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Modern foreign languages to 16

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Modern foreign languages to 16

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Department of Education and Science

Modern foreign languages to 16

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Preface

This is the eighth in HM Inspectorate's discussion series *Curriculum Matters* and sets out a framework within which schools might develop a programme for the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages appropriate to their pupils.

The document focuses on the aims and objectives which might guide foreign language learning to the age of 16. It considers planning and organisation, teaching approaches, and progression in learning and assessment.

Like all other papers in this series, *Modern foreign languages to 16* is a discussion document and the Inspectorate will welcome comments and suggestions on it and on the issues it raises.

Please send your comments to the Staff Inspector for Modern Languages, Department of Education and Science, York Road, London SE1 7PH by 31 August 1987.

This publication has been widely distributed to schools and LEAs.

EJ BOLTON
 Senior Chief Inspector

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It is essential that this document should be read as a whole, since all sections are interrelated. For example, the lists of objectives must be seen in relation to the defined aims and to what is said about the principles of teaching and assessment.

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Introduction

1. The policy statement *Foreign languages in the school curriculum* was published in draft in June 1986 by the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Wales. It was the outcome of extensive consultation. It recommends reappraisal of foreign language provision in schools and in particular higher standards, a more balanced range of language provision, and the learning of a foreign language by the majority of pupils for the five compulsory secondary years.

Implementation of these policies requires local education authorities (LEAs), governing bodies and heads to prepare and implement policies for foreign language teaching in schools, and teachers of foreign languages and teacher training institutions to take steps which will increase the effectiveness of their work.

2. The educational and cultural policies of the European Community and of the Council of Europe strongly support the study of foreign languages, recognising their contribution to furthering mutual understanding between members. In the world of business and exports, the British Overseas Trade Board (BOTB) has drawn attention to the importance of conducting negotiations in the language of the customer, and industry and commerce are displaying a growing awareness of the value of foreign language skills.

3. Since the 1960s there has been a considerable expansion of the numbers and ability-range of pupils studying a foreign language and, following continental practice, a shift of emphasis towards the use of the spoken language. Significant numbers of British citizens fluent in other languages as well as in English have become part of our society and the British are more aware than ever before of linguistic variety and of the possibility of communicating in more than one language. A foreign language, usually French, is now normally part of the curriculum for pupils across the whole range of ability between the ages of 11 and 14.

4. This HMI document considers in more detail the aims, objectives, methodology, assessment and organisation of the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages during the period of compulsory education. It takes as its guiding principle that learning a foreign language should be primarily a matter of using it for communication. In this way language learning

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serves both educational and practical purposes, and successful learning will enable pupils to use what they have learned for communication with native speakers of the foreign language according to their individual needs and competence.

5. The paper seeks to provide a basis for discussion. It is intended not only for specialist teachers of foreign languages in schools but also for heads, curriculum designers, governing bodies, LEA members and officers, higher education, parents and all others with an interest in foreign language learning in this country.

The contribution of modern foreign languages to the curriculum

6. The experience of learning and using a foreign language makes its unique contribution to the curriculum by taking pupils out of the familiar environment which is pervaded by English and allowing them to explore the life-style and culture of other lands through the medium of their languages. It can give the learner the experience of entering a foreign environment and existing within it. Coping for a while with a different linguistic medium, whether in the classroom or a foreign country, can be a liberating, enjoyable and intellectually challenging experience.

7. A foreign language, well taught, makes an important contribution to learning generally. In language and literature it teaches the learner to attend to the meaning of words and sentences, to recognise differences in concepts and usage and develop an awareness of the nature of language. Reading foreign literature for enjoyment can increase pupils' sensitivity to the sounds and rhythms of the language as well as introducing them to ideas and images.

8. In the human and social areas of experience, learning a language promotes social interaction within and beyond the classroom. It fosters sympathetic but not uncritical attitudes towards the people of the foreign country, helping pupils to

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appreciate their culture, understand their concerns, respect their opinions and accept them as they are. Such attitudes help to promote goodwill and to counter insularity and prejudice.

9. Effective learning of a foreign language provides many opportunities, through a different medium, for pupils to develop their skills of communication by listening, speaking, reading and, to a smaller extent, writing. They practise the observational and study skills of noting detail, of comparing, selecting, extracting, interpreting and re-ordering information from various sources and of committing to memory useful material for subsequent recall. They exercise their creative and imaginative faculties by envisaging life in a different setting, putting themselves in the shoes of a foreigner and playing various roles. They improve their personal and social skills by learning to communicate, cooperating and contributing in class, considering the views of others and having to adjust to different social conventions.

10. Finally, effective foreign language learning equips pupils with a skill which is advantageous to adult life and work. Our success in industry and commerce when we are dealing with countries whose

language is not English partly depends on our willingness and ability to communicate with potential customers in their own language. Orders can be lost if we communicate only in English. Thus some pupils will later need to use a foreign language in employment, for example as lorry drivers, site foremen, hoteliers, business people, scientists or technicians. Others will want to use it for reading, travel, recreation and personal contacts, either at home or abroad. The language learnt at school will almost certainly be one normally used in a country to which there is easy access from Britain and with which contacts are likely to become ever more frequent through ease of travel. Learning this language will also provide an apprenticeship in foreign language learning, so that those pupils who in later life need or wish to acquire competence in a different language already have confidence, some idea of the objectives to be attained and some of the skills required.

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Aims and objectives

Aims

11. Given that the distinctive contribution of foreign languages to the curriculum lies above all in the linguistic and literary and in the human and social areas of experience,* the broad aims of foreign language learning are clearly twofold. The fundamental aim of foreign language teaching is to enable learners to understand and use the foreign language for communication. The extent to which these aims are fulfilled will depend mainly on the cooperation, application and general ability of the learner; on the quality of the teaching; and on the length (and intensiveness) of the course.

12. These twofold aims may be defined as follows:

a Linguistic and literary

to provide successful and enjoyable learning experiences which may encourage learners to continue their study of a foreign language or to embark on the study of a new one;

to give learners the confidence and competence to communicate at levels appropriate to their ability with native speakers of the language;

to develop efficient listening and reading skills;

to foster sensitivity to language, its forms, sounds and rhythms; to promote pleasure in the use of words and an awareness of the expressive power of language;

to develop and reinforce the skills of analysis, classification, synthesis, analogy and inference;

to provide a satisfactory linguistic basis for the study of a foreign language beyond the age of 16.

b Human and social

to increase social competence by promoting an awareness of and sensitivity to differences in social customs and behaviour;

to foster positive attitudes towards other countries and those who live in them and to counter prejudice;

to enable learners to meet foreigners in this country and to

*See *The curriculum from 5 to 16*. Curriculum Matters 2, HMSO, 1985, paragraph 33.

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travel abroad with confidence, enjoyment, interest and advantage;

to awaken an interest in foreign cultures and life-styles and to foster a willingness to see one's culture in a broader context;

to develop a capacity for understanding and accepting the unfamiliar;

to encourage tolerance and a willingness to work together.

Unlike the linguistic aims, the human and social aims of a language course cannot be easily converted into more specific objectives. A modern language department might set itself specific objectives in respect of pupils' opportunities to visit the foreign country or to meet native speakers of the language. It might wish to set objectives in terms of aspects of the foreign country and its civilisation with which pupils should be made familiar. It is, however, characteristic of a language course that its specific objectives - as opposed to its aims - are primarily linguistic. The importance of the human and social aims lies in their influence upon the choice of methods and materials for pursuing the linguistic objectives and their fulfilment depends on success in mastering the linguistic objectives.

Linguistic objectives

13. The linguistic objectives of foreign language learning can be conveniently expressed in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing, although in practice these skills are usually combined. For pupils up to the age of at least 16 the most practical skills are listening and speaking. For many pupils these are closely followed by reading which, in addition to providing invaluable support in the process of learning a foreign language and affording learners an opportunity of working independently at their own rate, enables them to use the language in search of factual information or to enjoy what has been written in another language. The debate about the value of the skill of writing tends to confuse writing as a means to an end with writing as an end in itself. Thus, while the majority of learners are unlikely in the long run to have much or any need to write the foreign language, it can be a useful aid to memorisation in the process of learning. For a

minority, writing can bring considerable satisfaction and is an additional means of communicating with people who do not know English.

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Expectations

14. While it is reasonable to set objectives which are within the reach of learners, it is appropriate to stress the need to set expectations sufficiently high, particularly with regard to pupils' capacity to understand and use the foreign language. It should not be assumed, for example, that less able pupils are unable to work within the foreign language; if such an assumption is made they have no chance of achieving any competence in it.

Linguistic objectives for 16 year olds

15. Linguistic objectives can be usefully formulated in terms of both the process and the outcomes of learning. To define objectives solely in terms of outcomes can result in a narrow, unrewarding learning process. The following paragraphs suggest suitable objectives for 16 year olds, indicating (i) the kinds of linguistic experience which learners should have undergone and (ii) what they should be able to do with the language which they have learnt.

a Listening

i. Extensive experience of hearing the foreign language used by the teacher, by native speakers where possible in this country and abroad, by recorded voices and on video. This will include listening to questions, announcements, news bulletins, interviews, dialogues and accounts, as well as hearing much spontaneous use of the foreign language by the teacher and, where possible, by native speakers.

ii. The ability, within a range of defined topic areas, to understand (a) the gist of and (b) specific details in questions, announcements, news bulletins, interviews, dialogues and accounts. Sufficient understanding to be able to initiate conversation with and respond to a tolerant native speaker on familiar everyday topics. The assumption is that the average 16 year old will have sufficient powers of comprehension to be able to manage on his or her own, at a relatively unsophisticated level, as a visitor to the foreign country, and that the less able 16 year old will be able to cope at the level of simple everyday needs.

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b Speaking

i. Extensive experience of seeking and giving genuine information; of role-play which involves taking the initiative as well as responding to questions or

instructions; of conversation with the teacher, with native speakers where possible, and with each other, using both formal and familiar modes of address.

ii. The ability, within a range of defined topic areas, to meet the needs of daily life and travel in the foreign country, in particular to ask for information; and to take part in conversations about themselves, their lives, interests, family, home, likes and dislikes, and other familiar topics. Pronunciation, intonation and stress should be such as to make speech readily comprehensible to a native speaker and there should be appropriate and comprehensible use of past, present and future tenses. The assumption made under listening about the powers of comprehension of average and less able pupils applies also to speech.

c Reading

i. Extensive experience of reading short informational texts and letters and of longer narrative and descriptive texts reflecting teenage and adult interests.

ii. The ability, within a range of defined topic areas, (a) to demonstrate understanding of street-signs, menus, timetables, advertisements, travel information, brochures and letters; and (b) to grasp the essential message of authentic texts of the kind indicated, including newspaper and magazine stories. The less able 16 year old is more likely to cope successfully with (a) than with (b).

d Writing

i. Experience of writing simple letters, accounts, messages and answers to questions.

ii. The ability to complete a form, to write simple letters and to produce written messages such as might be required, for example, to convey the content of a telephone call. This should involve the use of past, present and future tenses as appropriate and, though there may be errors of spelling, grammar and syntax, what is written should be

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comprehensible to a native reader. For less able 16 year olds, writing will not constitute an objective in itself but serve as an aid to understanding and memorisation.

Additional objectives for more able 16 year olds

16. More able 16 year olds should have experience of listening to more sophisticated examples of the spoken language, including radio and television programmes, news bulletins and interviews; they should be able to make sense of natural dialogue in spite of the distractions of background noise and hesitations on the part of speakers; to identify attitudes, emotions and ideas expressed; to draw

conclusions from the ideas in material heard; to understand a variety of styles (radio, television, home, more formal situations, young people of their own age in the foreign country); and even to make some sense of foreign humour. They should be able to converse with a measure of fluency on a wide range of familiar topics; to talk for several minutes about a hobby or interest; and to convey information, ideas, opinions and feelings. Their use of verbs should be generally correct in the normal conversational tenses, they should be able to use subordinate clauses, and they should make relatively few grammatical errors. Pronunciation, intonation and stress should have a measure of authenticity. They should be able to scan a newspaper or magazine page either to identify specific information or to acquire a general view of what is contained in it; to identify the important points or themes in an extended piece of writing; and to draw conclusions from an extended text; and they should have some skill in inferring the meaning of newly encountered words and of tenses which may be outside their productive command. They should be able, within defined topic areas, to write stories, accounts or descriptions, to state the pros and cons of an argument, and to express opinions; their command of tenses and grammar should be as for speaking.

14 year olds

17. At every stage of a course it is important that teachers and pupils should be working towards suitable objectives. The reason for singling out the age of 14 is that this is currently an age at which, regrettably, a considerable number of pupils

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choose not to continue to study a foreign language. A course of three or more years must as far as possible have a value in its own right: as an educational experience, as a foundation for language learning in the immediate or more distant future, and as providing a set of usable skills in the language learned.

Linguistic objectives for 14 year olds

18. Linguistic objectives for 14 year olds are broadly the same as for 16 year olds, differing mainly in the range of vocabulary and structures to be covered. Pupils are likely to have had some experience of using vocabulary and structures appropriate to the following topic areas, though the list is not intended to be prescriptive:

- exchanging personal information
- family and home
- pastimes and hobbies
- weather
- school
- finding their way about town
- simple shopping
- food and drink
- daily routine
- sickness and health
- the foreign country
- travelling and holidays

- staying with a family abroad

Within the framework of these topic areas, the following linguistic objectives are suggested:

a Listening

The ability to understand (i) the gist of and (ii) specific details in questions, announcements, news items, weather forecasts, dialogues and accounts.

b Speech

The ability to ask and answer questions and engage in simple conversations on the topics, with pronunciation, intonation and stress which render their speech comprehensible to a native speaker and using the most common past, present and future tenses. The use of tenses other than the present by less able 14 year olds will be more limited but they should have some competence in using a past tense, even if not entirely grammatically.

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c Reading

The ability to read common street signs and simple menus, timetables, advertisements and letters; and narrative and descriptive texts the subject matter of which is within their experience and range of interests.

d Writing

The ability to write simple letters and messages. There should be some use of past and future tenses. While there will be errors of spelling, grammar and syntax, what is written should be comprehensible to a native reader. For less able 14 year olds, writing will not be an objective in itself but will serve as an aid to memorisation in the process of learning.

Additional objectives for more able 14 year olds

19. More able 14 year olds should be able to understand the essential points of dialogues and accounts spoken by native speakers. They should be capable of expressing themselves relatively accurately in past, present and future tenses and their pronunciation, intonation and stress should have a measure of authenticity. They should be acquiring rapid reading skills which enable them to understand the main events in an extended narrative and to pick out the essential facts in an informational text. Using the tenses already specified for speech, they should be able to write simple narratives, descriptions, letters and messages with few grammatical errors. It is assumed that their competence in the four skills will be largely within the framework of the listed topics, though more extended listening and reading may widen this range.

Teaching and learning: general principles

a The scheme of work

20. If successful teaching and learning of a foreign language are to take place within the inevitable constraints of the school timetable and classroom, an overall strategy is needed which the

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modern language department will implement throughout the course. Teachers need to have clear aims, agreed methods and appropriate expectations of pupils of differing abilities. For these purposes a scheme of work is an essential tool. It defines the agreed aims and objectives for all stages and abilities, gives guidance on appropriate methods and on the use of resources, and sets out the policy for assessment. As it is a working document the policies which it contains should be reflected in classroom practice. A scheme of work needs to be revised regularly through reviews of practice and consultation within the department, procedures which provide valuable opportunities for the involvement and professional development of all its members.

b Use of the foreign language in the classroom

21. Maximum exposure to and involvement in spoken and written language within the pupils' grasp are the basis of effective learning and make the most efficient use of the limited time available. In the classroom the foreign language should be the natural medium for teaching and learning. It should be constantly heard and used for general instructions, for conveying the content of the lesson, for practising specific skills and for communication between pupils or with the teacher. Teachers need to have at their command a repertoire of techniques which enable them to use the foreign language without constant recourse to English.

c Differentiation

22. The ability of pupils within a single class is likely to vary considerably, even when they have been placed in ability sets. The problem is both to expect high standards of all pupils and to ensure that all achieve a sense of well earned success. If the same demands are made upon all and a level suited to the average is aimed at, the abler pupils will achieve less than they should and the less able are likely to experience constant failure. In language learning this is particularly the case with written tasks, so that teachers need to vary, extend or simplify such tasks according to individual needs. Silent reading can be easily organised so that pupils work at an appropriate pace and level and, when appropriate equipment and recorded material are available, this is also possible with listening tasks. Much listening and speaking and some reading, however, necessarily engage the whole class simultaneously and in such situations different levels of response should be expected: individual

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pupils need to be challenged to comprehend and speak in whatever detail and with whatever complexity are appropriate to their ability. A prerequisite for differentiation is that the teacher is fully aware, through personal observation as well as school and departmental records, of the differing individual abilities within the class.

d Confidence and correction

23. Good classroom relationships, mutual respect and humour have a particular importance in language learning based on communication. Encouragement, tolerance and the avoidance of destructive criticism on the part of the teacher are essential if language learning is to be effective. This applies both to what pupils are trying to say and to the standards of grammatical accuracy and pronunciation which they manage to achieve. On the other hand, helpful correction of pupils' linguistic expression is also necessary, ranging from the incidental amendment of an oral statement to the detailed correction of a written task. It may be useful to distinguish between practice in fluency and practice in accuracy. When fluency is the objective, pupils should not be distracted from expressing themselves by frequent or lengthy interruptions for correction.

e Participation

24. Pupils learn better when they are actively involved. Practice in using the language is therefore more important than receiving information about it. For sufficient oral practice to be possible it is essential that frequent tasks should be set which enable pupils to speak the foreign language in pairs or small groups. Well focused listening work which requires a response also promotes participation, as do many reading and writing tasks.

f Variety and pace

25. For the foreign language course to succeed in engaging pupils' interest, variety is required in the tasks set, in the materials used and in the form of classroom organisation; and activities need to proceed at a brisk pace. In this way the necessary reinforcement of language points is less likely to be monotonous and a balance of work in the different skills can be built into the programme.

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g Relevance and breadth

26. The most effective way of developing pupils' ability to understand the spoken language is for the teacher to use it at an appropriate level to deal with matters which are of interest and importance to the class. Similarly, encouragement for pupils to speak in the foreign language is more likely to evoke a positive response if pupils are given opportunities to make statements and to ask and answer questions on matters important to themselves rather than only about subjects determined by the textbook or the teacher. The subject-matter should reflect the interests of pupils of similar age in the foreign country. The listening and reading materials should not simply equip pupils for linguistic survival in the foreign country but should encourage

curiosity about the country and its people. Through suitable materials and activities, dealing with many aspects of life ranging from menus and shopping to human relationships, the arts and current affairs, foreign language learning can offer pupils a rich experience.

h Authenticity

27. Learning a foreign language in a school classroom has to be much more structured than the acquisition of a language in its natural environment and the process requires a certain suspension of disbelief. Although authentic circumstances requiring use of the foreign language are rarely immediately to hand in a school, the aim is nevertheless to achieve as much authenticity as possible within the constraints of the school environment by giving preference to authentic materials from the foreign country and to activities involving real communication in the classroom. Those activities which enable genuine communication to take place or which simulate it closely are the most effective. Such opportunities as are provided by the necessary business of the classroom should be fully exploited, for example counting and spelling, noting absence, apologising, introducing people, asking permission and requesting an explanation.

i Authentic materials

28. Materials are now readily available which bring authentic examples of the foreign language and way of life into the classroom and make the practice of language activities both more realistic and more interesting. Recorded audio tapes

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which form part of language courses use the voices of native speakers. Video recordings enable the natural use of language to be presented in a variety of real situations. British and foreign radio broadcasts offer authentic and enjoyable programmes for extended listening. Indeed, the wealth of radio and television broadcasts now available is an invaluable and relatively inexpensive source of help to the teacher of foreign languages.

j The foreign background

29. Both the linguistic and the social aims of foreign language teaching imply the establishment of a close connection between the classroom and the countries where the language is spoken. Pupils need to appreciate from the outset that they are not learning a language simply for use in school or to acquire a qualification but, most importantly, in order to benefit from meeting people of other countries. Background information about the way of life of the foreign country is best conveyed through a careful selection of materials in the foreign language. Whatever the value of background information conveyed in English, it contributes virtually nothing to the learning of the language and the use of English reduces the time available for exposure to the foreign language. Course books and their accompanying materials can present a vivid picture of the foreign country through a combination of printed texts, photographs and recorded speech. Video recordings make it more possible than ever before to introduce pupils to the everyday life of their contemporaries in other countries. Teachers themselves can be a

source of information in the foreign language, while a foreign language assistant or other visitor can bring a wealth of up-to-date information and material into the classroom. A link with a school abroad is a valuable way of making the foreign country a reality for young learners: it may involve the exchange of letters, magazine cuttings, tape-recorded messages and other authentic material, all of which can give rise to rewarding work in the classroom. It is clearly desirable that all pupils learning a foreign language should make one or more visits to the foreign country during their course, so that they can fully appreciate the purpose and value of learning a language. A group visit is most valuable when it is carefully prepared and when specific tasks are set which employ pupils' language skills in the foreign country. A visit abroad is likely to be of greatest value if it involves living with a family with whom contact has been previously established.

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k The classroom

30. In order to achieve interest, breadth, variety and authenticity the teacher of foreign languages needs ready access to appropriate resources. It is clearly important for audio and visual materials and equipment to be immediately to hand so that they can be used as an integral part of any normal lesson. In addition to appropriate textbooks, there should be a range of readers, magazines and newspapers on display to suit different levels of ability and pupils should be encouraged to use them regularly. A fitting atmosphere can be created through the display of such items as posters, advertisements, brochures, travel timetables, maps, weather charts, signs, labels, packets, and not least the work of the pupils themselves. These can serve both as sources of information and as a visual stimulus for oral work. These requirements suggest that the teaching of foreign languages should as far as possible take place in specialist rooms. The ideal arrangement is that of a suite of two or more classrooms, each having suitable storage facilities and one an audio-visual store which can also be used as a recording studio. The rooms should be furnished with curtains or blinds and carpets, which serve not only to improve the acoustics but also to reduce noise levels, for active language learning encourages talk, drama, singing and movement. This emphasis on active learning also makes it desirable for the classrooms to be furnished with light tables and chairs which can be easily moved to make room for dramatic activities. Since oral communication is the most important classroom activity, the arrangement of desks or tables should allow pupils to see whoever is speaking and to talk to each other in small groups.

l The treatment of grammar

31. Most pupils can master and recall structures best if they encounter and use them regularly in a variety of realistic contexts. When sufficient language has been presented to learners in meaningful and usable phrases, pupils of all abilities can become aware of the structures underlying these phrases. The systematic learning and practising of sentence patterns, verb forms, case endings and the like help to consolidate the acquisition of language, provided that these activities are not given undue emphasis and that the structures are

constantly reintroduced into language work which entails genuine communication. A distinction can be made between the practising

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of structures and the learning of grammatical rules. All learners of a language need to practise structures but the extent to which the concepts and generalisations of grammar are helpful to pupils varies according to their ability and motivation. Able pupils will find occasional grammatical analysis of value and are likely to be stimulated by deducing rules from examples; others may be helped by a simple generalisation from time to time; often it is enough simply to indicate that 'this is what they say' in the country concerned. Grammatical analysis can be easily over-emphasised and is then liable, with pupils of all abilities, to result in loss of interest in the foreign language and excessive exposure to English. The essential requirement is for pupils to be able to re-use the language which they have learnt. In the initial stages, the grammar should remain in the mind of the teacher, though implicit in the language structures which the teacher presents. As learning progresses, the underlying linguistic concepts may be made explicit to an extent which varies according to the abilities and motivation of the pupils. Even when the focus of the work is on grammar, it is frequently possible and desirable to avoid the use of English: the presentation of selected examples in the foreign language can often make clear how a structure is formed and used.

m Translation

32. From the outset pupils need to understand and experience, without recourse to their native tongue, what utterances in the foreign language signify to speakers of that language. The chief disadvantage of translation as a means of language learning is that it militates against this and encourages pupils to think in terms of word-for-word equivalences unrelated to context. The translation approach can inhibit rapid comprehension and fluent expression. Translation into the foreign language tends to focus learners' attention upon what they do not know instead of encouraging them to adapt and make use of what they do know. Methods which avoid translation have been devised both for checking comprehension of the foreign language and for rehearsing its structures. Oral and written translation are skills required in some professional occupations, but the prerequisite for this type of work is a good grasp of each of the languages concerned. On the whole, in language learning up to the age of 16, it is best to avoid methods involving translation.

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n Vocabulary and idiom

33. Familiarity with a range of vocabulary is essential to confidence in using a language and a systematic approach to its acquisition is needed. The distinction made between structure and idiom is often artificial: many structures can simply be learned as idiom. Use of the conditional tense, for example, is frequently acquired by learning whole phrases without an exhaustive study of paradigms and rules.

The significance of context cannot be over-emphasised: words are more likely to stick in the memory if they are first encountered and then learned as part of a meaningful phrase in an easily understood situation. Retention of vocabulary and idiom for any length of time is for many pupils a major problem and a planned cycle of reintroduction in different situations is essential. It needs to be recognised that extended reading and listening have a vital part to play in the building and consolidation of pupils' vocabulary and that much learning can take place subconsciously. Nevertheless, there is a place for systematic learning of vocabulary and idiom in any language course. Pupils should be encouraged to note and learn whole phrases as well as isolated words. There are many ways of following up learning work other than the traditional vocabulary test: for example, pupils can be asked to supply the words and phrases which answer questions, fit definitions, or fill gaps in a familiar text; or they can be asked to list the new phrases which they have encountered in the past week. By such methods pupils can be brought not only to attend carefully to linguistic detail but also to relate words to their context and to take some responsibility for their own learning.

o Progression

34. Progression in language learning implies an increasing range of vocabulary and complexity of structures and a developing confidence in the use of the language. The rate of learning will vary according to pupils' aptitudes and interests but all pupils should be conscious of making headway. There is little progression if pupils simply move from one topic to another at the same linguistic level or if they learn phrases parrot-fashion without being able to modify them or to use them in different contexts. Since effective progression requires among other things that the work of earlier stages is recapitulated and made use of at each later stage, teachers need to be familiar with the methods and materials used by their

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colleagues over the whole of the course, so as to build upon earlier work and prepare the way for subsequent learning. Continuity of experience must be a particular concern where pupils change teacher or course book: a departmental scheme of work, transfer of records and appropriate assessment procedures can all play a part in enabling pupils to build upon what they have already learned. As the course develops, pupils will need to understand and formulate more complex statements, incorporating, for example, subordinate clauses and a wider range of tenses. The central principle governing the selection and ordering of the structures to be learnt is the increasing contribution which they can make to the ability of pupils to communicate.

Teaching and learning: activities

35. For the purpose of analysis it is often useful to consider the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing separately, as is done in the following paragraphs. In practice, however, it is normally best to plan classroom activities so as to integrate these skills, as happens

in real life. On the one hand, the ability to speak and write is best developed by imitating and adapting material which has first been heard or read; on the other, active use of a language is an excellent means of consolidating knowledge. Within this framework, oral activities need to be central at all stages and to be appropriate to the age and abilities of the pupils.

36. If it is to be successful, oral work requires a greater personal commitment from pupils than any other aspect of their work. They are more likely to make this commitment if the situations presented to them are fully understood and accepted and if the work is so structured as to ensure the maximum possible participation for each of them. First, therefore, it is important that topics should be chosen which have some intrinsic interest and maturity and that the necessary vocabulary and structures should be carefully prepared. Second, activities such as role-play, cooperative working and interaction within small groups should be a normal part of pupils' learning. All this implies close links between the four skills: for example, brief written notes may be made from an oral message and then used to pass on that message; a text that has been heard or read may be the stimulus for role-play or for an oral or written report by individuals or jointly by a group.

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37. Initially, new language will be acquired and practised in situations closely controlled by the teacher, but if pupils' confidence and skill are to grow they need progressively to move beyond this stage. This will involve them in manipulating vocabulary and structures in order to say what they want to say in contexts which engage their interest. The teacher will need to be imaginative in devising situations and tasks in which pupils feel a genuine wish to communicate and are able to do so with the linguistic means at their disposal. At times this will inevitably lead to pupils' experimenting with language. Although the teacher will naturally seek by careful planning and monitoring to minimise the risks of such experiments, it should be recognised that, especially for the more able linguists, they can be a source of fruitful learning and contribute to growing mastery of the language.

a Listening

38. The initial emphasis in learning a foreign language is best placed on comprehension of the spoken word. Listening skills need to be built up systematically from the simplest skill of recognising the sound of individual words in the foreign language and the distinctive way in which the native speaker pronounces the words, to the skill of understanding the detail and message of a sentence or sequence of sentences. Flashcards, pictures, cartoons, diagrams and real objects can contribute to understanding and the overhead projector can be a considerable asset. From the outset pupils need opportunities to grow accustomed to a variety of different voices, as is suggested in paragraphs 27 and 28 above. Where recorded texts are used, they should be recordings of speech; while speech should be clear and distinct, natural intonation and speech patterns should be the norm. In order that pupils learn to listen and do not depend for understanding on the printed word, it is good practice for them to hear new material in the first instance without the support of a printed text.

39. Pupils must come to accept the foreign language as the normal means of communication in the classroom. To this end, teachers need to use it regularly at an appropriate level. They can create and exploit opportunities to speak spontaneously, whilst using all the means at their disposal, such as simplified language, paraphrase, mime and visual material, to ensure that pupils understand them. Nevertheless, pupils need to be trained in listening skills. They require help in developing the

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ability to pick out particular pieces of information, to grasp the general sense, and occasionally to reproduce what has been said in as much detail as possible. At an early stage this may involve listening to a tape and identifying, for example, the number of speakers or the place where an event has occurred. At a more sophisticated level, pupils may be asked to pick out the major points of a news item or account so as to recapitulate the story. It is important that pupils should understand the context of the piece of language to which they are going to listen since they can find it daunting to be plunged straight into an unknown listening situation.

b Speaking

40. In the earliest stage of learning a foreign language, speaking consists largely of repetition and simple responses to questions. The ability to make statements and to ask as well as answer questions soon becomes important if there is to be true dialogue between teacher and pupil or between pupils. Opportunities to practise speech through repetition, question and answer, communication games, role-play, telephoning, and memorising and reciting dialogues and poetry should form a large part of the experience of pupils at all stages. As early as possible they should have opportunities to exercise some choice in what they say through, for example, the creation and performance of their own dialogues on the basis of those which they have been taught. At a later stage they need opportunities to respond to open-ended questions which allow them to impart information and express their own opinions in their own way; to take the initiative in dialogues and role-play; to recall facts or events which they have heard or read about; to describe people and situations; and to give short talks on topics of interest to them.

41. Oral activities need to be central to the teaching at all stages and developed progressively through the course. Role-play can be profitable and enjoyable but its success is related to how far pupils see it as contributing to their language development. As they progress, pupils need to have experience of using different styles of language. Some kinds of speech are concerned with carrying out transactions and imparting information. Others have a social purpose and are concerned with interaction between young people, between young people and adults, between friends or between strangers. All these contexts for speech have their place in the classroom and both

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the polite and familiar forms of address have to be practised. Speaking should be made as natural as possible: insistence that responses should always be in the form of complete sentences, for example, tends to inhibit spontaneous communication. On the other hand, after appropriate preparation, some pupils can be expected to speak at greater length, for example by giving unsolicited information, several items of information, or a longer explanation.

c Reading

42. Whilst speech is heard at the pace of the speaker, reading may be pursued at the pace of the reader. It is essentially a personal activity and thus lends itself to differentiation in teaching and learning. The very important practice of silent reading is the basis of the independent acquisition of vocabulary and idiom; it is also a means of reinforcing the structures of the language and of acquiring an awareness of different styles. It can usefully present the foreign background as well as being, where appropriate, the vehicle for introducing pupils to the higher levels of language, including selected examples of the foreign literature. The fact that pupils' reading ability is often at a higher level than their ability to speak or write the foreign language has clear implications for the level, complexity and authenticity of what they can be expected to read.

43. At the earliest stages of learning, reading is closely associated with language already learnt by pupils; it follows on from listening and speaking. It begins with the recognition of words and short phrases and progresses to the understanding of signs, notices, texts from the course book, and thence to reading material within the pupils' language competence.

44. Pupils need to be taught the skills of both intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading entails a detailed understanding of the whole text or of specific items within it. Extensive reading implies gist comprehension, that is identifying the general message or theme of a text without understanding every detail. Pupils need practice in extracting information from a variety of texts, including brochures, guides, timetables, advertisements, letters, stories and longer texts, both fiction and non-fiction. While it is unrealistic to expect the least able pupils to practise much extensive reading,

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average and more able pupils should be introduced to simple readers at the latest by the second year and taught to read extensively. Such reading should also form part of homework assignments.

45. The effective and progressive development of reading skills depends on the frequency with which opportunities are provided for varied reading throughout the course. If there is to be some consistency in the provision of such opportunities, modern language departments need to have a policy on reading. An effective policy will be reflected in a well structured reading scheme and the availability of a wide range of interesting materials for pupils of all ages and abilities, both within the department and in the school library. They should include, for example, fiction and reference books, teenage and other magazines, descriptive matter such as travel

information and technical literature (for example on music, motorcycles, fashion, design, sport and electronics), newspapers, short stories and cooking recipes; such items as horoscopes, weather forecasts, letters, statistical information, cartoons, drawings and photographs with captions can also be used. Pupils should be encouraged to make regular use of the departmental and school library to choose books or other material for reading at their own pace. Individual silent reading whether in school or at home is a skill which merits great emphasis.

d Writing

46. Writing does little to enhance pupils' linguistic competence unless they are carefully guided and encouraged to exploit the knowledge of the language which they have already acquired, so that what they write is largely correct. At a later stage, abler pupils may want to experiment with language, in which case the points made about oral work in paragraph 37 are relevant. An important function of writing is to reinforce language learning. At the earliest stage this will consist of copying words and phrases and short sentences which have already been heard, spoken or read. Such writing helps pupils to relate the sounds which they hear to the written forms of the language and thereby serves as an introduction to reading. Even at this stage, however, it is desirable that copying should entail some selection and discrimination on the part of pupils and not be a mindless activity. This applies, of course, also to those pupils whose writing is unlikely to go further but can usefully

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reinforce the listening, speaking and reading which are the mainstay of their course. For many pupils, independent writing of a simple kind can be introduced from the first year. If it is to be comprehensible to a native reader, it needs to be guided for a long time by the teacher rather than created by the pupil, though pupils can always be encouraged to select and order what they want to write. The varied stimuli used may be oral or written: pupils should be encouraged to re-use and re-shape material which they have heard, read and discussed and, where possible, to write from their own point of view. Written tasks should as far as possible have some intrinsic value, ranging from exercises which practise manipulation of the language to opportunities for pupils to communicate information and opinions for various readers, to express views and opinions of their own, and to write imaginatively. At different stages of the course and in accordance with their ability, pupils will write dialogues, short descriptions and accounts, messages, postcards, letters, longer narratives and descriptions, and essays in which, for example, they defend a position or argue a case.

e Pair and group work

47. Whereas the skills of listening, reading and writing can to some extent be developed outside the classroom, with pupils working on their own, the ability and confidence to speak in the foreign language have to be developed very largely within the classroom. For this reason opportunities need to be created in virtually all language lessons for reinforcing the oral skill. The fact that development of this

skill also involves practice of other skills, particularly of listening comprehension, makes it all the more desirable that pupils should have opportunities to work in twos or threes for some of the time, in order to experience the reality of communicating with others in the foreign language.

48. This method of working has two main advantages. First, pupils have much greater opportunity for oral practice than in work with the whole class and the addition of even a third member expands the range of possible activities. Second, teachers are freed from their position at the front of the class and are able to move around the room and to relate the work more closely to the abilities of pupils, supporting and encouraging the less confident and extending the more able.

49. Pupils need to be clear about the objectives of these

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activities and to have the command of language required to carry them out. These imply prior preparation by the teacher working with the whole class. It is worth stressing at this point that almost every activity undertaken by the teacher with the whole class can be developed with benefit by brisk periods of work in pairs or groups. At an elementary stage much of this work may consist of opportunities for pupils working in twos or threes to practise simple dialogues. These can provide opportunities for development into sketches in which pupils combine and re-create the dialogues which they know.

50. Sketches can be highly motivating, although as a general rule group-work is of little value unless the exchanges between pupils are confined to the foreign language. One way of obviating the need for English is through the use of cue-cards with symbols instead of words in order to stimulate dialogue. At a more advanced stage, sketches can be developed out of the exploitation of texts which have been previously studied and used as a basis for language development. Such texts give pupils opportunities to interpret roles and use language in more sophisticated ways, but careful preparation may still be needed to ensure that they have a full understanding of the situation and of the language needed. Well prepared playlets and sketches devised and enacted by pupils can provide strong reinforcement for language learning.

f Homework

51. Given the importance of using class time for oral work under the guidance of the teacher, much of the reading and writing and some of the listening may better be done as homework. At home, for example, pupils can memorise a dialogue; create their own playlets; correspond with penfriends; learn poetry and songs; read books and magazines; and listen to cassette recordings or radio broadcasts and watch television programmes in the foreign language. Independent work with a reader or cassette recorder may often be more valuable than learning a vocabulary list. Nevertheless, some learning by heart, including passages of prose and verse, can be a valuable activity.

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Assessment

52. Modern language departments need to have an agreed policy on the purpose and practice of assessment, resulting in a common approach to the recording and use of information on pupils' progress. The purpose of assessment should not be confined to providing the evidence for determining teaching-groups and predicting likely performance in examinations. Assessment has three important functions. The first is to ascertain the extent to which teaching and learning objectives are being met. The second, a diagnostic function, is to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in order to guide subsequent teaching and learning. The third function is to motivate pupils by giving them a regular sense of achievement and to make their parents aware of their progress. In establishing its policy, the modern language department will need to decide on the nature and extent of the assessment to be undertaken. For example, the balance between end-of-term assessment and course work, the marking policy and the procedure for transmitting results to pupils and parents have to be determined.

53. Since assessment needs to be concerned with what is taught, it is essential that all language skills are assessed. The fact that it is less easy to assess oral than writing skills, for example, should not prevent this from happening. Pupils' skills in extensive and intensive listening and reading, their ability to respond and to show initiative in speaking and, where appropriate, their command of the written language should all be assessed.

54. External examinations and the techniques of assessment adopted by schools tend to influence what is taught and how it is taught. An example of this is the use of English in testing listening and reading comprehension and even certain aspects of oral work such as role-play. In the best practice, tests and styles of testing reflect what has been taught; the curricular objectives come first. It is best to avoid assessment procedures which lead to excessive use of English in the classroom or to any narrowing of classroom activities. Where techniques of assessment require a wide range of materials, encourage imaginative approaches in which the different language skills are combined and promote the maximum use of the foreign language, the effect of assessment on classroom practice is likely to be beneficial.

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55. Informal assessment in an encouraging atmosphere helps to build up confidence and is often preferable to formal testing which, moreover, can be very time-consuming, particularly where oral skills are concerned. It may be preferable not to test the work of the whole class at one time but to assess the work of individual pupils over a period of time in the normal course of teaching. This is especially appropriate for oral skills, where a dialogue acted out in pairs or a discussion within a group or, indeed, responses to the teacher's questions can form the basis for assessment and can be noted by the teacher in the course of a lesson. Such informal assessment is effective provided that the criteria used are clearly formulated and that pupils and their parents are aware of them and understand them. A prerequisite for assessment procedures of any kind, of course, is

knowledge of the basis on which marks are given; this helps pupils to become self-critical and to improve their performance.

56. In formal end-of-year assessment, which may be a combination of course work and examination, the temptation to test only those skills which can be most easily examined has to be resisted. Individual tests of oral proficiency may be time-consuming but they reflect an essential objective of foreign language teaching. A foreign language, like a science, is a practical subject and requires the assessment of the application of practical skills in context. Moreover, the fact that whole classes are being examined simultaneously does not remove the need to match assessment to the differing objectives set for pupils of differing abilities.

57. Considerable efforts are being made in foreign language teaching to define objectives more precisely in the different skills and to assess performance levels with reference to specific criteria. The introduction of graded tests of defined objectives, now widely used in schools, and the move towards criterion-referencing in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) are examples of this trend. Graded assessment schemes have led to such developments as the regular assessment of closely defined objectives, the involvement of teachers in the preparation of syllabuses, and the rewarding of positive achievements in communication. The defined objectives of graded tests, especially at the lower level, generally deal in a narrow range of language and content and are not intended to represent complete teaching syllabuses. Used well, these schemes lead to pupils assessing their own progress and they

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improve their motivation without dominating classroom activities or restricting work in the subject. Their administration should be sufficiently flexible to allow pupils to take the tests when they are ready for them.

58. The process of assessment includes teachers' marking of pupils' work. This, too, should pay attention to work in all four skills. Paragraph 23 underlines the need for correction which does not diminish confidence; in oral work, for instance, correction should be related to whether the objective at the time is accuracy or fluency. Paragraph 55 above suggests a way of assessing oral performance. The perennial problem for teachers of foreign languages is that of striking a balance between too much and too little correction. Again, the objective intended is a useful guide. Does what the pupil says or writes convey the message effectively? If so, the marking should take account of this. The main emphasis should be on pupils demonstrating what they can do and gaining credit for doing so. This is perhaps the best form of motivation.

59. The work of the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU) in monitoring pupils' performance in French, German and Spanish at 13 plus has much relevance for teachers of foreign languages. There are important lessons to be learned from a study of methods of assessment which reward pupils' achievements rather than penalising mistakes. This kind of assessment is likely to foster a sense of achievement in pupils and to sustain their motivation. There are

valuable messages, too, for teaching methods and for the tasks which pupils are set. One is that pupils are capable of understanding longer and more complex passages of language, whether in listening or reading, than those to which they are normally exposed in the first two years of foreign language learning. Another message is that pupils need more scope for applying independently what knowledge they have, for taking the initiative, and for developing useful strategies and skills. They also need opportunities for sustained conversation and for extended speaking and writing tasks. Yet another is that a communicative approach to language learning does not exclude an appropriate mastery of grammar but that grammar, like vocabulary, should be learned in context. The existing and planned publications arising from the work of the APU have much to contribute to the initial and in-service training of teachers.

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The provision of foreign languages within the curriculum

a The starting-age

60. There is no one correct age at which to begin to learn a foreign language. For largely practical reasons, however, such as the supply of suitably qualified teachers and continuity between phases, it is generally around the age of 11, when most pupils transfer to the secondary school. In middle schools there may be an earlier start if suitably qualified teachers are available. Whatever the starting-age, it is important that all pupils should be included and none allowed to abandon the course before transferring to the secondary or upper school. Receiving schools need to take account, in both their organisation and their teaching, of what incoming pupils have encountered and achieved.

b Ability grouping

61. For both educational and social reasons, most pupils are taught in mixed-ability groups when they begin to learn a foreign language. While this initial stage, which may last up to a year, is usually regarded as partly diagnostic, it is essential that teaching should cater for the differing abilities and needs of the pupils. In subsequent years, effective teaching and learning are most likely to occur where pupils are in more homogeneous teaching-groups.

c A foreign language to the age of 16

62. While most pupils in England and Wales already learn a foreign language for three years, slightly more than two-fifths continue to do so at present in the fourth and fifth years of secondary education. *Foreign languages in the school curriculum: a draft statement of policy* affirms that most pupils should study a foreign language 'throughout compulsory secondary education' (paragraph 12). The issue facing the curriculum planner is that the provision of a foreign language for most (rather than all) pupils by means of a constrained options system may create an undesirable hierarchy of subjects; on the other hand, where there is a free choice of options, the curriculum tends to become differentiated according to sex, with foreign

languages appearing to be a subject for girls, although study of languages is just as personally enriching and important for boys.

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Since the arguments for learning a foreign language apply across the ability range it is arguable that all pupils should learn at least one foreign language for the five years of compulsory secondary schooling. The inclusion of a foreign language in the common curriculum, as in other European countries, is thus a logical and desirable step.

d Courses involving background studies

63. It is common to provide courses for some pupils, generally of average or lower ability, which combine a limited amount of language work with background studies, the latter often predominating. Such courses are not to be seen as a substitute for the learning of a foreign language.

e Time-allocation

64. Many schools provide four 35-minute periods a week, or the equivalent, for the first foreign language in each year of the course and it is hard to imagine satisfactory progress given less time than this. The frequency and distribution of periods across the week are equally important: at least three evenly spaced contacts a week are desirable to facilitate continuity and the reinforcement of skills. Periods of 70 minutes are difficult to exploit fully, particularly with younger or less able pupils, and require a considerable variety of well planned activity if the interest of the learners is to be held.

f Which languages?

65. The majority of pupils currently learn French as their first foreign language. The reasons for this relate to tradition and the supply of teachers rather than to any intrinsic advantages possessed by French. Although German, Spanish and, occasionally, Italian and Russian are offered as second foreign languages, the number of pupils taking them is small and even fewer continue to study them after the age of 16. As far as the educational value of learning a foreign language is concerned, it is unimportant which language is studied. Nationally, however, there is a need for people fluent in a range of languages, particularly those of our European trading partners. Although some languages important in business, science and diplomacy are more appropriately learned in further or higher education, greater diversification in schools is desirable. Languages other than French could be introduced more frequently as first foreign languages, either on their own or as alternatives to French.

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66. A start could be made in this direction in that there is already a pool of teachers with good qualifications in languages (notably German and Spanish) which they are not at present teaching at all or on any scale. For many teachers, an in-service training programme would be needed to revive dormant language skills. It is important

that LEAs should have a policy for the provision of languages other than French: this might lead to the concentration of teachers of these languages in a smaller number of schools to make teaching of them not only practicable but cost-effective. In the meantime, where they have appropriately qualified staff, schools themselves may be able to take some initiatives, for example by changing the first foreign language, or possibly, in large schools, by dividing the new entry into two 'populations' and offering one of two first foreign languages to each.

g The second foreign language

67. In most schools it is the practice to offer the opportunity to learn an additional foreign language in the second, third or fourth year to a restricted number of pupils, usually on the basis of their achievement in the first foreign language. One of the traditional reasons for doing this has been to provide opportunities for those who wish to specialise later in languages. However, this purpose is achieved at considerable cost since a large proportion of those who begin the study of a second foreign language in the second or third year do not choose to continue with it at the age of 14. In addition, while the intention of most schools is to provide a common curriculum over the first three years, the inclusion of a second foreign language, by whatever ingenious arrangements, distorts the balance of that curriculum, and not only for those pupils who elect to take a second language. The most desirable solution seems therefore to be to offer the second foreign language from the beginning of the fourth year when option choices are made. Nevertheless, this arrangement, too, brings its own problems. In terms of public examinations, the standard required in the second foreign language is the same as for the first and a period of two years is a short time in which to achieve it without recourse to narrow objectives and restricting methods.

68. In these circumstances, LEAs and modern language departments need to look to their overall provision for foreign languages in the fourth and fifth years and beyond. For example, the skills and strategies required in language learning are the

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same for both languages; how far do modern language departments acknowledge this fact in their provision? It might be possible to include an extra period of study in the option block which includes the second foreign language. One further period per week over 40 weeks, in addition to the four periods usually allocated to the second foreign language, would mean 80 additional periods over two years. In some instances, for those pupils who intend to continue with their study of the second foreign language after the age of 16, it might be possible to delay the examination until the first year of post-16 studies. The proposal for the diversification of the first foreign language, made in paragraphs 65 and 66, combined with these suggestions for the second foreign language, offers the possibility of a wider range of languages provided in a more balanced way than at present.

h Languages of ethnic minority communities

69. This paper is concerned with the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages. In most schools the languages taught are the European languages normally studied in this country. Other languages, however, such as Urdu, Punjabi and Modern Greek also have a strong presence in the community and are already taught in a significant proportion of schools serving these communities. This section is concerned with such languages as foreign languages and does not deal with the maintenance of them as mother tongues although the two issues are closely related.

70. All British children, of whatever background, need to develop competence and confidence in understanding and using the English language. No modern foreign language should find a place in the timetable at the expense of the time required for English. Nevertheless, linguistic diversity in Britain is not new and should be regarded as a national asset. The different languages concerned may be indigenous, such as Welsh or Gaelic, or they may be the language of other minorities.

71. Where there is likely to be sufficient demand for such languages, and where it is possible to do so, they should be included in the curriculum of secondary schools and offered to all pupils. However, the organisational and pedagogical difficulties of implementing such a policy should not be underestimated. Many schools have at least some pupils whose first

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language is not English. The number of such pupils and the number of languages which they speak vary considerably, with clear implications for patterns of provision. In schools with a multiplicity of home languages other than English, the only practicable way of supporting these languages is likely to be through classes held out of school time.

72. Even where one or two languages predominate and the decision is made to offer instruction in them within the normal curriculum, the arrangements needed require careful thought. If the classes are intended for pupils who do not already speak these languages, the same considerations apply as to the learning of any other foreign language and the courses are properly the concern of the modern language department, sharing the same aims, objectives and methodology. Frequently, however, pupils in such classes already speak the language or a variant of it, perhaps without being literate in it: in these circumstances, the objectives and conduct of the course need to be substantially different, having much more in common with the teaching of English as a mother tongue. Where possible it is advisable for classes in this category to be offered as option choices in the fourth and fifth years. Classes containing both categories of learner can present the teacher with severe problems and should be avoided if at all possible.

73. It is important, as the Swann Report recommends, that responsibility for the teaching of ethnic minority languages should rest with LEA advisers for foreign languages, who should provide appropriate advice and guidance both to the schools which decide to offer such languages and to the teachers responsible for developing

the programmes of work. Such teachers should hold recognised qualifications in the languages concerned and have received appropriate professional training which takes account of the techniques needed to teach the languages. Where minority languages are the responsibility of the modern language department, teachers of them should take a full part in formulating and implementing the policy of the department.

Implementation

74. All schools are doing at least some of the things which have been recommended in this paper. Implementation of these

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recommendations depends on LEAs and governing bodies as well as on the senior management teams of schools and their modern language departments. The following is a list of requirements against which schools and departments should set their practices:

- a clear statement of the aims and objectives of foreign language teaching and of the way in which these are related to those of the school;
- an understanding of the contribution which foreign languages can make to pupils' education;
- precise linguistic objectives which match the abilities and needs of pupils of all ages;
- clear human and social aims;
- a scheme of work which deals in detail with aims, objectives, teaching methods (including use of the foreign language in the classroom), resources and assessment, and which is revised and updated regularly;
- teaching which has appropriate variety and pace, with the foreign language as the normal means of communication in the classroom and with pupils encouraged to participate and use their initiative;
- substantial use of authentic materials and exploitation of every opportunity to make language learning authentic;
- appropriate use of books, and audio-visual and other resources;
- courses characterised by differentiation and progression;
- the fulfilment by pupils of all abilities of their potential for language learning;
- assessment closely related to objectives;
- provision of foreign languages within the curriculum which matches the needs and aspirations of all pupils;
- accommodation and resources which meet the needs of the department and of the pupils.

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