

Consultation on (1) the
draft Order making Foreign
Languages a statutory
subject for Key Stage 2;
and (2) a proposal to
require schools teach one
or more of seven
languages at Key Stage 2

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 16 December
2012

Your comments must reach us by that date.



Department
for Education

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential. ☐

Reason for confidentiality:

Name	Bernardette Holmes on behalf of:
Organisation (if applicable)	Association for Language Learning
Address:	Association for Language Learning University of Leicester University Road Leicester LE1 7RH

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact The Department on: Telephone: 0370 000 2288

e-mail: Foreign.LANGUAGES@education.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Public Communications Unit on:

Telephone: 0370 000 2288 Or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

Please mark an X in one box below that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School	<input type="checkbox"/> Special School
<input type="checkbox"/> Academy/Free School	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subject Association	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent
<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person	<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Employer/Business Sector
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisations representing school teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Please Specify:

The Association for Language Learning is the UK's major professional association for teachers and teacher educators in Modern Languages. The association represents language teachers in primary, secondary and higher education.

1 Do you have any comments on the draft Order attached at Annex 1?

Comments:

The Association for Language Learning (ALL) strongly supports the Government's proposal to make languages at Key Stage 2 a compulsory foundation subject in the National Curriculum for England in maintained schools from September 2014. Our support is not unqualified, however, and in these comments on the draft Order, we wish to draw attention to areas requiring immediate attention and also raise a number of points for clarification.

ALL conducted a full consultation with its members in response to the first Government Consultation exercise on languages at KS2, which concluded on 28th September. We would like to reiterate that while the vast majority of ALL members including teachers and head teachers from primary and secondary schools support this initiative and believe that it is long overdue, there are serious concerns about the implementation of the new Order. These concerns relate to teacher supply, access to professional development and resources in terms of funding and curriculum time.

ALL Members strongly recommend that Government priority should be given to addressing the following key issues:

1. Recruitment of primary teachers with evidence of specialist subject knowledge in languages to a minimum of B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference, (GCSE A* - C), preferably B2, (Advanced Level);
2. Access to high quality language training for existing primary teachers who wish to develop their proficiency in languages, including access to online support;
3. A review of Initial Teacher Education for primary language specialists to provide language enrichment to B2+ on the CEFR, including the reintroduction of a period of study abroad;
4. A clarification of national expectations with regard to a recommended time allocation e.g. a minimum of one hour per week, lesson frequency, assessment requirements.

The ALL has conducted a further full consultation among its members to clarify the questions raised in relation to the draft Statutory Order and the proposed amendment to section 84(4), which will set out the meaning of a 'foreign language' for the purpose of meeting the requirements for languages in the new National Curriculum. We have comments to make with regard to the choice of languages and the definition of 'foreign languages'. These issues are developed further in section 2 (a) and (b) of this document.

2 a) Do you agree with the Government's proposal to require primary schools to teach one or more of French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Spanish or a classical language (Latin or Ancient Greek) at Key Stage 2?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

The majority of ALL respondents agree fully with the proposal to require schools to teach at least one language at Key Stage 2.

There was general consensus that it is sensible to define a list of languages that can be offered in primary schools as 'national curriculum languages' and the current list includes the most commonly taught languages in the majority of primary schools e.g. French, German, Spanish. Members recognised the strategic importance of Mandarin and some are already teaching Mandarin in their schools. There was surprise that Arabic had not been included in the list.

There was also general support for the inclusion of Ancient Languages, although this was not unequivocal. Many respondents felt that Ancient Languages should not replace the teaching of a modern and living language but could be taught as an additional language in those schools that could provide high quality teaching and could find adequate curriculum time. It was recommended that this should be a matter for individual schools, governors and parents to decide.

A significant minority of respondents, however, raised some serious and justifiable concerns over the restricted list of languages, which should be taken into consideration. These arguments are developed in Section 2(b).

There is also an urgent need for clarification of the expectations of how many languages **must** be taught in the draft Order. In the current formulation, the statutory requirement is ambiguous.

2 b) Please explain the reasons for your answer

Comments:

1. Urgent need for cross-phase cooperation

The majority of ALL respondents approved of the list of languages because it has the potential to enable strategic planning at points of transition, allowing secondary and primary clusters and networks to choose a language or languages to offer at local or sub-national level and then develop and agree progressive programmes of learning across key stages. Cross-phase cooperation led by schools could encourage greater cohesion and involve focused planning and the development of high quality and age-appropriate methodology to meet pupil needs.

However, such cooperation will require funding for professional networking and training.

2. The issue of one or more languages:

On behalf of members the Association would like to clarify the expectations of the draft Order.

- i. The majority of members fully support the Government's proposal to require schools to teach at least one modern language at Key Stage 2. Most ALL respondents working in or supporting primary schools are already teaching programmes which offer progress over four years in one language, usually in French, Spanish or German.

Question: Can we clarify that there is no expectation that schools must teach more than one foreign language and that where schools choose to offer two languages e.g. German and Latin, only one of these languages would count as the Statutory requirement and be subject to inspection by Ofsted?

- ii. Some ALL respondents work in areas of the country where local authority programmes have developed expertise in teaching a multilingual programme involving the teaching of several languages linked by a foundation of language awareness, knowledge about language and language learning strategies. The current wording of the draft Order appears to allow multilingual approaches to continue where primary schools could teach two or more languages from the approved list of seven.

Question: Can we seek clarification that in areas where multi-lingual models are working effectively that these would satisfy Statutory requirements under the new Order?

3. Flexibility in the choice of languages included in the Statutory Order

It is our understanding that only the seven languages in the list will be deemed to be 'foreign languages' approved by the Secretary of State for inclusion as 'foundation subjects in the National Curriculum'.

The choice of these languages did not appear problematic for the majority of ALL respondents despite some reservations over the status of Latin and Greek as of equal value to modern foreign languages. Most respondents agreed with the Government's proposal that providing the list of approved languages should avoid the potential proliferation of very low take-up languages in the primary phase. Many respondents thought that greater diversity in language provision should be introduced from Key Stage 3 onwards, building on the foundation of language learning developed in Key Stage 2.

However, the restrictions on languages at Key Stage 2 created very serious issues for a significant minority of other respondents. Anxiety surrounded three key areas, namely:

- a) that exclusion from the list would threaten the teaching of community languages and would affect children's access to literacy in their home language e.g. speakers of Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi;
- b) that cultural and faith needs of particular communities were being ignored e.g. Modern Hebrew;
- c) that Arabic as a major world language had not been included.

The Association for Language Learning believes that every language is an asset and firmly believes that children should be supported to develop literacy in their home

and heritage languages. Such provision should not be adversely affected by the inclusion of the teaching of a 'new language' in the National Curriculum. In the background to this consultation about the seven languages, it is stated that *'Schools would, of course, be free to teach other languages in addition to one of these.'* We would advocate a stronger national statement supporting successful models of provision often including partnerships with supplementary schools, where community languages are taught in addition to the introduction of a 'new language' in curriculum time.

We would also recommend further consideration of exceptional circumstances where flexibility in which languages can be deemed as 'foreign languages' in the National Curriculum would be advisable e.g. the case of Modern Hebrew.

The key issues for successful language provision at Key Stage 2 which will lead to meaningful progress into Key Stage 3 and beyond are continuity and coherence, sustainability and high quality linguistic input from teachers, which will require changes to Initial Teacher Education and continued professional development.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply X

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

XYes

☐

No

All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and

- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 16 December 2012

You can respond to the consultation by completing the response form and emailing it to Foreign.LANGUAGES@education.gsi.gov.uk or sending it by post to:

Send by post to:

Public Communications Unit, Area 1C
Castle View House
East Lane
Runcorn
Cheshire, WA7 2GJ.