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Global futures

A plan to improve and promote modern foreign languages
in Wales 2015–2020



Information

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Audience	The entire teaching workforce and government and national partners, including regional education consortia, local authorities, governing bodies, workforce unions and diocesan authorities.
Overview	This publication sets out the Welsh Government's strategic objectives for modern foreign languages in Wales from 2015–2020.
Action required	None – for information only.
Further information	<p>Enquiries about this document should be directed to: Curriculum Division Infrastructure, Curriculum, Qualifications and Learner Support Directorate Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ</p> <p>e-mail: CurriculumCorrespond@wales.gsi.gov.uk</p>
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at www.gov.wales/educationandskills
Related documents	<i>Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales</i> (Welsh Government, 2015)

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Ministerial foreword

Learning other languages is an important element in the education of children and young people. It broadens horizons, introduces learners to other cultures and provides them with the experiences and skills that they need to succeed in the new global economy. This is an issue that was central to our recent independent review of the curriculum, *Successful Futures*, undertaken by Professor Graham Donaldson, which I accepted in full. This sets out four purposes of the curriculum, to cultivate children who are:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

In June, I announced a new approach to support modern foreign languages in Wales. '*Global Futures – a plan to improve and promote modern foreign languages in Wales*' demonstrates my commitment to ensuring that learners in Wales are equipped to compete in the new global economy.

The five-year plan has been developed with, and draws on the knowledge, experience and expertise of, key partners to the Welsh Government. It sets out how, collectively, we intend to raise the profile of modern foreign languages in Wales and support our teachers and learners to make the most of the life-changing opportunities that are available to them. This is an approach which supports our vision set out in *Qualified for life, an education improvement plan for 3 to 19 year-olds in Wales*.

We are ambitious for our children and young people, we want them to be equipped for the 21st century. That is why this plan includes new partnership arrangements for Wales, the sharing of effective practices and the use of new digital technologies, all of which will be overseen and driven forward by a Global Futures Steering Group, comprising key stakeholders.

Furthermore, I have set out my ambition for Wales to become a 'Bilingual plus 1' nation, where learners study English, Welsh and, from Year 5 onwards, one or more modern foreign languages. To explore how and when this can be achieved, the steering group will work with the Pioneer Network as they start work on the design and development of the new curriculum for Wales.

Huw Lewis

Minister for Education and Skills

Global futures

Our vision

Our vision is that all learners in Wales become global citizens, able to communicate effectively in other languages and to appreciate other cultures.

Our strategy

Our strategy is to encourage learners to extend their knowledge of other cultures by becoming 'Bilingual plus 1', that is, studying English, Welsh and at least one modern foreign language from primary to examination level.

Our aims

Our aims are:

1. To increase the number of young people choosing to study modern foreign language subjects at Level 2 (GCSE level or equivalent), at Level 3 (A level or equivalent) and at higher education level,
2. To improve the teaching and learning experience of modern foreign languages for learners from 7-19, with the intention of building towards a 'bilingual plus 1' system where the formal teaching of an MFL will begin at year 5 as part of the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience,
3. To maintain and improve on the attainment levels presently being achieved in modern foreign languages subjects.

Context

This five-year plan responds to the decline over the last 10 years in the take up of modern foreign languages at levels 2 and 3 and in higher education across Wales.

While the performance of young people who presently study a modern foreign language is strong at both GCSE and A level, there is a pressing need to encourage many more of our young people to study one or more modern foreign language subjects as part of their education at school in Years 10 and 11, and beyond.

We need to ensure that all young people from all backgrounds understand the benefits of, and have the opportunity to receive, a formal qualification in a modern foreign language subject.

The increased competition for subject time in school timetables and the perceived dominant position of English as the language of global business

have all contributed to the decline in take up of modern foreign languages at examination levels.

This decline is not a distinctly Welsh problem, but we are determined to ensure that young people in Wales understand the value of learning a modern foreign language to examination level and to understand how it can lead to progression to further and higher education and the world of work.

In developing this plan, we have reviewed the available evidence and drawn on the expertise of the Global Futures Steering Group who have advised on the actions set out below. Over the five years of the plan, the Steering group will continue to provide advice on promoting modern foreign languages in Wales.

Our strategic actions

This plan sets out how we will challenge and then reverse the decline in the take up of modern foreign languages at Levels 2 and 3, and beyond. Our strategic actions will be guided by three key themes:

1. Promote and raise the profile of modern foreign languages as an important subject not only at Level 2 but also as a longer term choice which can lead to exciting and valued career opportunities,
2. Build capacity and support for the professional development of the education workforce to deliver modern foreign languages effectively from year 5 onwards, enabling all learners to benefit from the 'bilingual plus 1' strategy via the New Deal for the education workforce, review of ITET and pioneer schools network,
3. Provide enhanced learning opportunities to engage and excite learners.

To achieve our aims, the Welsh Government has and will continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders, drawing on their knowledge, expertise and experience of supporting teachers and learners. These stakeholders include:

- teachers
- regional education consortia
- Universities Wales
- Goethe-Institut
- Institut Français
- Alliance Française
- the Spanish Embassy
- Education Department of the Italian Consulate
- Confucius Institutes
- British Council
- Estyn
- Routes into Languages Cymru
- The Open University in Wales
- BBC Wales.

The Global Futures Steering Group, comprising representatives from the above stakeholders, will oversee this plan and programme of work. In addition to overseeing the delivery, the Steering Group will:

- consider the role of digital technologies in supporting language development, and any links to the development of a cross-curricular Digital Competency Framework,
- work with the Pioneer Network to consider and share outcomes and learning from the Global Futures plan and to consider how the aspiration 'Bilingual plus 1' might be achieved,

- work with the Pioneer Network to support teachers' professional development and support the principles outlined in *Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers*, Professor John Furlong's report on the future of Initial Teacher Education and Training in Wales.

The actions set out on the following pages will be taken forward by the **Welsh Government** and the **regional education consortia**, in partnership with key stakeholders.

Successful futures

The actions within the Global futures plan will link in with the development of the new curriculum, including the Area of Learning and Experience for Language Literacy and Communication and the four purposes of the curriculum which shall be to cultivate children who are

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives,
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work,
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world, and
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

Strategic action 1

Promote and raise the profile of modern foreign languages as an important subject not only at Level 2 but also as a longer term choice which can lead to exciting and valued career opportunities

The study of languages and cultures provides learners with enjoyment, mobility and the opportunity to acquire a broad range of skills that appeal to universities and employers. The benefits of choosing a modern foreign language at Levels 2, 3 and beyond are well documented. However, all too often learners fail to choose a modern foreign language at examination level and this potentially limits their career and life pathways.

To meet this challenge, we intend to highlight to learners, parents/carers, headteachers and governors the value of learning a modern foreign language.

We will:

- work with the regional education consortia to **facilitate a programme of language and career role models and speakers** to go into schools to show learners the range of exciting and life-changing career and life paths that studying a modern foreign language at GCSE and A level, or their equivalents can open up,
- Work with Careers Wales and the regional education consortia to improve awareness and access to relevant **labour market information and intelligence about career opportunities** where a modern foreign language qualification can take a young person.
- **review the approach taken by schools in devising GCSE and 'A' level option blocks for Year 10 and 11 respectively and to ensure** greater equality of choice and that modern foreign languages are not marginalised,
- work with the Global Futures Steering Group to **review the examinations on offer to learners for modern foreign languages** at Level 2 and to consider whether the branding and presentation is fit for purpose,
- **develop a marketing and communication campaign** to promote the learning of a modern foreign language at GCSE and A level, or equivalent examinations to learners, parents/carers, headteachers and governors. This campaign will be designed to coincide with the lead up time when learners are making their choices for GCSE and A level,
- Working with universities, we will introduce a **mentoring scheme for undergraduate language students** within universities and Routes into Languages Cymru to work with the school 'centres of excellence' and

their partner secondary schools at Key Stage 3. The purpose of the scheme will be to:

- a) highlight the benefits of learning a modern foreign language at GCSE, A-level and degree level,
- b) broaden the horizons and aspirations of learners by highlighting career and mobility opportunities available to those with language skills, such as working and studying abroad,
- c) raise expectations, improve motivation and strengthen the persistence and personal resilience of learners studying modern foreign languages,
- d) create sustainable links between higher education modern languages departments and partner secondary schools,
- e) offer classroom experiences and opportunities to modern foreign language undergraduate students, with a view to encouraging a greater number to consider teaching a modern foreign language.

Strategic action 2

Build capacity and to support for the professional development of the education workforce teaching profession to deliver modern foreign languages effectively from year 5 onwards, enabling all learners to benefit from its study the 'bilingual plus 1' strategy via the New Deal for the education workforce, review of ITET and pioneer schools network.

Improving standards of teaching is a key priority for the Welsh Government and is set out as a strategic objective in *Qualified for Life* (Welsh Government 2014) – 'An excellent professional workforce with strong pedagogy based on an understanding of what works'. It is also about collaboration and co-operation through the school centres of excellence. This is a key component of sharing effective practice as set out in the New Deal for the Education Workforce.

We will establish a sustainable model of support for current and prospective modern foreign language teachers in Wales. We will also encourage teachers to further develop their pedagogical skills through high quality professional development, for both those who are specialist teachers and those who are keen to develop their language skills, particularly those in primary schools.

We will achieve this through the establishment of **school 'centres of excellence'** in each of the regional education consortia. The consortia will support and work in partnership with the language institutes, British Council, universities and other appropriate stakeholders to provide enhanced professional development opportunities for teachers.

The school 'centres of excellence' will:

- **build on their own practices of delivering effective learning experiences and share these directly with partner secondary schools and feeder primaries through school-to-school support**
- **develop and deliver training, resources and materials in partnership with modern foreign language teachers**
- **facilitate networking opportunities for modern foreign language teachers to innovate and to share ideas and effective teaching practices which make languages interesting and enjoyable to learn**
- **develop and provide English and Welsh digital resources and materials to be published on Hwb, the all Wales learning platform, so that they can be shared nationally**
- **create digital networks through Hwb to share resources and provide a forum for modern foreign language teachers across Wales to discuss effective practice, to innovate and to share and develop their ideas**

- **broker and facilitate the provision of training and materials by the language institutes who have a wealth of knowledge, resources, materials and expertise which they will share with our schools to improve the learning and teaching of languages**
- **improve transition arrangements for modern foreign languages between primary and secondary schools, support language progression, prevent duplication of effort and facilitate the development of a ‘bilingual plus 1’ strategy for Wales as we take forward the recommendations in the Successful Futures report.**

The regional education consortia will identify the school ‘centres of excellence’ in their area and they will help the ‘centres of excellence’ draw up well-focussed and timed action plans through which the ‘centres of excellence’ will achieve their aims. The Regional Education Consortia will also help to monitor the work of the ‘centres of excellence’ and they will provide appropriate challenge to ensure high quality outcomes. Teachers and schools are asked to contact their consortium representative for information on how to access support from their school ‘centre(s) of excellence’.

Details of the schools identified as ‘centres of excellence’ in each consortium are available on the Learning Wales website at – Learning.gov.wales

Modern foreign languages conference – summer 2016

The professional sharing of ideas and practices is a key component to professional development. Equally, given the focus on curriculum design and our ambition for a ‘Bilingual plus 1’ nation, the summer of 2016 provides a timely opportunity for teachers of modern foreign languages in Wales to gather to discuss the initial impact of this new approach and the future direction of language learning in the curriculum.

To support this, we will:

- **hold a modern foreign languages conference** to share effective practice from the school ‘centres of excellence’ and from modern foreign language teachers across Wales to: explore issues around the development of ‘Bilingual plus 1’, and, to discuss the findings from Estyn’s 2015 review of the teaching of modern foreign languages at Key Stages 3 and 4.

Digital technologies

Training and the sharing of ideas, resources, materials and practices are no longer constrained to face-to-face contact or delivery and throughout the curriculum we are embracing digital technologies, such as Hwb, to support teaching and learning.

To support training and the development and sharing of effective practices, we will:

- work with the **school 'centres of excellence'** to identify and promote effective digital technologies;
- work with the ***Global Futures Steering Group*** to explore how we can harness new digital technologies to improve language learning for teachers and learners. There will be a particular focus on up-skilling non-specialist teachers in primary schools,
- engage with the work of the Digital Pioneers who are developing a cross-curricular Digital Competency Framework. This will sit alongside existing Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks, and be available to schools from September 2016.

Taken together, these actions represent a sustainable and strategic approach to professional development to improve the teaching of modern foreign languages.

Strategic action 3

Provide enhanced learning opportunities to engage and excite learners.

Learners, whether they are studying a language or not, can also benefit significantly from a cultural exchange, a trip abroad and/or a partnership with either a European or non-European country. A number of schools in Wales already participate in cultural exchanges, undertake annual trips abroad or have established partnerships with regions and schools across the world. Such experiences engage learners who previously would not have considered pursuing languages and supports greater levels of attainment.

We want to ensure that schools participating in these programmes continue to do so and we want to encourage other schools to become involved. Funding is available through the British Council and European programmes to support the establishment of exchanges and partnerships and it is important that as many schools as possible in Wales access these funding streams

We will:

- work with the British Council to **promote the programmes and funding opportunities to regional education consortia** and we will work with the school 'centres of excellence' to support their applications for funding.
- work with the regional education consortia and British Council to **produce guidance and case studies to support schools** who wish to undertake these experiences.
- work with the language institutes and the regional education consortia to identify opportunities where they can **provide direct support and engaging learning experiences for learners** to enhance existing provision.
- work with the regional education consortia and the Global Futures Steering Group to **explore the effective use of existing digital technologies** and resources to enhance existing teaching practices.
- Work with the regional education consortia to explore **non-formal opportunities** (such as taster sessions) to encourage learners to try a language.

Evaluation and reporting

The regional education consortia will develop action plans based on clear objectives and success criteria to monitor and evidence the impact of the work they undertake with their school centres of excellence to support and improve modern foreign language learning and to ensure that the plan is both responsive and flexible in its approach.

The Global Futures Steering Group will oversee the approaches taken by the school 'centres of excellence', provide challenge and support to the regional education consortia and the 'centres of excellence' to ensure that the aims of this plan are achieved.

The evaluation process will capture the impact on learners in local partnership schools as well as provide evidence about implementation that can be used at a national level.

In particular, the evaluation process will consider the impact of the Global Futures strategy on improving the take up of modern foreign language at Level 2 and 3 examinations.

Each year, we will report on the previous year's progress.