

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP on MODERN LANGUAGES



Chair: Tonia Antoniazzi MP (Lab); Co-Chair: Baroness Coussins (CB);
Vice-Chairs: Darren Paffey MP (Lab); Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury (Con).

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Section 2: General views on curriculum, assessment and qualifications pathways

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Section 4: Ensuring an excellent foundation in maths and English

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[APPG contact details were submitted here].

The APPG on Modern Languages (APPG ML)'s response refers to positions it set out in its *National Recovery Programme for Languages* in 2019 (<https://nationalrecoverylanguages.weebly.com/>) and is informed by further decline in the uptake of l i (B c

[-national-languages-strategy-education-and-skills/](#)).

As early as 2012, research found just 9% of 14-15 year olds in England could use their first foreign language

School visits and exchanges are declining across the UK, and declining fastest in schools in the most deprived areas (68% of these schools cutting trips) compared to schools in least deprived areas (44%). (APPG ML meeting on international visits 2023).

Yet they are crucial to motivation and uptake: a British Council survey showed 62% of language students said a prior international exchange influenced their decision to do a language degree (British Council survey 2014 <https://www.britishcouncil.org/contact/press/british-council-says-bring-back-school-exchanges>).

The positive socio-economic impact of language skills and experiences abroad are well documented (for example: Ayres-Bennett et al. 2020, *The economic value to the UK of speaking other languages*). Students (of any subject) who study or train overseas report significantly higher earnings, better employability, and confidence in their future careers. (European Commission 2014, *The Erasmus impact study – Effects of mobility on the skills and employability of students and the internationalisation of higher education institutions*.)

The government should boost the current Turing scheme or consider returning to the Erasmus+ scheme to reinstate reciprocity (funding for in-coming exchange students from abroad) and eTwinning (allowing UK schools to partner with schools abroad virtually).

The government should also ensure adequate opportunities to learn languages in the FE sector, as many socio-economically disadvantaged students study courses in FE colleges. Recent research from the British Academy shows that language provision in the FE sector is limited (British Academy 2023, *Languages provision in UK Further Education*).

Learning a language has a positive cross-curricular impact on learning English language and literacy, maths, science and other subjects (RIPL Research In Primary Languages research papers: Woll 2019, *Cognitive Benefits of Language Learning: Broadening our perspectives. Final Report to the British Academy*; Bak & Mehmedbegovic-Smith at the APPG ML meeting on Neuroscience, 2018; Bak & Mehmedbegovic 2017, 'Healthy Linguistic Diet: the value of linguistic diversity and language learning across the lifespan', *Language, Society and Policy, Vol 1*).

Other studies have shown cognitive benefits from acquiring language skills, including protective effects on the brain (APPG ML meeting on Neuroscience, 2018).

The APPG ML has received representations that the scope of language learning should include more real-world relevance such as richer cultural content and linguistics and recommends that the Review takes advice from expert organisations about these approaches.

The APPG ML has seen evidence from initiatives that embed language learning in students' real lives including their communities successfully, such as the North East Festival of Languages and Hackney's Spanish First initiative.

At all stages of education from 5-18, language learning can have a positive cross-curricular effect including on English literacy, intercultural, creativity, confidence and cognitive resilience and performance (RIPL Research In Primary Languages research papers; Woll 2019: *Cognitive Benefits of Language Learning: Broadening our perspectives*).

Too many secondary schools start over when pupils enter Year 7 (British Council *Language Trends* series).

When successful, properly planned primary-secondary transition can lead to large increases in uptake at GCSE and A Level – for example, the Hackney Spanish First approach saw entries in GCSE Spanish doubling in four years (Baldwin 2021, *The Spanish First Language Initiative Evaluation Report*).

The reputation of languages as a harshly graded subject is detrimental to uptake and the severe grading issue is long standing (ALL London

consult expert organisations to evaluate the effectiveness of some innovations in the FE sector, for example remote teaching (Edinburgh College presentation