

# Language Trends 2014/15

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# Key findings

- Impact of statutory status for languages in key stage 2
- Growing tendency to exclude some pupils from language learning
- Impact of assessment systems and performance measures – especially post 16
- Wider social attitudes

# Impact of statutory status in KS2

- 99% now say they teach a language
- 12% say they have just started
- Many schools strengthening/formalising provision
- 38% have increased resources
- But CPD and collaboration with secondary schools declining
- Secondary teachers remain sceptical

## Quotes on KS2

- *‘We are attempting to be more rigorous in assessment and that the lessons actually occur.’*
- *‘The Year 6s are not currently receiving French lessons, but will do so in the summer term once their SATs are over.’*
- *‘A particular challenge is boosting the confidence and knowledge of staff who don’t teach languages to use them ‘cross-curricularly’.’*

# Exclusion

- Disapplication of pupils in KS3 associated with socio-economic disadvantage
- Restriction of opportunities at KS4
- Gap between state and independent sectors
- Decline in alternative accreditation for lower ability

# Quotes on exclusion

- *‘Approximately 30 per cent do not study a language. They do additional literacy.’*
- *‘Some students are discouraged by leadership from studying a language as they may not get a C.’*
- *‘GCSE is too difficult for most students & the NVQ course is being discontinued. We are looking for an alternative but it’s likely that languages will no longer be compulsory at our schools as the GCSE pass rate is too low.’*

# Negative impact of assessment and performance measures

- Lack of confidence in assessment systems
- Waning influence of EBacc
- Unfair representation in *Raiseonline*
- Competition from STEM
- Financial pressures post 16



## Quotes on post 16/performance tables

- *‘Pupils find the subject hard and their main interests are English/History or maths/sciences combined with an ‘easy’ subject.’*
- *‘Our A level provision has now been discontinued completely due to low uptake. It has been deemed no longer financially viable.’*
- *‘Results and data are the most important factors in our school. If a subject is not performing as well as others, then it is in danger of being cut.’*

# Wider social attitudes

- Influencers failing to make a strong case
- Decisions being made with regard to league tables, not in wider interests of pupils

## Quotes on wider social attitudes

- *‘Pastoral staff can be quite negative about the value of languages when talking to pupils. If they did not do well in languages themselves at school, they tend to view them as unnecessary.’*
- *‘Outside pressure from parents.....and unhelpful media perceptions of languages not being useful any more or as useful as a science degree, makes it a challenge to increase take up at post 16 level.’*

# Questions

1. How can primary schools be supported to improve quality and consistency?
2. Is 'Languages for all' an obsolete concept in secondary schools?
3. What impact can we expect as a result of Progress 8, and new GCSEs/A levels?