieving the Government's policy aims in respect of the teaching of languages in primary schools. We have decided, therefore, not to include non-regulatory options within the scope of the public consultation.

COSTS

Increase in demand for primary teachers with language expertise

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We do not hold systematic and up to date data on the actual number of primary school staff currently involved in teaching foreign languages, or their levels of capability. The current readiness of the primary workforce to deliver foreign languages effectively at Key Stage 2 is therefore not yet accurately known, and nor is the volume of training required. We do know, from the feedback that we have received from primary schools, that having specialist teaching, either through recruiting teachers who have languages as their specialism or being able to train and upskill existing teachers, is seen as an important element in delivering high quality language teaching.

In addition to the data on current levels of foreign language teaching in schools set out above, NFER's 2009 report stated that up to 18% of schools might not be able to provide foreign language teaching to Key Stage 2 pupils in class time by September 2010; and that up to a quarter of those might not be ready by September 2011¹³.

In 2009, DfE analysts produced a set of projections on the size of the primary workforce that would be necessary to teach languages to all pupils at Key Stage 2 from 2010/11 to 2013/14. This was based on surveys undertaken in 2006-2008 and therefore due to the time elapsed we believe it is not sufficiently reliable to use to provide a hard estimate of the current language capability levels of primary teachers without further evidence. However, it does provide a guide. The projection in 2009 was that in 2010/11, there would need to be a total of 62,000 primary school staff involved in teaching foreign languages– including 33,300 teachers who had been trained to teach a foreign language through continuing professional development (CPD) and 4,600 language-trained primary teachers. Factoring in rising birth rates meant the size of the total workforce needed to meet Key Stage 2 demand by 2013/14 was estimated at 70,000, including an additional 1,600 CPD-trained teachers and 800 recruits to primary ITT courses each year.

As part of the consultation, more evidence will be gathered to establish the number of new teachers required to teach languages on a compulsory basis at Key Stage 2, and the extent to which these teachers could displace other trainees. It is likely that this would represent a net annual additional cost to Government. The current costs to the Government of providing a bursary to a primary teacher on a postgraduate ITT course are £9000 and £5000, for those with a 1st class degree and 2.1 respectively at undergraduate level (the costs of the courses themselves vary and are paid for by trainees). As we do not have sufficient evidence on the number of new language teachers required, it is not possible to quantify the cost of training new teachers at this stage in the policy development process.

Training costs

The extent of the training required to ensure that teachers have the skills and the knowledge to teach the new curriculum will be dependent on wider reforms to the National Curriculum framework; this will be the subject of a further consultation later this year. Funding for CPD is already included in schools' budgets. The government's approach to teachers' CPD was set out in the White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (24 November 2010). It makes clear that we will focus on improving the capacity of schools to take the lead for the training and development of teachers and creating more opportunities for peer-to-peer training.

There may be an additional one-off training cost for schools to meet to help prepare existing teachers as a result of the wider National Curriculum reforms as well as the associated costs for schools of providing supply cover for teachers engaged in that training. Again, more evidence will be gathered on this as part of this consultation, engagement with key stakeholders and the later consultation on wider National Curriculum reforms, to quantify the

¹³ NFER (2009) Primary modern foreign languages: survey of implementation of national entitlement to language learning at Key Stage 2

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cost of providing additional training through a variety of models in an accompanying impact assessment.

Materials

The extent to which schools would have to purchase new materials (such as textbooks) will be dependent on wider reforms to the National Curriculum framework including content of the new Programme of Study. This will be the subject of a further consultation later this year. Costs for this will be considered at the next stage of the consultation process in an accompanying impact assessment. It is likely that schools would supplement existing materials with new resources; there may be a one-off cost and a small annual cost to ensure that resources are kept up-to-date.

Administration costs

There may be some administration costs in planning for a new statutory Programme of Study for foreign languages at the school level. These costs are likely to occur at the planning and implementation stage and will be one-off costs incurred as an impact on teacher time.

The average salary of a primary school teacher was £32,600 in 2011-12, or £20.40 an hour (including non-wage costs (25%)).¹⁴ As of 2011, there were approximately 120,000 Key Stage 2 teachers. However we are not able to determine the amount of time schools will need to plan their foreign language teaching to meet the new curriculum for languages at this early stage: the scale and nature of the changes to the National Curriculum more broadly will be decided in a further consultation later this year. There will be economies of scale in relation to administration costs associated with planning for introducing languages at Key Stage 2 alongside these wider National Curriculum reforms.

We will use the evidence gathered as part of this consultation and the consultation on wider National Curriculum reforms later in the year to quantify administration costs using a number of assumptions on any behavioural response to the changes.

Impact on other subjects

There will be an opportunity cost of concentrating limited time and resources on language teaching at Key Stage 2: an increase in the amount of time devoted to the teaching of languages will lead to other subjects seeing a reduction in time spent teaching those subjects or in resources, in schools which are currently doing little or no language teaching. However, it is difficult to predict which subjects would be affected as each school is responsible for subject curriculum time and so it is likely to vary across schools. We will attempt to gather more evidence on this through the consultation exercise.

BENEFITS

Primary age language teaching

Making foreign languages compulsory at Key Stage 2 will ensure that more pupils receive seven years of language teaching rather than three, which can be expected to help improve their language skills. Although the optimum age at which to introduce foreign languages remains contested, there is general agreement that successful acquisition of a second language declines with age¹⁵ in terms of training to the ear, phonological control, awareness of

¹⁴ Internal DfE analysis (2012)

¹⁵ Internal DfE analysis (2011)

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pattern¹⁶ better pronunciation, listening comprehension and reading comprehension¹⁷. Primary pupils are also generally very enthusiastic about their primary foreign language experiences¹⁸ due to a predisposition towards language acquisition; natural sense of curiosity; lack of inhibitions and higher motivation¹⁹. Children are motivated by the language teaching process itself as well as by their perceptions of the wider value of languages²⁰.

Foreign language teaching improves spoken language and literacy in English and it has all-round cognitive benefits, resulting in pupils being more receptive to teaching in all subjects²¹. In particular, research has shown that children who experienced difficulties in literacy in English appeared more assured in languages and gained confidence through foreign language teaching²². Foreign language teaching at primary school could also improve attitudes towards and the take-up of languages in later key stages²³. Children (and adults) who already speak more than one language find it easier to learn a new language²⁴.

The teaching of languages also has social benefits: it has a part to play in community coherence and a better understanding of different communities within our own society. It leads to an appreciation of cultural diversity and identity and thus to greater tolerance²⁵.

Although adult education can have beneficial effects, research²⁶ indicates that initial education (early years and compulsory) is most effective in changing an individual's life.

Equality of opportunity, consistency and progression

Given that schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, with English as an additional language, and those with lower results in statutory assessment at Key Stage 2 are the least likely to be teaching a foreign language at Key Stage 2²⁷, there is an important benefit in making the subject compulsory in terms of equality of opportunity.

In addition, secondary schools²⁸ have said they want greater consistency in coverage of foreign languages at primary level so that they have some assurance over the prior experience of the pupils that they are receiving and do not have to start all over again. They support the introduction of a statutory Programme of Study for Key Stage 2 languages. While many schools do work together to try to overcome difficulties at the start of Key Stage 3²⁹; providing continuity in languages is very challenging due to inconsistent practice between primary schools. Some argue that they have little choice but to start again or spend considerable time unpicking things which have been incorrectly learned (or been taught)³⁰.

¹⁶ ALL response to the National Curriculum Review call for evidence.

¹⁷ Internal DfE analysis (2011)

¹⁸ referenced in the Overview of the National Language Strategy 2003-2011 (The language company (May 2010)

¹⁹ CILT (2011) Primary Languages Head Teacher Survey Report

²⁰ Cable et al (2010) Languages learning at Key Stage 2 - A longitudinal study

²¹ All Party Parliamentary Group on modern languages submission to the Department for Education on the review of the National Curriculum; CILT (2009) Languages for a better society; Caccavale (2007) The correlation between early second language learning and native language skills development; Foster and Reeves (1989) Foreign language learning in elementary schools

²² Cable et al (2010) Languages learning at Key Stage 2 - A longitudinal study

²³ Review of the National Curriculum in England Summary report of the call for evidence. (2011). Some respondents stated that KS2 foreign languages alone will not increase the numbers taking GCSE. However other argued that foreign language GCSEs are not appropriate for all pupils and the introduction of the Ebacc will help to ensure that those capable will have the opportunity to do so.

²⁴ National Curriculum review call for evidence response 5447 (2011)

²⁵ National Curriculum review call for evidence response 5705 (2011)

²⁶ Feinstein et al. (2008). The social and personal benefits of learning: A summary of key research findings

²⁷ NFER (2009) Primary modern foreign languages: survey of implementation of national entitlement to language learning at Key Stage 2

²⁸ Feedback from stakeholders on the NC review Expert Panel report.

²⁹ CFBT (2011) Language learning in secondary schools in England

³⁰ Call for evidence response 199

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Teachers and language specialists have stated that having to start over again in languages in Key Stage 3 can dampen pupils' enthusiasm for languages, create boredom and stifle talent³¹. This will play a factor in pupil motivation in Key Stage 3 as languages are often cited among the least preferred subjects even when pupils like the teacher³².

By making languages a compulsory subject at Key Stage 2 with a Programme of Study that is developed alongside a new Programme of Study for Key Stage 3 we are aiming to build a coherent statutory language framework that not only provides a benchmark of expectation but will also support a smooth transition and progression from primary to secondary school. This should result in time savings, allowing secondary teachers to spend more time on teaching the Key Stage 3 syllabus with a positive impact on pupil attainment.

Economic benefits

In the global economy our young people find themselves competing for jobs and opportunities with peers from across the world, many of whom speak English and often one or more other major languages. There is some evidence to suggest that better language skills are beneficial for the economy and are demanded by UK firms. We are not able to quantify these benefits as we cannot predict the size of the impact of the policy change on the language skills of school leavers and do not have any data on the labour market outcomes associated with attainment in languages GCSEs compared with other subjects. However, we know that exports are an important driver of UK economic growth and that firms which operate in the exports market benefit from employing workers who can speak the language of their trading partners. It reduces the costs involved in communication, and improves the efficiency of firms. There are also less likely to be information barriers in international businesses.

A 2005 report found UK firms had lower foreign language capabilities than those in 28 other EU countries, with only 34 per cent of firms saying they were competent in any foreign languages, compared to 65 per cent in France and 74 per cent in Germany³³. A 2009 CBI survey found that lack of language skills was the skills gap employers were most concerned about. According to the survey, most employers (65%) are looking for conversational ability, rather than fluency, to help break the ice with customers or suppliers and to assist wider cultural understanding³⁴. Evidence suggests that those companies who take foreign languages seriously can expect their businesses to grow by an average of £290,000 per annum whilst those that do not can see declines of £50,000³⁵. More specifically, the tourism industry in particular can expect to benefit from an improvement in language skills amongst the population. Visitors may be attracted by services which are available in their native language. Language skills are also beneficial for academic research and international political negotiation.

As outlined earlier, foreign language teaching has the spill-over benefit of improving attainment in other subjects and so can help to improve the general skills and productivity of the UK workforce. The UK working age population has lower skills than the workforces in France, Germany and the USA³⁶. This is a major contributing factor to the 15 per cent productivity gap with the UK's main competitors³⁷.

Risks and assumptions

Assumptions

³¹ CFBT (2011) Language learning in secondary schools in England

³² Wright (2006) The health of subjects: evidence from examination entries

³³ CILT (2005a) Talking World Class: The impact of language skills on the UK economy.

³⁴ CBI (2009) Education and Skills Survey

³⁵ CILT (2005a) Talking World Class: The impact of language skills on the UK economy. National centre for languages.

³⁶ BIS (2010) *Skills for Sustainable Growth*

³⁷ ONS

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Some Key Stage 2 teachers and teaching assistants would need some form of additional training in languages although the extent of this will vary.

Risks

There is a risk that increased demand for foreign language teachers across all Key Stages (already occurring in Key Stage 4 due to the introduction of the English Baccalaureate) will reduce the availability of secondary teachers to help deliver foreign languages in primary schools and thereby increase the demand for primary-specific foreign language teachers.

Rationale and evidence that justify the level of analysis used in the IA

While making foreign languages compulsory subjects in Key Stage 2 could be viewed as a burden, in reality, the great majority of primary schools already teach languages at this stage and are very supportive of this change³⁸ to align with international practice; make existing provision more coherent; and provide a smoother transition between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. The cost-benefit ratio of non-regulatory options is clearly less favourable than compulsion and so relatively limited discussion has been provided of these. More evidence on the precise impacts of the policy change is needed and will be made available in the final stage impact assessment.

Direct costs and benefits to business calculations (following OIOO methodology)

Nil – No direct costs or benefits to business. Only maintained schools are affected by changes to the National Curriculum.

³⁸ QCA (2009) Consultation report on the independent review of the primary curriculum