

Languages: the next generation

The final report
and recommendations of
The Nuffield Languages Inquiry

The Nuffield Foundation

Copyright © 2000, The Nuffield Foundation.

CD version with minor corrections, 2000

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright holder.

ISBN 1-902985-02-8

The Nuffield Foundation
28 Bedford Square
London
WC1B 3EG
<http://www.nuffield.org>

The views expressed in this report are those of the Languages Inquiry and do not necessarily represent the views of the Nuffield Foundation.

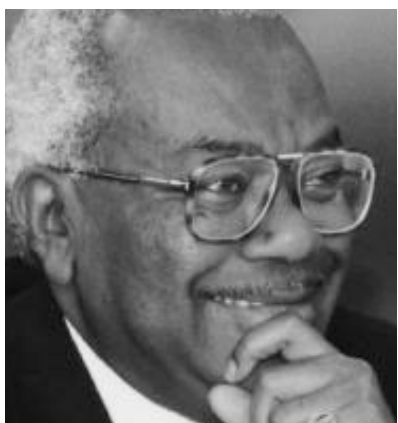
Typeset in Helvetica and Bembo by Catchline

The recommended citation reference for this publication is:
The Nuffield Languages Inquiry (2000) *Languages: the next generation*.
London: The Nuffield Foundation.

contents

Chairmen's foreword	4
Executive summary	6
Terms of reference	10
PART ONE	
Section 1: A new century, a new context	12
Section 2: The nation at work	18
<i>A national standards framework for languages</i>	28
Section 3: Creating a better society for the next generation	30
PART TWO	
<i>Matching needs and provision</i>	38
Section 4: Education to age 16	40
Section 5: Education beyond age 16	50
PART THREE	
<i>The need for change</i>	62
Section 6: Managing change	64
Recommendations	83
APPENDICES	
<i>Members of the Inquiry</i>	100
<i>Contributors: Individuals</i>	102
<i>Contributors: Organisations</i>	103
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	104

CHAIRMEN'S foreword



Sir Trevor McDonald OBE



Sir John Boyd KCMG

Our mandate from the Nuffield Foundation, to look at the UK's capability in languages and to report on what we need to do as a nation to improve it, was timely. Every day we are confronted by evidence that we live in a shrinking world. The breaking down of international barriers, a process which will move much further and faster in the course of this new century, has placed a premium on our ability to talk to our neighbours in the global village.

The UK has no automatic monopoly on political or economic success. In a world of alliances and partnerships we need to understand where others are coming from. In a competitive world we cannot afford to be without strong and complete skills: no skills – no jobs. The need to strengthen our children's literacy, numeracy and technology skills is clear and we support it. Side by side with these should go the ability to communicate across cultures. It too is a key skill.

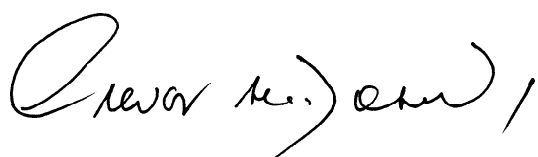
There is, however, a challenge here. The situation is greatly complicated by the global role of English, now essentially the language of international science, law, banking, technology and much else. Our partners, whether in Europe or East Asia, have moved fast to recognise this. A dry analysis might say that we could rest on that. But, in a complex and disparate world in which modern communications have transformed personal contact across boundaries, is English really enough?

In our view it is not. Capability in other languages – a much broader range than hitherto and in greater depth – is crucially important for a flourishing UK. The scale of what needs to be done has become ever more striking as our work has gone on. At the moment, by any reliable measure, we are doing badly. We talk about communication but don't always communicate. There is enthusiasm for languages but it is patchy. Educational provision is fragmented, achievement poorly measured, continuity not very evident. In the language of our time, there is a lack of joined-up thinking.

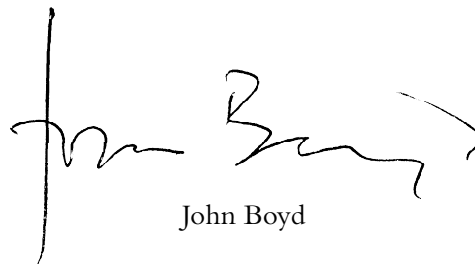
The UK needs a change of policy and practice to fit us for the new millennium. We want to see language skills built into the culture and practice of British business. One way or another we must give our children a better start with languages and equip them to go on learning them through life. We should make the maximum use of the opportunities opened up by European links and funding. We need to aim higher and deliver better. In practical terms, this demands a coherent national strategy for languages, reflected (and earning its place) in our changing educational curriculum and driven with determination.

Things may not be good and it may not be possible to put them right immediately but we hope to have launched a process. We can and must do better. The potential is there – there are excellent initiatives on which to draw and build, achievements to be developed and rewarded. Technology opens an extraordinary range of new possibilities. Both of us emerge with renewed respect for those who have committed themselves to excellence in language and with a desire to see higher standards yet.

A new and frank view is needed and we have tried to be rigorous in focusing on the issues that matter, drawing on a wide range of evidence and listening carefully. Not all our recommendations will be welcome but we expect them to be examined seriously.



Trevor McDonald



John Boyd

MAIN findings

English is not enough

We are fortunate to speak a global language but, in a smart and competitive world, exclusive reliance on English leaves the UK vulnerable and dependent on the linguistic competence and the goodwill of others.

People are looking for leadership to improve the nation's capability in languages

Attitudes have become markedly more positive in recent years and languages are now seen as much more important, especially among young professionals.

Young people from the UK are at a growing disadvantage in the recruitment market

The UK workforce suffers from a chronic shortage of people at all levels with usable language skills. Companies increasingly need personnel with technical or professional skills plus another language and often their only option is to recruit native speakers of other languages. Mobility of employment is in danger of becoming the preserve of people from other countries.

The UK needs competence in many languages – not just French – but the education system is not geared to achieve this

Schools and colleges do not provide an adequate range of languages and levels of competence for the future. Curricular, financial and staffing pressures mean that we teach a narrowing range of languages, at a time when we should be doing the opposite.

The government has no coherent approach to languages

There are many positive developments relating to languages in education and other areas of the government, but the scene remains a patchwork of often unrelated initiatives. There is no rational path of learning from primary school to university and beyond and investments in one sector are rarely exploited in another.

In spite of parental demand, there is still no UK-wide agenda for children to start languages early

There is a widespread public perception, backed by research, that learning another language needs to start earlier if the next generation is to achieve higher standards. An early start to language learning also enhances literacy, citizenship and intercultural tolerance.

Secondary school pupils lack motivation or direction

While more pupils now learn a language to age 16 than ever before, too few leave school with an adequate level of operational competence. Current provision does not motivate and too many pupils, also lacking positive messages about languages from outside the classroom, see language learning as irrelevant.

Nine out of ten children stop learning languages at 16

The current provision for 16–19 year olds is not broad enough to keep pace with individual or national needs. Most young people are faced with the harsh choice at 16 of either specialising in languages or giving them up. Moves to broaden the post-16 curriculum are welcome but more radical changes are needed.

University language departments are closing, leaving the sector in deep crisis

Higher education is trying to run an ambitious 21st century programme for languages but is hamstrung by outdated funding and management structures which mainly reward specialism and traditional areas of research. Provision is uncoordinated nationally with little apparent regard for the long-term consequences.

Adults are keen to learn languages but are badly served by an impoverished system

The government's recent recognition of the importance of lifelong learning is timely. The absence of coherence in the current language provision for adults, together with a hostile funding regime, has led to decline in what should be a key sector.

The UK desperately needs more language teachers

The shortage of teachers, which is now acute and damaging the quality of provision in schools and colleges, is creating a vicious circle of inadequate supply. Meanwhile, university departments which train language teachers are threatened with closure.

WHAT DOES THE INQUIRY propose?

Designate languages a key skill

Languages, by virtue of their direct contribution to economic competitiveness, intercultural tolerance and social cohesion, should have the status of a key skill alongside literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Drive forward a national strategy

The government should establish a national strategy for developing capability in languages in the UK and a system capable of supporting such a strategy.

Appoint a languages supremo

The task would be to work at the highest level with government departments, national agencies, employers and the general public to ensure successful implementation of the national strategy for languages. To be effective, the supremo should be attached to the Cabinet Office and have direct access to the Prime Minister.

Raise the profile of languages

The government should arrange for a sustained campaign to promote positive attitudes towards languages, raise awareness of their potential and foster a culture where using more than one language is seen as an attainable goal for the majority in the UK.

Give young children a flying start

The government should declare a firm commitment to early language learning for all children and invest in the long-term policies necessary for pupils to learn a new language from age 7. To spearhead this commitment, it should fund international primary schools and introduce language awareness into the National Literacy Strategy.

Improve arrangements in secondary schools

Language learning in the secondary school sector should be uprated to provide a wider range of languages, a more flexible menu to cater better for different needs, abilities and interests and more use of information technology. All pupils should leave secondary education equipped with foundation language skills and the skills for further learning in later life.

Make languages a specified component of the 16 – 19 curriculum

A language should be a requirement for university entry and for designated vocational qualifications. For the majority in the 16–19 age group who do not wish to specialise in languages, there should be a range of alternative courses to extend existing language skills or acquire new languages. There is scope to incorporate these in the Key Skills initiative.

Reform the organisation and funding of languages in higher education

A national agenda for languages in higher education should be agreed as a matter of urgency to ensure a sufficient supply of language specialists nationally and the entitlement of all students to learn a language as part of their degree course. Development should be a planned and managed process with full regard for national language needs.

Develop the huge potential of language learning in adult life

The government should take strategic responsibility for lifelong language learning in order to ensure the investment, collaboration and consultation needed to respond to the demand and drive up standards.

Break out of the vicious circle of inadequate teacher supply

The minister responsible for the recruitment of teachers should implement a series of radical short-term measures to attract more language teachers alongside the long-term solution of making post-16 language study a requirement for entry to higher education and therefore to initial teacher training.

Establish a national standards framework for describing and accrediting language competence

The framework should embrace the Council of Europe Framework and existing UK qualifications both in education and the world of employment. It should be clear, transparent and couched in terms which are intelligible to non-specialist users.

Coordinate initiatives linking technology and languages

The national strategy for languages should support and coordinate existing pioneering initiatives in ICT and ensure that the great potential of new technologies is fully exploited in language teaching and learning.

THE INQUIRY AND ITS terms of reference

The Nuffield Languages Inquiry

As its name suggests, this Inquiry owes its existence to the generous funding support of the Nuffield Foundation, which has long been active in support of a wide range of initiatives in the social, educational and scientific fields. In the spring of 1998, in response to approaches by an independent working group of representatives of language teaching and of the world of business and employment, the Trustees of the Nuffield Foundation established a national inquiry with the aim of providing an independent view of the UK's future needs for capability in languages and the nation's readiness to meet them.

The Inquiry Committee

The Inquiry's work has been carried out by a committee of ten members, appointed by the Trustees of the Nuffield Foundation and drawn in equal numbers from languages education and the business world. Profiles of the members are included in the appendices. Under the joint chairmanship of Sir Trevor McDonald and Sir John Boyd, the Committee met on a regular basis between October 1998 and March 2000 to consider the evidence.

The terms of reference

The Inquiry was asked to consider the following questions and to make recommendations.

- What capability in languages will this country need in the next twenty years if it is to fulfil its economic, strategic, social and cultural responsibilities and aims and the aspirations of its citizens?
- To what extent do present policies and arrangements meet these needs?
- What strategic planning and initiatives will be required in the light of the present position?

The evidence

The launch of the Inquiry was followed by the publication of a consultative report *Where are we going with languages?* which identified some of the key issues to be addressed before the Committee started to take evidence. Specialist consultants then advised the Inquiry and written evidence was received from a wide range of individuals and organisations (see appendices). In addition, major surveys were carried out by NIACE and FEDA and around a thousand contributions were emailed to the Nuffield *Inquiry OnLine* over an eight-week period from October to December 1998. To ensure a balance of evidence from employers, education and the general public, the Inquiry commissioned an intensive programme of interviews with individual employers in the private and public sectors.

Outline of the report

Languages: the next generation is in three parts. Sections 1 to 3 set the context for the report and consider the UK's language capability and needs in relation to economic competitiveness, personal fulfilment and civic responsibility. Sections 4 and 5 compare needs and supply by examining the language provision in each sector of the education system: primary, secondary, 16–19, higher education and lifelong learning. Section 6 considers the strategic implications of the Inquiry's findings and presents a full list of its recommendations.

Dissemination

The Committee of the Inquiry formally ceases existence with the publication of this report but the Nuffield Trustees have made provision for a further six-month programme of dissemination and promotion of the central messages. They have also provided for the publication of a CD-ROM containing the consultative report *Where are we going with languages?*, this report *Languages: the next generation*, the transcripts of the *OnLine Inquiry* and an extensive selection of the written evidence submitted by individuals, organisations and employers. In addition, there will be information on <http://www.nuffield.org>.

and finally...

The Chairmen and the Committee would like to thank the Nuffield Foundation for their continuing support, the Secretary to the Inquiry Alan Moys for his expertise and dedication, Alwena Lamping for her joint editorship of this report and everyone who contributed to the Inquiry.

A NEW CENTURY, a new context

1.1 A rapidly changing world

We enter the 21st century with at least one certainty: that the world in which the next generation will grow up, learn, work and play will be very different from the one we know. Rapid technological, economic and social change over the past twenty years has created a world that is complex, interconnected, interdependent. There are too many imponderables to allow a precise prediction of how it will look over the next two decades. Nor is this the principal aim of the Inquiry. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify the key trends likely to define the challenges and opportunities for the UK and thus the needs of the next generation.

“Companies which are not yet international in their thinking and actions will ultimately have internationalism thrust upon them.”

Sir Peter Parker, KBE, LVO

The world economy is in transition The present drive towards globalisation in the world economy seems destined to intensify in the next twenty years. The process takes many forms: freer markets in global trade and investment, rapid capital flows, mergers and acquisitions among large cross-border companies, increased labour mobility and an accelerating series of revolutions in information technology and business applications. The historical re-emergence of Asia, the promise of the Latin American market and the changing shape of the European Union will all have an impact.

Societies are becoming more open Although protectionist pressures are still strong, trade liberalisation is gaining ground. Governments are having to open up their societies to benefit from the economic gains produced by the new technologies. International cultural interchange is now a reality. World economic growth is likely to rely more than before on the developing countries where potential productivity gains remain high. Societies which deal in only one language will be in a minority and are unlikely to flourish, nor will they maximise job opportunities for their citizens.

There is a shift towards service industries Structural change will inevitably bring dislocation as governments and industry adjust to the rapidly changing commercial climate. The shift away from traditional labour-intensive industries means that the labour market is expected to shrink in the years to come. The service industries – the most rapidly growing sector of the UK economy – are becoming more sophisticated. It is in these industries that most of the children in school today are likely to be seeking employment.

Social values are changing Globalisation and integration at the national political level have been accompanied by a renewed emphasis on local and regional loyalties and identification with a sense of cultural and historical continuity. The indigenous languages such as Welsh and Gaelic are becoming more rather than less important as a consequence of devolution and changing relationships with Europe. London and other major UK cities are multi-ethnic and multilingual and each has its own pattern of diversity. Incoming communities want both to integrate with surrounding society and to preserve their own traditional cultures and languages.

Technology creates opportunities for direct contact Technology is transforming the world of work, education and leisure. Instant access to news and information stimulates curiosity about events and people in other nations. The Internet allows any business, however small, to promote itself worldwide and success involves creating a rapport with customers in different countries. As the cost of communicating with the rest of the world continues to fall there is an increased expectation of direct contact between colleagues and friends who live in different countries. And, as Internet use increases, so does the use of languages other than English and the opportunities for English speakers to access information in other languages.

Expectations are higher Improved life expectancy and early retirement are producing generations with more time for leisure, travel and entertainment, greater capacity to take advantage of adult education and higher expectations of how they should spend their time. Easier travel and the opening of borders within Europe are resulting in greater movement of families from one country to another. Children from such mobile families have different attitudes and expectations with regard to languages and their idea of what counts as a foreign language often differs from the traditional British view.

Qualifications, flexibility and mobility will be at a premium The new interconnected, globalised world will be a challenging environment. There will be fewer traditional jobs. Multinational companies will be able to take advantage of cross-border mobility of labour by recruiting the best quality staff wherever they are. Similarly, they will only be able to invest where the returns in productivity are secure. These developments will place a progressively higher value on the professional and technical qualifications of the labour force, their flexibility and their mobility. One point can be made with certainty: unless our education system can provide people with the skills to cope with the emerging challenges and opportunities – and these include language skills – the future will be tough for the next generation.

307 different languages are spoken by London's schoolchildren, ranging from Abe (from the Ivory Coast) to Zulu.

Source: Multilingual Capital, Battlebridge Publications

While the number of English-speaking Internet users is expected to rise by 60% over the next six years, the number of non-English speaking users is expected to increase by 150%.

The main implications of this are:

- there will be an increase in the number of multiple language sites;
- English will not be the default language on an increasing number of sites;
- English will not be offered as an option at all.

Source: Computer Economics

“We’re in a global economy and [children] are going to have to have excellent IT and linguistic skills to thrive in this new world. And also to be able to change careers as they go through their lives. The traditional industries are gone.”

David Charlton in The Independent

1.2 Languages for the next generation

Communication lies at the heart of much recent change. Its effects create national language needs for the UK which look significantly different from those of the 20th century. We need to equip the next generation with the skills to move about the world and take an active role in shaping their relationships with others on a world stage. Given the global prevalence of English it might be tempting to believe that it alone will be sufficient but evidence indicates that the UK will not thrive with a single language – even English. Successful and reliable communication in complex international relationships needs diversity, flexibility and sensitivity.

English is the international lingua franca English has emerged as the first real global language in an age where a global language is both possible and necessary. It is the language of science, technology and technical communication; the language medium for global investment, aviation, development aid and medicine. New strategies for survival in fields as diverse as food supply, the human genome or mastery of space are unlikely to be brokered in another language. For anyone involved in international business it has become a basic requirement and the Indian subcontinent as much as North America relates to the global economy in English.

English alone is not enough In the face of such widespread acceptance and use of English the UK's complacent view of its limited capability in other languages is understandable. It is also dangerous. In a world where bilingualism and plurilingualism are commonplace, monolingualism implies inflexibility, insensitivity and arrogance. Much that is essential to our society, its health and its interests – including effective choice in policy, realisation of citizenship, effective overseas links and openness to the inventions of other cultures – will not be achieved in one language alone.

Other languages are gaining in numbers of native speakers English is not the only language affected by global change. The languages spoken in Asia and Latin America are gaining in native speakers. Spanish, Hindi-Urdu and even Arabic will challenge English in terms of native-speaker numbers within a few decades. None of these languages, however, will approach Chinese, which will remain the world's biggest language in terms of native-speaker numbers. Some languages, with somewhat fewer speakers globally, may nevertheless possess regional strategic importance. Use of Malay, for example, is rapidly growing, augmented both by population growth in Indonesia and by language shift in an area with over one thousand languages.

The future of languages cannot be exactly forecast During the course of the next two decades language priorities will change, perhaps in unexpected ways. The processes of globalisation and economic mod-

Chinese	1,113
English	372
Hindi/Urdu	316
Spanish	304
Arabic	201

Major world languages in millions of first language speakers.

Graddol (1997) *The Future of English?*

ernisation are causing a decline in linguistic diversity in the world – many small local languages are disappearing and we may end this century with only 10% of the languages with which we started. As languages become more scarce, they are likely to become more valued. Many countries are already recognising the significance of language in maintaining identity and culture.

Early learning of languages is giving other countries key advantages As English is taught to ever younger children in other countries, in a context of support and motivation, so it creates widespread bilingualism and multilingualism. For example, there is evidence that the next generation in many EU countries is growing up bilingual. Thus other countries gain some key advantages: their populations acquire, often with considerable proficiency, a second language; through early exposure to language learning they become better equipped to learn additional languages. While we have English, others have English, their national language and a head start in learning new languages.

The UK is increasingly reliant on the language skills of visitors London and other UK cities have become major hubs through which nationals of many other countries pass and where many choose to work and live. Such visitors provide a huge linguistic resource for British employers but also distort the employment market for native speakers of English who have learned other languages. There is a danger that we become too reliant on native speakers of other languages and that this will create a barrier to those parts of Britain in which native speakers are not in plentiful supply.

Other countries are not learning English for our benefit English is neither our property nor is it static. The English spoken in international contexts, for example by Finns to Italians, Brazilians to Russians, is no longer UK English or even US English. And as UK English continues to become effectively a dialect of international English, like all dialects its currency will become localised. If the UK is to maintain the advantage of having English as its principal language we need to use it intelligently and to teach the skills and techniques to use it internationally with native speakers of other languages.

“Learning a language is vital for ... the insights it provides into the languages and cultures of our own country. I want to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to have a language as this will be one of the skills they will need for the new millennium.

David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education

“The key to success in business, the law and politics in the future will be the mastery of at least one foreign language.”

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Clinton-Davis

“Native speakers of English may feel that the language ‘belongs’ to them, but it will be those who speak English as a second or foreign language who will determine its world future.”

Graddol (1997) The Future of English?

1.3 The UK on the international stage

The UK performs well in languages in its structured external relations. No medium sized power can afford not to cultivate survival skills, from communications to strong science. Without these, permanent interests, including economic welfare and democratic pluralism, cannot be defended effectively. A country operating – as the UK does – in a wide range of structured partnerships needs to pay particular attention to communication, whether with partners or competitors. It will remain in our national interest to play a constructive and influential role in world affairs.

“International communication, whether in one’s own or in a different language, is a skill that can be acquired and that needs to be taken seriously. It’s about attitude as well as language ability. But learning a language is the best way to acquire the attitude.”

Stephen Jones, former Head of International Relations at the Department for Education and Employment

General Michael Jackson, who led the British contingent in Kosovo, is a fluent speaker of Russian.

The UK’s world role requires a range of languages English may increasingly dominate many working committees, but the ability of our officials, lawyers and soldiers to work confidently and quickly in NATO, the United Nations, the European Union and a host of bilateral partnerships with individual countries will continue to require a high level of targeted language skills. The UK’s active membership of the EU argues for a sustained effort with European languages, but our wider global engagement also underlines the need to broaden the languages menu.

Our relationship with Europe needs more than English Europe is now emerging not only as a single market but also as a social and political forum in which English serves as a second language. There is a danger that European monolinguals will find themselves marginalised – unable to take a full part in the new institutions and opportunities in the economic, cultural and educational fields. For English monolinguals there is no single other language which will suffice: we need to explore the means of creating diversity of provision and language expertise in both the major and minor European languages.

Languages for diplomacy and defence have a fine track record The UK’s Diplomatic Service has a high reputation for its positive attitude to the languages of host countries and the thoroughness with which British diplomats have learned new languages when required. In international diplomacy and defence the standard of language skills currently on display is acknowledged to be a centre of excellence. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence provide intensive, structured, specialist language training courses which are comparable with the best from other countries. The need for such investment in language skills is likely to increase as international alliances and partnerships multiply.

The UK needs an international cadre of professionals The pressure towards creating a more internationalised corpus of professionals is becoming more evident in many areas of activity, including medicine, law and accountancy. A knowledge of English alone will take them a long way, but not far enough to be able to work as effectively as their peers from other countries in an international environment. The dominance of

The Diplomatic Service Language Centre

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has a clearly stated overarching policy which recognises the central importance of competence in languages as an essential tool of an effective foreign policy. Its Diplomatic Service Language Centre trains 300–400 officers per year – about 10% of FCO’s diplomatic staff. Around 80 languages are covered, the precise balance at any one time reflecting both long-term needs (currently Chinese and the languages of central Asia) as well as short-term responses to events in areas such as the former Yugoslavia.

The Defence School of Languages

Languages have also played a central role in the work of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), particularly – but by no means exclusively – in the field of security and military intelligence. During the Cold War, large numbers of military personnel, including many university students on national service, were taught Russian and Chinese on intensive courses at joint-services training schools. In recent years, as the international security picture has changed, languages such as Arabic and Serbo-Croat have figured prominently. The emerging role of the UK’s armed forces with other countries in the exercise of a policing and diplomacy role in the world’s trouble spots is leading to fresh and varied demands on the language capability of its personnel. The number of personnel to be trained is projected to rise by 20% over the five-year period to 2002, with in particular an additional 40 new language training places to meet the requirements of defence diplomacy. There are forecasts for coverage to rise to 32 languages, the current priorities being for Russian, Serbo-Croat, Arabic and West European languages (principally French, German, Italian and Spanish).

“A visit to the European Parliament would convince anyone that getting by in one language is a grave handicap. The most effective members by far are those who can speak or understand several languages – very few Brits amongst them, unfortunately. Even though translation and interpretation services are available for official meetings, it’s in the corridors, cafeterias and members’ offices that the real business is done, the compromises reached and the amendments drawn up.”

Eryl McNally, MEP for Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes

English has been a powerful disincentive to learn other languages but the situation must be addressed if the UK is to maintain a cadre of professionals able to work worldwide and to ensure that mobility of expertise is a two-way process.

Communication across cultures will remain a key skill During the next two decades the UK’s multiple and complex international relationships may change dramatically. They may not. But, while it is not possible to predict the course of events, it is possible to anticipate with confidence a growing need for flexibility and diversity. The ability to communicate across cultures will be essential to national well-being and it is in the UK’s interests to wake up to the value of languages in cementing international relations.

2.1 Languages in global markets

World-class excellence involves more than getting by in English. The globalisation of markets, the accelerating rate of international communications and the rapid flow of cross-border mergers and acquisitions are creating an environment where a highly skilled, mobile and internationally adept workforce is a priority – and the ability to communicate across cultures a key skill.

A wide gulf exists between business language needs and education supply, a gulf which needs to be bridged if the UK is to satisfy the need for business to be globally competitive and the need for individuals to skill themselves for an unpredictable employment market.

2.1.1 Global markets: the role of languages

English alone will not sustain world-class excellence The global currency of English tends to be cited as proof that business people do not need foreign language skills to conduct business worldwide. Evidence does indeed suggest that the UK could continue to get by in the short term with our current low levels of competence in other languages and by relying on others being able and willing to speak English. However, operating successfully in a highly competitive world economy and maintaining world-class standards involve more than muddling through in the short term and include as a minimum the acquisition of the range of skills and languages which our competitors offer. Given that so many people all over the world now speak, or are learning, English, knowledge of English no longer confers an automatic advantage on the British workforce.

Languages allow insight into competing and partner cultures Monolingualism is not an obstacle when importing the goods and services of others – but exporting our own is another matter. The essential ingredient in securing a contract can be developing an understanding with the client, which is more easily done with even a basic knowledge of the client's language and an appreciation of the cultural framework. In a complex and competitive world, we cannot do without insight into competing and partner cultures. Those who fail to communicate in any language other than English, or who rely on third parties, risk losing out on personal relationships – and risk losing business. Evidence to the Inquiry revealed the hidden resentment that can be aroused by the blanket assumption by monolingual English speakers that others will always be prepared to speak English.

With languages comes mobility Flexibility and mobility require linguistic and cultural expertise. If the UK is not proactive in world

“We are part of Europe, we are a global player, we are the fifth largest exporting nation in the world, 30% of our GDP comes from international trade, one in three jobs depends on international trade – we cannot afford therefore to continue with an island mentality.”

*Ian Campbell, Director General,
The Institute of Export*

markets, its position in the world will decline. Success at boardroom level, in whichever language, is followed by establishing business on the ground and at this level a lack of linguistic and cultural skills often leads to difficulties. To have influence and be effective it is vital to understand the local community and to integrate with it. Companies often purchase the necessary skills locally but need also to keep their options open and post their own personnel overseas. The majority of young people in the UK leave school, college or university with little useful competence in languages and no transnational, cross-cultural work experience. Meanwhile, our European and Asian competitors are producing people who are at least as well qualified technically and speak good English alongside a range of other languages – enabling them to be posted overseas at short notice and at least expense.

Languages are not only for overseas placements The ability to understand and communicate in other languages is becoming not simply a bolt-on extra for overseas representatives but a core requirement for all. Many of the national shortages in languages are at a relatively basic level, resulting in routine business communications failing due to lack of language skills: calls lost at switchboard or reception, faxes, emails and letters failing to receive a response. Yet languages are not a core element in any post-16 vocational courses and very few students in the 16–19 age group include a language in their portfolio.

R. W. Newman, Group Vice President BP Amoco

‘Early in the last century, English became the universal language of the petroleum industry and no great emphasis during my 30 years in the industry has been placed on language skills. You might expect me to conclude that the future for language education is gloomy.

On the contrary. The spread of capitalism and the globalisation of the English language now make it even more important to understand thoroughly the cultures in which we work. Understanding the multiculturalism of capitalism now becomes a key business skill in my mind. Why do I say this? Because it is only by truly understanding the local culture that we will be able to manage and mitigate country risk.

I believe there is a great opportunity, and indeed need, through language skills to enhance the understanding of business people of the many cultures of the world. Paradoxically, this occurs at a time when many could be persuaded, wrongly, that because the English language, American culture and capitalism are sweeping the board they don’t need to bother any more.’

Recruitment patterns reflect a changing world Language skills can confer a distinct advantage in what is now a very competitive employment market. Employers are taking a more global view of recruitment and the profile of the desirable employee is changing. Large companies,

“When I attended a presentation recently by a group of impressively enthusiastic GNVQ students, I was most alarmed to be told that this course, geared by its very nature towards employment in business, contained no statutory element of foreign language learning.”

Sally Fairfax

Only one student in every ten continues the study of a language beyond the age of 16.

“The aim is to hire globally and to place globally. Knowledge of more than one language demonstrates that a candidate has the ability to think across cultural boundaries.”

Company spokesman, Diageo

when recruiting staff, place top priority on professional qualifications, technical skills and personal qualities, regardless of nationality. The emergence of a professional, intercultural elite from Europe and Asia means that a competent knowledge of English can be taken for granted alongside one or more other languages. Preference is often given to people with language skills, not merely because they can communicate across borders but because language skills tend to go hand in hand with the ability to adapt and an awareness of the importance of empathising with others.

2.1.2 Global markets: the skills gap

There is a mismatch between business ‘demand’ and education ‘supply’

There is frustration in the business world with the inadequate levels of language skills emerging from education, the narrow range of languages taught, the lack of transparency in qualifications and the general absence of coherence in the system. Employers see the lack of grammatical understanding and transferable language learning skills as serious weaknesses. There is also a widespread view that public examinations at age 16, the terminal point for formal language training for most pupils, do not reflect the level of practical competence which employers expect. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that so few students study a language after the age of 16.

A short-term outlook puts the UK workforce at a long-term disadvantage

There is no public outcry about the shortage in the UK workforce of people at all levels with usable language skills. This seeming paradox is explained by the availability of native speakers of other languages and their recruitment to posts where technical or professional skills plus another language are required. Companies simply employ the most competent and qualified workforce available so as to remain profitable and to contribute to national prosperity and employment. Short-term business interests, however, are at odds with the UK’s long-term interest. Since language skills can be found on the open market they do not feature prominently in key messages about employability in the UK and specific salary rewards are rare even in companies for whom they are essential. Young people, unaware of their relevance, see no need to acquire language skills – and are edged out of the increasingly competitive employment market.

A wider range of languages is called for The present range of languages spoken by the UK workforce and taught in the education system does not accurately reflect the current pattern of UK trade, nor the patterns that are predicted to emerge in the next generation. Evidence suggests that the predominance of French owes more to traditional attitudes and teacher availability than to current requirements. From a business standpoint, German, Spanish and French are the top priority European languages – Spanish, particularly given the emerging Latin American markets. An additional need is emerging for languages such as Japanese, Arabic and Chinese – China has been the fastest growing major eco-

Germany, France and Spain accounted for over US\$64bn of UK exports in 1997.

“For those who say that French and German speaking peoples are our major trading partners among non English speaking nations, could this not be cause and effect?”

Susan Love, International Circles, Ltd

“Yes, other people use English because it is practical to do so – but they do not expect to have to use it all the time in their own country, within and outside working hours.”

Senior executive of multinational company based in Brussels

onomy in the world over the past two decades. British business would like to see the balance in languages changed to a pattern more in line with the UK's economic interests.

Businesses are not investing in language training Policy and provision relating to in-house business language training are inconsistent – despite evidence that the performance of many British companies in acquiring language skills lags behind their counterparts from other countries. Businesses often cite variability in access and quality of training provision as stumbling blocks. Moreover, there is a general view that it is not the role of companies to provide basic skills for job applicants: they see it as the responsibility of the government and the education system to produce qualified school-leavers and graduates.

There is little practical support for smaller companies Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can now trade globally via the Internet. While their need for language skills may mirror that of a large multinational corporation, most are less well placed to provide language training for employees: hiring a multilingual employee is a major investment, the cost of reputable translation and interpreting services a deterrent. Often, a vicious circle develops whereby SMEs do not export because they do not have language skills and they do not invest in language training because they are not exporting.

2.1.3 Languages in global markets: recommendations

Establish national responsibility for languages A national strategy for languages is needed in the UK to introduce a greater transparency of objectives between users of languages and providers of language training. A languages supremo should be appointed by the government to ensure strategic coherence, to motivate and to coordinate language-related initiatives by such key agencies as the Regional Development Agencies, the Learning and Skills Councils, the University for Industry and the Languages National Training Organisation.

Convey the importance of languages to young people One of the key roles of a languages supremo should be to work closely with business interests in developing a series of imaginative measures to raise the profile of languages in society as a whole. In particular, the pro-languages message should be actively promoted in schools and colleges, with children and young people receiving unequivocal messages on the importance of language skills through high quality promotional and guidance materials. Employers, working with the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and local Learning and Skills Councils, should form alliances in schools and colleges with managers, careers officers and those who coordinate vocational courses, to communicate their preference for recruits having a genuine usable capability in at least one foreign language and experience of living, studying or working abroad. Practical support should be offered in the form of appropriate work experience.

“Employers’ commitment to supporting foreign language study remains relatively constant and apparently negligible.”

Research finding, Goldsmiths College, London

“Today, as never before, we are having to search out new markets, often where there is little tradition of speaking English and where we hope to increase our trade turnover substantially. We are simply not going to be able to prosper without mastering international communication strategies.”

Brian Wilson MP, Minister for Trade

Recommendation 1

Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2.4

Recommendation 3.2

Recommendation 4.5

Recommendation 4.6

- Recommendation 4.2** **Needs must be prioritised and communicated clearly** Employers should indicate clearly their short- and long-term priorities in terms of languages and levels of competence, based on market information. The government and providers of languages education across the spectrum should absorb and respond to their needs: in particular, the pressing need for a wider range of languages and for transferable language learning skills and solid competence in grammatical structures, which assist the process of learning new languages or refreshing existing skills at short notice. In this context the scope of the government's vigorous initiatives to improve pupils' understanding of grammar, within the drive for improvements in literacy, should be widened to encompass languages other than English.
- Recommendation 5.3**
- Recommendation 15.4** **Training and qualifications should be benchmarked** To be taken seriously in an environment where quality, credibility and transferability are assured by the existence of international, transferable standards, language training and language qualifications should demonstrate an equal rigour. A means needs to be found of guiding companies towards meeting their specific requirements without resorting to trial and error. To support this process, a new framework for defining language competence, based on the Council of Europe Framework, should be established to allow employers to extrapolate from qualifications what an individual can actually do and to predict language capability.
- Recommendation 4.11** **Offer incentives for premium language skills** An early review of salary rewards for languages is recommended – particularly in companies where they are essential. As an investment in the next generation, businesses should also offer student scholarships and sponsorship for language training. Of particularly high potential is the area of community languages where business could do much to support colleges in integrating languages such as Arabic, Hindi or Chinese into vocational programmes in parts of the country where these languages are spoken fluently by students. The Department for Trade and Industry should be encouraged further to expand its excellent National Languages for Exports Awards scheme, as a means of recognising both personal achievement and corporate success. It should also explore with potential partner governments the possibility of a European awards scheme.
- Recommendation 3.6**
- Recommendation 14** **Business should cooperate with other agents for change** Within the drive towards a more secure foundation for future policy making, UK business organisations should assist the government and the education system in establishing a national research and development agenda for language learning. It should be underpinned by the systematic collection of data relating to languages. Services such as the existing national database of training providers (BLIS) could be usefully merged with other regional information services to provide a comprehensive information source. Business could further assist by sponsoring initiatives by providers, thus highlighting the importance of languages in the world of work.
- Recommendation 14.7**
- Recommendation 4.8**

2.2 Welcoming visitors

Two thirds of the 25 million tourists who visit the UK each year come from countries whose first language is not English, yet our travel and tourism industry still depends largely on its customers taking the trouble to learn our language. This is a scandalous picture when contrasted with tourist destinations as diverse as Greece, Austria, Thailand or Indonesia where, in spite of widely differing economic and training provision, the tourist industry has learned to operate across at least the most frequently encountered languages of its tourist customers.

2.2.1 Welcoming visitors: as long as they speak English

Few tourist organisations have language policies Research commissioned by the British Tourist Authority (BTA) in the early 1990s revealed that, while many organisations recognised the need to provide language services to non-English speaking customers, few communicated this message to their staff or recruits, or had policies in place to improve the situation. Although the need is now more widely recognised in the UK's tourist industry, progress towards improvement is slow and language skills remain low on the policy and training agenda.

The picture varies widely according to the sector Most major tourist sites have developed audio and printed guidance material in several languages, and tourist information centres in major cities increasingly employ reception staff with language skills. In the travel industry the picture is patchy. International air, ferry and rail services offer passenger announcements in one or two other languages, and increasingly employ foreign nationals in areas dealing with the public. However, UK airports have few signs in languages other than English and domestic public transport services do little to assist non-speakers of English: rail companies, for example, make little or no provision for travellers who do not speak English. On the hospitality front some hotel chains now provide printed information for visitors in more than one language but reception desks and telephone points are still frequently staffed by monolingual employees.

Languages are marginal in tourism education and training Languages are largely absent from tourism and hospitality education and training courses. In hospitality courses in higher education – a growth area – languages are not essential to the qualification. Yet these graduates will become managers in the hospitality industry and will influence policy and practice. And while in theory students on post-16 vocational programmes in tourism have the option of adding language modules to their course, the reality is that languages figure in only a tiny minority of these programmes. The reasons for this lack of take-up are clear. Languages are optional and therefore have low status; course managers are under fin-

Leeds-Bradford International Airport has staff at all levels – including cleaners, security and reception staff – who offer between them a total of 6 languages. Staff wear badges to indicate they speak other languages, and are available on call to assist reception staff in cases of difficulty.

Evidence was presented to the Inquiry of key staff in one of London's airports not only unable to respond to simple requests for assistance, but also unable to distinguish whether the requests were in French or Spanish.

financial pressure to keep costs to a minimum and therefore may see positive savings in excluding languages; students receive no clear messages about the importance of language skills when working in this field.

Communication is viewed too narrowly The Inquiry welcomes the moves by the government to make communication a key skill in the education of students from 16. It is regrettable, however, that programmes under this heading have not so far addressed two complementary issues: the use of other languages, and the effective use of English in communicating with overseas visitors. UK first-language speakers of English are not taught the skills and techniques of adjusting their own use of English in order to overcome barriers of understanding with the large number of visitors who have only a partial knowledge of the language.

Migrant workers are relied upon to fill the gap Communities of foreign nationals are growing in the UK, primarily focused on large metropolitan areas such as London. There is, for example, a 150,000 strong French community in the capital. The gap in language skills among the UK population is increasingly being filled by resident foreign nationals, particularly in hotels, restaurants and shops.

The languages of many clients are ignored While an increasing number of public services (health, social services, police, immigration) now seek to provide at least printed information across the full range of languages represented by their clients, this concern is more often absent in areas such as tourism, hospitality, transport, retailing and leisure, where coverage in brochures, guides and signposting is often limited to a small number of European languages.

2.2.2 Welcoming visitors: recommendations

Recommendation 1

A high-profile problem merits a national response Employing migrant workers and relying on all visitors always to use English are not adequate responses to the issue of languages in the UK tourist industry. A long-term national strategy is required for languages to ensure that the next generation, in an age where travel is likely to become even more commonplace, is fully aware of the benefits of language learning. A national overview would connect sectors and initiatives, and introduce the coherence necessary to make cost-effective use of resources.

Recommendation 4.1

National agencies should include languages in their strategic thinking Quality schemes such as Investors in People and Charter Mark should include language skills in their assessment of quality in tourist industries. The British Tourist Authority, which has sought to promote the importance of language skills through occasional initiatives, should redouble its efforts to ensure that employers in the field of tourism appreciate the link between language skills, quality standards in client service and business success. Only when employers in their turn give a clear and urgent message will staff and recruits respond.

The number of people in the world who speak English other than as a first language far outweighs the number of first language speakers.

Employers should link employability to language skills Employers and tourism authorities should insist that languages have more than their present purely nominal place in tourism education, and they should give clear messages to students and course managers that the next generation of recruits will be expected to offer language skills. They should work with agencies such as the Learning and Skills Councils to issue to schools and colleges high quality promotional materials highlighting the key role of languages in the tourism industry.

Recommendation 3.2

Broaden the basis of communication as a key skill The communication strands within the post-16 Key Skills qualification for all students should include communicating in other languages, and the effective use of English when communicating with speakers of other languages.

Recommendation 9.3

Provide key information in a wider range of languages Shops, hotels, leisure facilities, rail and coach companies should provide printed information for visitors in a range of languages reflecting the diversity of languages represented within incoming tourism. Information points, ticket machines and public telephones should provide a similar range using new technologies.

Recommendation 1.9

World travel

Together, the United States of America, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom account for some 40% of world travellers.

In 1999 25,740,000 tourists visited the UK, earning the country \$20,972,000,000. Over the next twenty years, the number is set to increase dramatically:

- in 2000 the UK is expected to attract 27,700,000 visitors;
- in 2010 this figure is expected to rise to 38,000,000;
- in 2020 we can expect some 53,800,000 visitors to these shores.

Source: World Tourism Organization

2.3 Languages and public services

Language is fundamental to equality of opportunity – and there is much to be done if people whose first language is not English are to exercise their right in the UK of informed access to services such as healthcare, justice, employment advice, housing and social services. Investment in the domain of language technologies will assist in providing solutions to some of the issues.

Language Line provides a telephone interpreting service for many of the UK's 'NHS Direct' services – a 24-hour telephone advice line staffed by nurses, providing easier and faster information for people about health matters so that they are better able to care for themselves and their families.

“My sister is in the nursing profession in an area where the vast majority of patients are of Indian or Pakistani descent. Initially she could only use a smattering of Urdu but motivated by the effect this could have on patient care, she was eager to learn more. I have heard similar stories from friends who work in social services, DSS and in NHS management.”

Jenny Barrett

“Translation will always be called for. Machine translation must be accepted and encouraged even by the purists in the context of commerce, the law and science. To this end, text must be composed in simple machine-translatable language.”

*Sir Rowland Whitehead BT,
President of the Institute of
Translation and Interpreting*

2.3.1 Public services: the role of languages

Fluency in English can be deceptive The UK has always been a multilingual society – and many people whose first language is Urdu, Hindi, Chinese or Turkish may also be fluent speakers of English. Public services can still present obstacles to people from other language backgrounds because, despite being fluent in English, they may feel more in control when interacting in their first language. For non-speakers of English trying to access and negotiate public services the obstacles can be insurmountable without outside help.

Awareness of the need for clear communication is growing Public services in the UK are much more aware than in the past of the link between languages and access to services. Many languages are involved, especially in urban areas with a high concentration of speakers of other languages. Organisations often rely heavily on leaflets and other documents translated into the languages most needed. In documentation which is written in English there has recently been a drive to reduce or eliminate complex and bureaucratic language.

There is a casual expectation that bilingual staff will act as interpreters People who are bilingual often provide an invaluable informal service in dealing with non-English speakers. In areas with concentrations of speakers of a given language public services often rely on staff recruited from those communities to provide the bilingual capability needed. However, evidence suggests that it is rare for individual employees to be financially rewarded for the linguistic resources they bring.

Little financial reward exists for highly qualified linguists Interpreting in the public services, at national or local level, is a demanding activity. Interpreters need a close knowledge of the specialist field they are working in, whether it is police procedures or childcare legislation, housing tribunals or medical practice. Moreover, a high percentage of their work is undertaken at moments of emergency or in contexts of great personal stress for individuals, where the highest standards of accuracy and neutrality are critically important. Yet interpreters are paid low hourly rates: a lawyer may charge an hourly rate many times that which is paid to the interpreter on whom the lawyer may be utterly dependent for accurate communication with a client.

There are risks in ignoring professional services The need for properly qualified public service interpreters is likely to grow in the foreseeable future: there is increasing focus on the rights of the individual and a high expectation that public services will act without discrimination. In such circumstances the risks in employing unqualified interpreters are considerable: litigation, for example, is proving very costly in sensitive public service areas. Over the past twenty years, pioneering work has led to the progressive development of a framework of professional training, support and recognition of interpreters in the public services. However, many public services still rely on unqualified interpreters.

The Institute of Linguists maintains a national register of public service interpreters, together with the mechanisms for obtaining appropriate professional qualifications.

2.3.2 Languages and public services: recommendations

Raise awareness of the importance of clear English All public bodies with a responsibility for the delivery of services to the general public should take positive steps to ensure that no one is denied access to essential public services by barriers of language. Not only will this involve providing mother-tongue support, but also ensuring that everyone employed in the services is aware of the need for clarity when communicating in English.

Recommendation 1.9

Public services should commit themselves to using qualified interpreters Public services using interpreters should declare a commitment to the exclusive use of registered interpreters, for both face-to-face and telephone-based interpreting, and set a date by which this commitment will be fully implemented.

Recommendation 1.9

Offer realistic rewards for language skills The daily and hourly rates of pay for registered public service interpreters should reflect the critical importance of their task and the level of knowledge and expertise required in their work. Financial incentives and rewards should be offered by public services organisations to staff who are prepared to operate bilingually when needed.

Recommendation 4.11

Invest in technology to support language services Great savings and improvements in efficiency should be achieved by a strategic approach to language support. The UK should invest in developing expertise in language technology – machine translation systems are now regularly used, largely outside the UK, to support human translators dealing with routine translation of standard documentation into a variety of languages. Major public services with devolved local or regional structures, such as the police and healthcare services, should continue to give priority to funding and supporting central services such as documentation banks and telephone-based interpreting. Technology can also be usefully employed at key points of contact such as reception desks, or in key contexts such as public telephones and ticket machines.

Recommendation 1.10

A NATIONAL STANDARDS framework for languages

Communicating across cultures will be a key skill for the next generation, involving skilful and sensitive use of languages

This does not necessarily mean fluency – languages have an important role to play at different levels, according to needs and circumstances. A means of defining these levels would allow a greater common understanding of competence.

Different circumstances require different levels of language skills

The UK will continue to need specialist linguists to meet the demand for interpreters, translators and teachers. Many other people, both in their private and working life, will operate in a multilingual, multicultural environment and will need languages at a functional level, with the ability to discuss a wide range of topics with confidence and to operate across cultural boundaries with little difficulty. There are also many circumstances where specialist or functional skills may be desirable but not essential – and where even basic competence can do much to change attitudes by sending positive signals and conveying respect. The Inquiry believes that it is in the national interest for everyone to have at least such foundation skills, enabling them to interact simply in a foreign language and to extend their skills as required.

The Inquiry proposes a unified national standards framework for languages, based on the Council of Europe model

Such a framework would introduce coherence and transparency into the system, and provide benchmarks and points of comparison for learners, employers and providers. It would allow calibration of qualifications in all sectors, clarify their relationships to one another, and support diversity and variety of provision while ensuring that they do not result in confusion and chaos.

A framework would introduce coherence and clarity into the qualifications system

There is a need in the UK for a transparent and coherent system to correlate learning pathways, their different stages and their relationships to one another. Language learners are often bewildered by the choice of qualifications on offer, uncertain of their relative value, and unconvinced of their credibility and transferability. Employers too find the range confusing, and many find it difficult to predict from qualifications what the standards being achieved actually represent.

Not everyone needs languages for the same purpose

It is often assumed that 'knowing a language' means being able to speak it. However, there are four language skills – speaking, listening, reading, writing – and there are occasions when they are not all relevant. Depending on people's work or interests, some may need only to read, others to listen and understand. These are useful skills in their own right and a means of acknowledging them is needed.

Describing capability in a language is difficult

Valuable language skills are often overlooked because people tend to be diffident about skills acquired outside the education system. These might include fluency in a language other than English spoken in the home, a working knowledge acquired by adults living and working abroad or by students travelling in their gap year, and basic language skills developed through family connections or holidays. One reason for this diffidence is the difficulty in describing capability in a language where there is no 'label' to attach to it.

The Common European Framework

The Council of Europe, which has a distinguished record in promoting and supporting language learning, has recognised and addressed the need to define levels of competence in languages. Its 24 member states have developed and agreed a reference framework which gives positive value to all language competence, from the most basic to the most fluent. It is based on six levels within three broad bands relating to specialist, functional and foundation language skills. Below are synopses of what a person can actually do in a language at each of the six levels.

The proficient user

C2 Mastery level Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

C1 Effective-proficiency level Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

The independent user

B2 Vantage level Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

B1 Threshold level Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

The basic user

A2 Waystage level Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

A1 Breakthrough level Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

CREATING A BETTER SOCIETY for the next generation

3.1 Skills for citizenship

It is our national responsibility to ensure that the next generation acquires the personal skills, qualities and values which will enable everyone to function rewardingly and responsibly as citizens of a multilingual community both in the UK and in the wider world. Monolingualism will not serve them well – it implies inflexibility and the presumption that others should always be prepared to use English; it creates a culture of dependence on the linguistic competence and the goodwill of others. Learning to use another language is about more than the acquisition of a useful skill – it reflects attitudes, conveying respect for the identity and culture of others and tolerance of diversity.

3.1.1 Citizenship: the contribution of languages

Lifestyles will continue to change The next generation will encounter other languages more frequently than ever before. This is partly because the number of people resident in the UK who speak languages other than English is likely to grow, but also because of a complex pattern of driving forces such as the explosive growth of global travel and communications in the context of work, education, leisure and entertainment.

Successful language learning fosters tolerance and respect It is widely accepted that learning a new language can give the learner insights into how other people think, and engender respect for other cultures and ways of life. In the UK it can lead to a less insular outlook, increased acceptance of the legitimacy of difference and an obligation to uphold and understand that difference. It can lead to more tolerant attitudes on a broader front, and to respect for other institutions and values, both within the UK and in the wider world.

Languages support communities Language marks out a community in a unique way and can help bind it together. The social and economic health of our culturally and linguistically diverse society depends substantially on the sense of self-worth of individual communities and ultimately of the individuals within them. The languages of the many communities which constitute our society represent a major cultural and a potential economic advantage to the UK, and this message needs to be promoted – the next generation should be encouraged to view our society as richer and stronger because of its many language communities.

“Learning a language can lead to a less insular outlook, increased acceptance of the legitimacy of difference and an obligation to uphold and understand that difference.”

Good citizenship involves communicating with others Citizenship is not simply a matter of knowing about institutions and practices – it involves playing an active part in the community, which in turn means communicating effectively with others. We can learn from the experience of deaf and hearing-impaired people, who have seen the use of sign languages emerge to a new level of public recognition in recent years. Many hearing UK citizens have taken lessons in signing in order to bridge the communication gap, thus sending positive signals about the status of languages.

Over 20,000 hearing adults attend evening classes in the British Sign Language and take national examinations each year.

Language competence implies other transferable skills Employability depends on possession by the individual of the qualities and competences required to meet the changing needs of both employers and customers. These include self-reliance, flexibility and the ability to learn throughout life. Employers value language competence as an indicator of wider communication skills: language learning promotes understanding of the need to listen carefully, to engage with others and to empathise with people in a range of working and social contexts.

‘We live in a world where contacts across frontiers are more profound and frequent than ever before. While some doubts might exist about the precise relationship we should have with our European neighbours, our contacts with them through business, culture and leisure activities will surely continue to increase. We must be able to communicate with them better.

Communication is a two-way effort, and to rely solely on the competence and willingness of one’s correspondent to speak one’s own tongue is unbalanced – and indeed arrogant. It also assumes that the other person’s knowledge of English is sound. This is, of course, not always correct.

Some basic awareness of the other person’s language frequently leads to better comprehension and can help enhance the quality of the relationship because both parties have “met in the middle ground” and “negotiated” their understanding of each other.’

Gordon Harrison, former International Client Director, Lintas Worldwide Group

Learning a new language improves the use of English Learning another language gives the learner valuable insights into the way the mother tongue works. This is particularly important for first-language English speakers, who are already outnumbered in the world by speakers of English as a second or foreign language, and who will increasingly need to use English sensitively and in simplified form as an aid to mutual comprehension. Monolingual English speakers are often not adept at modifying their use of English appropriately: some may even be unaware that there is a problem.

“Nobody really knows their own language until they can compare it with another. And once you know even a little bit about another language you begin to understand that the way sentences are formed and the way grammar shapes language creates the very shape of the way you think.”

A.S Byatt

Effective use of technology needs linguistic skills We are in the midst of a global communications revolution underpinned by the rapid advances in the technology of telecommunications. The next generation will need high levels of proficiency both as communicators and in the associated technologies. While computer-aided translation systems will speed up the process of working between languages, it is people with high levels of literacy and the experience of learning and using languages who are most likely to be able to exploit new technologies to the full.

‘Languages open doors. When you make the effort to speak a few words of another language, opportunities are made available to you. Once you show willing, people come more than half way to meet you.’

Trevor Young, adult French learner.

Every year:

- around £14m. is spent by individuals on language learning materials;
- more than 200,000 adults enrol on language courses in Further, Adult and Continuing Education institutions.

The image of the UK is enhanced abroad Travel is increasingly affordable: the average British household now spends more on leisure, including travel, than on food, drink or housing. Tourist numbers are set to increase worldwide and there is evidence, from the sales of phrase books and self-study materials and from the numbers of adults enrolling for evening classes, that many people are now equipping themselves with basic language skills when travelling abroad. Feedback indicates that this is universally well received and that these learners help to combat the negative impression that English speakers expect everyone else to speak English. Even the most basic phrases and common courtesies send positive signals and convey a sense of respect for other people and their languages.

The next generation will need to be flexible Since many people in countries around the world choose to learn English, learning to understand other languages may be more important for first-language English speakers than speaking or writing them. With well-developed listening skills, it would then be possible to conduct dual-language conversations, in which both parties speak their own language, knowing that their opposite number will understand.

‘In international conferences, meetings and negotiations where translation and interpretation are not available and English is used as the lingua franca, native English speakers tend to talk too much and to over-estimate the importance of their contribution and the strength of their arguments. Not infrequently, a discussion session becomes a lively rapid-fire exchange among the native speakers, with non-natives reduced to a passive audience, never quite formulating what is in their minds in time to intervene. Silence by the non-native struggling with a foreign medium may by no means indicate consent!’ – *John L.M. Trim, Officier dans l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques*

3.1.2 Citizenship and languages: recommendations

A national overview is needed for languages The strategic importance of languages in developing qualities associated with citizenship needs to be acknowledged. The neglect resulting from the historic reliance on English and the absence of a national responsibility for languages in the UK should be addressed with a strategy for languages in all walks of life.

Recommendation 1.5

Link languages and citizenship in schools Direct links should be established in school education between language learning and education for citizenship, so as to foster notions of equality and acceptance of diversity in children's minds at the earliest possible age.

Recommendation 5.5

Raise awareness of the importance of effective use of English Teachers of English and of other languages in schools should work together to raise young people's awareness and competence in using English effectively in communicating with non-native speakers of English. This should also feature in the teaching of communication as a key skill.

Recommendation 5.3

Reward the first steps The government, examining bodies and employers should explore ways of giving public recognition to basic language skills of the sort which, while falling short of existing qualification requirements, are nonetheless of positive value and allow learners to get on to the ladder of success in language learning. Examples include a national system of graded objectives awards and the European Languages Portfolio which offers the opportunity of rewarding partial competences.

Recommendation 15.5

Promote research into communication skills Research should be conducted to assess the benefits for first-language English speakers of concentrating on developing comprehension skills (particularly understanding speech) in order to facilitate dual-language conversations.

Recommendation 14.5

3.2 Our children's linguistic heritage

The first language of many thousands of people in the UK is not English but one of the indigenous languages – such as Welsh, Gaelic or Irish. Aware that language is integral to identity, community and culture, and aware of a special responsibility for keeping these languages alive, people have fought to maintain them and secure the heritage of the next generation. Speakers of the indigenous languages are bilingual, and they have accumulated a wealth of experience in bilingual education at all stages. The Inquiry is impressed by the value they place on language, and recognises that much can be learned from their experience.

3.2.1 The indigenous languages of the UK: a success story

“The increase in the number of young people who can speak Welsh is mainly because of the development of Welsh-medium education and increased teaching of Welsh in schools. Parental pressure has played a large part in achieving this.”

Welsh Language Board

“Being bilingual from early childhood, most Welsh speakers share the European perception that plurilingualism is an attainable goal.”

Ioan Talfryn, Popeth Cymraeg

“The future of [the UK's indigenous languages] depends entirely on how we in Britain treat them. They impose a special responsibility.”

Tony Leaver, Cambridge University

Political will can change attitudes to language The current positive attitudes towards the Welsh language represent a remarkable success story, and demonstrate that attitudes to language can change given the right conditions. A few decades ago, despite the efforts of a few committed people, the profile of Welsh was not high, there was no strategic direction or support, attitudes were negative, and there was a general lack of appreciation of its value and a lack of enthusiasm for learning it. Today, however, Wales has an ambitious and energetic language policy, innovative ideas are translated into policies, strategies and projects – and attitudes have altered substantially.

There is a resurgence of interest in the indigenous languages Current demand for learning the indigenous languages is booming, and represents a significant repudiation of earlier lack of belief in their economic value for employment and social mobility. The numbers of adults learning Welsh is unprecedented – and is sustained by a coherent strategy as part of the overall policy for the Welsh language. Since the introduction of the strategy, the number of adults learning Welsh has doubled. The potential of the indigenous languages is being recognised also in Scotland and Ireland, in the form of successful promotional and teaching programmes. In Cornwall too, the Cornish Language Board produces teaching materials for Cornish and supports classes for adults and children.

Bilingualism enhances children's development For children whose mother tongue is one of the indigenous languages, bilingualism is a fact of life. They grow up viewing the world from two cultural and linguistic perspectives, and this enhances their cognitive development and their social skills. Learning more than one language at an early age also supports later learning of other languages, and tends to confer a greater awareness of the significance of language. These benefits are well understood by the increasing numbers of English-speaking parents who choose Welsh- and Gaelic-medium schools for their children.

The experience of successful initiatives is not built on There is currently very little connection made between successful initiatives in the promotion and teaching of Welsh, Gaelic and English as a second language and the promotion and teaching of other languages in the UK. The effectiveness of a good policy for languages in schools is demonstrated by the fact that 36% of all children who are Welsh speaking come from homes where neither parent speaks Welsh.

Available statistics indicate that Welsh is spoken by more than 590,000 people; there are about 70,000 speakers of Gaelic in Scotland; Irish is spoken by 140,000 people.

Indigenous languages are an economic driver Sensitive use of languages assists in improving the quality of customer service, attracting new customers and increasing customer loyalty – and providers of commercial services are increasingly recognising the economic benefits of using the indigenous languages. In the hospitality and tourism industries, more people are becoming aware of the international interest in these languages and their potential to become a unique selling point, and promotional initiatives now feature them prominently.

Effective policies ensure equality of opportunity The Welsh Assembly has an energetic and effective interpreting and translation policy which recognises language rights while acknowledging bilingual skills. All Members have the right to address the Assembly in their mother tongue. Speeches in Welsh are translated for monolingual English Members whereas it is expected that all Members can understand speeches in English.

“Ultimately, the issue of Gaelic is not just a Scottish issue ... it is an issue of human dignity, of belonging, and of justice.”

Commun na Gàidhlig

3.2.2 The indigenous languages: recommendation

Learn from the experience of the indigenous languages In developing a national strategy for languages, the UK government should draw upon the valuable and extensive experience of bilingual education in Wales, Scotland and Ireland – spanning policy, promotion, research, teaching and learning – from nursery and primary schools to university and beyond. There is much that can be extrapolated from their experience and applied to the teaching and learning of other languages in all parts of the UK. The media have played a vital part in awareness raising and promotion, and experience here could also be usefully shared.

Recommendation 1.6

“The recognition given to the Welsh language in your institutions is a sign of a society that is tolerant with the expression of difference. It is an asset that must be cherished and promoted.”

The Honourable Roy MacLaren, the High Commissioner for Canada, addressing the Welsh Assembly, November 1999

3.3 Building on diversity

The remarkable linguistic diversity of the UK, reflecting our complex history, includes speakers of the indigenous languages and also of the languages of our main Asian, European and Afro-Caribbean communities as well as hundreds of smaller groups of speakers of other languages. Yet the multilingual talents of UK citizens are under-recognised, under-used and all too often viewed with suspicion. Our aims must be to recognise the opportunities offered by this multilingual wealth, ensure that talent is nurtured in future generations and meet the linguistic and cultural needs of individuals and communities.

“In Britain there are tens of thousands of students who are already linguists. We do not use their great talents. Do we link Business Studies with Arabic, for example? Do we promote native speakers’ Asian languages in our schools, so that some will use them when they become police officers, social workers, teachers, doctors?”

Fitzalan High School, Cardiff

“Panjabi is my home language, so I would like to learn more about it to communicate with my elders, e.g. my grandparents.”

Angela Kumari, King’s High School, Wolverhampton

3.3.1 Building on diversity: neglecting the nation’s wealth

The UK fails to correlate demand and supply There are large numbers of people in the UK who are bilingual, able to speak both English and their ‘community’ language – the language of their parents or grandparents. Such languages – including Chinese, Italian, Turkish, Greek, South Asian languages, West Indian Creoles – add cultural richness to society, and many are also in a position to make a significant economic contribution. The Middle East and the Far East are likely to pose some of the most complex international and economic issues in the 21st century, while businesses need linguistic skills in major world languages such as Arabic and Chinese. Yet skills in these same languages go unrecognised, are under-deployed or dismissed as a problem.

Provision of community languages education is variable The provision of community language teaching in schools varies greatly across the UK, and is dependent on the policies of individual local education authorities (LEAs) and schools. In cities with a high proportion of children from one or two minority communities secondary schools are often able to provide teaching of the home languages within the school curriculum, but schools with a low proportion of children from minority communities generally take little account of pupils’ bilingualism. This results in two weaknesses: the failure to meet children’s linguistic and cultural needs, and the failure to nurture their talents.

Multilingualism can create an outward-looking curriculum for all Where there is effective support the multilingual background of children is perceived as enriching and their presence in a school a positive influence, creating an outward-looking curriculum and raising all children’s linguistic and cultural awareness. Children from multilingual backgrounds, including boys, tend to have more positive attitudes to learning languages and to learn them more easily than do monolingual children. However, bilingual and plurilingual children in schools are still seen sometimes as a problem rather than a resource.

There are insufficient accreditation opportunities Interest in accreditation for the main community languages of the UK is growing but there is no policy to ensure the continued availability of accredited courses. The number of candidates at GCSE and A-level is increasing, yet community groups have had to fight to prevent the disappearance of courses. There are also few degree courses in these languages.

Community language teachers have a harder route to qualified teacher status Despite hard work by committed schools and individuals, and good practice in several LEAs, the situation of teachers of community languages is highly unsatisfactory. Many are on part-time, temporary contracts which give them little hope of advancement into mainstream teaching, which affects both their status within the schools and access to resources. More fundamentally, there is no mainstream initial teacher training provision for them to become qualified teachers in these languages. Thus an under-class of language teachers – and by extension, of languages – is perpetuated. This is a policy failure which is inappropriate in a democratic society and costly in social terms.

“Student teachers need teaching practice placements. School-based schemes for gaining Qualified Teacher Status are clearly dependent on headteachers being prepared to ‘take a risk’ and introduce community languages alongside European languages. At the University of Nottingham we are eager to explore ways of offering accreditation to community language teachers but first we have to address this ‘chicken and egg’ situation.”

Terry Lamb, University of Nottingham

3.3.2 Building on diversity: recommendations

Ensure a national overview to maximise potential It is the UK’s interest to ensure that the advantages to both the individual and the nation’s skills pool offered by the country’s multilingual wealth are not overlooked. Businesses need speakers of major world languages such as Urdu, Arabic and Chinese – and the need is likely to be more pressing for the next generation. Therefore, within the remit of a national strategy for languages, the potential of community languages needs to be identified and enhanced. The government and key agencies should explore ways of compiling and disseminating relevant statistical information.

Recommendation 1.7

Develop a more international curriculum in schools and colleges Although some secondary schools and colleges work hard to celebrate linguistic diversity, many maintain an eurocentric view of language learning. The UK should develop a world-languages curriculum within which a greater diversity of languages would be taught. The availability of qualifications in the main community languages should be reviewed to ensure pathways of accreditation at all levels.

Recommendation 5.4

Create more opportunities for speakers of community languages to train as teachers Members of minority communities should be encouraged to enter teaching in greater numbers. Building on discussions now taking place with the Teacher Training Agency, teacher training courses leading to qualified teacher status should be made more widely available for teachers of community languages, and expert advice offered to individuals on how linguistic skills may be converted into a teaching qualification. Teacher training departments serving areas where community languages are taught should give positive encouragement to those hoping to train in other disciplines to offer a community language as a second teaching subject.

Recommendation 15

Recommendation 12.9

Recommendation 12.10

MATCHING

needs and provision

The Inquiry's analysis in Part One suggests that our national capability in languages is inadequate for the demands of the 21st century.

Our traditional exclusive reliance on English is leaving the UK vulnerable, locked in a culture of dependence, reliant on the linguistic competence and the goodwill of others.

It is in the national interest to equip the UK to be proactive and competitive in world markets and enable our young people to compete on an equal footing with their peers from Europe and Asia.

It is also in the national interest to make the UK an attractive destination for tourists, to secure equality of opportunity for all citizens, to value the nation's linguistic diversity, and to promote greater tolerance and respect for other languages and cultures. If the UK is to fulfil its economic, strategic, social and cultural responsibilities, and equip the next generation to become not just British citizens but world citizens, the following are essential needs:

- Recognition that English alone is no longer enough and that the advantage of speaking a global language is eroded daily as more and more people not only speak it as well as we do but speak other languages too;
- Greater language capability at all levels: more specialists in more languages; more people with operational-level language skills alongside professional and technical expertise; everyone to have basic-level 'courtesy' language skills;
- Capability in a wide range of languages reflecting global patterns of change;
- Positive attitudes towards languages, awareness of their value at all levels, and a culture where using more than one language is perceived as an attainable goal for the majority;
- Flexibility and other qualities which often go hand in hand with language skills: cross-cultural understanding, enhanced communication skills, acceptance of difference;
- Adaptability to learn new languages as the need arises – requiring generic language learning skills and access to language learning opportunities throughout life;
- The skills and techniques needed to adjust the use of English for effective communication with non-native speakers of English.

Part Two considers the extent to which present education arrangements respond to these needs, and sets out the Inquiry's findings and recommendations for languages in each sector. However, the scope of the needs raises major issues that go beyond the remit of individual sectors and points to national policy and responsibility. On the facing page, the Inquiry presents an audit of cross-sectoral policy for languages in education.

Policy for languages in education

Strengths

- recent government interest in early language learning
- languages a requirement for 11–16
- Language Colleges raising the profile of languages and facilitating innovation
- support by CILT for the teaching and learning of languages
- establishment of Languages National Training Organisation to promote occupational language standards
- funding for a national subject centre in higher education for languages, linguistics and area studies
- successful recruitment of teachers from other countries
- commitment by the DTI to promoting languages, including business/education links
- language teaching introduced in Scottish primary schools
- launch of European Languages Awards with joint UK and European funding

Weaknesses

- no strategic management of languages in the education system
- no match between national needs and provision
- no rational and consistent path of learning from primary through to higher education and beyond
- investments made in one sector not built on in others
- no national approach to achieving a better balance of languages taught
- poor continuity between qualifications in languages at different points in the education system
- language learning initiatives in the primary sector patchy and uncoordinated
- many secondary schools suffering from a lack of institutional support for languages in the curriculum
- inadequate opportunities for language learning beyond 16, and no agenda for increasing the numbers continuing languages
- no national agenda for languages in higher education
- inadequate opportunities for adults to learn languages
- no opportunities for language teaching methodology in primary teacher training courses
- no concerted strategy to adjust teacher recruitment and training to achieve a better balance of languages in schools
- no consistency in provision for the languages of resident communities
- no clear definitions of the competence represented by achievement in public examinations
- chronic shortage of teachers despite measures to encourage recruitment

4.1 Early language learning

Parents, employers and the wider public alike believe that language learning should start early. A clear national action programme is now needed to introduce the learning of other languages into primary school education. For this to become generalised in UK schools, a range of imaginative short- and longer-term measures will be necessary to overcome the organisational and resource issues.

“Everyone knows that with languages the earlier you start, the easier they are.”

Tony Blair, Romanes Lecture, Oxford, December 1999

In Scotland, the majority of primary schools offer children the opportunity of learning French, German, Spanish or Italian, as a result of a Scottish Office initiative launched in 1989.

4.1.1 Early language learning: learning from experience

An early start makes sense in both educational and social terms On the educational front, learning a new language can inform, enrich and draw upon the broader development of communication skills and literacy, as well as giving young learners a flying start in languages at a very receptive age. In social terms, it is vital that positive attitudes to language diversity are established early in a child’s education, so that learning and using other languages are seen as a normal feature of life.

There has been a history of uneven policy direction Policy on the issue of early learning of foreign languages in the UK presents a confusing picture. Since the collapse of the major pilot experiment in the 1960s attitudes have remained guarded. However, a resurgence of public interest in languages in the late 1980s and 1990s was accompanied by more positive official statements, although without any commitment to a national plan, except in Scotland. In England, the government has acknowledged the potential importance of the issue, and in 1999 announced the allocation of modest funding to support existing teaching and to undertake feasibility studies with a view to a future policy initiative. This move is encouraging, and is being driven forward vigorously by national agencies in partnership with a network of schools and local education authorities (LEAs). Another significant feature has been the success of national projects for the early learning of Welsh and of Gaelic in Wales and Scotland.

Provision is haphazard At present, provision for learning foreign languages in the primary sector, except in Scotland and in a number of coordinated local authority schemes elsewhere, is haphazard and piecemeal. Although estimates suggest that around 25% of primary schools teach a foreign language, there is much variation in features such as course objectives, time allocation, starting age, teaching arrangements, and the degree of integration into the primary curriculum. There is, on the other hand, little variation in the chosen language, which is mainly French (although in Scotland there has been a deliberate policy of

introducing Spanish, German and Italian into the national scheme alongside French).

Continuity into secondary schools is a key problem One of the main obstacles to success, identified by the national experiment in the 1960s and largely unresolved since, has been how to coordinate transition from the primary to the secondary school. Ensuring continuity of learning has proved elusive, and has often given rise to frustration and disillusionment for both teachers and learners. The situation has become even more complex since the introduction of parental choice of secondary school. Secondary schools often receive pupils from a greatly increased number of primary schools, making it more difficult to ensure continuity, especially when a proportion of pupils have already started a language.

A shortage of teachers hinders progress There is no requirement for students entering initial training as primary school teachers to have any qualification in another language. Initial teacher training courses for aspiring primary school teachers no longer offer languages. The sector therefore lacks the constantly refreshed pool of linguistically or professionally trained entrants to teaching needed for all primary schools to include a language in their curriculum. There are some excellent LEA in-service training schemes for existing primary teachers, but these are limited to the small number of areas where there is commitment and coordination of early language learning across a local area.

Does it have to be French? It has been cogently argued that, faced with the problems of continuity and teacher supply, French is the only language which the UK could realistically aim to teach at primary level in any national programme for early language learning. However, to accept this assessment would run counter to the broader national aspiration for a greater diversity of languages, which is a central concern of this Inquiry. Any policy initiative aimed at achieving countrywide provision of early language learning, while it may be substantially centred on the teaching of French in the short term, needs to aim for diversity of languages within the system.

A radical approach is more likely to attract success Successful early language learning is heavily dependent on a range of factors. Research findings tend to confirm public perceptions: the more radical the scheme, the more successful the outcome. Children taught from age 5 clearly make more progress than those who start later; teaching children the whole or a major part of the curriculum through the medium of the target language achieves more than teaching the language for a few short lessons per week; ensuring a coordinated transition from primary to secondary school reaps the benefits of continuity; and learning in a supportive cultural and parental environment helps maintain motivation. Significant benefits can be gained from less ambitious arrangements – the many successful examples of good primary school language learning bear testament to this – but these are commensurately less.

“We are wasting precious years, where children are receptive to language physically and intellectually and are happy to learn for fun.”

Lynne Brackley

“Why do we not expose all our children to several languages at a very early age so that they speak at least one other language as fluently as they do English – for the sheer joy of being able to communicate with others rather than purely to be able to pass examinations?”

Ann Miller, former Managing Director Simpsons Photo Imaging

“Currently nine out of ten primary schools where a foreign language is being taught concentrate on French. Most secondary schools offer French only to the majority of their pupils. More and more teachers have a qualification which is French only because fewer and fewer schools make it possible to study more than one language.

... I love French. I live in France. I need to speak French. Do our pupils?”

John Fergusson, formerly Deputy Director, Association for Language Learning

“It is significant that the growth of foreign language teaching in primary schools is commonly the result of parental demand. No doubt parents are comparing with independent schools who, almost exclusively, offer foreign languages.”

George Varnava, Chair BBC Secondary Advisory Committee

Language awareness would enhance the National Literacy Strategy

During the primary school years there are clear advantages in developing pupils’ general awareness of language issues alongside learning another language. Language awareness programmes involve a planned exploration of how different languages look, sound, and relate to their cultures. They can be taught by the class teacher, drawing on the specific language resources available within a school or local community. Crucially, language awareness could be valuably woven into the National Literacy Strategy, as well as into the curriculum for geography, history and citizenship. For pupils who have not yet started another language, it can generate enthusiasm and curiosity, and help ‘train the ear’.

4.1.2 Early language learning: recommendations

Recommendations 5 & 6

Early learning should be a key part of the national strategy The government should declare a long-term commitment to early language learning by setting up a national action programme to cater for all pupils in primary school education, within the framework of a coherent national strategy for languages education in the UK. A package of measures is needed, to raise the profile of early language learning, to address long-term solutions, and at the same time to support and strengthen existing provision. The national strategy must also provide a framework for schools to use when planning their long-term arrangements.

Recommendation 6.2

The government should spearhead development In the light of the success of its Language Colleges initiative in raising the profile of languages and encouraging innovation, the government should establish an ongoing fund to support the progressive designation of primary schools as ‘international primary schools’ for parents who would like their child educated from age 5 through the medium of a new language. The level of funding should allow at least 100 schools a year to be designated for the next ten years. The aim would be for children to become bilingual in the new language by the age of 11. Schools bidding for funding would undertake to provide for at least one class each year to be educated mainly or wholly through the medium of the target language. The choice of language would not be limited to French. There would be agreement with a partner secondary school or schools to ensure continuity.

Recommendation 6.4

Provide targets for all primary schools In tandem with the development of designated international primary schools, the government should declare a ten-year target to provide an entitlement for all pupils to learn a new language from age 7, based on 10% of curriculum time, integrated with other subjects or taught separately.

Recommendation 6.5

Reward cooperation between schools Continuity into secondary education is a cornerstone of success, and diversity should not be allowed to dissolve into confusion. The government should offer financial incentives to encourage primary and secondary schools to form groups in order to agree a common pattern of provision for early language

learning, including the choice of languages and continuity arrangements.

Equip, train and support new teachers A series of measures is needed to ensure enough teachers in the longer term:

- All entrants to higher education – and therefore to initial teacher training – should be required to show evidence of continued and accredited study of a language beyond 16;
- Initial teacher training should include the opportunity for entrants to develop the further linguistic and professional skills required for teaching a language;
- An ongoing programme of retraining and incentives for existing primary school teachers should be funded immediately, alongside a drive to recruit returners and speakers of other languages. These measures should be underpinned by the development of high-profile part-time courses addressing issues specific to early language teaching;
- Primary schools should be offered incentives to recruit foreign language assistants as classroom helpers.

Recommendation 12.1

Recommendation 12.2

Recommendation 12.10

Recommendation 12.11

Make the most of expert teachers The government should, as a matter of urgency, develop pilot projects with a view to making the skills of expert teachers available to support primary teachers. Online networks allow the experience and expertise of excellent language teachers to be widely shared. They also provide teachers with access to direct exchange of ideas and experience with other teachers.

Recommendation 12.5

Language awareness should contribute to the Literacy Strategy Modules of language awareness should be introduced into the National Literacy programme in primary schools. The content would be designed to bridge the gap between English, literacy and foreign languages. A number of models of effective language awareness teaching already exist and could be used as the basis for trial schemes before wider implementation.

Recommendation 6.6

4.2 Languages in secondary schools

Language learning in secondary schools should equip pupils with a basic level of competence on which they can build, and the confidence and skills needed to learn other languages in adult life. It is the Inquiry's view that these aims are not yet being met. Over the last ten years, government policy has ensured that the number of pupils in England learning a language for five rather than three years has increased from 50% to almost 100%. But despite this significant progress, there remain serious defects in the system and in the quality of provision. These failures are reflected in the fact that only one pupil in ten chooses to continue language study beyond the age of 16.

The National Curriculum for England and Wales allows schools to teach any foreign language or languages, provided they offer all pupils the possibility of studying an official EU language.

Apart from the limitations of the National Curriculum there is [therefore] no national policy to control or direct either the availability of specific languages or the numbers of pupils learning them. Schools are free to make their own decisions about MFL provision. These are guided primarily by tradition, the availability of specialist teachers and teaching materials, and parental preference.

QCA

4.2.1 Languages in secondary schools: challenges and obstacles

The range of languages is unbalanced French remains the dominant language taught in secondary schools, despite legislation which allows great freedom of choice. More pupils are learning German and Spanish, but not in sufficient numbers to meet the nation's needs. Apart from initiatives in Language Colleges, the number of schools teaching non-European languages is tiny. Yet there is no overall government strategy to achieve a wider mix of languages which better reflects what the country will need in the years ahead.

Qualifications are inflexible At every stage between 11 and 18 there are weaknesses in the system of accreditation. For 11-14 year olds, short-term goals and rewards, such as those provided by graded tests in the 1980s, are no longer available. After 14, disaffected pupils would achieve more if they had the opportunity to switch to another language, but present accreditation structures do not allow for this. In addition, the tightly defined content of 14-16 syllabuses makes it difficult for teachers to develop innovative approaches which would appeal to less willing learners. There also remains too great a shift in emphasis and difficulty between GCSE and A/AS level, which acts as a disincentive to continue language study. Furthermore, there are no attractive alternatives to A and AS levels for students who do not wish to specialise in languages post-16.

Continuity is at risk Current moves in England to make the 14-16 curriculum more flexible threaten to undermine the learning of languages. Given the UK's low levels of language competence, it would be counterproductive to move back to a situation in which many pupils stop language study at 14. Such a pattern of provision would be in stark contrast to the continuation of language learning to age 18 elsewhere in Europe. It would reduce national levels of capability, reduce the pool of potential A or AS level candidates, and make it much harder for pupils to improve their language skills after leaving school. Even if an earlier start became normal, three years of secondary level language learning are insufficient to achieve a useful level of competence.

There are defects in curriculum organisation Language lessons are often badly served by school timetables. For example, time taken to teach a second language often has to be taken out of the hours devoted to the first language. It is also commonplace for pupils to be offered a second language at age 13 only to find that option choices at age 14 make it difficult to continue. Largely because of timetabling pressures, the numbers studying two languages to GCSE have fallen by half in the past five years.

“The [time] allocation ranges widely between schools ... so that in effect some pupils may have an hour per week more than others in which to learn a new language.”

Standards in the Secondary Curriculum 1997/8, OFSTED

Courses provide a poor foundation for future learning Too many pupils – including those achieving high grades – emerge from secondary education with limited practical competence, low levels of confidence and negative attitudes towards language learning. Many have a poor understanding of grammar, which makes future language learning difficult, and limits their ability to use language flexibly. The Inquiry welcomes the vigorous initiatives to improve pupils’ grammatical understanding within the government’s literacy strategy. There is obvious scope here for making connections between English and other languages.

Public examination results are below average At age 16, examination candidates of all abilities tend to be awarded lower grades in languages than in other subjects. This is a key factor contributing to under-achievement. Pupils’ perception that they are not doing well in languages

Imagine two people who both want to learn a foreign language-- say, Korean. Both are native speakers of English, both read and write it fluently but one also understands something of how it works – how we change word order to make a question (He is. Is he? He left. Did he leave?), how we form compounds (light bulb, jam sandwich), how we choose between simple past (He left) and the present perfect (He has left) and so on – and has some terminology for talking about such things.

Now suppose that they want to learn enough Korean to live in the country and to negotiate with business partners at a simple level. The ‘phrase-book’ level of most GCSE language teaching won’t do: they have to aim at a much firmer foundation of understanding. It is often argued that the one who understands how English works will (other things being equal) make much better progress. This seems reasonable, even obvious.

The National Curriculum for English aims at just this kind of understanding. Wonderful! So our French or German teachers can build on it, producing a new generation of adults who know how to learn a new language efficiently. But will they? Can they? Does the phrase-book approach of GCSE allow it?

Dick Hudson, Department of Phonetics and Linguistics, University College London

“It is obvious to many language teachers that what a pupil is expected to do to obtain a Grade C language GCSE is significantly harder than in some other subjects.”

M. Purves, Ecclesbourne School, Derby

The theory

“Through the study of a new language, pupils extend their knowledge of how language works. They explore similarities and differences between the target language and English, or another language, and develop their knowledge of the ways in which language can be manipulated and applied in different contexts.”

The National Curriculum for England and Wales.

The practice

11 year olds at Hasland Hall School, an 11-16 comprehensive school in Chesterfield, study geography, ICT, history and personal & social education through the medium of French.

It was found that lower ability children who had followed the bilingual programme performed better in English than those who had not. Boys seemed to do especially well.

is demotivating in itself, and many ‘give up’ on language lessons in order to pursue more attainable high grades in other subjects. They avoid choosing to study a second language when easier options are available. In addition, headteachers may be tempted to discriminate against languages in order to boost a school’s overall results.

Boys achieve far less well than girls The gender gap – a matter of concern across the curriculum – is greater in languages than in most other subjects. This is a long-standing problem with long-term effects: for example, very few men enter training to teach languages. The lack of male teachers reinforces the message that language is a girls’ subject, that men are no good at languages, do not like them and do not want to teach them. Despite research which sheds light on teaching approaches that suit boys’ needs, these are not yet reflected in the content of examinations at age 16.

New technologies are not used effectively New technologies, such as e-mail, the Internet and interactive CD-ROMs, lend themselves ideally to language learning, and are particularly attractive to boys. However, in many schools the organisation and management of computer facilities make it difficult for language teachers to place new technologies at the centre of their course planning. The Inquiry welcomes the major government investment in information and communications technology in schools.

Good opportunities are being wasted Measures to improve pupils’ enjoyment and interest in language learning could be taken but overwhelmingly are not. Bilingual teaching – where subjects such as History or Geography are taught in the foreign language – remains a rarity, and no accreditation is available for such courses. Schools are finding it difficult to run foreign exchanges, mainly because of pupils’ increasing unwillingness to participate. Many schools have few or no links with schools in other countries, despite the increasing ease of international communication and the important motivational effect of linking language learning to real-life communication. In too few schools is there a firm internationalist ethos in which all subject areas are encouraged to look outwards to the wider world. All of these weaknesses can be traced to a lack of strong policy at national level. While specialist Language Colleges are increasingly making progress in these directions, other schools desperately need help.

A more positive climate is needed Learning a language – while it can be fun – is also hard work, for which learners need support and encouragement from outside as well as inside the classroom. Neither government nor employers issue information aimed at young people to highlight the relevance of competence in languages, and school managers themselves sometimes have little awareness of the importance of languages, leaving language teachers struggling against a tide of indifference. In too many schools, pupils’ negative attitudes have led to a vicious circle of under-achievement, low subject status and low teacher morale.

A more co-ordinated approach to teachers' professional development is needed There is a large disparity between the best and worst professional development available to language teachers, depending on their geographical location. Changes in education authority boundaries, in funding and in inspection arrangements have eroded the quality of support provided by advisory teams. In-service training has moved from co-ordinated programmes of curriculum development towards one-off events which are less likely to make a long-term difference to the practice of language department teams.

Voices from the classroom

"I do French which I really enjoy because for that one hour you experience a different culture and way of living. It's not just a language, you find out things about the country and get to make comparisons between another country and your own." – Sarah

"I don't like studying foreign languages because I am not very good at them and they don't really interest me. I would like to speak Bulgarian because I never hear much about it, and I would like to go there and visit the capital and chat to people." – Rob

"I find foreign languages hard to do. I would like to speak fluent French because where I work people there talk French and it's hard for me to understand them and for them to understand me." – Sharon

"I don't like learning languages but I enjoy speaking them. I think this is because I can't get to grips with the hard learning of verbs, etc. Being in among a crowd of foreigners would help and therefore I could catch on and speak it in my own time." – Andrew

"When you first start learning a different language it's hard to take it all in but after a little while things begin to sink in." – Stacey

"I really enjoy foreign languages because it creates another opening in your future. Companies would be able to send you abroad and your job description can be more varied and widely based." – Laura

"I don't like learning foreign languages because they are boring and I am not very good at speaking them." – Liam

Students at Buckingham School, Buckinghamshire.

4.2.2 Languages in secondary schools: recommendations

- Recommendation 7.3** **Create a new balance and diversity of languages** National strategies for the schools system should aim to produce roughly equal numbers of students over the next 10 years with basic level capability in French, German and Spanish. Special funds should be agreed to support the teaching of languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Portuguese and Russian, which are spoken by huge numbers of people in countries of significant economic and political interest to the UK.
- Recommendation 7.4** **Keep language learning for all up to 16** Changes to National Curriculum requirements in England should not allow pupils to drop language learning. However, there should be increased flexibility in course content to enable teachers to find new teaching approaches to suit the needs of disaffected pupils.
- Recommendations 7 & 7.1** **Recognise progress through graded awards** The government should co-ordinate the establishment of a national system of optional graded awards to cover the years prior to public examinations. The awards, based on the model of swimming or gymnastics badges or music grades, would require pupils to complete practical challenges, and could be taken at any time. They would allow children of all abilities, including those in special education, to gain credit for their achievement.
- Recommendation 7.2** **Introduce modular accreditation** Language examinations at age 16 should become modular in structure to allow pupils to take foundation-level tests at the age of 14. This would also allow some pupils to change to a different language at this point and then take further foundation modules at age 16. These results could be added to their previous results to produce a certification in 'languages' rather than in a particular language.
- Recommendation 7.1** **Review curriculum content and examination syllabuses** Programmes of study in English and Languages should be properly co-ordinated so that pupils are given sufficient grammatical skills to move comfortably to advanced level study or to language learning in later life. The content of examination syllabuses for 16 year olds should be reviewed, with three main aims: to provide more scope for teachers to match courses to pupils' interests and aptitudes; to develop approaches which have greater appeal to boys; and to seek ways of enabling pupils to achieve grades which are in line with other subjects.
- Recommendations 5.3 & 7** **All schools should maintain active international links** The Inquiry welcomes the moves to make direct contact with people living in another country an entitlement for all pupils, as part of a drive for a more internationalist curriculum and to increase motivation. The government should take steps to make this a firm requirement at whole school level and schools themselves should take active steps to explore fully the potential of European links and funding opportunities.
- Recommendation 5.4**

Review and reinvigorate the Foreign Language Assistant Scheme The reciprocal Foreign Language Assistants Scheme, which enables schools to appoint higher education students from other countries as living exponents of their language, should be reviewed and reinvigorated as a matter of urgency. The review should have particular regard to financial arrangements, since many UK students are being attracted away from the scheme by alternative European programmes under which student fees are waived.

Recommendation 7.9

Offer incentives for schools which create bilingual sections Financial incentives should be made available for schools to introduce bilingual sections, in which a major part of the curriculum would be taught through the medium of a new language. Bilingual sections could be initiated either independently or as part of a ‘contract’ with a primary school making similar provision. Schools would provide classes in each year group, with children remaining in a bilingual class as they move up the school. Entry to bilingual classes where at least half the timetable would be taught through the medium of another language would be through parental choice. There should be arrangements also for public examinations at age 16 in bilingual form for selected disciplines.

Recommendation 7.8

Boost the use of technology Language teachers should continue to develop the use of information and communications technology for language learning, with the aim that it should become a central part of their course planning and materials development. School management should ensure that access to appropriate hardware does not limit opportunity. Additionally, within its strategy for the National Grid for Learning, the government should declare a commitment to a target date by which all pupils entering secondary school should have, in addition to at least one ‘taught language’, an entitlement to choose another language from an extended list, for which tuition would be provided through distance approaches using new technology.

Recommendations 7.6 & 7.7

Government and business should promote languages as a key life skill Language learning is a key life skill which all pupils should continue to study to age 16 and beyond, whether their studies are directed towards academic or vocationally related goals. Government and employer interests should work together to ensure that school pupils – and school management – receive clear and encouraging messages about the importance of language skills, through high quality promotional and guidance materials.

Recommendations 3.1 & 3.2

5.1 Languages 16–19

Sixteen year olds should all be entitled to a flexible range of opportunities to maintain existing language skills or to add a new language to their portfolio. They should be in a position to make informed choices about their language needs, fully aware of the advantages of proficiency both for employment and personal fulfillment.

However, critically few students on either academic or vocational courses now continue study of a language between the ages of 16 and 19. The impoverished language curriculum for this age group denies them real choice and, although present moves to broaden the curriculum are a step in the right direction, unless more focused action is taken very soon the next generation of young people in the UK will be the losers.

“Our European and Asian competitors are producing people who are at least as well qualified technically and professionally [as young people from the UK] and speak good English alongside a range of other languages.”

2.1.1 Languages in global markets

5.1.1 Languages 16–19: a wasted opportunity

Nine out of ten students stop learning a language at 16 There is a sharp decrease in students choosing languages at A-level, in marked contrast to an increase in numbers of students following A-level courses across all subjects. This bodes ill for the next generation which will be short of language specialists. This decline in recruitment to languages as a specialist advanced subject is not being offset by growth in languages as a supporting discipline: the take-up of language units in vocational courses is minimal. This situation represents a major problem for the UK, and will lead to damaging long-term repercussions unless checked. Monolingual young people from the UK will be at a clear disadvantage in the global market place, and mobility of employment could become the preserve of people from other developed countries where competence in two or more languages is the norm. Given that 30% or more of students go on to higher education, where they quickly realise in increasing numbers the need to maintain their language skills, the 16–19 sector of education must be counted as a catastrophic wasted opportunity.

There is no post-16 policy on languages In other countries, a foreign language is regarded as a fundamental part of education and therefore an integral component of all post-16 study. English is by no means the only language learned – many young people operate effectively in several languages. In the UK, the study of a language post-16 is seen purely as a route to a specialist language degree rather than as a life skill. It is not therefore considered essential in 16–19 courses, with the exception of the International Baccalaureate which deserves far wider use in view of its combination of breadth and high standards. Unfortunately, the narrow UK view has informed the content of a national Key Skills initiative

which does not include languages or indeed make the connection between communication skills and the learning of other languages. Measures recently introduced by the government to broaden the A-level curriculum are a step in the right direction, but their tentative nature may limit their full implementation – and languages may fall victim to any narrowing of choice or take-up.

Students face narrow horizons and limited choice Many of our future doctors, engineers, scientists, economists and other professionals find it difficult to combine the need to satisfy university entrance requirements with the study of a language. In vocational courses, languages, if they exist, tend to be an additional rather than an integral component of the programme, implying a lack of importance and relevance. Moreover, our current provision lacks vision and fails to offer choices which are attractive and relevant: it is rare to find languages such as Japanese or Portuguese on offer. Post-16 education is also missing the opportunity to foster students' existing bilingual skills.

Languages have no status in society There is little to suggest to young people that languages are important, no explicit messages from the business community linking languages to employability, no implicit message from government through the inclusion of languages in high-profile national initiatives. Consequently, in the minds of many students, language skills bear little relation to their immediate concerns and are not therefore valued. This is particularly telling among disaffected or lower-ability students or students from a less advantaged background, whereas there is evidence of strong parental encouragement towards language learning among the more advantaged.

Languages are perceived as difficult Data from the Advance Level Information System (ALIS) at Durham University shows languages as one of the hardest subject areas in which to achieve high grades at A-level. The prospect of low grades is a disincentive not only for students but also for institutions, mindful of performance league tables and reputation. In competing for students many therefore tend to offer courses that are popular by virtue of their perceived ease.

Students are poorly equipped for A-level language study Many students, even those with the highest GCSE grades, drop out within a few weeks of starting an advanced-level language course because they find it too difficult. Their grammatical knowledge is not sufficient for them to make a smooth transition to advanced-level study. At a time when the decline in take-up is a matter for concern and demand for specialist skills is likely to increase, it is clearly unacceptable for this mismatch to lead to a haemorrhaging of the already small numbers.

Funding of vocational courses is detrimental to national needs Further education colleges offer (G)NVQ courses in areas such as tourism, hospitality, business – all fields in which the UK would benefit from more employees with expertise in languages, even at basic levels. However, very few students on vocational courses study a language, and this leads both

I.B. students are characterised by self-confidence and an ability to think in a variety of ways. This, together with their depth and breadth of study makes them very attractive to higher education establishments. Ten years ago few universities understood the I.B. Today, many offer financial incentives to attract I.B. students.

Anglo European School

“Why do examination boards – and often it is the same one offering GCSE and A level – not produce examinations that progress from one to another? Why is it necessary for authors to write books and articles about bridging the gap from GCSE to A level in languages?”

Sue Ainslie, Head of Languages, Edge Hill College

An inquiry undertaken by the Leisure and Tourism consortium found that, for inward tourism, the need was for a range of languages at relatively low level ... and that these languages should be available to front-line junior staff.

LNTO

to national shortages and employers recruiting from other countries. The recent systematic reduction in central funding for vocational courses is a major contributory factor. It has led to courses being squeezed into as few hours a week as is necessary to qualify as full-time study – as few as 16 hours compared to around 30 for the equivalent course in France, Italy or Germany. Such constraints, together with the absence of positive direction on languages from employers, mean that vocational staff are not in a position to regard languages as a priority, often not even as a consideration.

5.1.2 Languages 16–19: recommendations

Recommendation 9

Include accredited language study as a requirement for entry to higher education Accredited post-16 language learning should be a requirement for entry to degree programmes. Recent government initiatives to broaden the 16–19 curriculum should be strengthened to ensure that young people actually do follow a broader curriculum and, specifically, continue to study languages. Successful professionals of the future are unlikely to be monolingual English speakers, and the ability to operate in one or more foreign languages therefore needs to be considered a key life skill for all those progressing to higher education, alongside the ability to use the English language effectively, to apply number and to exploit information technology.

Recommendations 9.1 & 9.2

Recommendations 9 & 8.2

Introduce choice, flexibility and language diversity The government should ensure that 16–19 education provides an appropriately wide range of courses in languages, covering the specialist advanced-level route, the provision of intermediate-level programmes, and properly integrated language elements in vocational programmes. Schools and colleges must be enabled to offer both continuation courses for languages learned up to age 16 and the opportunity to start the study of new languages such as Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese and Arabic.

Recommendation 3.2

The government and business to communicate the importance of languages Clear messages about the importance of language skills must be communicated to students in the 16–19 age group if the UK wishes to motivate them, alert them to the reality of tomorrow's world as an international, multicultural environment, and help them equip themselves to operate effectively in it. The government and employer interests should collaborate to ensure that schools and colleges receive unequivocal messages on the importance of language skills through high quality promotional and guidance materials.

Recommendation 9.5

Correct current anomalies The government should address as a matter of urgency the difficulties of transition for students wishing to embark on advanced courses, the perceived difficulty of the proposed AS-level in England, the omission of languages from the communication component of the Key Skills initiative, and the funding regime which effectively discourages the inclusion of languages in vocational programmes.

Make full use of technology Arrangements need to exploit the full range of information and communications technologies at our disposal in order to offer provision which is attractive, efficient and cost-effective. The National Grid for Learning offers the opportunity for collaboration to develop high quality online provision for less commonly taught languages, supported by local networks of specialist teachers, the precise offer varying by locality in response to demand.

Recommendation 9.4 & 13

Relate student achievement to a common standards framework Students aged 16–19, preparing for entrance to university or for their first job, need formal recognition of their learning as they focus on certification and documentation of their skills and achievements. It is vital that there is widespread understanding of the levels of achievement represented by qualifications in languages. All language courses should therefore relate clearly to the common framework recommended in this report, which should be flexible enough to detail achievement even at beginner level.

Recommendation 15

Languages at A-level

French, German and Spanish account for nearly 90% of total A-level entries in foreign languages

The numbers of A-level candidates for French have declined, with a 9% drop in 1998, the biggest drop in one year.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
A-level Languages entries	48,912	50,343	48,752	46,316	42,335

The total of foreign language entries as a proportion of all A-level entries has been steadily falling

In 1997 only 6% of all A-level entries were in a foreign language

Just 2.5% of A-level candidates took two foreign languages

The contrast between the maintained sector and the independent sector is marked: in 1997 the proportion of dual linguists was 5.0% of all A-level candidates in independent schools compared with 2.2% in maintained comprehensive schools.

QCA

5.2 Higher education

The ability to operate in other languages and cultures should be part of the portfolio of skills possessed by all graduates. To meet their own and the country's needs, they will need to be effective communicators and citizens in a multilingual, multicultural world, regardless of their area of specialist study. For many, using languages will be a regular supporting feature of their work, in areas as varied as global finance, defence, diplomacy, public administration or voluntary associations.

The UK also needs an adequate supply of specialists in languages and cultures to meet the demand for teachers, translators, interpreters, language engineers and cultural experts. There are disturbing signs that higher education is unable to respond successfully to the major challenges it faces in providing the next generation of graduates with languages. To ensure best use of national resources, it is vital that the process should be coordinated and strategic issues addressed in a sustained way.

5.2.1 Higher education: seeking to adapt

“Language departments in HE should be poised to become key players in developing the linguistic and cultural resources that are nationally needed. ...But language learning in universities is a national issue which universities alone, and their financially hard-pressed vice-chancellors, cannot deal with in isolation.”

Hilary Footitt, University of Westminster

Languages are in crisis Most university language departments are regarded as operating in deficit, and an increasing number are under threat of closure or reduction. Some have already closed. This is in part a product of funding formulae that do not adequately recognise the cost of language teaching, and reflects a national context where individual universities are not actively encouraged to enhance their provision of languages. Higher education is a diverse and fragmented sector, which lacks both the will and the means to address UK-wide strategic issues in languages in a sustained way. There is no government-led strategic agenda for languages to which higher education could respond. This makes it difficult to match provision to the national need for a diverse range of languages, taught at several levels. The picture is further complicated by the fact that each of the four funding bodies for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has a different methodology for allocating funds, and each individual university has its own internal arrangements for funding languages.

Of the 70,000 or so students taking languages to degree level, fewer than 15% concentrate on one language, with the rest studying two languages or, increasingly, combining a language with another discipline.

A changing pattern of language study There are now more higher education students studying a language outside language degrees than within them. Integrated degrees, such as ‘Economics with French’, ‘Engineering with European Studies’ or ‘International Business Studies’, in which a language course may contribute up to a quarter of the degree, are growing in popularity. However there are still some disciplines that fail to make room for a language dimension, especially in courses also accredited as professional qualifications. The recognition that a language is important whatever their discipline has also led more students to study a language on a purely optional basis. The Inquiry welcomes the integration of languages with other disciplines in response to changing

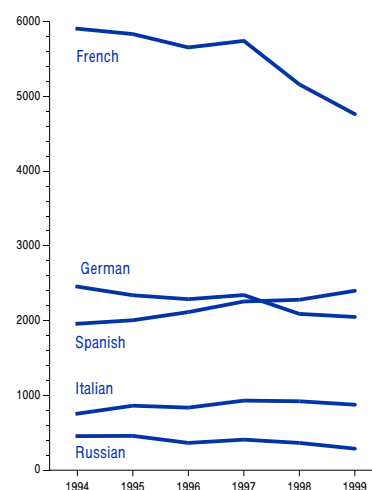
demand. It is, however, concerned that the implications of these changes have not been adequately addressed, and that poor strategic management exposes the system to unnecessary risks and is potentially wasteful of national resources.

Recruitment of specialists is declining Applications to specialist language degrees for undergraduates are declining (see figure, right). Several universities have closed or are in process of closing their languages departments; many others are facing difficulties in recruitment. These changes are uneven and unplanned and, if sustained, they will further reduce the supply of language graduates and trainee teachers. A substantial majority of language students study French, followed by German and Spanish. Lower numbers study Italian and Russian. A decline in Russian has led to several universities withdrawing degree courses; there are also fears of course closures in German. The declining national capability in German and Russian is a matter of serious concern, given the strategic importance of these languages for the UK.

Less widely taught languages are at risk The recent expansion of provision for Chinese and Japanese language and culture is to be welcomed. Outside the main European languages, there have been successive initiatives to protect some languages as ‘minority subjects’ and to promote others as being of long-term importance: the most recent initiative has sought to increase national capacity in Chinese language and society. However, some important world languages, such as Arabic and Portuguese, have not been targeted. Past initiatives have often foundered after pump-priming funding, owing to the absence of long-term strategic perspectives. As a result, national capability in many African, Asian and East European languages is now extremely fragile, even in the small number of specialist institutes which have historically been the national centres of expertise. The current piecemeal approach to funding languages is inadequate.

High-demand, effective courses often have low status Most universities and colleges provide free-standing language options for students of other disciplines. These are often provided in various ways, often via a separate unit, such as a languages centre, or identified as an ‘institution-wide language programme’ (IWLP). Teaching is provided in response to demand, demand is growing, and such programmes are effective. They have been at the forefront of innovation: they exploit information technology, pioneer open learning approaches and develop transferable skills. But the free-standing and flexible nature of such courses often leads to their having low status and being under-resourced. Typically, languages centres and IWLPs comprise a small core of full-time staff and an extensive cadre of part-time temporary staff, usually employed on an hourly basis. They are vulnerable to annual fluctuations in funding and may have difficulties in maintaining a stable level of high quality provision.

Fragmented arrangements waste resources The organisation of language teaching varies widely. Over half of institutions organise language teaching across several departments. Languages centres and IWLPs



UCAS figures for students accepted into degrees in the five largest languages (students studying two languages are counted twice). During the same period the total number of students entering degree courses in all subjects rose from 248,000 to 308,000.

“The kind of basic provision that so many undergraduates now find they need to add to their degree courses should ideally have been part of what they did at school, so that language work in university could operate at a more appropriately high level.”

*Professor John Sandford,
University of Reading*

may be incorporated with or separate from specialist languages departments. In some cases, they may even be in competition. In addition, foreign language teaching may or may not encompass teaching English as a foreign language: sometimes both are provided by the same unit; sometimes they are provided separately. There is evidence that such fragmented arrangements confuse students, inhibit planning, discourage effective cooperation and waste resources. The Inquiry believes that integrated provision, a ‘one-stop shop’ for languages, is the most advantageous approach and the one most likely to enhance quality provision in all areas.

“At the moment, more European students flow into the UK than UK citizens into Europe. The presence of European students in our classes is an eye-opener for our UK students who see at first hand what the effective learning of two languages can mean and can measure themselves against ‘the competition’ which they will face when they look for work. The standard is set. The question is : do we have the will and the capability to achieve it ourselves?”

University of Portsmouth

Initiatives need a wider framework The funding bodies have launched a number of initiatives in recent years to strengthen and develop teaching and learning across higher education in the UK. As part of this, a number of projects have developed different aspects of pedagogy in foreign languages and cultures. The Inquiry welcomes the establishment of a national subject centre in languages, linguistics and area studies, with the task of promoting innovation, good practices and cooperation in these areas. However, for these initiatives to achieve their maximum effect, an overall policy agenda is essential.

Outcomes are not comparable between institutions Universities have developed a variety of language degree programmes. Consequently, there is no clear picture as to what a language qualification in higher education means, especially in cases where the language is combined with other disciplines. Outcomes are not readily comparable between institutions and do not adequately inform potential employers about the capability of graduate recruits.

There is a lack of information informing change It is difficult to extract detailed information about languages from official statistics, and in particular to measure the number of students following optional language courses. Surveys have been conducted by special interest groups or organisations, and the information is often helpful, but tends to be partial and approximate. Much evidence of change is anecdotal. It is a matter of concern that there are few official figures to show provision, participation and outcomes across the variety of contexts for language learning in higher education.

“Until recently, I was involved in a regular annual visit [with students] to European Institutions (not just EU ones). Each year students were amazed to find job opportunities being denied to them (their words) – because they had not recognised the huge potential which exists in such organisations and commercial enterprises beyond the UK. ... Students simply do not know what they are missing.”

Anonymous correspondent

There are disincentives to the ‘year abroad’ Almost all full-time students in specialist language degrees spend a year studying or working abroad as part of their degree. It is valuable in broadening their work experience, social contacts and employability. It enables them to develop not only their language and cultural skills, but also key life skills of self-reliance and resourcefulness. However, the extra cost of this additional year can be a disincentive to some potential students. The shortfall in applicants to become Foreign Language Assistants is undermining reciprocal arrangements with our EU partners.

5.2.2 Higher education: recommendations

Formulate a national strategy There is an urgent need for a national strategy to plan the range of languages taught in higher education, to manage the integration of languages into all subject areas and to maintain a sufficient supply of language specialists. This strategy should form a part of the agenda for strategic leadership at national level recommended elsewhere. It should take account of the national needs identified in this report, and involve the funding bodies, subject centres and professional associations concerned with languages in higher education.

Recommendation 1 & 10

Adopt a national ‘languages for all’ policy Languages should be a key skill for graduates and all students should be entitled to learn a language as an optional part of their degree. Universities should specify their requirements and expectations for student participation. A target of 10% of study time is suggested and universities and accrediting bodies should be invited to consider how this may best be achieved. National and institutional funding increases should reflect such a policy. In addition, all students should be encouraged to extend their portfolio of languages through supported independent learning, whether or not it forms part of their degree programme.

Recommendation 10.4

Recommendation 10.2

Recommendation 10.5

Introduce a language requirement for university entrance All students should expect to be able to consult foreign language materials as part of their studies, and should be expected to develop their language skills. Accredited post-16 language study, or equivalent language learning experience, should be a stated requirement for entry into all degree programmes. The government and higher education institutions should consult widely and decide how to introduce this over a five-year period.

Recommendations 9.1 & 9.2

Improve funding levels for language courses The Inquiry welcomes recent decisions to enhance the level at which the teaching of some languages is funded in England, and recommends that funding reviews should be extended to all languages, in all parts of the UK. This review should address resourcing of teaching and learning both in specialist degrees and in provision for students of other disciplines. It should take account of the staff-intensive nature of language teaching and the need for adequate technical resources. Funding should be set at a level which enables teaching, advice and support to be carried out by well-qualified staff, and which enables a consistent portfolio of languages to be offered across a range of levels of attainment.

Recommendation 10.1

Recommendation 10.2

Bring all language courses within a common assessment framework Higher education qualifications should link the outcomes of all language courses to a transparent and easily understood framework. This should in turn be linked to the common national framework detailed in this report.

Recommendations 10.7 & 15

Waive fees for the ‘year abroad’ The Inquiry welcomes the DfEE’s measures to alleviate the expense to students of spending a year abroad, for example by waiving or abating the tuition fee. The fee waiver should be extended to include teaching assistantships and work placements.

Recommendation 10.8

5.3 Lifelong language learning

The need for language learning does not stop with full-time education. As horizons continue to widen, adults need to extend, update or maintain existing language skills, and to acquire new languages in order to take advantage of new opportunities. The UK, however, is failing to develop fully the huge potential of language learning in adult life. Despite extensive interest in language learning among adults, and a commendable appreciation by the government of the value of lifelong learning, there is flagrant inequality of access and a complete absence of coherence in the language provision currently on offer.

5.3.1 Lifelong language learning: an opportunity waiting

1999 NIACE survey revealed:

- 41% of respondents expressing a wish or intention to learn a language;
- 5% actually learning.

A robust adult language provision would be a sound investment

Demand from adults for languages is buoyant, and showing a steady growth. Systems, however, are not meeting the demand, and there is a glaring disparity between the numbers expressing a desire to learn a language and those actively engaged in learning. A vigorous lifelong provision for learning languages would be a sound investment for the UK both for economic and social reasons. Adults with language skills enhance their employers' competitiveness and also the image of the UK when they travel abroad. They are more likely to display tolerance and intercultural understanding. They communicate these values, along with their enthusiasm for languages, to their children – and progress in schools depends as much on parental attitude as on educational policy.

Absence of national responsibility leads to inequality of opportunity

Access to adult language learning is unevenly spread nationally, leading to unacceptable inequality of opportunity. Provision varies from excellent to non-existent, subject to geographical accident. Its range, content and quality in any given location are, more often than not, dependent on the enthusiasm and expertise of one individual, working without the support of a national infrastructure. There is no strategic overview of lifelong language learning, and no reliable statistical profile or coordinated research and development agenda to inform initiatives.

Inflexible funding arrangements deter and exclude

Adults have varied and complex reasons for learning languages and it is disturbing to find people effectively excluded from learning by the inflexibility inherent in the funding system. Discrimination between vocational and non-vocational courses is wholly inappropriate for languages, and has resulted in a provision which is contrived and artificial, and unattractive to many. Central intervention would be better directed towards recognising the potential of all language learning to enhance both employability and personal development.

“Funding mechanisms may be deterring some adults from joining provision and distorting some provision. It is important they should support learning rather than constrain learners.”

NIACE

Development is piecemeal and uncoordinated There is an overwhelming case for the inclusion of languages in major lifelong learning initiatives currently being developed by the government. Teachers are concerned that the lack of strategic coordination of languages results in piecemeal tinkering, which duplicates effort and is a poor substitute for the real development needed in the sector. This is exemplified by the recent proliferation of locally produced syllabuses, each similar but not necessarily compatible, and each requiring significant investment of scarce resources. Many, though not all, of them fail to command the respect of the learner, inhibit transferability and progression on anything other than the most local scale, and bewilder employers.

Opportunities for training are not widely available Recruitment of good teachers can be difficult, particularly for minority languages and in rural areas. Staff morale is currently low, and many experienced teachers, demotivated by the effects of central funding requirements, are abandoning a service they now regard as insufficiently learner-friendly. They are often replaced by unqualified teachers for whom there is no adequate training and support. Good part-time training courses, addressing issues specific to language teaching in the adult sector, are not widely available.

Collaboration between providers would benefit learners In the further education sector, where so much adult learning now sits, the damaging effects of local competition which has been the hallmark of the 1990s still remain, despite lip service to a new collaboration. Lack of cooperation between parallel institutions in a given area inhibits local rationalisation of provision and results in a narrowing of scope, with fewer languages and fewer progression opportunities offered. At another level, procedural difficulties mean that adult education classes on school premises are often excluded from using specialist equipment.

“There must be small clusters of keen, if angry, students all over the region who could be brought together to form viable groups if the institutions would only stop competing with each other quite so vehemently and set-up some kind of liaison procedure.”

Letter from AE tutor reporting large numbers of axed classes, Autumn 1999

Current accreditation arrangements are de-motivating Adult learners are generally motivated more by their wish to learn than by the acquisition of formal qualifications. However, once they are engaged in the learning process, formal recognition of their achievement helps to maintain their enthusiasm and motivation – when the process is appropriate and clearly linked to learner needs. Regrettably, current accreditation arrangements seem to be a major source of dissatisfaction for learners and teachers alike, and, at a time when the spotlight is on qual-

“The lack of specialist staff development in some areas leaves poorly trained or outdated part-time tutors adrift.”

Ofsted: Accent on Adults

NETWORK is a small interactive network of self-help groups of adult language tutors organised by CILT.

“I’m 58 years old and have just passed my GCSE French. I’ve never done anything like this before. It’s been like opening a window to me.”

Visitor to the London Language Show

A 40 second peak time TV trail campaign for languages on BBC Learning Zone attracted 170,000 phone calls.

ifications, it is disturbing that language accreditation should detract from learning and become a deterrent rather than an incentive.

Flexibility and diversity can be improved The traditional weekly two-hour taught class is still the norm, although there is growing awareness of the need for more variety and flexibility. Flexibility is especially relevant to adult learning, which often has to be accommodated alongside work, family and social commitments. To achieve this goal will require strategic collaboration between key national organisations and a climate of cooperation regionally and locally. In terms of language choice, the UK is currently witnessing a change in the languages adults wish to learn. There is growing interest in less commonly taught languages, but would-be learners are often frustrated by the insufficiency of offers.

Employers tend to be diffident about languages In the absence of national guidelines or targets, opportunities to learn a language at work, or to receive sponsorship to access public courses, depend on the priority given to languages by the individual employer. Although language skills are generally valued, relatively few companies have a language training policy in place, preferring to seek employees who have taken the responsibility for their own language training, and taking the view that it is not their role to provide the basic skills needed to compete in global markets.

5.3.2 Lifelong language learning: recommendations

Recommendation 11.1

Introduce strategic responsibility for languages Languages should be classed as one of the priorities for lifelong learning, attracting similar status and funding to other transferable life skills. The government must take strategic responsibility for the inclusion of languages in emerging key initiatives for adult learners and in the strategic plans of both national and regional organisations. A first priority must be to create the infrastructure to support education services in introducing coherence to the provision, improving access and quality, and widening participation.

Recommendation 11.3

Recommendation 11.5

Establish partnerships to maximise potential Key organisations such as the local Learning and Skills Councils should encourage local learning partnerships to include languages in their plans, and ensure that local organisations collaborate. The potential benefits include access for adults to information and communications technology (ICT) by efficient and cost-effective management of facilities, establishing networks of teachers of less widely taught languages, and setting up a unified information and advice service for potential language learners. The University for Industry offers the mechanism for such a service, online and through locally identified contact points, and it is essential that languages are included in its remit.

Recommendation 11.7

Recommendations 11.10 & 13.5

Encourage the use of technology to offer flexibility and diversity Imaginative, cost-effective solutions, using technology combined with robust support networks, should be sought to meet the demands for

greater flexibility and a wider range of languages. Dramatic progress can be made given strategic collaboration between key national organisations to develop high quality materials, guidance and accreditation, and local cooperation to ensure equitable access to technology and learner support networks.

Provide appropriate accreditation If qualifications are to underpin the government's new policies on lifelong learning, then it is essential for qualifications in languages to be learner-friendly, motivating, appropriate for adults, and offering credibility and transferability. An urgent review is required of the current situation in which the quality of many accredited programmes falls well below an acceptable standard. New qualifications should support the common national standards framework recommended in this report, recognise the motivational value of learning in small steps, and ensure that the first step is achievable in order to promote wider participation and inclusive learning.

Recommendation 11.9

Recommendation 15.2

Public service organisations have a key role to play The BBC is to be commended for its long-term commitment to providing high quality language learning resources across a range of media for independent learners. It has proved that television has the power to raise the profile of languages and to stimulate demand in language learning. The government should encourage broadcasting organisations to play a key role in promoting languages, with the aim of increasing and widening participation.

Recommendation 11.10

Ensure future policy is based on reliable information The government should review the present inadequate arrangements for the collection of statistical information on languages in post-16 education, to furnish a secure basis for monitoring and planning provision. As part of a wider development agenda for languages, a research and development programme focusing on adult language learning should be established to ensure that future initiatives are supported by coherent policies.

Recommendation 14

The Welsh experience

In April 1999 Wales published its national Welsh for Adults Strategy, building on work initiated in 1994. It includes strategic and operational plans, recommendations on the most effective ways of presenting Welsh to adults, and outlines of national and local support structures designed to improve accessibility, participation and quality. Although the question of learning Welsh to live in a bilingual society differs from that of learning a foreign language elsewhere in the UK, there is much that can be learnt from the Welsh experience and applied to other situations. Since the conception of the Strategy, the number of adults learning Welsh has doubled, proving that an explicit and proactive national agenda can bring coherence and credibility to the provision – and with them more learners.

THE NEED for change

The work of the Inquiry has highlighted the serious mismatch between what the UK needs in language capability and what the education system is providing

We are on course for the next generation to be disadvantaged, edged out of the employment market both at home and abroad. We are heading towards being a minority clinging to monolingualism. The time is right for the UK to make the changes which will allow its citizens to participate on an equal footing internationally.

More action is needed instead of words

Change to the system of languages education is overdue – the present system is incoherent, fragmented and increasingly ineffective in meeting national needs. No-one has responsibility for it, therefore progress is insufficient. Fundamental change is required to reverse the current situation where many people talk about the value of languages and communication but little is done to ensure they are a reality for everyone.

We must not allow lack of coherence to continue undermining excellence

There are examples of excellence in all the successive stages of education, but the piecemeal and haphazard fashion in which they have been developed, and the absence of coherence and continuity between them, means that they are less effective than they should be. High-quality language learning initiatives in the primary sector are uncoordinated and there is no continuity between them and the secondary sector. Many secondary schools find their efforts diminished by lack of institutional support for languages. The vast majority of students drop languages at age 16 only to find they need remedial measures when they enter university – and the higher education system is not geared to cope with them. Lifelong language learning is hamstrung by the lack of national infrastructure.

The UK cannot afford to sit back and wait

The lack of strategic management of languages has resulted in funds not being used to maximum effect. Investments made in one sector are not exploited within another, diversity all too often dissolves into confusion, the dedication of the teaching profession is not put to full use. These are serious weaknesses, which waste scarce resources in an increasingly competitive world. The total cost of the UK's inadequate capability in languages is very high indeed when we add up the latent costs of a workforce without the skills to compete in the employment market and a potential reduction in exports.

Choice and opportunity are needed for the 21st century

Education has too long served the needs of the provider and institutions rather than the learner. The world is changing, and there is increasing focus on the consumer and consequently more emphasis on choice. Demand and public awareness are growing – employers are looking for a wider range of languages, parents want their children to start learning a language early, 16 year olds need to be able to keep their options open, adults need access to real and varied opportunities for language learning.

Making change happen

There are fundamental issues of policy to be addressed if the UK is to meet the nation's linguistic needs for the 21st century. The prime responsibility for providing a national education system lies with the government. A national approach is now needed, to provide a rational and consistent path of language learning, starting from an early age and offering progression opportunities throughout life. Only with such strategic direction and support can learners achieve credible levels of competence, and confidence in their ability.

Given the political will, attitudes can change. The Welsh experience highlights how an explicit and proactive national agenda for language can bring coherence and credibility to provision – and with them a change of attitude and a resurgence of interest. A high profile government strategy will give encouragement and coherence to the many imaginative and innovative enterprises already developed by teachers and agencies in different sectors of education. Changes will certainly involve new resources but much can be done to allocate existing resources more effectively. Ultimately, a policy agenda for languages is an investment the UK cannot afford to ignore.

Principal drivers of change

- The political will – government leadership and vision
- A national strategy for the development of capability in languages
- Explicit responsibility for languages at strategic level
- A culture where using more than one language is attainable by the majority, as in so many other countries
- A rational path of learning from early childhood throughout life
- More teachers, teaching a wider variety of languages
- Partnerships and collaboration between employers, government and education
- Extensive and imaginative use of technology
- A coherent and inclusive framework to define language competence
- A comprehensive research and development agenda to inform policy

Part Three of the report considers the management of change and presents a full list of the Inquiry's recommendations.

6.1 A national strategy for languages

The work of the Inquiry has attracted remarkable interest – from both men and women in the general public, the professions, politics, and sections of the media – confirming a new shift in public awareness of the importance of languages. This reinforces the Inquiry’s conclusion that the time is right for the government to declare a clear commitment to setting a national policy agenda for languages, along with an enhanced international dimension in education, as a contribution to economic success and international understanding. Furthermore, this is an opportunity for a British government to play its part among governments of English-speaking countries in displaying a positive and sensitive attitude to the languages and culture of others.

A National Opinion Polls independent sounding in October 1998 revealed only 14% of those questioned believing that ‘English is enough’ – with 86% believing that ‘more needs to be done to promote language learning in the UK’.

“In the long term modern language competence should become as much a core skill as problem solving. Just as IT skills were not perceived as ‘core’ a decade ago, there is a similar perception on modern language skills today.”

CBI

6.1.1 A national strategy for languages: the need

Lack of national responsibility has led to lack of coherence The Inquiry welcomes the positive signs that the government is becoming aware of the need for concerted action in developing a national capability in languages. Evidence has uncovered an alarming absence of strategic responsibility at national level for language-related issues which, inevitably, has led to an absence of coherence, continuity or cohesion between successive stages of education. We teach a narrowing range of languages at a time when we should be doing the opposite. However, many of the government’s current reforming initiatives – from literacy in the primary school through to lifelong learning – provide opportunities for action to enhance the role and effectiveness of language learning. A clearly articulated national strategy for languages is needed, involving continuing dialogue between government, the general public, and partners in business and education, in order to take advantage of these opportunities.

Current provision for languages does not meet national needs Evidence from business and public services is remarkably consistent in its message: capability in languages is becoming more important, and the possession of usable language skills – along with other qualifications – increasingly attractive to employers when recruiting staff. However, employers generally express disappointment at inadequate levels of competence and the limited range of languages offered, and often prefer recruits from other countries, who have learned English to a high standard alongside their own language. At the same time, it has become clear that employers and employer bodies have not been transmitting their message effectively to the world of education. Given that young people in school and college need to be motivated by clear signals about the potential career usefulness of their studies, there is an obvious opportunity here for employers to offer a strong message about the importance of languages alongside other

disciplines. There are also increasing opportunities for businesses to invest in public–private initiatives in local schools. The positive impact of such relatively low-cost initiatives as joint ownership of teaching programmes in difficult, non-European languages for priority markets, or development and distribution of multilingual software, could be substantial.

The UK lacks an adequate information base Policy development for the future needs to be underpinned by a substantial research and development agenda, and based on a more comprehensive and informative statistical base than the UK enjoys at present. In the case of schools, much of the statistical information about take-up of individual languages is based on public examination returns. Beyond school, the picture is confused. Official statistics for further, higher and adult education are collected by various agencies; they are tightly focused on the particular purpose of the collecting agency and are difficult to rework for other purposes. Most other available information is derived from organisations with a particular interest, in which case the data is at best partial and approximate.

Dependable information is hard to come by Would-be language learners, especially adults, often find it hard to get information and impartial advice about language provision. As a result it can be difficult for all but the most persistent to make an informed choice. Evidence from business reveals that small and medium-sized enterprises in particular have problems in finding language training to match their needs. There is a strong need for a unified information service, accessible both nationally and locally, aimed at business and the general public, and providing information for both public and private sectors. The provision of such a unified service would also help to pinpoint regions of the country where learning opportunities are inadequate, and provide a basis for coordination of provision across local areas.

Success will require a change in attitude However well organised the systems by which we can improve our capability in languages, we must never lose sight of the fact that success will ultimately depend on public and individual attitudes. It requires a culture where the use of more than one language is seen as natural and attainable by practically everyone, as in so many other countries. In this context, the media have the potential to raise the profile of languages substantially. Many respondents to the Inquiry expressed irritation at the almost universal use of English voice-overs in preference to subtitling during interviews in other languages on televised news and current affairs broadcasts. This conveys the misleading impression that English is spoken at all times in all corners of the world, and prevents exposure to the sounds of other languages. It is unfortunate also that some parts of the media still use the outdated stereotype of the insular Englishman, suspicious of non-English speakers and showing no capacity for learning other languages.

“HSBC has joined forces with the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, to develop strategic partnerships to benefit the teaching and learning of Mandarin in the UK. Twenty-four teacher exchange bursaries are being made available by us over three years to allow staff from the Language Colleges we sponsor to exchange with counterparts in Chinese schools.”

Mary Jo Jacobi, HSBC Holdings plc

Campaigns by the BBC, such as *Look and Read*, and *Webwise* attract up to 300,000 phone calls from interested individuals. The *Computers don't bite* campaign encouraged 200,000 people to try a computer for the first time.

A national strategy would maximise European support European institutions attach great importance to respecting language diversity among member states. Both the EU and the Council of Europe give prominence to programmes designed to improve the capability in languages of European citizens as a key component in co-operation between states, respect for the identity of others and the promotion of mutual understanding. The impact of the EU's range of language-related funding programmes – targeted at such areas as teacher training, teaching materials, transnational work experience, innovation in technology, language learning in schools – has been positive and far-reaching. However, in the UK, the absence of a clear agenda for languages has led to the misdirection of some funding – and those most adept at surmounting the bureaucratic complexities of bidding have on occasions obtained resources for projects which might not have been approved had a national strategy existed. Another consequence is the failure to disseminate key messages emerging from funded activity.

6.1.2 A national strategy for languages: recommendations

- Recommendation 1** **The government to drive forward the agenda for languages** The government, in consultation with the many sectors and interests which contribute to the nation's economic and social well-being, should formulate and vigorously promote a national strategy for the development of capability in languages. Such a strategy would serve as a policy frame within which to locate and coordinate the contribution of the various sectors and stages of education and training.
- Recommendation 2** **Appoint a languages supremo** To secure the coherence necessary for real progress, the government should appoint a languages supremo whose task would be to work with government at the highest level, with national agencies, employers and the general public, to ensure effective implementation of the national strategy. The remit of the post would include the setting and monitoring of targets, coordination of initiatives between sectors, consultation with education and the wider public, and the promotion of a multilingual Britain.
- Recommendation 3** **Raise the profile of languages using public service media** A high-profile awareness-raising campaign is needed to launch a fresh approach to the issue of languages in the UK and to break down barriers to learning. In the light of its successful history of encouraging participation in the domains of literacy, computers and the internet, the BBC, in partnership with other organisations, should play a key role in the promotion of languages.
- Recommendation 3.4**
- Recommendations 3 & 4.3** **Employers and government should together promote the importance of languages** Employers and their associations should join with the government to promote the importance of capability in languages. In particular, they should produce information and publicity material emphasising the need for languages alongside other skills and compet-

National support agencies

The Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT) is highly regarded for its promotion of good practice in all sectors of languages education and training, and for the services it offers to teachers and researchers. Over the last ten years it has taken a lead role in establishing partner centres in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and in the English regions. CILT receives funding support from government, but now derives more than half its running costs from its income generating activities. CILT also hosts the work of the National Languages Training Organisation (LNTO), which promotes awareness of the importance of languages in employment and the adoption of the National Language Standards in the field of vocational qualifications.

The Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges has a role which extends to international education and training with many partner countries, but which includes a special emphasis on support for the languages commonly taught in the UK. With government funding, its programmes have given both teachers, students and young people in employment a wide range of opportunities for direct contact with other languages and cultures through visits, exchanges and courses abroad. The Bureau has been closely involved in the development of European funded programmes in support of languages, and it administers the reciprocal Foreign Language Assistants scheme.

These bodies have for many years worked to promote greater coherence in languages education in the UK, and with their expertise, their UK-wide networks and their track record they are strongly placed to make a major contribution to future national investment in languages.

ences. This should be directed at young people, their parents, and teaching staff and management in schools and colleges. Organisations such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) should emphasise the importance of languages for success in business around the world, encourage incentives for language use, make information on employment requirements available to providers, sponsor key initiatives mounted by providers, and cooperate on research relating to cultural and language fluency.

Base policy on reliable information As a priority, the government should review the present arrangements for the gathering of statistical information on languages in the successive stages of education, and require that such information provide an effective basis for monitoring and planning provision. A national research and development agenda for language learning and teaching should be established, with funding allocated according to the priorities identified within the national strategy.

Recommendation 14.2

- Recommendation 14.7** **Establish national and regional information networks** Languages should feature prominently in high-profile developments such as the University for Industry. Information and guidance about learning opportunities should be comprehensive and easily accessible to individuals and organisations, online and through locally identified contact points. Regional networks should ensure the provision of an adequate range of languages across all sectors of education and training, in both the public and private sectors, with a particular concern for enhancing access to less widely taught languages.
- Recommendation 3.5** **Support for European work in language learning** The UK government should assume a higher profile in disseminating and promoting the messages which emerge from the development work in the field of language learning sponsored by the EU and the Council of Europe. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that funding reaches those projects and initiatives in the UK likely to contribute most to fulfilling the national strategy for languages.
- Recommendation 1.8**

The University for Industry

The University for Industry is committed to boosting the competitiveness of business and the employability of individuals. Working with businesses and education and training providers, it will use modern technologies to make learning available at a time and place to suit the learner - at home, in the workplace and through a national network of learning centres.

Clearly, given the findings and recommendations of this Inquiry it will be important to ensure that foreign languages feature prominently in the range of provision endorsed and supported by the University for Industry.

6.2 The teachers

The next generation will need more teachers, teaching more languages. The future of language teaching and learning in the UK relies critically on the availability of an appropriately qualified teaching force. The Inquiry is keenly aware of the current difficulties in recruiting language teachers, and welcomes the government's high-profile drive to attract more applicants to the profession. The long-term answer, however, lies in tackling the root of the problem and in ensuring that a large enough proportion of young people have the capability to be able to consider teaching a language, whether as a main or a second subject. To bring the UK to that point, radical and imaginative short-term measures are called for.

6.2.1 The teachers: the needs of different sectors

Language skills in short supply do not find their way into the classroom

Numbers of secondary school pupils studying two languages are in sharp decline. Nine out of ten young people in the UK stop learning a language at the age of 16. Inevitably this results in a shortage of applicants to degree courses in languages, a shortage of students with language skills on initial teacher training courses, and a shortage of teachers of other disciplines, in all sectors, with the skills to integrate languages into their curriculum. Of the reduced number of language graduates, a smaller percentage is now coming forward to train as teachers – the figures for the last five years show a consistent shortfall against funded targets. Statistics show that a range of employment opportunities is open to these graduates and that they do very well in the competition for jobs in the graduate employment market.

Needs vary according to sector Strategies for recruitment, and for initial and in-service training, have to address a widely differing picture in different educational sectors. The primary school sector lacks the large pool of linguistically or professionally equipped teachers needed for all primary schools to include a language in their curriculum, and initial teacher training courses for aspiring primary school teachers no longer offer languages. Retraining existing primary school teachers to ensure they have the necessary fluency or language teaching skills offers one possible way forward, but it is expensive and will depend on teachers volunteering; any attempt to oblige teachers to retrain for this work would increase the risk of failure through lack of commitment. In secondary schools, achieving a more equal balance between French, German and Spanish will entail recruiting more teachers for German and Spanish over a sustained period of years. In the further, higher and adult education sectors, all with a large proportion of part-time teachers, it has not been a statutory requirement for teachers to be formally qualified to teach, but measures are now being taken to address this anomaly.

Destinations of language graduates 1998

Business services	26.9%
Manufacturing	12.7%
Wholesale/retail	11.6%
Banking/finance	10.4%
Health/community/ social services	11.1%
Transport/communications	9.4%
Public administration	5.9%
Education	5.3%
Hotels & restaurants	3.7%
International organisations	0.2%
Other areas	2.8%

Source: HESA

“Unless language teaching (or any teaching) in the state sector is made more attractive, good graduates will not enter the profession.”

Judith Hamilton, Secretary General, FIPLV

The Graduate Teacher Programme, a pilot scheme developed between the French Embassy, CILT, the Central Bureau and the TTA, involves recruiting French nationals, qualified to teach French as a foreign language, in English schools. The pilot is now in its second year and there are plans to include native speakers of German and Spanish.

“After teaching French for 26 years in secondary school, I am now one of a band of dedicated teachers who just love teaching young children whose eagerness to learn a language is the most satisfying experience a teacher can have.”

Janet Randell

Continued incentives are needed to recruit from home and abroad

Teaching needs to recruit more specialist linguists from UK sources if a safe and sustainable supply of teachers is to be achieved and role models provided for the next generation. The Inquiry welcomes the decision by government to offer a financial inducement to students entering training for language teaching, but anxieties remain about the prospects of any substantial improvement in the immediate future. The UK has witnessed in recent years the significant – and growing – contribution of native speaker language teachers recruited from other countries, and there have been welcome initiatives to smooth the path for them to teach languages in the UK system. While these initiatives have been prompted by the chronic shortfall in recruitment of UK linguists to initial teacher training programmes, the presence of teachers from other cultures and language communities brings broader potential advantages to our classrooms, and should not be viewed merely as an expedient.

New approaches need a greater diversity of teacher profiles

Teaching languages has largely tended to be the preserve of graduates who have specialised in one or, more often, two languages. However, there are powerful reasons, relating both to motivation and to the potential practical benefit in vocational terms, for languages to be more closely connected with other disciplines. This could be more easily achieved given the presence in schools and colleges of more teachers of other disciplines who are also linguistically able, whether as native speakers of other languages or as graduates of a language combined with another discipline. New graduates are not the only source of such teachers, and the UK should explore the potential of recruiting from a wider pool of people whose existing skills and experience could be channelled towards language teaching.

There is a long route to qualified status For graduate linguists, residence abroad as part of a degree in languages already adds a year to the period of study. Students may be reluctant to envisage adding a further year for initial teacher training, especially in view of the financial implications, which weigh more heavily since the advent of student loans. Furthermore, many students are inevitably drawn to other areas of employment with more attractive working conditions, higher status and higher-paid prospects.

Fewer students are now interested in working as assistants

Recruitment to postgraduate teacher training courses (PGCE) has been affected by the relative decline in language undergraduates spending their year abroad as language assistants. There have recently been particular difficulties in recruiting to assistantships, which were traditionally a first experience of teaching, and which often encouraged students to consider a teaching career.

Too few males are entering the teaching profession The uptake of languages by boys beyond age 16 is low and declining. This in turn leads to few men taking specialist language courses at university and fewer taking a PGCE teacher training course. In 1999–2000 there are 255 men on PGCE language courses (compared to 1154 women). It is estimated that nearly 50% of the men are not of UK origin.

In-service training is vital Teachers of languages have had to adjust to fundamental changes in their clientele and their approaches over recent years, across all sectors of education. These demands will continue, particularly in the light of the progress and potential of information and communications technology (ICT). Language teachers are well served by national agencies such as the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT) and its partner bodies in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, but local education authority provision for specialist advice and training support has been greatly reduced in recent years.

Technology can help provide diversity of languages To satisfy both national needs and personal fulfilment, learners in all sectors need access to a much wider range of languages. With video links, online support structures and interactive resources, a ‘remote’ teacher or team could service the needs of learners scattered over many institutions. In the case of secondary school pupils, this is a medium-term ambition, but could be envisaged in the shorter term for the further, higher and adult education sectors, where a more mature attitude to self-access learning would allow more rapid development. It would clearly be unrealistic and wasteful for schools and colleges each to seek to recruit part-time teachers of less widely taught languages. However, a local or regional pool of teachers with expertise in both small-group and online teaching could provide a service to which schools and colleges could subscribe.

“It would be helpful if a second language was a requirement for entry to a teaching degree and formed part of it, so that monoglot teachers were the exception rather than the norm.”

Anne Coleman

6.2.2 The teachers: recommendations

Continue and intensify recruitment drives The Inquiry urges the government to continue and intensify its current drive to attract more applicants to the teaching profession. Where languages are concerned, the situation can only be remedied effectively if entrants to higher education, and therefore to initial teacher training, continue their study of a language beyond age 16. To ensure sufficient numbers of primary school teachers able to teach languages, initial teacher training should include the opportunity for the development of further linguistic and professional skills. In addition, an ongoing programme of retraining and incentives for existing primary school teachers should be funded immediately.

Diversify the opportunities to teach languages In a profession in which the majority are women, the government should launch a high-profile campaign to encourage teachers who have taken a career break to return to language teaching in primary or secondary schools, further, higher or

Recommendation 12

Recommendation 9.1

Recommendation 12.2

Recommendation 12.11

Recommendation 12.3

Recommendation 12.4

adult education. Incentives should include accessible opportunities for intensive linguistic and professional updating for returners, both women and men. Current development work in training graduate teachers of other disciplines, especially from other countries, should be extended to provide an enlarged pool of teachers offering a language with another discipline.

Recommendation 12.12

Encourage greater collaboration The minister with responsibility for the recruitment of language teachers should give added impetus to the growing collaboration between the many organisations and institutions with a direct interest in the delivery of languages in educational services. The form of cooperation should be a matter for wide consultation between schools, the languages and education departments of universities, LEAs, the DfEE, the TTA, CILT, careers services, professional associations and the cultural services of relevant embassies.

Recommendations 12.5 & 12.6

Use technology to share the skills of good teachers The government should invest in the formation of small specialist teams of teachers to work in partnership with national agencies and bodies such as the BBC, the Open University and higher education language centres. Using the full range of technology available, these teams would develop materials for use in training teachers to teach languages, both in the classroom and in the virtual classroom. This would be of particular benefit for less commonly taught languages, such as Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese.

“I don’t really enjoy learning foreign languages as they can be quite tedious and I find most languages difficult”

Kevin, Buckingham School, Buckinghamshire.

‘To be a modern languages teacher requires vast amounts of energy and enthusiasm, a wealth of creativity, a total mastery of subject knowledge, excellent organisational skills and, above all, a sound understanding of the relevant methodology.

Pupils up and down the country encounter such teachers every day and experience the satisfaction and fulfillment which learning a language successfully can bring. In the classrooms where language learning is not seen in such a positive light we should be working with teachers to develop their professional skills in an appropriate way rather than expressing despair about the state of language learning in our schools as a whole.

Let’s look to the future where we value and, at the same time, actively seek to develop the expertise of our teachers who are, after all, our most valuable resource.’

Trevor Mutton, University of Oxford Department of Educational Studies.

6.3 Technology and language learning

Alongside its rapidly expanding role in translation and interpreting, ICT (information and communications technology) has immense potential to enhance language learning – which is a central concern of this Inquiry. Managed effectively and used imaginatively, it offers access to a wider choice of languages, caters for individual needs, aptitudes and learning styles, and motivates by allowing direct and easy communication with speakers of other languages. It moves the focus from teaching to learning in a way that has never been possible until now, reflecting the general shift in society towards greater consumer awareness and choice. However, technology needs to move from a peripheral to a central role in language learning if it is to be successful – a challenge which has yet to be fully met.

6.3.1 ICT: the potential for language learning

The full potential of ICT has yet to be realised in languages Levels of use of ICT in language learning vary dramatically from sector to sector and from one institution to another. Many universities make excellent use of the range of ICT resources to provide language learning opportunities for students of all disciplines. Further education and sixth-form colleges have invested heavily in technology, although language learning has often not been in the forefront in exploiting this investment, with some notable exceptions. In schools there is evidence that logistical problems still make it difficult to provide the levels of pupil access needed for success. Despite examples of good practice, particularly in the Language Colleges, technology still tends to be used at the margins rather than at the core of school language learning. Adults learning languages in the evening rarely gain access to new technologies – and this exemplifies an overall problem, namely that resources tend not to be used efficiently, collaboratively or cost-effectively.

The BBC Languages website logs around 300,000 page hits per month with figures showing a rising trend.

Pioneering work puts the UK in a strong position The National Grid for Learning and the University for Industry provide the UK with the potential infrastructure to lead the way in online language learning. Organisations such as the Open University Language Centre and BBC Languages have pioneered mixed media approaches to language learning, and their development of supported self-study using distance teaching approaches has demonstrated how effective a well managed combination of technology and tutorial support can be. The UK is also fortunate in being able to draw on the investment in new technologies associated with the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL), which have made an enormous contribution to language teaching generally.

The National Grid for Learning will involve nearly 500,000 teachers in 33,000 schools, 250,000 staff in 900 FE institutions, and eventually 22,000 library staff in 4,300 public libraries used by 60% of the UK population.

Sharing teachers can lead to a wider choice of language The Internet allows the talents of excellent language teachers to be widely shared instead of confined to a few students. Online teachers, with appropriate

support structures, could enable a school or a college to offer languages that would not otherwise be available. Such enriched choice and ease of access could improve learners' motivation and commitment. Online teaching would allow pupils in secondary school the option of an additional language from an extended list. This approach could also give greater freedom of choice in the languages offered to adult learners, given properly organised support structures.

“Our French website is having a big impact on the school, particularly with some of the younger boys, who can be so hostile to modern languages – once online they seem to forget that it's lesson time.”

Stéphane Derône, the Howard School, Medway, Kent

Technology can motivate reluctant learners Many teenagers, particularly boys, who may be reluctant to engage in classroom interaction and are not inspired by conventional language teaching materials, have a keen interest in computers as well as excellent screen and keyboard skills, often developed outside school. Evidence suggests that alternative approaches to language learning which harness these interests and skills could result in greater enthusiasm for languages and fewer disciplinary problems. The National Curriculum now specifies real communication with native speakers of the language learned as an integral part of the syllabus. Personal contact with people from other countries contributes to motivation, skills and knowledge – and technologies allowing us to communicate instantly and effectively with people anywhere in the world are becoming commonplace and improving daily.

Language, communication and IT skills can be integrated To exploit new technologies to the full, the next generation will need high levels of literacy and good communication skills. Opportunities for developing these qualities are missed by isolating languages and failing to integrate them into the curriculum. ICT provides the opportunity for clear connections to be made between languages, literacy and communication, since skills such as word processing, letter or message writing, oral presentation and Internet information searching are often as easily developed and practised in a second language as in English.

The Lingu@NET forum is an e-mail discussion group, developed by CILT and BECTA with support from the DfEE, for those involved in language teaching and research. It allows teachers to exchange ideas, seek advice from peers, comment on materials, share problems and challenges, discuss issues and keep each other up-to-date with what's going on.

The Internet can offer professional networking for teachers Through the Internet, teachers have immediate access not only to up-to-date resources but also to direct exchange of experience with other teachers. Many networks and newsgroups already exist which allow teachers to communicate, collaborate and exchange resources with other teachers anywhere in the world. This sort of facility is particularly important to teachers in the adult sector where so many work part-time and have no access to local or national support structures. Networking could also play an important part in sharing experience between teachers and researchers in different sectors, who for too long have suffered from the fragmentation of the languages scene.

6.3.2 ICT and language learning: recommendations

Ensure national strategic coordination The government's ambitious targets on ICT and its significant investment are to be applauded – having the infrastructure in place for online learning and teaching is an excellent start. But it is only a start, and the full exploitation of the potential of new

technologies should form a key component of the recommended national strategy for languages. Languages should be accorded an explicit place in national initiatives using ICT – in areas as diverse as the networking of schools, colleges and public libraries, the provision of a comprehensive information and advice service, and support networks for learners and teachers to share experience and ideas.

Recommendation 13

Organisational issues must not be allowed to dictate policy in schools

Senior management in schools must ensure that the provision and management of ICT facilities allow their benefits to be experienced to the full. The next generation, familiar from an early age with technology and its applications in all aspects of life, will undoubtedly have well developed computer skills. Organisational issues must not deny them the opportunity of integrating these skills with language learning.

Recommendation 13.6

Collaborate locally to rationalise resources

There should be incentives to schools and colleges to collaborate to ensure the most efficient and cost-effective use of ICT facilities in local areas. This collaboration should provide on the one hand for making maximum use of equipment and facilities (for example, schools sharing with lifelong learning providers), and on the other hand for expert teachers to be made available online to provide tutorial services to networked partner institutions.

Recommendation 13.7

Collaborate nationally for an imaginative provision

National organisations, public service media and local providers should collaborate to provide a high quality nationwide range of flexible language learning opportunities for adults. The availability of hardware and software is not enough – success depends on an imaginative mix of materials across the range of media, combined with opportunities for speaking practice, group work, assessment by professionals, and accreditation opportunities. Support, face-to-face or online, is vital to maintaining motivation.

Recommendation 13.5

Ensure language graduates are equipped for the future

The link between technology and languages is not confined to the use of ICT to support teaching and learning. Higher education should ensure that graduates in languages are all fully prepared for the information society, capable of accessing and making intelligent use of technologies such as cross-language information extraction systems, authoring aids, computer aided translation systems, and online multilingual management systems.

Recommendation 13.4

Coordinate research in the field of technology and languages

The evolution and progressive integration of technology and language learning need to be informed by comprehensive research, focusing on all aspects of development, including the vital issue of online teaching and learning support. Important work is already being conducted as part of funded support of projects in higher education. The outcomes of this research should be integrated within an overall national strategy for languages, and funding should be allocated for the intensive development of the pioneering work already undertaken in supported self-study.

Recommendation 13.1

6.4 Rewards and recognition

Improving the UK’s national capability in languages can best be achieved in a climate of sustained encouragement for language learning, incorporating both personal and material incentives. Motivation is a key element if learning is to be successful: learners need the reassurance that what they do is important and valuable, both to them as individuals and in the wider context of society. Success is a powerful incentive, and achievement, however modest, must be positively acknowledged.

“Language degrees awarded by British universities do not represent any guarantee of a common minimum standard of practical language proficiency.”

Coleman (1996), *Studying languages: a survey of British and European students*

“Alongside an all-round competence in at least one language for all we should explore the possibility of teaching partial competencies. I am convinced this is the only way a considerable number will become acquainted with more than one or two languages. It is a concept first expressed in the Council of Europe but now much encouraged in the European Commission’s language programmes.”

Brian Page

6.4.1 Rewards and recognition: the current situation

Qualifications – diversity or confusion? There is a plethora of qualifications in languages in the UK and it is hardly surprising that learners are often bewildered by the choice, while employers are confused as to the relative value of different qualifications and what they mean in practical terms. This is particularly true in the full-time education sector at all levels, from examinations such as GCSE through to degree-level qualifications in higher education. There has been a major effort over the last 10–15 years to specify in practical terms what is required to achieve particular qualifications. We are still a long way, however, from meeting the urgent need for a unified national structure of measures of competence in languages which could be applied in all sectors, and to which all qualifications would be related. The Council of Europe has recognised the importance of this issue in its pioneering work to develop a European Framework within which qualifications can be related to each other and be clearly defined.

We demotivate learners by not rewarding the first steps The UK has failed to build on the successful initiatives in the 1980s to develop a flexible step-by-step approach to rewarding learners as they take their first steps in a new language. The benefits of such an approach in these early stages remain as important as ever, both in schools, where this idea was born, and also in the world of adult learning, where the positive and unthreatening nature of these ‘graded objectives’ schemes is appreciated.

Partial competence is insufficiently acknowledged Language qualifications generally require candidates to show their capacity in all of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. While this is clearly appropriate in many (particularly educational) contexts, there is also a strong case for recognising and rewarding competence on a narrower but nonetheless useful front: there are circumstances where reading is all that is required, others where writing is essential. Many UK residents who come from – or whose families originated in – other countries, have valuable levels of competence in their ‘home’ language, perhaps exclusively in its spoken form. Partial competences such as these require a flexible system of public recognition.

Languages awards celebrate achievement Much has been achieved in recent years by promoting successful language learning through awards schemes such as the European Languages Awards, funded by the EU in collaboration with national governments and agencies. The Council of Europe's Language Passport and Portfolio scheme is aimed at raising the self-image and confidence of individuals by providing a device for recording personal achievement in languages. For a number of years, the Festival of Languages and Young Linguists Awards scheme organised national and regional events which attracted wide participation from schools. It is regrettable that this scheme should have collapsed through lack of continuing business sponsorship and government grants.

The status of languages in employment is often surprisingly low

Initiatives such as the annual DTI National Languages for Exports Awards have encouraged businesses to identify and build on the language skills of their employees. Those employers who have responded to the DTI's guidance by assessing needs and by raising the profile of languages have frequently benefited. The Languages National Training Organisation has drawn up detailed specifications for operational skills using languages in the world of work, so that people using languages in many different vocational contexts can have their skills recognised and credited. However, while evidence from recruitment advertisements and agencies shows an encouraging increase in the number of jobs advertised where language skills are mentioned, these skills are often undervalued in terms of the salaries they attract. They also still have surprisingly low status in many fields of employment, such as travel and tourism, hospitality, and retailing.

The Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) and SOAS organise annual awards.

"A knowledge of the language is the key to gaining a really in-depth understanding of the people and culture."

Sadayuki Hayashi, Japanese Ambassador

6.4.2 Rewards and recognition: recommendations

Establish a transparent qualifications framework The government should accelerate and raise the profile of moves to establish a common framework for assessing levels of language competence. Drawing on the Council of Europe Framework and taking account – where appropriate – of the National (Vocational) Language Standards, it should provide a set of robust grade descriptors for levels of attainment to which public examinations in the school system, and qualifications in further, higher education, lifelong learning and employment, should be connected. This national framework should be couched in terms which are intelligible to non-specialist users, and should in particular be flexible enough to recognise partial competences and the small steps in achievement at beginner level.

Recommendation 14

The Council of Europe, as part of the European Framework and in order to promote lifelong language learning, has developed the European Language Portfolio, a personal portfolio which allows all learners to record their experiences of both formal and informal learning.

- Recommendation 4.10** **Offer workplace rewards and raise the profile of languages** Employers or employer associations should take a lead in stressing the importance of languages as part of the skills pack they seek when recruiting new entrants to employment. The profile of languages could be raised significantly by such actions as offering cash awards to students who learn a new language outside their studies from a designated list of languages useful to the sponsoring business. There should be similar cash incentives for employees willing to learn a new language to meet an agreed need, together with employer-funded opportunities for intensive study visits.
- Recommendation 4.9** **Publicly celebrate success** Businesses should see sponsorship of national and local award schemes, language festivals and similar events as an opportunity to invest in the languages capability of the next generation in employment.
- Recommendation 4.12** **Sponsor graded awards for beginners** The business world should sponsor a system of optional graded awards for beginners of all ages. Such a system, based on the model of swimming and gymnastics badges or music grades, would require learners to complete practical challenges and could be taken at any time.

At the 1999 BTI Languages for Export Campaign awards, Trade Minister Brian Wilson underlined the benefits of language skills to UK plc.

‘For a relatively small investment in languages, three of our corporate award winners have obtained, or helped their clients to win, orders worth more than £4 million over recent months.

Innovators like these award-winning companies and organisations are often the first to achieve success through new opportunities and serve as a leading example to other British businesses and education.’

Source: Business Language, BLIS

6.5 Research and development

Research and development should be an essential element in the successful pursuit of a national strategy for capability in languages. In areas as diverse as applied linguistics, language engineering, and the teaching and learning of languages, we must ensure that the next generation has access to and draws upon well-founded research and development programmes reflecting national need. As in other areas which the Inquiry has scrutinised, the field is characterised by fragmentation. A more coherent view is needed if the present balance of research activity across sectors is to be aligned with a national agenda.

6.5.1 An under-developed research base

The research field is fragmented Research in languages takes place in many different institutional contexts, focuses on a range of fields which may be unrelated, is driven by different requirements and is funded by a variety of sources. While this diversity may have many strengths, it also leads to misdirection of effort and the perpetuation of areas of traditional privilege. This picture is well illustrated in the higher education sector, where traditional specialist departments focusing primarily on the literary, historical and political study of languages still account for most of the research conducted by individuals for postgraduate qualifications. Other important areas of research, relevant to the work of this Inquiry, are conducted largely outside specialist higher education languages departments, for example within education or applied linguistics departments, or by teachers in other sectors, working independently or in some cases in partnership with higher education.

“The diversity relating to research in languages has many strengths but it also leads to misdirection of effort and the perpetuation of areas of traditional privilege.”

Funding is unbalanced and mechanisms too complex Research in language-related areas needs more funding. The Inquiry welcomes the new funding for pedagogic research, administered by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and hopes it will support some research projects in language-related pedagogy. Outside this funding, key areas of language-related research, and especially language learning and teaching, tend to fall between the remits of two main agencies, the ESRC and the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB). As a result, research in these areas is not well supported by funding bodies. Further and adult education, which have no tradition of or funding for research, are major casualties of the system.

“We believe there are significant gaps in the research infrastructure underpinning language teaching and learning in the UK, and significant gaps also in the knowledge base which is needed if we are to formulate effective language policies, and develop and sustain an appropriate language capability.”

CILT Advisory Group on Research

Educational research needs an agenda for languages The UK has research strengths in work on language and languages in education. In addition to those universities which have established a high reputation for research in support of language learning, organisations such as the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), and the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) have conducted major research and monitoring projects for the government in this area.

The Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT) has been active in promoting research and development programmes across all sectors of education and training, with a welcome emphasis on teacher-driven research. However, none of these bodies is given the strategic role of establishing or interpreting a national agenda, nor do they dispense funding on behalf of the government in support of national policy.

More research is needed in:

- intercultural communication;
- autonomous learning;
- early language learning;
- learner motivation;
- language use in business;
- ICT and language learning
- assessment & accreditation;;
- online learning support;
- widening participation;
- language engineering;
- methodology for different age-groups;
- partial competences.

Listings of current research topics in French reveal:

- six times as many theses on mediaeval literature as on the role of ICT in language learning;
- ten times as many theses on pre-twentieth century literature as on the whole of applied linguistics.

Professor James Coleman

Key issues need research and development A national strategy for languages will need to be informed by a substantial research and development programme. Sustained research is required in areas as diverse as the application of autonomous learning approaches, the use of technology in language learning, language education in the post-compulsory sectors, early language learning, intercultural communication, interpreting and translating. Where topics are of potential interest and applicability across more than one sector – such as technology and autonomous learning – it is important that sector-specific research is conducted.

Higher education has benefited from targeted funds In recent years there has been significant investment in development projects such as the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) and the Technology in Teaching and Learning programmes. These have benefited development in areas related to language in higher education. The recently announced establishment of a new national subject centre for languages, linguistics and area studies is also intended to promote development work and raise teaching standards in higher education, though the sources of development funding need to be expanded.

Language-related research is not well recognised There are few specialist departments of applied linguistics or of intercultural studies. In most institutions, specialists in these areas are distributed across other departments, such as education, modern languages, or English. The present arrangements for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) undertaken by the funding councils discourage such researchers from focusing on topics that are not part of their department's mainstream activity. And the terms and conditions of employment of many teaching staff in languages departments do not allow them to take on an active research role.

Scotland sets an example In contrast with the rest of the UK, notions of a national research agenda for languages are well implanted in Scotland. The Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED, formerly SOEID) has for many years funded research projects directly related to the development of a policy on languages. Over the last decade these have included a full-scale independent evaluation of national pilot projects on languages in the primary school, an investigation into the causes of decline in recruitment to languages beyond standard grade, two projects on the development of Gaelic language teaching, and currently two consecutive projects to assess achievement in modern languages. These research projects have received extensive support from local authorities and schools, and the results have been disseminated through

national publications and through conferences and training programmes. In addition, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFCE) has established an annual Research Development competition, open to all Scottish higher education institutions, in order to support the creation of new infrastructures for research in areas that will be of benefit to the Scottish economy and to the quality of life in Scotland.

The SCOTLANG Project

The SCOTLANG project (1999-2002), which is worth £675,000 and is based at Scottish CILT, will develop a national network for supporting coordinated research on the teaching, learning and use of languages, both in education and in the wider society, in order to inform future decisions on language policy, provision and practice in Scotland.

6.5.2 Research and development: recommendations

Draw up a national research and development agenda Research and development needs should be an integral part of the national strategy for languages. Competent bodies should be consulted to establish a national research and development agenda for languages, with priorities clearly identified and reflected in funding criteria. The agenda should include intercultural communication, interpreting and translating, and aspects of language teaching and learning, such as autonomous learning, the use of technology, language education in the early learning and post-compulsory sectors, student motivation, language acquisition, and assessment.

Recommendation 14

Fund more joint work involving teachers and researchers The criteria for funding applied research and development in language learning and teaching should reward partnerships which bring together research expertise and teacher participation.

Recommendation 14.8

Launch joint research initiatives The Arts and Humanities Research Board and the Economic and Social Research Council should cooperate with the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research to launch a joint research initiative, to address missing areas of research. They should also seek the cooperation of other agencies which fund research and development. The higher education funding bodies should ensure that satisfactory recognition is given to research related to teaching.

Recommendation 14.2



Nuffield Languages Inquiry

Recommendations

recommendations

1

Develop a national strategy for languages as a key skill

The government should designate languages a key skill and, in consultation with the many sectors and interests which contribute to the nation's economic and social wellbeing, should formulate a national strategy for the development of capability in languages in the UK.

The national strategy for languages should:

- 1.1 bring coherence and consistency to languages education by coordinating organisations and initiatives in the various sectors and stages;
- 1.2 introduce a greater transparency of objectives between users of languages and providers of languages education;
- 1.3 ensure equal access for all to a rational and consistent path of language learning from primary school through to higher education and beyond;
- 1.4 ensure provision in an appropriate range of languages, an emphasis on transferable language learning skills and solid competence in grammatical structures, which assist the process of learning new languages or refreshing existing skills at short notice;
- 1.5 acknowledge the strategic importance of languages in developing qualities associated with citizenship;
- 1.6 take account of successful policies and initiatives in the teaching of Welsh, Gaelic and English as an additional language;
- 1.7 identify and enhance the potential of the UK's community languages;
- 1.8 allocate priorities to ensure the most appropriate and effective use of EU funding for languages;
- 1.9 ensure that no one is denied access to essential public services by barriers of language;
- 1.10 develop the potential of technology to provide cost-effective solutions to issues relating to languages.

2

Appoint a languages supremo

The government should appoint a languages supremo whose task would be to work with government at the highest level, with government departments, national agencies, employers and the general public, to ensure effective implementation of the national strategy for languages.

The role of the languages supremo should include:

- 2.1 setting and monitoring targets, consulting with education and the wider public, and promoting a multilingual UK;
- 2.2 achieving coherence and cooperation between the many institutions and agencies involved with languages in the education system;
- 2.3 ensuring strategic coherence, motivating and coordinating language-related initiatives by such key agencies as the Regional Development Agencies, the Learning and Skills Council and the Languages National Training Organisation;
- 2.4 working closely with business interests in developing a series of imaginative measures to raise the profile of languages in society as a whole;
- 2.5 securing an explicit place for languages in emerging national initiatives.

recommendations

3

Raise the profile of languages in the UK

As an early priority, the government should arrange for a campaign to raise the profile of languages in the UK, promoting positive attitudes towards languages and language learning, raising awareness of their potential at all levels, and fostering a culture where using more than one language is an attainable goal for the majority.

Measures should include:

- 3.1 designating language learning a key skill that all pupils should study to age 16 and beyond, whether their studies are directed towards academic or vocationally related goals;
- 3.2 actively promoting a pro-language message in schools and colleges, ensuring children, parents, teaching staff and management receive unequivocal messages on the importance of language skills through high quality promotional and guidance materials;
- 3.3 establishing direct links in schools between languages and citizenship, to foster notions of equality and acceptance of diversity in children's minds at the earliest possible age;
- 3.4 encouraging broadcasting organisations, in partnership with other major organisations and agencies, to play a key role in promoting languages;
- 3.5 assuming a higher profile in disseminating and promoting the messages which emerge from language development work sponsored by the European Union and the Council of Europe;
- 3.6 expanding the Department of Trade and Industry's National Languages for Exports Awards Scheme.

4

Establish business – education partnerships

The languages supremo should encourage key national organisations, providers of languages education and employer interests to form strategic partnerships in order to match provision with national needs and promote the link between languages and employability.

Business–education partnerships should:

- 4.1 publicise the link between language skills, cultural understanding, quality standards in client service and business success;
- 4.2 establish national short- and long-term priorities in terms of languages and levels of competence;
- 4.3 issue high quality promotional materials highlighting the key role of languages in industry and commerce to schools and colleges;
- 4.4 agree the vocational courses in which languages should be an integral element;
- 4.5 underline to management and careers officers in schools and colleges the employer preference for recruits having a genuine usable capability in at least one foreign language and experience of living, studying or working abroad;
- 4.6 offer practical support in the form of appropriate work experience;
- 4.7 support further education colleges in integrating community languages into vocational programmes in parts of the country where these languages are spoken fluently by students;
- 4.8 sponsor initiatives mounted by providers, thus highlighting the importance of languages in the world of work and investing in the capability in languages of the next generation in employment;
- 4.9 expand workplace awards schemes as a means of recognising both personal and corporate success;
- 4.10 offer cash incentives and opportunities for intensive study visits to students who learn a designated language outside their studies and to employees willing to learn a new language to meet an agreed need;
- 4.11 encourage employers to review salary rewards for languages, particularly in companies where they are essential, and reward staff who are prepared to operate bilingually when needed;
- 4.12 sponsor a system of optional graded awards for beginners of all ages;
- 4.13 offer bursaries for university language students to help with their living expenses during the year abroad;
- 4.14 provide statistical and other information to ensure that policy is based on sound information.

recommendations

5

Provide school children with a sound basis for language learning for life

The national strategy for languages should provide a coherent and consistent path of language learning from early childhood throughout life. To lay sound foundations for this path, learning for all children should start in primary school and become a sustained dimension of their entire school education.

School languages education should:

- 5.1 ensure that, by the age of 16, pupils have basic competence in at least one language other than English;
- 5.2 provide the generic skills to enable continued learning in further and higher education and during adult life;
- 5.3 integrate foreign language learning with understanding of grammar and effective use of English in communicating with non-native speakers;
- 5.4 take place in an internationalist culture;
- 5.5 relate foreign language learning to citizenship, intercultural tolerance and acceptance of difference.

6

Invest in an early start

The government should declare a long-term commitment to early language learning by setting up a national action programme for languages in primary school education, within the framework of the national strategy for languages.

The national action programme for early learning should:

- 6.1 address long-term solutions while supporting and strengthening existing provision;
- 6.2 provide funding for at least 100 schools a year for the next ten years to be designated as 'international primary schools' for parents who would like their child educated from age 5 through the medium of a new language;
- 6.3 ensure the international primary schools offer languages other than French and reach agreement with a partner secondary school or schools to ensure continuity;
- 6.4 in tandem with the development of international schools, declare a ten-year target to provide an entitlement for all pupils to learn a new language from age 7, based on 10% of curriculum time, integrated with other subjects or taught separately;
- 6.5 offer financial incentives for primary and secondary schools to form groups to agree a common local pattern of provision for early language learning, including the choice of languages and arrangements for continuity into secondary school;
- 6.6 introduce into the National Literacy Strategy programme modules of language awareness, the content of which would be designed to bridge the gap between English, literacy and foreign languages;
- 6.7 highlight the link between languages, communication and good citizenship in order to establish notions of equality and acceptance of diversity at the earliest age possible.

recommendations

7

Raise the quality of the provision for languages in secondary schools

Provision for language learning in the secondary school sector should be uprated in order to provide a wider range of languages, a more flexible menu to cater for different needs, abilities and interests, and more use of information technology. All pupils should leave secondary education equipped with foundation language skills and the skills for further language learning in later life.

The revised provision for secondary schools should:

- 7.1 introduce modular arrangements for examinations in languages at age 16 which will allow all pupils to take foundation-level tests at the age of 14, after which pupils will either continue towards a full certificate or change to a different language and take further foundation modules for certification in languages rather than in a particular language;
- 7.2 coordinate the development of a national system of optional graded awards to cover the years prior to public examinations;
- 7.3 ensure roughly equal numbers of pupils emerge from secondary education over the next ten years with basic capability in French, German and Spanish;
- 7.4 agree special funds to target languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Portuguese and Russian as part of the drive to widen the range of languages taught;
- 7.5 declare a commitment to a target date by which all pupils entering secondary school should have an entitlement to one taught language (for which the school would have the teaching staff) plus the option of another language for which tuition would be provided using technology;
- 7.6 move the use of ICT from the margins to the centre of course planning and materials development;
- 7.7 ensure that lack of access to appropriate ICT facilities does not limit opportunity;
- 7.8 make financial incentives available for schools to introduce bilingual sections, in which a major part of the curriculum would be taught through the medium of another language;
- 7.9 review and reinvigorate the reciprocal Foreign Language Assistants scheme, which enables schools to appoint higher education students from other countries as living exponents of their language.

8

Ensure wider participation beyond school

The language learning path established in school should extend beyond school with the same clarity of objective, offering opportunities in the 16–19 sector, university and throughout life to extend, update or maintain language skills and to acquire new languages.

The provision should ensure:

- 8.1 equality of access and opportunity to language learning across the UK for everyone at any age;
- 8.2 a range of languages reflecting national needs and personal aspirations, with opportunities to learn new languages such as Chinese, Russian, Japanese or Arabic alongside European languages;
- 8.3 imaginative and cost-effective use of information and communications technology;
- 8.4 progress is supported by a sound framework of qualifications;
- 8.5 the policy is based on reliable information about current provision and trends.

recommendations

9

Promote languages for the majority of 16–19 year-olds

Languages should be a specified component of the 16–19 curriculum, and a requirement for entry to higher education and for designated vocational qualifications. A range of attractive opportunities to learn languages should be developed and integrated into existing structures such as the Key Skills package.

The organisations charged with managing post-16 education and training should:

- 9.1 designate the ability to operate in one or more languages as a key skill for all those progressing to higher education, alongside the ability to use English effectively, to apply number and exploit information technology;
- 9.2 collaborate with higher education institutions to establish the logistics of introducing the entry requirement within a five-year period;
- 9.3 include in the communication strands of the Key Skills qualification the ability to communicate in a second language and the effective use of English when communicating with speakers of other languages;
- 9.4 make full use of the National Grid for Learning to develop and promote high quality online provision for languages, supported by local networks of specialist teachers;
- 9.5 review the A-level curriculum for languages and improve transition arrangements between GCSE and A-level;
- 9.6 designate language learning an integral element of specific vocational courses to be identified by employers;
- 9.7 review the funding of vocational courses;
- 9.8 work with the senior management of colleges to encourage productive collaboration between language teachers and managers of vocational courses.

10

Develop a strategic approach to languages in higher education

A national development plan should be agreed for languages in higher education as a matter of urgency to ensure an appropriate balance between the supply of language specialists in specified languages, the availability of graduates with languages in combination with other disciplines, and the entitlement of all students to learn a language to enhance their personal skills.

The development plan for higher education should:

- 10.1 agree the funding and organisational priorities needed to support universities in responding to national needs;
- 10.2 ensure a level of funding for languages which enables teaching, advice and support to be carried out by fully qualified staff, and which provides for a consistent portfolio of languages to be offered across a range of levels of attainment;
- 10.3 coordinate existing initiatives and projects;
- 10.4 ensure that all undergraduate degrees allow students to undertake language study alongside their main discipline;
- 10.5 provide encouragement for all students to extend their portfolio of languages through access to supported independent learning, whether or not it forms part of their degree programme;
- 10.6 encourage universities to offer an integrated provision, a one-stop shop for languages;
- 10.7 agree standards for degree-level competence by linking the outcomes of all language courses to the national framework of standards;
- 10.8 extend the waiving of fees for students spending a year abroad to include teaching assistantships and work placements;
- 10.9 develop closer links with other providers across higher education and in different sectors.

recommendations

11

Develop the huge potential of lifelong language learning

The government should ensure a central place for languages in current lifelong learning initiatives in order to meet both the vocational and personal aspirations of adult learners, develop the huge potential in this area and drive up quality.

As part of this agenda, the government should:

- 11.1 designate languages one of the priorities for lifelong learning, attracting similar funding to other transferable life skills;
- 11.2 ensure appropriate investment, collaboration and consultation;
- 11.3 develop a national infrastructure to support providers in introducing coherence to provision, improving access and widening participation;
- 11.4 secure the provision of an adequate range of languages across all sectors of education and training, in both the public and private sectors, with a particular concern for less widely taught languages;
- 11.5 ensure the inclusion of languages in the strategic and development plans of national and regional organisations and local learning partnerships;
- 11.6 ensure strategic collaboration at national and local levels to secure the widest possible range of languages and opportunities for progression;
- 11.7 on a regional basis, set up unified information and advice services, online and through local contact points, to ensure comprehensive and easily accessible information and guidance about learning opportunities for individuals and organisations;
- 11.8 establish local/regional networks of teachers of less widely taught languages to support distance learning;
- 11.9 develop accreditation which is motivating, learner-friendly and appropriate for adults, and which offers credibility and transferability;
- 11.10 encourage broadcasting organisations to play a major role in promoting languages.

12

Intensify the drive to recruit more language teachers

The government should continue and intensify its current high-profile campaign to attract more language teachers to all sectors of education by implementing a series of focused short- and long-term measures.

To intensify its recruitment drive, the government should:

- 12.1 require all entrants to higher education – and therefore to initial teacher training – to show evidence of continued and accredited study of a language beyond 16;
- 12.2 ensure initial teacher training includes the opportunity for the development of further linguistic and professional skills;
- 12.3 launch a high-profile campaign to encourage teachers who have taken a career break to return to language teaching – in primary or secondary schools, further, higher or adult education;
- 12.4 develop accessible and attractive opportunities for intensive linguistic and professional updating, including part-time courses addressing issues of methodology specific to language teaching;
- 12.5 develop online networks of excellent language teachers, to allow their experience and expertise to be widely shared;
- 12.6 invest in the formation of small specialist teams of teachers working in partnership with national agencies to develop materials for training teachers to teach languages both in the classroom and the virtual classroom;
- 12.7 extend current development work in training graduate teachers of other disciplines – especially from other countries – to provide an enlarged pool of teachers offering a language with another discipline;
- 12.8 make teacher training courses leading to qualified teacher status more widely available for teachers of community languages, and offer expert advice to individuals on how linguistic skills may be converted into a teaching qualification;
- 12.9 ensure that teacher training departments serving areas where community languages are taught should give positive encouragement to those hoping to train in other disciplines to offer a community language as a second teaching subject;
- 12.10 fund an ongoing programme of retraining and incentives for existing primary school teachers;
- 12.11 offer incentives for primary schools to recruit foreign language assistants as classroom helpers;
- 12.12 give added impetus to the growing collaboration between the many organisations and institutions with a direct interest in the recruitment and training of language teachers.

recommendations

13

Exploit new technologies to the full

The national strategy for languages should plan for full exploitation of the potential of new technologies and the explicit inclusion of languages in emerging key national ICT initiatives.

The agenda for technology should:

- 13.1 coordinate research in the field of technology and languages to ensure that the benefits of investments in one sector are widely felt beyond that sector;
- 13.2 move technology from the margins to the core of language learning;
- 13.3 allocate funds for the intensive development of existing pioneering work relating to online teaching and learning;
- 13.4 ensure that graduates in languages are fully prepared for the information society, and capable of accessing and making intelligent use of language technologies;
- 13.5 encourage national organisations, public service media and local providers to collaborate to provide a high quality nation-wide range of flexible language learning opportunities for adults;
- 13.6 ensure that the provision and management of ICT facilities in schools and colleges allow their benefits for language learning to be experienced to the full;
- 13.7 offer incentives to schools and colleges to collaborate to ensure maximum use across all sectors of equipment and facilities, and to make services such as online tutorials by expert teachers available to networked partner institutions.

14

Ensure policy is reliably and consistently informed

In order to provide an effective basis for monitoring and planning provision the government should establish a prioritised research and development agenda for languages and improve the present arrangements for the gathering of statistical information on languages in the successive stages of education and training.

The research and development agenda for languages should:

- 14.1 ensure priorities are aligned with the national strategy for languages;
- 14.2 clarify and where necessary adjust the remit of agencies and organisations with national responsibilities for funding and undertaking research, and for collecting and disseminating data in the languages field;
- 14.3 specify key areas for attention in language teaching and learning, such as autonomous learning, the use of technology, education in languages in the early learning and post-compulsory sectors, student motivation, language acquisition, and assessment;
- 14.4 include research in intercultural communication, language engineering, pure and applied linguistics, translating and interpreting, language use in business;
- 14.5 focus on particular issues for first-language English speakers in using English with non-native speakers;
- 14.6 network and disseminate existing expertise and experience in the teaching and learning of the UK's indigenous and community languages;
- 14.7 merge existing information on training providers with other regional information services to provide a comprehensive information source;
- 14.8 reward partnerships which bring together research expertise and teacher participation.

15

Establish a national standards framework for languages

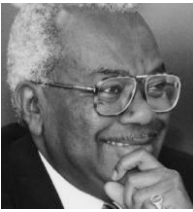
The government should make arrangements for the development of a national framework to define levels of language competence and provide a set of robust grade descriptors for levels of attainment to which all language qualifications should be connected.

The national standards framework should:

- 15.1 be based on the Council of Europe Framework and take account where appropriate of the existing UK National (Vocational) Language Standards;
- 15.2 ensure ease of understanding of the levels of achievement represented by qualifications in the school system, further and higher education, lifelong learning and employment;
- 15.3 be couched in terms which are intelligible to non-specialist users;
- 15.4 enable employers to extrapolate from qualifications what an individual can actually do and to predict language capability;
- 15.5 give public recognition to basic language skills of the sort which, while falling short of existing qualification requirements, allow learners to get on to the ladder of success in language learning;
- 15.6 be flexible enough to recognise partial competences.

Appendices

MEMBERS OF THE inquiry



Sir Trevor McDonald is universally recognised as Britain's most popular and respected newscaster. He started his television career in his native Trinidad in 1962, and joined ITN in 1973, from the BBC World Service. His extensive international experience, and his love of cricket and of poetry, have won him many admirers. He is Chancellor of the South Bank University and has honorary doctorates from a number of universities.

Sir John Boyd studied modern languages at Cambridge and Chinese at Yale before joining the British Diplomatic Service. He spent eight years in East Asia, ending as Ambassador in Tokyo. He is now Master of Churchill College, Cambridge. He is also a Trustee of the British Museum and served as Vice-Chairman of the Asia-Europe Vision Group.



Alan Moys has spent his whole career in the field of languages education, with teaching experience in schools, further education and teacher training. He also served as a local authority languages adviser in Derbyshire before moving to CILT as Deputy Director and then as Director. Since his 'retirement' in 1992 he has continued his work as a writer and as an OFSTED inspector. He is currently President of the National Association of Language Advisers (NALA).

Sir Leonard Appleyard is Vice Chairman of Barclays Capital. He has spent most of his career in the Diplomatic Service, including postings as Ambassador in Hungary and China, and in the Treasury and Cabinet Office as Deputy Cabinet Secretary. He speaks Chinese, Russian, Hungarian and French, and has an honours degree in Classical Chinese.



Rosemary Calthorpe works for Marks and Spencer. She has worked in a number of areas within the business covering Buying, Operations and Personnel. Part of her responsibilities has been the career management of M&S people overseas, and the skills needed to take on such assignments, including language requirements.

Professor Glynn Cochrane is Rio Tinto's Group Adviser for Community Relations. Prior to joining Rio Tinto, he was a Professor of Anthropology and worked for the World Bank. He has lived in Asia, Africa, the Pacific and Latin America.



Peter Downes taught languages in grammar and comprehensive schools and was a Headteacher for 21 years. Formerly President of the Secondary Heads Association, he is now a consultant, specialising in education funding and modern languages. President of the Association for Language Learning (1999–2000), he was awarded the OBE in 1998 for 'services to language teaching and educational management'.



Professor Michael Kelly is Professor of French at the University of Southampton. He was founding Chair of the University Council of Modern Languages, and chairs the Coordinating Group for Languages of the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning. He is the first Director of the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies recently established to serve higher education.

Alwena Lamping has wide-ranging experience of working with languages in education, industry, public services and publishing. She has produced a variety of learning materials for the BBC in Italian, Welsh and English and now works as a freelance author, editor, broadcaster and consultant, specialising in adult language learning.



Frank Pignatelli is Chief Executive of the Scottish University for Industry and honorary president of the Scottish Association for Language Teaching. Following 26 years in the public sector in Scotland, first as a teacher of modern languages and latterly as executive director of Strathclyde's education service, he moved to the private sector. Before taking up his present post he was Chief Executive of Scottish Business in the Community.

Jessica Rawson has been Warden of Merton College since 1994. Dr Rawson worked in the British Museum for 25 years prior to moving to Oxford. Her area of research is Chinese archaeology. She was Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiquities at the Museum from 1987 to 1994. In 1990 she was elected a Fellow of the British Academy and she was awarded a CBE in 1994.



Kathy Wicksteed has taught languages in comprehensive schools, adult education and sixth form colleges. She was an inspector for Hampshire County Council from 1994 to 1997, then director of the International Centre at Campion School, Northamptonshire, a specialist Language College. She is now Language College Adviser for the Technology Colleges Trust.

Hugh Morgan Williams is a leading businessman in the north of England. Chairman of Canford Group, which has won many awards for its linguistic and cultural strategy, he is also a director of a number of other businesses, as well as a board member of One North East. He chairs the Languages National Training Organisation, and is a former CBI chairman for the north east region.



CONTRIBUTORS:

individuals

Ainslie, Ms S
Anderson, Dr N G
Anon (Brussels)
Arrowsmith, Mr R
Arthur, Ms L
Ashby, Ms N
Ashton, Ms G
Ball, Ms L
Barrett, Mr P
Bates, Mr D
Bearne, Mr C
Benford, Mr M
Bennett, Dr W A
Bishop, Mr G
Blarser, J
Bond, Ms D
Bonnyman, Mr D M
Brackley, Ms L
Bradford, Mr R
Bremer, Ms Z
Briere, Mr L
Bristow, Ms W
Buckby, Mr M
Byram, Mr M
Carr, Mr P
Chadwick, Ms D
Clark, Mr D
Cole, Mr J
Coleman, Professor J
Corcut, Mrs A
Coyle, Miss D
Crockett, Mr P
Cross, Mr G
Davis, Mr S B
De Caux, Mrs B
Deere-Jones, Mr A
Dickinson, Ms A
Didiot-Cook, Mr H
Dugard, Ms C
Duhn, Ms J
Dunn, Ms M
Dupont, Mr P
Ellis, Mr C
Embleton, Mr D
Esch, Ms E
Eustace, Mr P
Eustace, Ms E
Evans, Mrs H
Fairfax, Ms S
Fell, Ms C
Field-Smith, Col R
Fisher, Mr D
Footitt, Ms H
Gonzalez, Mr H W
Goodman, Mr A
Gordon, Mr M
Greensmith, Dr C
Hacking, Mr J
Harrison, Mr G
Hawkins, Professor E
Head, Professor D
Heafford, Mr M
Henry, Miss V
Hilditch, Ms M
Hilliard, Mr K F
Hobson, Ms M E
Holland, Ms V S
Hughes, Mrs B
Hudson, Ms C
Inman, Ms V
Jacobi, Ms M
John, Mr G
Johnstone, Professor R
Jones, Mr M P
Jones, Mr T
Joseph, Mr M
Jump, Mr M
Keenan, Mr J B
Kelly, Mr B
Keunsberg, Mr N
Kirkup, Mr A J
Kurd, Ms M
Kyeremeh, Mr M
Lack, Ms E M
Lamb, Mr T
Lang, Professor M
Leech, Ms A
Lehmann, Mr J
Le Ny, Mrs F
Lockhart, Mr L B
Low, Mr G
MackKichan, Mr P
Maguire, Mrs R
Martin-Jones, Professor M
Massy-Beresford, Mr C
Mawji, J
McAllister, Mr J
McColl, Ms H
McKechnie, Mr I
McKendry, Dr E
McMillan, Ms K
Meacher, Mr D
Middleton, Mr C
Mills, Mr J
Moore, Mr P
Moore, Ms C
Morey, Ms L
Morgan, Mr A
Mughan, Mr T
Munro, Ms S
Mutton, Mr T
Naysmith, Mr J
Newton, Mr R W
Nicholls, Ms V
Norbrook, Mr H
Norman, Mr N
Nott, Mr D
ó Mearáin, Mr B
O'Neal, Ms C
Orpwood, Ms F
Ostarhild, Ms E
Ostler, Mr N
Page, Mr B
Parker, Ms L
Paxton, Mr W
Peakman, Ms C
Picken, Ms C
Pilkington, Ms R
Potter, Mrs S
Prys Jones, Mr M
Pugh, Mr M
Purves, Mr M
Rankin, Dr J
Rees, Mrs P
Reeves, Professor N B
Rendall, Ms H
Richards, Ms C M
Rollin, Ms H
Roundtree, Ms S
Rudlin, Mr P
Satchwell, Mr P
Savage, Mr R
Shackleton, Ms C
Shields, Ms L
Shirley, Mr J
Siberry, Mrs L
Skelton, Ms J
Slater, Mr M
Smith, Dr G W
Smith, Mr J
Smith, Mr R
Smith, Mr S
Sneyd, Mr S
Spencer, Mr S
Spencer, Professor J
Starkey, Mr H
Swanston, Ms A
Tait, Mr A
Thomas, Ms P
Thunder, Mr M
Toogood, Mr G
Tranter, Mr A
Trim, Mr J
Tyldesley, Mr N J
Varnava, Mr G
Verlander, Mr R
Vorstman, Mr S M
Walmsley, Professor J
Ward, Mrs S
Wei, Professor L
Wickham, Ms T
Wilson, Mr J
Wolf, Ms A
Wolf, Ms N
Womack, Mr M
Wylie, Ms A C
York, Professor R

CONTRIBUTORS: organisations

Allied Distillers Ltd	Comannan Luchd Ionnsachaidh	Invest in Britain	Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc
Anderson High School, Shetland Islands, Council	Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the UK	Japan Foundation Endowment Committee	Royal College of Nursing
Anglia University	Confederation of British Industry	Jolie Ronde	Scotch Quality Beef & Lamb Association Ltd
Anglo European School & International Baccalaureate Schools & Colleges Association	Conference of University Teachers of German in Great Britain and Ireland	Jose Cuervo Tequila, Diageo plc	Scottish & Newcastle plc
Anthony Roper County Primary School, Kent	Conversation Piece	Kent Local Education Authority	Scottish Airports Limited, Glasgow
Ashford (Kent) Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People	Lancaster University, Centre for Study of Education	Scottish Association for Language Teaching (SALT)
Association for Language Learning (ALL)	Cumbernauld High School	Language Bank, Melville Craig Group	Scottish Council for Research in Education
Association for Language Learning Dutch Committee	Cumbria Local Education Authority	Language Business	Scottish Tourist Board
Association for Language Learning Essex & East Anglia Branch	DHL Worldwide	Languages National Training Organisation	Securities Institute
Association for Language Learning Russian Committee	Diageo	Lara Project, Oxford Brookes University	Sheffield Multilingual City
Association for Low Countries Studies	Downes Church of England Primary School, Kent	Leeds Bradford International Airport	Siemens plc
Association for the Study of German Politics	Dr Challoner's School, Buckingham	Leeds City Council	S J Berwin & Co
Association of British Insurers	Dromona	Leeds Local Education Authority	Society for Italian Studies
Astor School	Dundee Business School, University of Abertay	Leeds Metropolitan University	Solvay Interox
AstraZeneca	Durham Local Education Authority	Linguistics Association of Great Britain	Standard Life
Barclays Bank plc	Edexcel Foundation	Local Government Association	Standing Conference of Heads of Modern Languages in Universities
BBC Education	Edinburgh Business Development Ltd	Logica International Limited	Taylor Vinters, Solicitors
Bedfordshire County Local Education Authority	Educational Publishers Council	London Business School	The Farmers' Club
Bell College of Technology	EMI Music Publishing	London Chamber of Commerce & Industry	The Guardian & Observer Newspapers
Biscuit, Cake, Chocolate and Confectionery Alliance	Ennismore Partnership Ltd	London Medicine	The Institute of Export
Bishop Heber County High School, Language College, Cheshire	Esperanto Teachers Association	Luton Sixth Form College	The Queen's University of Belfast, School of Modern Languages
BP Amoco	Ethicon Limited	Malvern Colleges	The Scottish Council for Development & Industry
British Aerospace	Eurocall	Marks & Spencer plc	Travel Santafe
British Airports Authority	Eurotunnel	Mary Glasgow Language Trust	UMIST, Chemistry with Language
British Association for Japanese as a Foreign Language	Export Advisory Services	MCG Staffing Group	UMIST, Language Engineering
British Association for Japanese Studies	Extech Computer Services	MediDesk	University College London, Faculty of Arts & Humanities
British Association for Slavonic & East European Studies	Financial Services Authority	Ministry of Defence	University Council of Modern Languages
British Council	Fitzalan School, Cardiff	Middlesex University	University of Bath, Foreign Languages Centre
British Invisibles	Food from Britain	Midlands Electricity	University of Birmingham, Modern Languages Unit
British Telecom plc	Ford Motor Company	Moray House College	University of Bristol Language Centre
British Tourist Authority	Forth Valley Education Business Partnership	Morrison Construction Group plc	University of Cambridge, Faculty of Oriental Studies
Burgon (Eyemouth) Ltd	Foundation for Endangered Languages	Motherwell College	University of Central Lancashire
Cabinet Office, Fast Stream & European Staffing Division	Glasgow City Council, Education Department	National Association of Language Advisers (NALA)	University of Durham Dept of East Asian Studies
Canning House	Goethe Institut	National Council for Development of Urdu	University of Greenwich
Cap Gemini UK plc	Gravesend Grammar School for Girls	National Farmers Union	University of Leicester, School of Modern Languages
Cardiff Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Harland & Wolff	National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs	University of London, Institute of Education
Cavewood Ltd	Harlow College	North East Wales Network Group	University of London, School of Oriental & African Studies
Centre for Information on Language Teaching & Research (CILT)	Harris Academy	North Yorkshire County Council	University of London, School of Slavonic & East European Studies
CILT Advisory Group on Research	Home-Grown Cereals Authority	Nottingham University, Language Centre	University of Portsmouth
CILT Community Languages Group	HSBC Holdings	Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust	University of Southampton, Centre for Language in Education
CILT Primary Languages Network	IBM UK Ltd	Open University, Centre for Modern Languages	University of Wales, Aberystwyth
CILT Teacher Training Working Group	Institut Français, Post Graduate Diploma Course	Oxford Brookes University, School of Languages	University of Wales, Bangor
China-Britain Business Council	Institute of Directors	Oxford University Press	Virgin Atlantic
Comann Ceilteach Oilthigh Dhùn Éideann	Institute of Directors, Scotland	Penguin Books	Warrington Borough Council
	Institute of Linguists	Philological Society	Welsh Language Board
	Interman	Pilkington	West Cheshire College
	International Circles	Professional Association of Teachers Qualifications & Curriculum Authority	
	International Institute for Management Development	Reuters Ltd	
	International Management Group UK Inc.	Roberts-Gordon Europe Ltd	
	International Trade Development	Royal & Sun Alliance	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

acknowledgements

The Chairmen, Inquiry members and Secretary are deeply indebted to all those who have enriched the work of the Inquiry, and wish to express their gratitude to:

- The Trustees and the Director of the Nuffield Foundation for their guidance, encouragement and unstinting material support;
- Frances Marcus and Stephanie Young for their effective and resilient administrative organisation of the Secretariat;
- Evelyn and Jez Pellow of Enabling Concepts, for their public relations services;
- David Graddol and Margaret Keeton and The English Company (UK) Ltd, for their production of the consultative report, the final report, the CD-ROM, and for the organisation of the *OnLine Inquiry*;
- Joan Keevill, for developing and maintaining the Inquiry's website;
- Judith Hamilton and Gordon Harrison, for their conduct of the survey of employers' views;
- Stephen Jones, Stephen Hagen, David Graddol, Peter Boaks, Richard Towell and Pauline Swanton, for writing the principal sections of *Where are we going with languages?*;
- CILT, and its partner organisations in other parts of the UK, for the provision of extensive information support;
- The Association for Language Learning (ALL), the Scottish Association for Language Learning (SALT) and the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML) for their consistent support in raising the profile of the Inquiry's work;
- FEDA (the Further Education Development Agency) for mapping further education provision for languages;
- NIACE (the National Organisation for Adult Learning) for their survey of the languages adults speak in Great Britain;
- the observers from government departments and agencies, for their advice and guidance both at and outside meetings;
- the press and broadcast media for their consistent interest in and coverage of the Inquiry's work;
- and the many individuals and organisations who gave their views to the Inquiry, whether in the form of written evidence, or as expert witnesses, or at the many conferences and consultative meetings around the UK over the past two years.