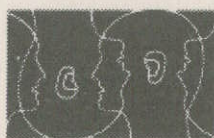


TEACHING MODERN LANGUAGES

Policy and Practice in
England, Wales and
Northern Ireland

Sigrid Boyd



European Year of Languages 2001



EURYDICE



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Sigrid Boyd



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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PREFACE

The **European Year of Languages 2001**¹ is a celebration of languages and language learning organised by the **European Union** and the **Council of Europe**, and supported by **UNESCO**. The initiative covers all languages and involves 45 countries across Western and Eastern Europe.

EURYDICE, the European information network on education in Europe, is part of the **Socrates** programme – the European Community Action Programme in the field of education. The EURYDICE network currently comprises national units in around 30 European countries including all the member states of the European Union. The national unit for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, known as **EURYDICE at NFER**, is based at the **National Foundation for Educational Research**, Britain's leading independent educational research body.

EURYDICE at NFER is sponsored by the **Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)**, the **European Commission** and NFER.

This description of the teaching of modern languages in England, Wales and Northern Ireland was originally compiled by EURYDICE at NFER as part of the EURYDICE network's comparative study² of language teaching across 30 European countries. The full series of national descriptions of language teaching for each of the 30 countries (including Scotland) follows a common format, and is being made available on the EURYDICE network website³. The information on England, Wales and Northern Ireland has been expanded and updated, and is now being published by the NFER as its contribution to the European Year of Languages 2001.

¹ The European Year of Languages UK website is at <http://www.eyl2001.org.uk/index1.htm>

² Eurydice (2001). *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools in Europe*. Brussels: Eurydice European Unit. This publication is also available in French and in German.

³ <http://www.eurydice.org>

1. THE MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENT

The language situation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

In **England**, the official language by custom and practice is English. Linguistic minorities include the speakers of **community languages** such as Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Panjabi, Chinese and Turkish.

In **Wales**, around 20 per cent of the population is able to speak Welsh. The passing of the Welsh Language Act in 1993¹ confirmed in law the principle of equality between the Welsh and English languages, and placed a duty on the public sector to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis, when providing services to the public, including education, in Wales.

In **Northern Ireland**, the official language by custom and practice is English. Around nine per cent of the population has some knowledge of Irish, and, in the wake of the Good Friday Agreement (1998),² the UK Government has declared that commitments in the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages³ will apply to Irish.

Support for minority and community languages

In **Wales**, the availability of **Welsh-medium** education has developed greatly since the first publicly funded Welsh-medium primary school was established in 1947. Local education authorities are now required to produce plans for developing Welsh-medium education. These plans must

¹ The Welsh Language Act 1993 is available on the Internet at: http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1993/Ukpga_19930038_en_1.htm

² The Belfast Agreement (also known as the Good Friday Agreement) is available on the Internet at: http://www.nio.gov.uk/agr_links.htm

³ The Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is available on the Internet at: <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/148.htm>

demonstrate that the reasonable demands of parents are being taken into account and that planning for expected future levels of demand is taking place. Parental preferences for the language of instruction can normally, but not always, be met, either by choosing a particular school, or by choosing a particular stream within a bilingual school. There are now over 500 primary and secondary schools using Welsh as the sole or main medium of instruction.

There are no differences between Welsh-medium and English-medium schools in terms of governance or administration.

Welsh-medium pre-school education is also available, and some further and higher education courses are also taught through the medium of Welsh, although not in all subject areas.

The National Curriculum in Wales, originally established by the Education Reform Act of 1988,⁴ requires pupils in Wales to follow a programme of study in Welsh, either as a first or second language, throughout the years of compulsory education. Specialist teachers of Welsh, known as Athrawon Bro, are funded by the Welsh Language Board to support the teaching of Welsh in the National Curriculum. There are statutory requirements for the assessment of both English and Welsh (either first or second language).

In **Northern Ireland**, **Irish-medium** education is provided only in a very small number of schools. The number may increase, however, as under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998,⁵ a duty has been placed on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education. When considering development proposals for Irish-medium schools, the

⁴ The Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988 is available on the Internet at: http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1988/Ukpga_19880040_en_1.htm
However, the ERA has now been superseded by the Education Act 1996, which is available on the Internet at: <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1996/1996056.htm>

⁵ The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 is available on the Internet at: <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1998/19981759.htm>

Department of Education considers a range of factors, such as viability, parental demand, availability of a balanced curriculum, affordability and the school's accommodation needs.

Irish-medium pre-school education is also available.

In vocational and higher education, the language of instruction is normally English, with a small number of specific exceptions, for example within higher education courses in Irish and Celtic studies.

Irish may also be taught as a subject in English-medium schools; some primary schools and most post-primary schools under Catholic management teach Irish.

Teaching in **community languages**, such as Urdu and Gujarati, is offered in a few **schools in England and Wales** with significant numbers of bilingual pupils. The choice of which language or languages to offer, either within the framework of the National Curriculum, or alongside the National Curriculum, is a matter for the school, provided that the requirement to offer at least one of the official working languages of the European Union is met. There are no regulations governing the qualifications of specialist language teachers, beyond the general requirement that all teachers in publicly funded schools must have qualified teacher status.

However, provision for mother tongue teaching of community languages is more often made outside mainstream education by the minority linguistic communities themselves. For example, in many communities, **supplementary and mother tongue schools** are run, normally for around three to four hours a week, in youth clubs, community centres, places of worship, and the premises of mainstream schools. Supplementary and mother tongue schools sometimes receive support from the local authority or from charitable foundations. There are no regulations governing the qualifications of teachers in

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these schools; their experience and qualifications may vary, and many such schools depend heavily on volunteers.

The Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT), an independent charitable trust supported by central government grants, has recently begun to establish support networks⁶ for teachers and managers of community languages.

Knowledge of certain community languages, such as Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Panjabi and Urdu, however acquired, can be accredited by the qualification normally taken at the end of compulsory education, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), and the qualification normally taken at age 18, the General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (A-level).

⁶ More information is available via the CILT community languages website at:
<http://www.cilt.org.uk/commlangs/index.htm>

2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Key developments since 1960

There has been a significant **expansion in the number of pupils** learning a language over recent decades.

Until the establishment of the National Curriculum in England and Wales, under the Education Reform Act of 1988, and the Northern Ireland Curriculum under the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, schools had responsibility for their own curricula, with guidance provided by local education authorities. Modern languages were not often taught in primary schools. Secondary education was organised on selective lines, based on academic ability at age 11. Grammar schools, for more academically able children, generally taught one or more modern languages to all pupils. Secondary modern schools, for pupils who were not selected for a grammar school education, sometimes taught a language, but generally to a minority of their pupils only.

The spread of comprehensive secondary education in England and Wales throughout the 1960s and 1970s, whereby pupils were no longer selected by ability for entrance to secondary school, resulted in many more pupils having the opportunity to study a foreign language from age 11. This was extended to an entitlement for all pupils in the early and mid-1990s, as the requirements of the National Curriculum in England and Wales and the Northern Ireland Curriculum were phased in. For the first time, **all secondary schools** now had to make provision for **all pupils** of **all abilities** to study at least one modern language.

There have also been many developments in the **curriculum and teaching methods**. In the 1950s, teaching in modern languages tended to emphasise grammatical and literary knowledge and to neglect the spoken language. Since then,

there has been a widespread shift of emphasis away from these concerns, towards communication in the target language, and particularly towards the skills of speaking and listening. These developments have been accompanied by the wider use of authentic materials. Teachers now commonly draw on a wide range of material resources, often including audio and visual media. More recently however, the development of knowledge and understanding of the structural aspects of language, such as grammar and phonology, has again begun to receive more attention.

Assessment methods have changed to reflect the increased emphasis on the skills of speaking and listening, as well as the need to accredit the achievements of pupils of all levels of ability. For example, the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) was introduced in 1965, specifically for less able 16-year-olds, and laid a new emphasis on the skills of speaking and listening. From around the same time, the General Certificate of Education Ordinary-levels (GCE O-levels), intended for more able 16-year-olds, also began to allocate higher percentage weightings to these skills.

Graded Objectives in Modern Languages (GOML) represented a new approach to assessment in the mid-1970s. Although no longer available in England and Wales, they were an important influence on the development of the National Curriculum and the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (see below). GOML are still available to schools in Northern Ireland. GOML schemes were developed by schools and local education authorities, using criterion-referenced schemes of assessment to provide various levels of tests, which students took when they were ready. The tests were based on a closely defined syllabus for each level that set out the tasks the learner was expected to be able to perform. They could be used for teaching pupils of all levels of ability, although they were often considered particularly useful for motivating lower attainers.

In 1988, the GCSE was introduced to replace the CSE and GCE O-level. It was intended for pupils of all levels of

ability at 16. It assesses, in a balanced manner, the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The latest revisions to the GCSE, for first examinations in 2003, place a greater emphasis on knowledge and application of grammar across these four skills.

A foreign language experiment in the primary sector

The Pilot Scheme 'French from Eight' was set up in 1963 by the, then, Ministry of Education, the Schools Council, Her Majesty's Inspectorate, local education authorities and the Nuffield Foundation (an independent charity which supports projects to advance education or social welfare). The Scheme covered 13 pilot areas and a further 90 associated areas in England and Wales. Pupils involved in the Scheme studied French from the age of eight in primary school until age 13 in secondary school. The evaluation of this project, by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in 1974,⁷ concluded that there was no significant advantage to early language learning, and government support for the policy was subsequently withdrawn. The Nuffield Foundation, which had invested heavily in the project, reacted strongly against its termination and published its own appraisal of the pilot scheme in 1977.⁸

Despite the withdrawal of government support, a minority of primary schools continued to offer a modern foreign language, and some local education authorities continued to provide support.

More recently, partly in response to pressure from schools and parents, the Government has begun again to encourage language learning at primary level. The revised National Curriculum for England, introduced in August 2000,

⁷ BURSTALL, C. (1974). *Primary French in the Balance*. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

⁸ HOY, P. H. (ed) (1977). *The Early Teaching of Modern Languages*. London: Nuffield Foundation.

includes for the first time, non-statutory guidelines on teaching languages at key stage 2 (seven- to 11-year-olds),⁹ together with additional curriculum materials for French, Spanish and German, the languages most commonly taught. In 1999, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) announced an initiative to promote and develop the provision and quality of modern foreign language learning in the primary sector. The initiative, which is being managed and coordinated by CILT, on behalf of the DfEE, has established a National Advisory Centre on Early Language Learning (NACELL). NACELL aims to develop curriculum materials and provide advice and support for primary schools involved in teaching a modern language or considering its introduction. It is also working in cooperation with 18 schools and their local education authorities in England and Wales, to identify, develop and disseminate models of good practice in the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages in primary schools. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is carrying out a study of the feasibility of extending the teaching of modern foreign languages into primary schools, based partly on the outcomes of this project.

Developments in Initial Teacher Training (ITT)

During the 1960s and early 1970s, in the belief that French would become an established part of the curriculum in primary schools, a number of courses with a specialism in modern languages were established for intending primary school teachers. The number declined from the late 1970s and few such courses remain.

In most other respects, developments in initial teacher training of teachers of modern languages have proceeded in tandem with developments in training for all teachers.

⁹ The guidelines for teaching modern foreign languages at key stage 2 are available on the National Curriculum website at:
<http://www.nc.uk.net/servlets/NCFrame?subject=MFL&KeyStage=-29>

Significant changes include:

- ◆ Since 1969, all intending teachers, including those holding a relevant degree, have been required to undergo a course of professional training.
- ◆ Until the early 1980s, the length, content, structure and objectives of courses of initial teacher training were largely a matter for the institutions themselves. Since that time, accreditation criteria for institutions providing ITT have been developed. The criteria focus on the competences of teaching, that is on the subject knowledge, understanding and skills to enable teachers to teach effectively.
- ◆ There have been considerable changes in the balance of roles and responsibilities between higher education institutions and schools, with schools now playing a much larger and more influential part, for example taking a major training and assessment role.

3. ORGANISATION OF MODERN LANGUAGES TEACHING

Place and status of modern languages in the school curriculum

This subject is known as modern foreign languages (MFL) in England and Wales, and as modern languages in Northern Ireland.

There is some teaching of modern languages in **pre-primary** institutions, particularly in the private sector.

At **primary level**, schools are free to choose whether they offer teaching in modern languages, and around 25 per cent of primary schools do so. However this proportion may increase, as recent government policy has been to begin to provide encouragement and support for the development of foreign language teaching in primary schools (see chapter 2 for more details).

Where primary schools teach a modern language, it is likely to be taught to all pupils in a particular age group; typically, to pupils aged nine and over. The amount of time allocated, staffing, availability of resources and, indeed, the rationale for inclusion of the subject in the curriculum, all vary greatly. Some schools aim primarily to promote language awareness rather than the attainment of a particular level of competence in a language.

At **secondary level**, pupils at **key stage 3 (aged 11 to 14)**, are required to learn a modern language in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

There is considerable scope for flexibility within the curricular frameworks for schools to develop a curriculum that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of

pupils, and the majority of pupils with **special educational needs** follow the same statutory curriculum as other pupils. However, for a small number of pupils with special educational needs, part or all of the programmes of study may be disappplied.

For pupils at **key stage 4 (aged 14 to 16)**, there are different requirements in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The current minimum requirement in **England** at key stage 4 is for a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) 'short course'. Short courses are intended to be taught in half the time of a full subject, although they may be studied over one or two years. There is also some scope for schools to modify or disapply the requirement to learn a modern language for a small number of 14- to 16-year-olds. This can be in order to allow a pupil to participate in extended work-related learning, to allow a pupil with individual strengths to emphasise a particular curriculum area, or to allow a pupil making significantly less progress than other pupils of his/her age to consolidate his/her learning and progress across the curriculum.

In **Wales**, where the teaching of both Welsh and English is compulsory throughout secondary education, there is no requirement to teach a modern language at key stage 4 (14- to 16-year-olds). Only around 40 per cent of pupils in Wales continue the study of a modern language to age 16.

In **Northern Ireland**, pupils at key stage 4 (14- to 16-year-olds) must take a full course in a modern language. There is some scope for schools to modify or disapply the requirement to learn a modern language for a small number of pupils aged 14 to 16 in order to focus on work-related learning programmes and associated qualifications.

Although only **one** modern language is a statutory requirement, many schools in **England, Wales and Northern Ireland** provide teaching in a **second modern language**, generally starting at age 12 or 13. In some

schools, the additional language is compulsory for all pupils, while, in others, it may be compulsory for higher attainers only. Alternatively, some schools offer the additional language to all or some pupils as an option. A few schools may also offer some pupils the opportunity of learning a **third language**. These are all matters for the school to decide. However, at age 14, when pupils choose options from the range of non-statutory subjects offered by the school, many pupils studying two languages drop one of them, and continue to the end of compulsory education studying one modern language only.

At **post-compulsory level (ages 16 to 19)**, the study of modern languages is optional, and only a small minority of students (around ten per cent) continue with the study of one or more languages at this level.

Traditionally, students following a general academic path have chosen three subjects (although sometimes fewer than or more than three) from the courses offered by the institution, which lead to a qualification at General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level).

Alternatively, students have been able to study a language within a number of vocationally related qualifications. Students of business, hospitality and catering, leisure and recreation, travel and tourism, and retail and distributive services may optionally include language units within the programme of study leading to Advanced General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), and their replacement from August 2000, the Vocational Certificates of Education (VCEs) at Advanced or Advanced Subsidiary-level.

The reforms to qualifications for 16- to 19-year-olds, which were introduced in August 2000,¹⁰ are intended to encourage young people to take up a broader programme of study, for example by studying five subjects up to the age of 17. These changes may increase the take-up of modern languages

¹⁰ More information on the changes to post-16 qualifications is available on the DfEE qualifications website at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/qualifications/index.cfm>

amongst 16- to 19-year-olds, by offering more scope to combine a language with other subjects, for example science or vocationally related qualifications.

Range of languages offered

At **primary level**, the vast majority of schools which teach a modern language teach French. However, other languages, such as Spanish and German, are taught in a few schools. In Northern Ireland, French and Irish predominate, although Irish is offered only in schools under Catholic management. The special status of Welsh in Wales is discussed in section 1.

In **England and Wales**, the National Curriculum requires schools at **secondary level** to offer at least one of the official working languages of the European Union; only then may they offer other languages as a choice. Before August 2000, only specified languages could be offered within the framework of the National Curriculum: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin), Danish, Dutch, French, German, Greek (modern), Gujarati, Hebrew (modern), Hindi, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Panjabi, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish and Urdu. However, this list of approved languages was abolished when the revised National Curriculum was introduced in August 2000. Pupils must now learn at least one modern language, but this may be any language offered by the school within the framework of the National Curriculum.

The **Northern Ireland** Curriculum requires schools at **secondary level** to offer at least one of French, German, Italian or Spanish; only then may they offer Irish as a choice. Pupils must learn at least one of French, German, Italian, Spanish or Irish.

Despite the fact that the legislation allows a great deal of choice, French is the dominant first modern language taught throughout England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. This results largely from historical factors and organisational

considerations such as teacher supply. Numerous official and unofficial reports have recommended the diversification of first modern language provision,¹¹ and a great many schools do, indeed, offer two or three first modern languages, with German and Spanish being the most common alternatives. Where two or more languages are offered as the first modern language, the choice between them is usually made by the pupil and his/her parents. However, some schools choose to introduce pupils to two languages at age 11 and divide the time allocated to modern languages between them. A few schools adopt the 'wave model' of provision, in which one language is taught to all pupils in one year group and a different language to pupils in the following year group. These are all matters for the school to decide.

There are no regulations regarding which languages may be taught as a second or third modern language. German, Spanish and French are widely taught.

Organisation of the timetable and teaching groups

In England and Wales, the time spent on each subject and the organisation of this time are matters for schools to decide. Typically, the time allocation for one language for pupils aged 11 to 14 is around 150 minutes per week. The time allocation for two languages may be higher in total, but not necessarily so. In Northern Ireland, the Department of Education recommends that, for pupils aged 14 to 16, language studies should take up, as a minimum, 5 to 7.5 per cent of the time available.

After the age of 16, the time typically allocated to each GCE A-level subject is between four and a half to five hours a week.

The size and organisation of teaching groups are determined by the school. However, in the majority of secondary

¹¹ A list of documents and publications related to diversification is available at the CILT website at: <http://www.cilt.org.uk/infos/0to25/info13.htm>.

A review of the literature on diversification is available at the Department of Education Northern Ireland website at: <http://www.deni.gov.uk/statistics/research/rb397/rb397.htm>

schools, pupils are taught modern languages in mixed-ability groups for their first year (or sometimes for two or three years), and are subsequently grouped (or 'set') according to their attainment in this subject.

Special initiatives

In **England**, specialist language schools, known as **language colleges**, form part of the Government's specialist schools programme.¹² The first language college was operational in 1995 and by January 2001 there were 99. These schools deliver the full National Curriculum, and cater for the full ability range. At the same time, they aim to enhance and widen the teaching of modern languages across the ability range, and to act as centres of excellence for language learning by developing links with other schools and the wider community. Schools applying for language college designation, and the associated additional funding, are expected to set out a development plan showing specific measurable targets in relation to provision, take-up and outcomes of modern languages teaching. For example, as a minimum requirement, schools are expected to increase the proportion of pupils aged 14 to 16 studying two languages to at least 50 per cent, and to ensure that all pupils at post-compulsory level (aged 16+) maintain an element of language study. The Government announced early in 2001 that it intends to greatly increase the number of specialist schools, including language colleges,¹³ and that it is planning to encourage language colleges to act as coordinators and providers of expertise for language teaching in primary schools.

In **Wales**, where the requirement to learn a foreign language applies only between the ages of 11 and 14, the **Languages in Action**¹⁴ project has been established. This project aims

¹² More information on language colleges is available at the DfEE specialist schools website at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/specschl/index.htm>

¹³ For more information on the Government's proposals for schools, see the schools green paper *Schools: Building on Success*, published February 2001 and available on the Internet at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/buildingonsuccess>

¹⁴ More information on the Languages in Action project is available via the CILT website at: <http://www.cilt.org.uk/projects/action.htm>

to promote modern languages capability, and reverse the decline in the number of pupils aged 14 to 16 who continue to study a modern language. The pilot project, which involves 13 schools, is funded by the National Assembly for Wales to run from 1999 to 2001.

Higher education

Universities and other higher education institutions are autonomous institutions and are responsible for developing their own programmes. Programmes for modern languages have become increasingly diverse over recent decades. Although many students still follow a traditional specialist language course in one or more languages, there has been a growth of integrated degree courses, which combine one or more modern languages with subjects such as business and management studies, European studies, law, science, engineering or ICT. There has also been an expansion in *ab initio* degree courses for most languages other than French. The other significant development in recent years has been the growth of institution-wide language programmes. These are often taught in language centres and offer tuition to all students from beginners upwards.

Adult education

There is a wide variety of courses and qualifications available to adults wishing to study a modern language for recreational or vocational purposes. Courses are offered by adult education centres, colleges of further and higher education, universities, cultural institutes, private language schools and distance learning providers, including the Open University and television and radio. Many institutions offer preparation for general qualifications such as GCSEs and GCE A-levels, or more vocationally and business oriented qualifications such as those set by the Institute of Linguists, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and others.

4. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Structure of the curriculum

The National Curriculum for modern foreign languages which was introduced in **England and Wales** from 1995 is set out in:

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION and THE WELSH OFFICE (1995). *Modern Foreign Languages in the National Curriculum*. London: HMSO.

This curriculum has been reviewed recently in both England and Wales. In **England**, the revised National Curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 16, which came into effect in August 2000 (in August 2001 for 14- to 16-year-olds for modern foreign languages), is set out in:

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT and THE QUALIFICATIONS AND CURRICULUM AUTHORITY (1999). *The National Curriculum Handbook for Secondary Teachers in England*. London: DfEE and QCA.¹⁵

In **Wales**, the revised National Curriculum for modern foreign languages, which came into effect for pupils aged 11 to 14 in August 2000, is set out in:

QUALIFICATIONS, CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY FOR WALES (2000). *Modern Foreign Languages in the National Curriculum*. Cardiff: ACCAC.¹⁶

The **Northern Ireland** Curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 16 is set out in:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NORTHERN IRELAND (1996). *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Key Stages 3 and 4, Programme of Study and Attainment Targets*. Bangor: DENI.¹⁷

¹⁵ The National Curriculum website is at: <http://www.nc.uk.net/home.html>

¹⁶ The National Curriculum in Wales is available on the ACCAC website at: <http://www.accac.org.uk/publications/ncorders.html>

¹⁷ The Northern Ireland Curriculum is available on the CCEA website at: <http://www.ccea.org.uk>

The curriculum in Northern Ireland is currently under review. It is expected that schools will begin to deliver the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum in September 2003.

The curricula in **England, Wales and Northern Ireland** all adopt a broadly similar structure. The curriculum is the same for all languages, although there are some modifications in respect of reading and writing for pupils studying Chinese and Japanese. There is one **programme of study for pupils aged 11 to 16 (11 to 14 in Wales)**. The programme of study sets out what pupils should be taught, and provides teachers and schools with the basis for more detailed curriculum planning. **Attainment targets** set out the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to attain. Each of the four attainment targets for modern languages (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) consists of eight **level descriptions** of increasing difficulty, plus a description for exceptional performance. Each level description describes the types and range of performance that pupils working at that level should characteristically demonstrate.

In England, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has also developed more detailed teaching programmes (known as 'schemes of work') for the languages most commonly taught (French, German and Spanish)¹⁸. These are designed to be used as a flexible resource for lesson planning and are not compulsory.

At **post-compulsory level (ages 16 to 19)**, the study of modern languages is optional throughout **England, Wales and Northern Ireland**, and there is no compulsory curriculum. Schools generally offer programmes in one or more modern languages leading to GCE AS- and A-level qualifications. For most languages, these qualifications are

¹⁸ Schemes of work for French, German and Spanish are available on the National Curriculum website at: <http://www.nc.uk.net/home.html>

available from different awarding bodies.¹⁹ Schools have, therefore, a degree of choice, although all GCE AS- and A-levels must conform to the subject criteria for modern foreign languages, as specified by the regulatory authorities.²⁰ These criteria set out the **knowledge, understanding and skills** which students are expected to demonstrate and provide the framework within which the awarding body designs the qualification. They also set out the **assessment objectives**. For modern languages there are four assessment objectives:

- ◆ to understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language;
- ◆ to understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language;
- ◆ to show knowledge of, and apply accurately, the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification; and
- ◆ to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of aspects of the chosen society.

Students following a vocationally related programme of study leading to Advanced General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), and their replacement from August 2000, the Vocational Certificates of Education (VCEs) at Advanced or Advanced Subsidiary-level, may choose to include one of two language units. There are two

¹⁹ Awarding bodies are organisations recognised by the regulatory authorities for the purpose of providing qualifications in respect of secondary, further and vocational education. Awarding bodies design the qualifications within the framework of the subject criteria specified by the regulatory authorities and are responsible for setting external assessment and ensuring consistent assessment standards across the country. There are three awarding bodies for England: the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA); Edexcel; and Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR). There is one awarding body for Wales: the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC). There is one awarding body for Northern Ireland: the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

²⁰ The regulatory authorities in respect of external qualifications are: the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA); the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC); and the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). (CCEA is both a regulatory authority and an awarding body.)

units available for each of a range of languages – oral communication and written communication – and students may choose either or both.

Development of the curriculum

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC), and the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) are statutory bodies with a duty to advise the ministers responsible for education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively. These bodies keep the school curriculum, and pupil assessment and qualifications under review. They draw on recommendations of working groups and consult widely on proposed changes to the curriculum.

Monitoring the curriculum in practice

The schools' inspectorates in England (OFSTED), Wales (Estyn), and Northern Ireland (the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) of the Department of Education) regularly publish their main findings from school inspections as they relate to each curriculum subject. For example, the OFSTED subject report 1999–2000 for secondary modern foreign languages²¹ noted significant improvements in modern foreign languages in over four schools in ten. It also noted that listening is usually the most developed skill, while speaking and writing skills are often underdeveloped. It raised the issue of the differences in performance between girls and boys, with 54 per cent of girls obtaining a good pass at GCSE compared with 37 per cent of boys.

²¹ Available on the OFSTED website at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>

Programmes of study

The excerpts below are taken from the revised National Curriculum programme of study for modern foreign languages for England from August 2000. The revisions to this programme of study were relatively minor; it is now less prescriptive with regard to the areas of experience to be covered (e.g. everyday activities, personal and social life, etc.) and lays slightly more emphasis on the development of knowledge and skills, including grammar.

General objectives

During key stage 3 (11 to 14) pupils begin to understand, speak and write at least one modern foreign language. They become familiar with the sounds, written form and grammar of the language, and use this knowledge with increasing confidence to express themselves in role plays, conversations and writing. They improve their understanding of the language by listening to people talking about different subjects and by reading a range of texts. They also increase their cultural awareness by communicating with people who speak the language and by using materials from countries and communities where the language is spoken.

During key stage 4 (14 to 16) pupils begin to use a modern foreign language more independently, drawing on a firmer grasp of grammar and a wider and more complex range of expression. They adapt their use of the language according to context, purpose and audience. They learn to understand a more extensive range of unfamiliar language by reading and listening to a variety of materials from countries and communities where the language is spoken. They also increase their cultural awareness through more direct contact with people who live in those countries and communities.

Pupils are expected to use and respond to the target language and to use English only where necessary (for example, when discussing a grammar point).

Communication skills

Pupils should be taught:

- *how to listen carefully for gist and detail*
- *correct pronunciation and intonation*
- *how to ask and answer questions*
- *how to initiate and develop conversations*
- *how to vary the target language to suit context, audience and purpose*
- *how to adapt language they already know for different contexts*
- *strategies for dealing with the unpredictable [for example, unfamiliar language, unexpected responses]*
- *techniques for skimming and for scanning written texts for information, including those from ICT-based sources*
- *how to summarise and report the main points of spoken or written texts, using notes where appropriate*
- *how to redraft their writing to improve its accuracy and presentation, including the use of ICT.*

Structure of the language

Pupils should be taught:

- *the principles and interrelationship of sounds and writing in the target language*
- *the grammar of the target language and how to apply it*
- *how to express themselves using a range of vocabulary and structures.*

Developing cultural awareness

Pupils should be taught about different countries and cultures by:

- *working with authentic materials in the target language, including some from ICT-based*

sources [for example, handwritten texts, newspapers, magazines, books, video, satellite television, texts from the Internet]

- *communicating with native speakers [for example, in person, by correspondence]*
- *considering their own culture and comparing it with the cultures of the countries and communities where the target language is spoken*
- *considering the experiences and perspectives of people in these countries and communities.*

Methodology

Pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through:

- *communicating in the target language in pairs and groups, and with their teacher*
- *using everyday classroom events as an opportunity for spontaneous speech*
- *expressing and discussing personal feelings and opinions*
- *producing and responding to different types of spoken and written language, including texts produced using ICT*
- *using a range of resources, including ICT, for accessing and communicating information*
- *using the target language creatively and imaginatively*
- *listening, reading or viewing for personal interest and enjoyment, as well as for information*
- *using the target language for real purposes [for example, by sending and receiving messages by telephone, letter, fax or e-mail]*
- *working in a variety of contexts, including everyday activities, personal and social life, the world around us, the world of work and the international world.*

Encouraging autonomy

Pupils should be taught to develop language-learning skills:

- *techniques for memorising words, phrases and short extracts*
- *how to use context and other clues to interpret meaning [for example, by identifying the grammatical function of unfamiliar words or similarities with words they know]*
- *to use their knowledge of English or another language when learning the target language*
- *how to use dictionaries and other reference materials appropriately and effectively*
- *how to develop their independence in learning and using the target language.*

Pupil assessment

All schools are expected to have effective systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment and for using assessment information to inform curriculum planning. Schools are required by law to report annually to parents on pupils' progress in all National Curriculum subjects (Northern Ireland Curriculum subjects in Northern Ireland) and other subjects studied.

In addition, at the **end of key stage 3 (age 14)**, in England and Wales, but not Northern Ireland, there is a statutory requirement for teacher assessment of pupils' attainments in modern foreign languages. Pupils are assessed separately for each attainment target (listening and responding, speaking, reading and responding, and writing) against a set of eight level descriptions of increasing difficulty. The level descriptions describe the types and range of performance that pupils working at that level typically demonstrate, with reference to the application of phonological, grammatical, and lexical knowledge. Materials to support this teacher assessment are available

from the QCA for the languages most commonly taught. These materials include optional tasks and tests, and exemplification of standards, including an audio-tape of pupils speaking.

At the **end of key stage 4 (age 16)**, there are no statutory assessment arrangements in England, Wales, or Northern Ireland. Assessment of students at the end of key stage 4 is normally by the main external qualification for pupils aged 16, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or (in England and Wales) the GCSE (short course) qualification in a modern foreign language.²² These are single subject examinations, and are separately available in a wide range of languages, so a pupil may, for example, gain two or more GCSEs in modern languages. This qualification conforms to the minimum National Curriculum and Northern Ireland Curriculum requirements for modern languages, and it has a similar set of (equally weighted) assessment objectives:

- ◆ understanding and responding to spoken language;
- ◆ communicating in speech;
- ◆ understanding and responding to written language; and
- ◆ communicating in writing.

GCSEs are offered by different awarding bodies and assessment may be linear or modular. Schools have, therefore, a degree of choice. However, although schemes of assessment vary to some extent, they must conform to the criteria²³ specified by the regulatory authorities. For example, all schemes of assessment must include a final examination with a minimum weighting of 70 per cent in non-modular schemes and 50 per cent in modular schemes. GCSEs in modern languages may contain a proportion of coursework up to 30 per cent.

²² More information on the qualifications available in schools is available at the DfEE qualifications website at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/qualifications>

²³ The GCSE Criteria for Modern Foreign Languages are available on the QCA website at: http://www.qca.org.uk/nq/framework/gcse_criteria.asp

The GCSE is graded on the scale A*,A,B,C,D,E,F,G and U, where A* to G are considered to be passes, and A* to C are considered to be good passes. Examinations are targeted at two different ability groups; higher tier examinations are targeted at grades A* to D, and foundation tier examinations are targeted at grades C to G. Pupils are entered at the tier most appropriate to their level of competence for each of the four assessment objectives and their marks are combined to produce an overall grade.

At **post-compulsory level (ages 16 to 19)**, students following a general academic path have typically followed a two-year course in three subjects (sometimes two or four or more subjects), leading to a General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) qualification in each subject studied.²⁴ However, since the reforms to qualifications for 16- to 19-year-olds came into effect in August 2000, students have been encouraged to broaden their study, for example by studying up to five subjects in the first year of post-compulsory education, and continuing with three subjects in the second year. To enable separate certification of these courses, GCE A-level qualifications are now based on six units of approximately equal size. Three of these units constitute the GCE Advanced Subsidiary level (GCE AS-level), representing the first half of the full A-level. Units are offered for assessment in January and June examination sessions. GCEs are offered by different awarding bodies, which means that schools have a degree of choice. However, although schemes of assessment vary to some extent, they must conform to the criteria²⁵ specified by the regulatory authorities. For example, the assessment objectives must be weighted as follows (for the full A-level):

- ◆ understanding and responding, in speech and writing, to spoken language (23–33 per cent);

²⁴ More information on the qualifications available in schools is available at the DfEE qualifications website at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/qualifications>

²⁵ The GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced (A) Level Specifications Subject Criteria for Modern Foreign Languages are available on the QCA website at: <http://www.qca.org.uk/nq/subjects/mfl.asp>

- ◆ understanding and responding, in speech and writing, to written language (23–33 per cent);
- ◆ showing knowledge of, and applying accurately, grammar and syntax (25 per cent);
- ◆ demonstrating knowledge and understanding of aspects of the chosen society (15–25 per cent).

GCE AS- and A-levels in modern languages may contain a proportion of coursework up to 30 per cent, and must contain an assessment of at least 20 per cent at the end of the course that tests students' understanding of the whole programme.

AS- and A-level passes are graded on a scale of A–E. Candidates not achieving a pass receive U (unclassified).

A new qualification, the Advanced Extension (AE) Award, is being developed for French, German and Spanish, for first examination in 2003. It is targeted at the top ten per cent of GCE A-level candidates, and is intended to be taken in addition to the A-level.

Students following a vocationally related course of study leading to Advanced General National Vocational Qualifications (Advanced GNVQs), and their replacement from August 2000, the Vocational Certificates of Education (VCEs) at Advanced or Advanced Subsidiary-level, are expected to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to a broad vocational area. Assessment is by coursework (a portfolio of work), which is internally assessed, and by external assessment. The internal component normally contributes two-thirds of the final marks and the external component one-third.

VCE qualifications are graded on a scale of A–E. Candidates not achieving a pass receive U (unclassified).

5. TEACHER EDUCATION AND RECRUITMENT

Who teaches modern languages?

All intending teachers specialise in a particular age range during initial training, for example three to eight, three to 11, seven to 14, 11 to 16, 11 to 18, or 14 to 19. Intending secondary teachers specialise in a particular subject or subjects. Teachers most commonly work within the age range and subject in which they qualified, but there is no statutory requirement for them to do so.

At **primary level**, teachers are generalists who teach all subjects in the curriculum. Modern languages are not part of the National Curriculum (or Northern Ireland Curriculum) at this level and therefore the vast majority of courses of initial teacher training for intending primary teachers do not cover the teaching of this subject. Schools that have chosen to introduce modern languages have addressed the staffing of this subject in a variety of different ways. Sometimes, they are able to use their existing generalist teachers flexibly, to enable a teacher with modern language skills to teach the language to more than one class. In other cases, they may employ a specialist part-time teacher. More often, language teaching in primary schools has been introduced as part of an initiative in a local area, in which primary school class teachers receive in-service training and continuing support from the local education authority (Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland). In England, secondary schools specialising in modern languages sometimes provide support to their feeder primary schools.

At **secondary level**, modern languages are normally taught by specialist subject teachers, who may teach one or more languages. There is no general requirement for teachers to

offer more than one language, but schools which teach two or more languages often prefer to recruit dual linguists or linguists able to teach one language to the top of the age range and another to a lower level.

Many schools also employ one or more foreign language assistant(s). The Central Bureau for International Education and Training organises the Foreign Language Assistants programme, under which well over 1,000 students from other countries are placed in UK schools and colleges each year, to assist with the teaching of their mother tongue for one academic year.

Organisation of initial teacher training

Initial teacher training is known as initial teacher education in Northern Ireland.

Prospective secondary school teachers of modern languages usually follow the consecutive training model. This involves three or four years of study leading to a first degree (which normally includes up to a year in the target language country as a requirement of the degree course), followed by one year of professional training leading to the **Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)** and to qualified teacher status (QTS) (eligibility to teach in Northern Ireland). Some institutions offer two-year PGCE courses for modern language trainees, which provide 'refresher' language tuition in the first year. Full-time PGCE courses for intending secondary teachers must last a minimum of 36 weeks.

A small number of initial teacher training institutions offer a **four-year education degree** leading to QTS, which includes the chance to study a modern language as a specialist subject.

In England and Wales, there are also employment-based training routes, such as the Graduate Teacher Programme,

where on-the-job training is combined with professional duties in a school as an unqualified teacher. The Registered Teacher Programme is an employment-based scheme, usually lasting two years, for those who are not graduates but who have completed two years of higher education.

Access to initial teacher training

Entrants to **all** courses of initial teacher training must satisfy a number of general conditions.²⁶ For example, they must hold good GCSE passes in English language and mathematics, or approved equivalent qualifications²⁷; they must meet requirements for physical and mental fitness to teach; and they must not have a criminal background which might prevent employment as a teacher. Selection procedures by the institution providing the initial teacher training must include representatives from those centrally involved in the training process, including school staff. The selection process aims to determine the applicant's suitability for teaching as a career, taking into account their personal, intellectual and presentational qualities, and must include an interview.

Entrants to a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course must hold a university degree or the recognised equivalent in a relevant subject. An unrelated degree may also be accepted if the applicant demonstrates a high level of command of the target language, for example as a native speaker.²⁸ (More than one in three modern languages teacher trainees is a native speaker.)

²⁶ The general trainee entry and selection requirements for England are set out in annex I of DfEE Circular 4/98: *Teaching: High Status, High Standards. Requirements for Courses of Initial Teacher Training*. Available on the Internet at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/circulars/4_98/summary.htm

The requirements for Wales are set out in Welsh Office Circular 13/98: *Requirements for Courses of Initial Teacher Training*.

²⁷ More information on routes into teaching in England and Wales is available from the Teacher Training Agency website at: <http://www.canteach.gov.uk>

²⁸ Information on routes into teaching in England for native speakers of other languages is available at the CILT website at: <http://www.cilt.org.uk/teach/teach.htm>

There are also four-year undergraduate courses which provide a teaching qualification and a degree at the same time, although only a very small number of such courses offer a specialism in modern foreign languages. Applicants to these courses must demonstrate that they fulfil the academic requirement for admission to first degree studies.

These are minimum entrance requirements; beyond these requirements, institutions providing initial teacher training determine their own admissions policies.

Applicants to employment-based training routes must find a school willing to employ them on this basis.

Successful completion of initial teacher training leads to **qualified teacher status (QTS) (eligibility to teach in Northern Ireland)**, which qualifies teachers to apply for appointment to individual schools but does not guarantee them employment.

Initial teacher training curriculum

All institutions providing courses which lead to qualified teacher status (eligibility to teach in Northern Ireland) must be accredited by, in England, the Teacher Training Agency, in Wales, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), or, in Northern Ireland, the Department of Education.

Initial teacher training courses in England must comply with national requirements with regard to course content.²⁹ Courses must be designed to develop trainees' knowledge, skills and understanding in order that they should meet the standards for the award of qualified teacher status (QTS). These standards are set out under the following headings:

²⁹ The requirements for England are set out in DfEE Circular 4/98: *Teaching: High Status, High Standards. Requirements for Courses of Initial Teacher Training*. Available on the Internet at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/circulars/4_98/summary.htm

- ◆ planning, teaching and class management;
- ◆ knowledge and understanding (including a secure knowledge and understanding of specialist subject(s) to degree level for secondary teachers);
- ◆ monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability;
- ◆ other professional requirements.

In addition, all courses must cover the initial teacher training curriculum for the use of information and communications technology.

The standards for the award of QTS in Wales,³⁰ and the competence based guidelines³¹ in Northern Ireland include broadly similar expectations.

All full-time courses leading to the **Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)** must incorporate at least **24 weeks' practical and teaching experience**. For intending secondary school teachers, this normally includes a short period in a primary school, observing and working with young children, and longer blocks in at least two secondary schools, working with pupils of different ages and abilities. Trainees offering two languages may have the opportunity of practical teaching experience of both languages.

The remainder of the PGCE course is delivered in 12 weeks, spread throughout the year. The organisation of the course and the teaching methods used are matters for the individual institution to decide. Courses do not aim to teach the language, but to teach how to teach the language, and a high level of command of the main modern language is assumed.

A few institutions offer a **four-year education degree** including the chance to study a modern foreign language as a specialist subject. These courses must satisfy the requirements listed above, and in addition include the study

³⁰ Welsh Office Circular 13/98: *Requirements for Courses of Initial Teacher Training*.

³¹ These competences and associated personal and professional qualities are set out in the Teacher Education Partnership Handbook (Section 2), available on the Internet at: <http://www.deni.gov.uk/teachers>

of a specialist subject or subjects to degree standard. These courses must include **32 weeks' practical and teaching experience**.

Assessment of trainees

Trainee teachers are supervised and assessed by tutors from the higher education institution and by their mentors in the schools where they undertake their practical experience. Assessment may involve examinations and continuous assessment during the course, but this is a matter for the institutions themselves.

By the end of their training, students in England must meet the standards for the award of qualified teacher status (QTS).³² The trainee is expected to meet all the standards for the award to be made. These standards apply to all programmes of initial teacher training, including employment-based routes.

Standards for the award of QTS in Wales,³³ and the competence-based guidelines³⁴ in Northern Ireland, include broadly similar expectations.

Additional requirements are now being introduced for all trainee teachers in England. Since summer 2000, all trainees have had to pass a national numeracy test, and, since February 2001, a national literacy test. National skills tests in ICT will be launched in September 2001.³⁵

The quality of the training and the standards achieved by trainees are subject to inspection by the schools inspectorates.

³² The standards for England are set out in DfEE Circular 4/98: *Teaching: High Status, High Standards. Requirements for Courses of Initial Teacher Training*. Available on the Internet at: http://www.dfee.gov.uk/circulars/4_98/summary.htm

³³ Welsh Office Circular 13/98: *Requirements for Courses of Initial Teacher Training*.

³⁴ These competences and associated personal and professional qualities are outlined in detail in the *Teacher Education Partnership Handbook* (Section 2), available on the Internet at: <http://www.deni.gov.uk/teachers>

³⁵ More information about the skills tests is available on the Teacher Training Agency website at: <http://www.canteach.gov.uk>

Visits to the target language country

Most intending secondary school teachers of modern languages obtain a first degree in a relevant subject before embarking on professional training, and almost all specialist languages first degree programmes require students to spend an academic year in the target language country working or studying. For example, they may work as a language assistant. The English Language Assistants programme, which is operated by the Central Bureau for International Education and Training, places well over 1,000 assistants a year in 30 countries in Europe (including Eastern Europe), Canada (Quebec) and Latin America. Alternatively, students may undertake work experience abroad, or they may have studied in a partner university, usually as part of the European Union's Erasmus programme.

Teacher recruitment and appointment

The arrangements for the appointment of a teacher of modern languages to a position in a school are the same as for a teacher of any other subject. Teachers are public employees but they are not civil servants. They are not guaranteed employment at any stage of their professional life, but must apply for specific posts. Headteachers, with their governing bodies (Boards of Governors in Northern Ireland), are responsible for staff recruitment. The recruitment procedure includes an interview, after which an applicant is selected, on the basis of overall suitability for the post, taking into account experience and qualifications. The interview panel normally includes at least one governor and one representative from the school management team (for example the headteacher or the head of department).

There is currently a shortage of teachers of modern foreign languages in England and Wales. The Government is seeking to increase the number of well-qualified applicants to courses of postgraduate initial teacher training, and to courses specialising in shortage subjects such as modern

foreign languages in particular. It has therefore introduced financial incentives of £6,000 for all postgraduate trainees, to be supplemented by 'golden hellos' of £4,000 for teachers who, after qualification, teach modern languages in a publicly funded secondary school (England and Wales only).

In-service training of teachers

Responsibility for the in-service training of teachers, often known as continuing professional development (CPD), is shared between central government, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), local education authorities (LEAs) in England and Wales, or Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland, school governing bodies, headteachers, and individual teachers.

Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are expected to meet development targets during the first year of teaching which build on the knowledge, skills and understanding developed in initial teacher training. In England, this induction period must be satisfactorily completed to nationally set standards for the NQT to be eligible for employment in a publicly funded maintained school. In Northern Ireland, the induction year for beginning teachers is followed by a two-year period of early professional development, during which the teacher is expected to continue to review his or her professional development needs.

The statutory conditions of service for all teachers deem participation in arrangements for further training and professional development as part of the professional duties of a teacher. These conditions of service also require that all full-time teachers have at least five working days when they are not required to teach pupils, and it is expected that at least three of these non-contact days are used for continuing professional development.

Each school also has a responsibility for developing and implementing a system for reviewing and managing the

performance of all teachers. These arrangements are intended to encourage teachers to develop their professional skills and to identify any training and development needs. The way in which training and development needs may be met is a matter for the school, as well as the individual teacher, taking into account the availability of resources.

In-service training for teachers of modern languages is provided by various bodies, including:

- ◆ local education authorities (normally the subject adviser for modern languages) in England and Wales;
- ◆ Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland (through their Curriculum Advisory and Support Services);
- ◆ higher education institutions, including the Open University;
- ◆ the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT) and Comenius Centres;
- ◆ the Association for Language Learning (ALL) (a professional association for those involved in teaching modern languages at all levels and in all languages); and
- ◆ independent consultants.

Training courses on a wide range of topics are available from these providers. They include language refresher courses and workshops, and courses which look at the impact of recent policy changes, for example, in England and Wales, the recent (August 2000) changes to the National Curriculum. There is also the opportunity for almost all teachers of modern languages to attend a course on the use of ICT in their subject teaching. These courses are funded by the National Lottery New Opportunities Fund³⁶ and aim to increase the ICT expertise of all serving teachers up to the level expected of newly qualified teachers.

³⁶ The New Opportunities Fund website is at: <http://www.nof.org.uk/>

Some courses for teachers of modern languages may take place wholly or partly in another country. The Central Bureau for International Education and Training and CILT are the principal bodies in this field, and offer advice and information as well as acting as agencies for courses funded by European Union education programmes such as Lingua, the Council of Europe in-service training programme for teachers, and foreign embassies. The duration of such courses varies, but two weeks is typical.

The Central Bureau is also the principal agent for educational exchanges under a number of different schemes, including the EU education programme Arion. Higher education institutions, local education authorities, language associations and other training providers may also organise their own visits and exchanges.

6. CURRENT DEBATES

The revisions to the **National Curriculum in England and Wales**, which were implemented from August 2000 (August 2001 for 14- to 16-year-olds in England) have already been mentioned. There were no major changes to the curricula for modern foreign languages. In **Northern Ireland**, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) is also reviewing the curriculum. It is expected that schools will begin to deliver the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum in September 2003.

Developments in the **post-compulsory curriculum in England, Wales and Northern Ireland** have also been mentioned. These changes, implemented from August 2000, are intended to encourage young people to take up a broader programme of study and may lead to an increase in the take-up of modern languages.

The **age at which children start learning a language** is a continuing subject of debate. As already mentioned, the Government is now providing a measure of support and encouragement for language learning at primary level, and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is carrying out a study of the feasibility of extending the teaching of modern languages into primary schools in England. Considerations include the availability of appropriately trained staff, and the question of which language to teach. Continuity between primary and secondary school is also an issue, particularly as pupils from a single primary school may transfer to a range of different secondary schools, with differing policies as to the first modern language to be taught.

In the spring of 1998, a **national inquiry** was established with the aim of providing an independent view **into**

language teaching and capability in the UK.³⁷ This inquiry was funded by the Nuffield Foundation, an independent charity which supports projects to advance education or social welfare, and was conducted by a committee drawn from languages education and business. The final report, *Languages: the Next Generation*,³⁸ was published on 10 May 2000. It concluded that the UK should develop competence in many languages in order to be able to compete internationally, and should not depend on the position of English as a global language. The report found no coherent national strategy to support the development of this competence throughout all the phases of education. Although this was not a government inquiry, the Government has set up a working group to consider the development of the **Modern Foreign Languages Strategy** proposed by the Nuffield report. It will consist of senior officials from all government departments with an interest and will include external partners such as the Nuffield Foundation and the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT).

In **Wales**, the National Assembly for Wales has been working with the schools' inspectorate (Estyn), the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC), and others, to develop a **National Languages Strategy**.³⁹ Following consultation, the strategy will be published in spring 2001. It will aim to improve the take-up and standard of modern language learning beyond ages 14 and 16, and will focus on maximising the benefits of the statutory teaching of Welsh and English, by promoting the development of transferable linguistic skills.

³⁷ The Nuffield Languages Inquiry website is at:
<http://www.nuffield.org/language/index.html>

³⁸ The Nuffield Foundation (2000). *Languages: the Next Generation: the Final Report and Recommendations of the Nuffield Languages Enquiry*. London: Nuffield Foundation.

³⁹ The National Languages Strategy Consultation Paper is available on the National Assembly for Wales website at:
http://www.wales.gov.uk/consultations/consultations_e.html

APPENDIX

List of abbreviations used

AE Award	Advanced Extension Award
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education
GCE A-level	General Certificate of Education Advanced-level
GCE AS-level	General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary-level (from August 2000)
GCE O-level	General Certificate of Education Ordinary-level
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
GOML	Graded Objectives in Modern Languages
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LEA	Local Education Authority
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
VCE	Vocational Certificate of Education

Useful addresses and websites

ARION (UK National Partner)

See Central Bureau for International Education and Training

Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)

Devas Street
Manchester M15 6EX
England – UK
Tel: +44 (0) 161 953 1180
Fax: +44 (0) 161 273 7572
<http://www.aqa.org.uk>

Association for Language Learning (ALL)

150 Railway Terrace
Rugby CV21 3HN
England – UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1788 546443
Fax: +44 (0) 1788 544149
<http://www.languagelearn.co.uk>

Central Bureau for International Education and Training (CBIET)

10 Spring Gardens
London SW1A 2BN
England – UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7389 4004
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7389 4426
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/cbiet>

Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT)

20 Bedfordbury
Covent Garden
London WC2N 4LB
England – UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7379 5110
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7379 5082
<http://www.cilt.org.uk>

COMENIUS

See Central Bureau for International Education and Training

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)

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<http://www.nics.gov.uk/edu.htm>

Edexcel Foundation

Stewart House
32 Russell Square
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Fax: +44 (0) 20 7758 6960
<http://www.edexcel.org.uk>

Estyn

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training
in Wales
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Tel: +44 (0) 29 2032 5000
Fax: +44 (0) 29 2075 8182
[http://www.wales.gov.uk/polinfo/industry/estynreport/
details_of_estyn_e.htm](http://www.wales.gov.uk/polinfo/industry/estynreport/details_of_estyn_e.htm)

Eurydice at NFER

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Upton Park
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Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)

Welsh Funding Councils
Linden Court
The Orchards
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Cardiff CF14 5DZ
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Tel: +44 (0) 29 2076 1861
Fax: +44 (0) 29 2076 3163
<http://www.wfc.ac.uk/hefcw>

Institute of Linguists (IoL)

Saxon House
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London SE1 1UN
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Fax: +44 (0) 20 7940 3101
<http://www.iol.org.uk>

**London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI)
Examinations Board**

Athena House
112 Station Road
Sidcup
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England – UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8302 0261
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<http://www.lccieb.org.uk>

**National Advisory Centre on Early Language Learning
(NACELL)**

20 Bedfordbury
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London WC2N 4LB
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Tel: +44 (0) 20 7379 5110
<http://www.nacell.org.uk>

National Assembly for Wales (NAfW)

Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ
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http://www.wales.gov.uk/index_e.html

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

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**Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum,
Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)**

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Nuffield Foundation

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<http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org>

Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)

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<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>

Open University (OU)

Central Enquiry Services
The Open University
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<http://www.open.ac.uk>

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)

1 Regent Street
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<http://www.ocr.org.uk>

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

83 Piccadilly
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<http://www.qca.org.uk>

Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC)

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Tel: +44 (0) 29 2037 5400
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<http://www.accac.org.uk>

Teacher Training Agency (TTA)

Portland House
Stag Place
London SW1E 5TT
England – UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7925 3700
<http://www.canteach.gov.uk/home.htm>

Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)

245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
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Fax: +44 (0) 29 2057 5894
<http://www.wjec.co.uk/>

Welsh Language Board

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Cardiff CF5 2YX
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Fax: +44 (0) 29 2087 8001
<http://www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk/html/index-e.html>

TEACHING MODERN LANGUAGES

Policy and Practice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Part of a wider study into the teaching of modern languages across Europe, this report has been compiled by EURYDICE at NFER as an overview of policy and practice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Focusing mainly on the place of modern languages in schools, it provides information on

- ◆ the linguistic environment in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- ◆ the historical background to modern languages teaching
- ◆ the place, status and organisation of modern languages in the curriculum
- ◆ modern languages curriculum and assessment
- ◆ training and recruitment of teachers of modern languages
- ◆ current debates.

It does not assume any prior knowledge of education systems in the UK, and provides full references to source material and Internet sites of relevant organisations. It will provide all those interested in the teaching of modern languages, including policy makers, teachers, school managers, advisers, inspectors and researchers, with a concise, up-to-date and comprehensive view of the position of language teaching in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

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