

Report To: Education & Communities Committee **Date:** 10 September 2013

Report By: Corporate Director Education,
Communities and Organisational
Development **Report No:**
EDUCOM/67/13/WB

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Subject: Foreign Language Learning in Primary Schools A 1+2 Approach

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Committee members with the details of the ambitious and challenging agenda for future language learning and teaching in Scotland's schools as recommended by the Scottish Government Languages Working Group.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report brings forward far reaching recommendations with the purpose of establishing a new model for the learning and teaching of languages in Scottish schools for years to come.

It describes a framework for language learning in Scotland based on the mother tongue plus 2 additional languages model recommended by the European Union and adopted by many countries in Europe and beyond.

Introducing two additional languages is an ambitious goal but one which, given the right approach and the right resources, the Working Group believes is achievable. It will require a commitment to the provision of additional resources for local authorities and schools at a time of unprecedented financial constraint.

All pupils will learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue. This will be rolled out over two Parliaments by 2020. All children will start learning a second language (referred to as L2) in P1 and a third (L3) in P5. Languages should be an entitlement for all pupils up to the end of their broad general education in S3. Implementation will be on a phased basis from 2013/14 and beyond, and aim for full implementation by 2020.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education and Communities Committee note the contents of this report.

Albert Henderson
Corporate Director Education & Communities

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The working group drew on the Gaelic Excellence Group Report, which highlights the success of Gaelic Language teaching through Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and the work being undertaken through Gaelic Learners in the Primary School (GLPS).

Whilst recognising this good practice, it has to be acknowledged that there has been a significant and worrying decline over the past decade in the number of languages taken forward to SQA certification. In engaging with a globalised world young people in Scotland will increasingly need to be able to communicate in more than one language. It is in Scotland's economic interest to have a workforce equipped with appropriate language skills and the ability to speak the language of our trading partners.

Language learning is life enhancing. It opens doors to possibilities and experiences which are not available to those who are restricted to the knowledge of one language. Learning an additional language also facilitates a deeper understanding of the possibilities of language and of communication, including those relating to the learner's mother tongue.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) aims to equip our young people for life and to prepare them for a future Scotland that is open to the world. Within the framework of CfE there is a recognition of the importance of language learning as a communicative skill which will enable our young people to participate fully in a global society and economy.

As with other areas of the curriculum, positive language learning experiences contribute to young people's development as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Through learning new languages young people can become successful learners with opportunities relating to working and travelling abroad; confident individuals able to communicate in more than one language; effective contributors to a changing world with an understanding of Scotland's relationship to other countries; and responsible citizens with an awareness of cultures and languages in addition to their own.

An audit of the resources within the system, including the number of teachers trained under previous Modern Languages in the Primary School (MLPS) and GLPS initiatives will be required and consideration will need to be given to teacher professional development and future initial teacher education (ITE).

Inverclyde Council has 6 secondary schools, 20 primary schools and 2 specialist ASN schools. In all of the primary schools, pupils start learning a foreign language no later than primary 6. Some schools begin earlier. In the three associated primary schools for Notre Dame, this language is Spanish. In all other primary schools, pupils study French. Almost all pupils continue with their study of the modern language up to the end of S4. Presently pupils in secondary will also have the option of taking up a second foreign language (French or Spanish) at the start of S3. Pupils in Additional Support Needs Schools study at Access Level.

There is also the Gaelic medium unit for nursery and primary pupils based in Whinhill Primary School. Pupils from the Unit may choose to continue their Gaelic studies at the Glasgow Gaelic Secondary School.

The vast majority of Modern Languages in the Primary School (MLPS) trained teachers in Inverclyde schools have French as their language. Very few are trained in Spanish. Likewise all secondary languages teachers are qualified in French. Some but not all have a Spanish qualification and others are qualified to teach German and Italian, although these two languages are not currently on offer in Inverclyde's secondary schools. To offer Spanish as the main foreign language in primary and secondary would have massive implications re staffing, resources, training and CPD. However it would be more feasible and the obvious choice for most schools as the third language to be offered in the 1+2 programme from P5.

MLPS training ceased in session 2007-8 in Inverclyde when ring-fenced funding from the Scottish Government for modern languages learning was discontinued. The training had lasted 15 years and in each of these years, between ten and fifteen teachers were trained, mainly in French but some in Spanish. However, many of these teachers have since retired, some have been promoted and others are not delivering the programme in their schools. Only a minority of primary teachers are equipped to deliver a modern languages curriculum. Even teachers currently delivering the programme would require further training/ refresher courses in the delivery of the new policy.

In recent years some languages graduates and NQTs who have undergone MLPS training while at university have joined Inverclyde primary schools and are delivering the MLPS programme.

Liaison between secondary school Modern Languages departments and associated primary schools would have to be improved in the future with timetabled visits to primary schools put in place.

An action plan for 1 + 2 languages is in the process of being developed for 2013/14 and will be shared with Committee members at a future meeting of the Education and Communities Committee.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

Inverclyde Council's share of the national funding to deliver the 1 + 2 Languages initiative is £59,606.

5.2 Legal

There are no known legal issues.

5.3 Human Resources

The report Teaching Scotland's Future (Donaldson Review) acknowledged that teachers increasingly require specialist knowledge in a number of areas, including modern languages, in order to teach in the primary school. Teachers involved in the delivery of the policy will need high quality Continuous Professional Development.

5.4 Equalities

Implementation of a 1+2 policy is for all young people wherever they live in Scotland and must be inclusive. The concept of equality and social justice lies at the heart of the model.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 This report outlines key features and implications of the Language Learning in Scotland A 1+ 2 Approach.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

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