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PRESS RELEASE

Association for Language Learning responds to KS4 Performance Measures consultation

The Association for Language Learning (ALL) has submitted its response to the Department for Education's consultation on proposed changes to Key Stage 4 performance measures.

In developing its response, ALL engaged with members across the sector through membership engagement events (e.g. policy webinar) and a dedicated survey, drawing on the experience and professional judgement of language teachers, school leaders and trust-level practitioners working in a wide range of contexts. The response also builds on ALL's evidence and policy positions articulated in its submission to the Curriculum and Assessment Review (CAR).

ALL recognises the government's stated aim of increasing curriculum breadth and flexibility within accountability measures. Many members welcome a move away from rigid structures and support the recognition of creative and technical subjects alongside academic routes.

However, the Association raises **significant concerns about the impact of the proposed reforms on language education**. Evidence from our members indicates that, in a high-stakes accountability system, flexibility alone does not guarantee breadth. Without explicit incentives or protections, schools are likely to prioritise subjects perceived as lower risk within performance measures. Given the comparatively severe grading outcomes in GCSE languages, there is a clear risk that language learning will become further marginalised, particularly in schools serving disadvantaged communities.

ALL is also concerned that certain proposals, including the inclusion of science as an additional breadth category, may unintentionally narrow the curriculum and reinforce subject hierarchies, undermining the consultation's stated objectives.

In line with its CAR response, ALL emphasises that **curriculum breadth cannot be left to chance**. Accountability measures, inspection frameworks and curriculum policy must work coherently if all pupils are to have equitable access to a broad and balanced education that includes languages.

The TES on Monday 27th April 2026 noted the public debate over the change from the 2019 Ofsted Framework to the 2025 Framework and the significant impact that this has had on schools and their decisions. Survey respondents have reported early and ongoing reductions in language provision, including reduced curriculum time, fewer languages being offered, and staffing reductions.

ALL warns that these trends risk becoming structural and irreversible unless addressed as part of system-wide reform.

ALL's response calls on the Department for Education to:

- ensure explicit protections for curriculum breadth, including languages;
- avoid reforms that reinforce subject hierarchies;
- align accountability reform closely with inspection expectations; and
- recognise language learning as a strategic national priority rather than an optional enrichment.


A full version of ALL's response to the KS4 Performance Measures consultation is available on the Association's website [here](#).

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