

Language Learning in Schools – Strategic Plan for Implementation 2017-2021

Vision

Scottish Ministers have a clear message to all stakeholders that it is normal to learn language from P1 as part of Curriculum for Excellence and that every primary teacher will be a teacher of languages in the future. In this way all our young people will understand the value of having language skills and of its worth as a skillset for employability.

To achieve this vision the SIG members will focus on the priority areas of this Plan working to support Local Authorities who are implementing this policy. This will include developing their approaches together in terms of sharing practical resources and sophisticated strategic approaches with a clear aim for effectiveness, efficiency and optimising the experience for all children and young people.

Context

Today's children and young people are growing up in a multilingual world. The ability to communicate effectively in social, academic and commercial settings is crucial if they are to play their full part as global citizens.

Languages are one of the eight areas of Curriculum for Excellence which recognise the importance of language learning as a skill which enables our young people to participate fully in a global society and economy. The experience of learning an additional language early in life is known to support the development of key cognitive skills, boost mother tongue literacy skills, broaden horizons and encourage tolerance and respect. Learning a further additional language allows for progression in language acquisition and fosters further interest in other cultures.

The Scottish Government's policy on language learning (a 1+2 approach) is aimed at ensuring that every child has the opportunity to learn a modern language from P1 onwards; this language (known as L2) is an entitlement up to the end of S3. Additionally, each child should have the opportunity to learn a second modern language (known as L3) at the latest from P5 onwards, with opportunities for learning in this or another second modern language continuing to the end of primary school. Young people are entitled to learn a second language within their broad general education i.e. within the S1 to S3 experience.

Since 2013 the Scottish Government has provided development funding to local authorities totalling £21.2m, including £5m in this financial year 2016-17, to support activity that works towards the sustainable implementation of this model of language learning by 2021.

In addition, Scottish Government funding has been provided annually to SCILT, Scotland's National Centre for Languages and CISS, the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools to provide national level support and co-ordination of activity, in partnership with schools, local authorities (LA) and Education Scotland, to support the enhanced provision of language learning in schools.

Progress

We acknowledge that significant progress has been made to date on the implementation of language learning in schools. This is enabling more and more young people across Scotland to access high quality language teaching and learning, starting in primary, continuing throughout broad general education in to secondary school and onward to national awards and qualifications. The work carried out by ADES to review progress, along with on-going dialogue with stakeholders, demonstrates this good progress but also signals that there is still more to be done.

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That is why, in order to further develop, embed and sustain this work, we have developed with partners a Strategic Plan for Implementation of our language learning policy in schools by 2021.

In doing so it has been recognised that there is a need to refine the key priority areas over time that all stakeholders in the system can identify with and focus on. There is a recognition that funding is important, but this alone will not deliver the changes we want to see.

The Plan fully recognises that developing teacher capacity is central to the success of the policy along with robust plans and support for on-going professional development. It also recognises that a strategic approach as the basis for long term sustainable change is essential, requiring strong leadership at all levels.

The Education Strategic Implementation Group (SIG) for languages will play a key role in ensuring successful implementation of this plan.

Areas of priority action

In the interests of providing strategic direction on implementation of the policy in the next 4 years, the following areas of priority have been determined in discussion with stakeholders who are our Implementation Group members. These areas will contribute to the original 'creating the conditions' priorities agreed with a specific focus on impact in schools, and are based on experience of what has worked most effectively to-date. They are intended to provide a reference point for national and local decision making on actions and support that will help us in meeting our ambitions for language learning in schools by 2021. Across all of these priority areas it is acknowledged that all levels of the system need to demonstrate **effective leadership** if our ambitions are to be met.

Communication and engagement - Building on the context set out above the Scottish Government will lead in making clear the role and importance of language learning in schools. This will include a clear narrative on the place of language learning in the curriculum and its contribution to improving literacy, numeracy, employability and health and wellbeing, all as part of our vision for the Scottish education system to deliver excellence through raising attainment and achieving equity.

Collaboration - It is clear that more can be done to ensure most efficient and effective use of the resources available for languages across the education system, including through strategic planning on a collaborative basis, within or across local authority boundaries. We will work with partners to identify and support appropriate opportunities for this to take place.

Curriculum - Effective curriculum models, inter-disciplinary learning and clear learner progression and pathways for language learning are essential to the success of our languages policy. We will ensure the promotion of effective practice and models for language learning, including supporting joint working between primary and secondary schools on content, skills and approaches to learning and to enable effective transition, progression and continuity.

Professional Development - In order to ensure the sustainability of the policy, teachers require to have access to high quality professional development in languages pedagogy, and to upgrade their language skills and knowledge both early on in their careers and as necessary at other points. We will work with schools, local authorities, Initial Teacher Education Institutions and the General Teaching Council for Scotland to review and build on the strengths of current programmes.

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Priority Area	Objective	Areas of Action 2017-2021	Key SIG members	Measures
Communication & Engagement	Clarity and consistency of understanding and expectation across schools, local authorities, further & higher education, employers, into wider society.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver sustained, relevant messaging showing strong commitment, especially to reach leaders and decision makers. 2. Provide events and activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) with wide-ranging cross-sectoral participation b) for specific sectors c) led by SIG members' own organisations and by non-members d) to promote languages opportunities in further/ higher education/ workplace. 	<p>SIG members</p> <p>SG and ADES strong messages in particular</p>	<p>In addition to recording progress against particular actions, the following are key sources of evidence of progress in terms of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority updates to identify progress and refine areas for support, including evaluation work. • Evaluation work building upon the ADES 2015 research. • Evaluation work led by ES. • Research led by academics. • Information about breadth of provision and uptake at HE/FE and community learning. • Social Attitudes Survey information. • Data about uptake and attainment in SQA qualifications and other forms of accreditation. • Possible Pisa interest if global skills are included.
Collaboration	Effective and efficient collaborative partnerships.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Support effective collaboration at every level to support LT strategic planning for change: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) all stakeholders: dialogue, joint planning and cooperation to support development in languages within CfE and beyond. b) schools and LAs: sharing plans, resources and innovative approaches, e.g. technology, native speakers, twinning, flexible learning opportunities. 	SIG members	
Curriculum	Clear and effective curriculum design to ensure progress through primary and secondary schooling, and beyond.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Support, guidance and resources for practitioners at all levels, e.g.: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Guidance on approaches to L2 and L3 planning from early years through to upper secondary, including transitions recognising that there is no hierarchy of languages, and in L2, cohesion and progression must be paramount. b) Tools to support high quality progression in all settings nationally, including re-evaluation of secondary approaches and innovative development. c) Active support for effective use of native speakers in schools. 	ES, SCILT SALT	
Professional Development	Practitioners equipped, enabled and empowered to deliver high quality language learning in primary and secondary schools, recognising the strong connection between ITE and CLPL.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Equip those undertaking ITE to an agreed level to teach languages (and literacy through language) within CfE, supporting motivation, relevance, achievement and attainment. This requires national strategic planning by TEIs and SG. 6. Ensure that languages CLPL for all practitioners is sustainable and responsive to specific needs e.g. pedagogy, language skill, strategic planning, and curriculum design. 7. Encourage diversification and uptake of opportunities for professional recognition, including more dual registration. 8. Promote practitioner enquiry, research and professional dialogue at all levels to support evidence based practice. 	<p>SCDE</p> <p>SCILT, SALT, ES</p> <p>GTCS</p> <p>SCILT, SCDE</p>	

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¹The key SIG member is the lead organisation. It will not be the only organisation involved in the action.

The abbreviations in the Plan are as follows: SG - Scottish Government, ES - Education Scotland, SCILT - Scotland's National Centre for Languages, ADES - Association of Directors of Education Scotland, SCDE - Scottish Council of Deans of Education, SALT - Scottish Association of Language Teaching, GTCS - General Teaching Council of Scotland, CLPL - career long professional learning, TEI – Teacher Education Institutes, ITE – Initial Teacher Education., SQA – Scottish Qualification Authority, LA – Local Authorities