



THE CAMPAIGN  
FOR LANGUAGES

## Briefing for Objective 1

### Every language valued as an asset

This will encourage policy-makers and citizens to recognise that the many languages used in the homes of UK citizens are a valuable resource for social cohesion and economic success.

#### ▪ Why every language matters

The inclusion of a broad range of languages throughout education is important to reflect the increasing diversity and mobility brought about by globalisation. There are many benefits to be reaped from support and development of the UK's 'linguistic capital': a total of 240 languages spoken in homes and communities by over 800,000 pupils in British schools.

Economic benefits derive from improved capacity for business to compete internationally using languages spoken in new and emerging markets. The UK's international political and strategic influence can be enhanced by harnessing the language skills and cultural knowledge of our population. Employers in the private, public and voluntary sector need staff whose languages and cultural knowledge reflect those of their clients – at home and overseas. Social inclusion and community cohesion benefit from recognition and enjoyment of the hundreds of languages used in homes across the UK.

The cognitive benefits of bi- and plurilingualism for individuals, including cognitive flexibility and creativity, are increasingly recognised by professionals. Positive impact on all-round academic achievement has been noted in pupils who have the opportunity to learn their first language in voluntary or mainstream schools. There are high levels of interest both from parents and pupils in the broadening of the languages offered in schools for economic reasons and to reflect the languages of the community. The confirmation of identity is also a very strong driver for 'heritage' language learners in both the mainstream and voluntary sectors.

#### ▪ Where we are now

Opportunities are limited across all phases of maintained education for pupils to learn languages other than French, German and Spanish within curriculum time.

**Only French is offered in Key Stage 2 by the large majority** of English primary schools.

**Provision at any level for Arabic, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian and Urdu** is likely to be **after school or as an enrichment option** in secondary schools.

**Pupils attending independent schools** are more than **twice as likely to have opportunities** to study other **'world languages'** as those in the maintained sector.

**Attitudes towards community languages** may mean that they are viewed as less 'difficult' or 'important' than the languages traditionally learned in British schools.

**Lack of suitable qualifications** hampers opportunities for recognition of language learning.

**Staffing is a frequently quoted constraint** on developing a wider range of languages in the curriculum, with progression routes limited for heritage languages speakers to become highly qualified linguists, including entering the teaching profession.

However, encouraging signs of commitment to build on linguistic diversity are to be found in the growing number of partnerships between maintained schools and many of the **616 complementary / supplementary schools** teaching community languages in England in February 2011.

**New models are emerging for greater flexibility in language learning**, such as facilitating language learning using teachers from other institutions, learning with peers or in tandem, intensive learning experiences and self-study.

**Innovative schools are reaching out to their communities and local employers** to support them in ensuring high levels of visibility of languages and in celebrating language learning by pupils in and beyond the school.

## ▪ **Priorities for the future**

We believe it is important to build on the work of growing numbers of complementary and maintained schools that are developing innovative models, strategies and ways of offering language teaching with culture, creativity, community and individual needs at its heart.

Our priorities to be addressed to policy-makers in government and education are:

- **Promotion of a wider range of languages** throughout education, highlighting their relevance to the economy, society, political and cultural life as well as to personal development.
- **Exploration of new approaches to pedagogy:** the potential of learning different languages for specific purposes; challenging traditional approaches to the teaching of the skills of listening, speaking and reading; and development and promoting expansion of the Languages Ladder.
- **Building bridges for curriculum development and provision:** bridging the gap between formal learning, i.e. mainstream education, and informal learning, e.g. family learning and complementary schools; and enabling collaboration between various language learning sectors, such as community, school and university.