

**Press Release**

***Languages from seven: building our future***

The Association for Language Learning (ALL) fully supports Michael Gove's decision to introduce compulsory language learning from seven. In an initial response to the announcement, ALL President Bernardette Holmes warmly welcomed the proposal;

*"This long-awaited confirmation that primary language learning will be a statutory part of the Key Stage 2 curriculum is excellent news. ALL has been concerned about the limbo in which primary schools were left after the 2010 elections and has tirelessly argued the case for language learning from the age of seven. At last, primary schools will be able to begin to plan coherently for languages in the new curriculum."*

When asked about the value of language learning to primary age children, she said:

*"We believe that learning a new language will bring considerable benefits to children's personal, cultural and cognitive development, which will have an impact not only on their skills in and attitudes towards other languages but will also make a significant contribution to their general literacy."*

ALL is however concerned that, as yet, no confirmation of any government training proposals or funding arrangements to support schools in implementing the new policy from 2014 have been proposed. There will be need for further training to support primary schools in planning the curriculum and in developing appropriate methods for the teaching of phonics, word knowledge and grammar that are relevant and motivating for young children. As we build capacity and expertise in primary schools, there will be continued need for language enrichment as well as opportunities for teachers to share and develop primary pedagogy. For this initiative to be successful, we must capture children's imagination and retain their interest, while providing the essential foundations of language learning that will enable children to be confident speakers and writers of at least one language other than English by age eleven and to go on and learn other languages in secondary and higher education.

As part of its response to the Government's announcement of the intention to make languages statutory at Key Stage 2, ALL will be convening a Primary Special Interest Group to address the new curriculum and to consider ways in which ALL can provide specialist support for primary colleagues across the country during this crucial period of reform.

**ENDS**

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

##### **1. The Association for Language Learning (ALL)**

ALL is the major UK association for teachers of foreign languages, with over 5,000 members in all sectors of education: [www.all-languages.org.uk](http://www.all-languages.org.uk).

Our Patron is Professor David Crystal and President in 2011-12 is Bernardette Holmes

##### **2. Curriculum Reform**

The proposals on the reform of primary education in England are set out by the Secretary of State, Michael Gove, in a letter sent to the Chair of the Curriculum Review Expert Panel, Tim Oates.

The text of the letter can be found at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/nationalcurriculum/b0075667/national-curriculum-review-update>

##### **3. Primary Language Learning**

Primary language learning has hitherto been an entitlement at Key Stage 2. Under the previous Labour administration many primary schools introduced language learning at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1. Languages at Key Stage 2 was due to become statutory in September 2010 but the change of Government in that year led to the decision being put on hold while the new administration implemented its review of the National Curriculum. The new reforms must be in place by 2014.