

# Perth & Kinross

## Local Agreements : Modern Languages 5 - 14

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**PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL**  
**Policy and Guidelines for the**  
**Implementation of**  
**MODERN LANGUAGES**  
**5-14**

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### **Introduction**

Perth and Kinross Council believes in the importance and value of foreign language learning in the school curriculum. Besides equipping young people with the linguistic skills necessary to play a full and active part as citizens of Europe, it also provides opportunities for cross-curricular links and promotes multi-cultural understanding.

In 1993 the Secretary of State for Scotland published the National Guidelines for Modern Languages 5-14, designed for use by teachers in S 1 /S2, the stage at which the majority of pupils in Scotland began the study of a language other than English. Since that time the teaching of a modern European language has been introduced to the curriculum of almost all Perth and Kinross primary schools; by the end of session 1998/1999, all primary schools should be involved.

It is understood that the National Guidelines are eventually to be reviewed and amended to take account of the extension of provision to all primary schools, but in the meantime they offer a useful framework for the development of a coherent and progressive curriculum.

The purpose of this document is to establish the teaching of a modern European language as an integral part of the 5-14 programme and to offer advice and guidance to schools on the implementation of the National Guidelines. It also addresses issues of learning and teaching in Modern Languages. The advice contained in the Policy and Guidelines is not new; much of it is based on the good practice described in the documents *Effective Learning and Teaching in Scottish Secondary Schools - Modern Languages* (SOED 1990), *Modern Languages in the Primary School - Advice for Schools* (SOEID 1995-7) and of course the *Modern European Languages 5-14 National Guidelines*. In writing the Policy and Guidelines the steering group drew upon the experience of not only the extension of the modern languages teaching programme in primary schools over the last five years but also the previous experience of the national pilot project in Tayside (Montrose).

The Policy and Guidelines will be accompanied by the publication of a Framework Syllabus for Modern Languages P6-S2 (Perth and Kinross, 1998) which will provide practical assistance to enable teachers to translate policy into practice.

## **2 Rationale**

'The Secretary of State is firmly of the view that the learning of foreign languages is a valid and useful educational experience, which can benefit pupils across the whole range of ability.'

SED Circular No 1178, January 1989

National and European policies stress the importance of equipping all our youngsters for life in Europe and foreign language competence is rightly seen as a necessary part of this preparation.

The benefits to be derived from learning a foreign language are not purely linguistic. Language learning also makes an important contribution to social and emotional education and to the development of learning skills in general.

The potential benefits to be gained from foreign language learning are the same for all learners, whatever their age, whatever their circumstances, and whatever their aptitude for language learning.

## **3 Aims**

In the teaching of modern foreign languages, we aim:

- o to develop positive attitudes to language learning
- o to develop the ability to communicate in the foreign language
- o to learn how language works

- o to learn about the way of life in other countries
- o to promote pupil attainment and achievement

### Objectives

In order to promote the policy, schools will require to give consideration to the following objectives:

- o with reference to the Authority policy statement schools should review their 5-14 strategy to ensure a timescale for development within the school and departmental plans
- o through effective planning, schools should maximise the use of resources - people, time, space and materials - to encourage the linguistic development of each pupil
- o through school policy, the Head teacher should monitor the effective delivery of the modern language across and through the curriculum

In pursuit of these aims and objectives, a planned teaching programme would incorporate the following features:

- o an enjoyable, stress-free learning environment in which pupils can learn at their own pace
- o the recognition that through language learning pupils acquire skills, develop confidence and find enjoyment
- o links, where appropriate, across and through the curriculum
- o contexts which are stimulating and relevant
- o opportunities to learn how language works by paying proper attention to structures and patterns
- o activities which encourage interaction among pupils and between pupils and teachers

## **4 Learning and Teaching**

### 4.1 Background

Each school has its own policy on Effective Learning and Teaching. The key principles are the same for Modern Languages. Reference should be made to the following documents:

- o Effective Learning and Teaching in Scottish Secondary Schools - Modern Languages (1990)
- o Modern Languages in the Primary School - Advice for Schools (1995/1996/1997)
- o Modern European Languages 5-14 National Guidelines

## o Perth and Kinross Framework Syllabus for Modern Languages P6-S2

### 4.2 Learning IN and THROUGH a modern language

4.2.1 Foreign language learning should be active and enjoyable. Wherever possible, it should be contextualised and linked to the work of the class in other curricular areas.

4.2.2 In the primary languages context, the term 'embedding' has been used to describe the linking of the foreign language to the topic or theme being covered by the class. If the theme does not lend itself to the foreign language, a 'stand alone' unit may be preferred. It is important that the foreign language being learned has transfer value in other contexts. It is of little benefit to pupils to concentrate on acquiring items of vocabulary specific only to one topic. The danger of this 'phrase book' approach is that language learning becomes little more than an ever-increasing number of lists of nouns.

4.2.3 Although language teaching in P6 and P7 tends by its nature to be based on one topic or language area at a time, as pupils progress into S 1 and S2 teaching programmes should be organised in such a way that they are encouraged to transfer and build on language acquired from one topic or context to another. It desirable that topics recur but that teachers ensure that there is progression in language learning.

### 4.3 Balance of skills

4.3.1 The four skills involved in language learning - Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing - are in constant interaction, but attention to their individual weightings is necessary to ensure balance and progression. At the early stages of language learning, Listening, Speaking and Reading may have greater prominence than Writing; however Writing has an important role to play in supporting language acquisition.

4.3.2 It is often argued that the 'interference' of the written word is a reason to delay its introduction, but as there is some evidence to indicate that the written word will inevitably interfere with learners' pronunciation whenever it is introduced, there may be a case to do so early. As in all areas of the curriculum, different children learn in different ways. Many pupils need to see the written form of the word to allow them to consolidate and to aid memorisation. It may also play an important part in confidence building.

The research evidence suggests there is no need to limit foreign language teaching at primary exclusively to what can be achieved through listening and speaking. Not only can reading and writing be introduced successfully but the four modes can reinforce each other, particularly once literacy in the first language has been established.

Teaching Modern Languages at Primary School: Approaches and Implications  
Professor Richard Johnstone

### 4.4 The place of grammar

4.4.1 Knowledge about language is the strand which underpins progression within all teaching programmes. Within the context of knowledge about language, some teaching of a grammatical point, even in the early stages, is perfectly acceptable and often desirable. Useful comparisons can be made with English language, making pupils aware of similarities and

differences at appropriate points. While the main emphasis, at the early stages of learning a language, will be on participation, communication and enjoyment, the total exclusion of any mention of how the language works would be entirely artificial.

#### 4.5 Use of the target language

4.5.1 No school experience of a foreign language (whether in primary or secondary) can come close to the 'total immersion' approach where the foreign language is used exclusively for all aspects of learning. However there are three main ways in which it helps learners if they are taught in the language they are learning:

- o they experience the target language as a real means of communication
- o they get a chance to develop their own in-built language learning system
- o they come to realise that they can understand the whole without having learned or understood every individual word.

4.5.2 The teacher does not have to be a fluent bilingual, able to say anything and everything in the target language. Limited language = convey quite complex messages. The important thing is to expose the pupils to as much of the foreign language as the teacher feels able to, but not at the expense of the teacher's confidence, or language competence.

#### 4.6 Coherence, continuity and progression

4.6.1 Programmes of work should ensure continuity and progression, a balance in the range of activities and experiences offered to pupils and build on previous learning. To promote this continuous process of learning, it is particularly crucial that strong links be established between primary schools and their associated secondary school. (See reference to role of the 5-14 Coordinator and to Cluster arrangements in Chapter 5)

4.6.2 Every child has:

- o the right to a stress-free transition from one system to the other
- o the right to systematic continuity of learning experiences
- o the right to build on achievements.

A smooth, stress-free progression in foreign language learning is seen to involve the following:

- o awareness-raising
- o collaboration
- o transfer of information
- o transition activities

o dissemination of 'good practices'

Good ideas for easing the primary/secondary transition include:

o bridging' units begun in P7 and finished in S I

o a performance given by the primary pupils in the first weeks of secondary school to show what they have learned

o primary teachers' visits to the secondary school to see the pupils' progress

o secondary teachers' visits to the P7 class to participate in a lesson

o secondary pupils' visits and participation in primary lessons

o local festivals of languages

o portfolio of pupils' work to show t ' he secondary teachers the scope of the child's experience through creative work, posters, workbooks, reading record, songs, rhymes.

4.6.3 There is a need for secondary modern languages teachers to review and amend their S 1 /S2 courses to take account of the primary language experience. They should plan for, and provide, continuity of experience, approaches and contexts, and progression in fluency, accuracy and range, the length and complexity of the foreign language and the cognitive level of the task. Progression should not be seen in terms of 'getting through the course book faster' or 'missing out the first three units'. The fact that most S I pupils now come to secondary school with two years' experience of learning a language gives teachers the opportunity to dedicate time in S 1 and S2 to some of the following areas:

o reading for pleasure o stories

o songs o poetry

o games o grammar

o audio/video recordings paired reading or peer support

o contact with native speakers schemes

#### 4.7 Differentiation

4.7.1 The structure of strands and attainment targets within 5-14 recognises that pupils progress at different rates and that a wide range of ability may be represented within a given class. This is further complicated in Modern Languages by the fact that in each S 1 class, and in some primary classes, there will be not only a wide range of ability but also a wide range of language learning experience - from beginners in some cases to those with two or more years. Teachers should plan to set appropriate challenges in the class according to their needs. This may take various forms:

· the creation of small groups of beginners for part of the week to work on an accelerated course for up to a term to help prepare them for reintegration to their own class

· peer tutoring

· deployment of senior pupils as mentors

- support cassettes and workbooks
- extension work or consolidation work for those who are further ahead
- setting tasks of different levels of difficulty around the same central piece of work
- varying the pace of lessons
- setting open-ended assignments which allow the pupils to go on as far as they can in a particular piece of work.

4.7.2 Forms of differentiation can be used which allow the pupils to progress beyond Level E, while reflecting the spontaneity and enjoyment of learning associated with the early stages of language development. It is possible even in the early stages of S 1 to have differentiated activities within a common project, for example in devising a class radio/video programme or a magazine, in which pupils undertake various tasks appropriate to their ability or experience. In this way, pupils can collaborate in groups or as a whole class and the differentiated levels within the activities arise naturally from the project.

## **5 Managing the Foreign Language Provision**

### 5.1 Status of and attitude to foreign language learning

'Re modern foreign language is an important part of the school curriculum in both primary and secondary. It requires the same consideration as other curricular areas and proper arrangements made for its implementation.

### 5.2 Responsibility for the foreign language teaching programme

#### 5.2.1 in primary school

The head teacher has overall responsibility for the management of all areas of the curriculum. This will involve:

- o managing resources - people, time, space, materials
- o deployment of staff
- o timetabling arrangements - consultation, teaching time, liaison between the MLPS teacher and the class teacher where appropriate
- o overseeing the formulation of whole school programmes
- o monitoring and evaluation
- o identifying and making arrangements to meet needs for staff development at whole-school and individual teacher level
- o liaising with education services on issues pertaining to foreign language teaching

It is important for schools to identify the member of staff who is to take a particular responsibility for the foreign language teaching programme. This person may or may not be MLPS trained.

Responsibilities could include:

- o planning
- o MLPS staffing issues
- o monitoring classwork
- o pupil attainment and achievement
- o cluster liaison
- o communications with parents
- o timetabling of the foreign language teaching
- o in-school consultation

Circumstances will vary greatly from school to school and given the workload implications of such a remit, it is important that in each school the tasks and responsibilities associated with the remit should be negotiated with the individual concerned.

#### 5.2.2 in secondary school

In the secondary school the principal teacher has a significant management role in overseeing the work of the department including curriculum content as well as teaching approaches. It is helpful to have a member of the department (e.g. Assistant Principal or Senior Teacher) with specific responsibility for primary/secondary liaison. (S)he will work in conjunction with the school's 5-14 coordinator who has a key role in ensuring that effective consultation and planning takes place.

#### 5.3 Which classes in primary school should be doing the foreign language?

5.3.1 The MLPS programme is based on the understanding that a foreign language will be introduced into the curriculum of all pupils at P6 and P7. However there will also be schools where composite or multi-stage classes mean that foreign language learning may be introduced earlier.

#### 5.4 Staffing arrangements in primary school

5.4.1 The class will be taught the foreign language by a MUS-trained teacher. This may be their own teacher or another class teacher on a timetabled basis. Circumstances will vary from school to school and from year to year in any individual school.

5.4.2 When the foreign language is taught in a timetabled arrangement, the most desirable arrangement, where possible, is that on at least one of the timetabled 'slots' the MLPS-trained teacher's class is taken by a member of staff without a class commitment, allowing the class teacher is to be present at the foreign language lesson. This not only has the advantage of allowing the teacher to be fully aware of the work the class is doing, which will greatly facilitate, for example, reporting to parents, but also means that, in those cases where the

class teacher feels comfortable with the arrangement, the class can do some limited follow-up work between timetabled lessons.

5.4.3 It is however the reality that in many timetabled arrangements the MLPS trained teacher's class is taken the P6/P7 class teacher through a 'swap' arrangement. The most successful arrangements for class swaps have been where the class teacher agrees to take on responsibility for some aspect of a particular curricular area in the class of the MUS teacher, e.g. RME or PE.

## 5.5 Time allocation

5.5.1 In S I and S2, the time allocation for foreign languages should be in accordance with the SCCC guidelines.

5.5.2 In primary school, the minimum time allocation should be about 60 minutes per week. This time allocation should come from the 20% flexibility element allowed for in the National Guidelines on The Structure and Balance of the Curriculum 5-14.

This can be used flexibly to allow schools to manage curriculum balance and make their own emphases through the enhancement or reinforcement of particular curriculum areas or activities at different ages or stages.

### 11c Structure and Balance of the Curriculum 5-14 (June 1993)

5.5.3 Where the primary class is taught the foreign language by their own class teacher, the opportunities for incidental use of the language in the daily work of the class will increase the exposure to the foreign language; there will also be a degree of flexibility which allows the teacher to adjust the amount of foreign language work in particular weeks, within an overall balance in the curriculum over a longer period of time.

5.5.3 In primary classes where the foreign language is being taught by a teacher other than the class teacher, such flexibility will not be easy to achieve. The timetabling should allow a minimum of 2 x 30 minutes per week. This time allocation can be supplemented when the class teacher is encouraged to allow the pupils to engage in some of their daily routine (e.g. register, date, weather) in the foreign language.

## 5.6 Planning

5.6.1 For successful implementation, the foreign language provision needs to be planned at all levels:

- o cluster
- o school
- o department
- o individual class

5.6.2 For planning at departmental and individual class level, reference should be made to the Perth and Kinross framework syllabus.

5.6.3 Careful planning before the pupils begin their language learning in primary school is essential, particularly to take account of arrangements for composite classes:

- o If the pupils in a composite class remain together as a class for foreign language learning, the teaching programme must be adjusted to allow for progression in the foreign language for both groups of pupils (which might include, for instance, pupils who have had no previous foreign language experience and pupils who have had a full year's language learning)

- o As an alternative, arrangements could be made to 'de-composite' the class for the foreign language learning, through the use of promoted staff with non-class-contact time or other flexibility within the available staffing (this option may be preferable when planning for a P5/6 composite class where there is a parallel PS class which will not be receiving foreign language teaching)

In schools where two foreign languages are being taught it is desirable that pupils continue throughout primary school the language they have begun. This may also have implications for the need to make arrangements to decomposite classes.

## 5.7 Cluster collaboration

5.7.1 The foreign language is unlike any other area of the primary curriculum in that only certain teachers are trained to teach it. To overcome a feeling of isolation on the part of the primary MLPS teacher (s)he will need the support of and contact with colleagues in other schools and this needs to be discussed as a possible priority for using staff development time. In the interests of coherence, continuity and progression, it is essential that secondary modern languages staff be involved in such liaison.

5.7.2 All cluster planning should be based on the principle of progression; wherever possible, the norm should be that pupils continue in S 1/S2 the language they have begun in primary school. If such pre-P6 planning at cluster level takes place annually, secondary schools will be able to plan their S 1 /S2 curriculum to ensure language progression.

## 5.8 Monitoring and evaluation

5.8.1 The head teacher has ultimate responsibility for the monitoring of the curriculum taught in the school. This will involve:

- o observing and monitoring the work of MLPS teachers
- o discussion of forward plans and programmes of work
- o evaluating the quality of learning and teaching
- o monitoring pupil attainment and progress

5.8.2 In many primary schools, the head teacher may have no direct experience of teaching a foreign language. However, in collaboration with the nominated senior member of staff with

MLPS responsibility (where appropriate), monitoring of the foreign language teaching can take place as follows:

- o the head teacher will be able to make some judgements about the teaching of the foreign language in terms of the active participation of the pupils in the learning, levels of enjoyment, the motivation of pupils and so on

- o (s)he will also have an important role in terms of informal discussion with the MLPS teacher(s), showing interest in the foreign language teaching, supporting the teachers, talking to pupils in more formal terms (s)he will have a role through the monitoring of forward plans and progress through the Perth and Kinross framework syllabus.

## 5.9 Communication with parents

5.9.4 As with any curricular initiative, head teachers will ensure that parents are aware of the introduction of a foreign language into the learning and teaching programme. Information might be given about the aims and content of the teaching programme, the kinds of activities the pupils will be involved in, and what will be expected of them. This will hopefully encourage the parents to take an active interest in what their children are learning, as well as helping to avoid unrealistic and often unhelpful comparisons with parents' own experience of learning a foreign language in secondary school.

5.9.2 Good practice in many primary schools has included making a foreign language element part of school shows or other open evenings. Parents' information evenings, at individual school or cluster level, have also been much appreciated, giving parents and opportunity not only to ask questions but also to experience aspects of the teaching programme first-hand.

## 6 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

### 6.1 Assessment

6.1.1 Assessment is an important and integral part of the learning and teaching process. It can best be considered in terms of the five key elements as described in the National Guidelines Assessment 5-14: planning, teaching, recording, reporting and evaluating. Teachers need to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress in order to plan next steps in learning.

6.1.2 The assessment of the foreign language will take place within the broader context of the school's policy on assessment across the curriculum and with reference to the National Guidelines for 5-14 Modern European Languages.

6.1.3 It is important that approaches to assessment should be varied and that teachers do not attempt to assess too much at once. Nor should teachers feel they are required to assess all pupils at any one time.

Approaches to assessment might include:

- o assessment of a completed task

- o assessment of use of classroom language on a daily basis

- o self-assessment (I can do...

- o discussion with pupils.

6.1.4 In the secondary school where some assessment takes the form of an end of unit test, teachers should not feel obliged to set the whole test, but may wish to focus rather on 2 or 3 strands. Nor should test results be the only evidence of progression -evidence of pupil performance on a day-to-day basis is essential. Teachers should have confidence in their own judgement and ability to develop a range of activities, and techniques which will help them evaluate pupil progress without interrupting the teaching flow. Tests can then be used to confirm the teacher's judgement.

## 6.2 Recording

6.2.1 Teachers should maintain a record which gives them enough information to know how pupils are progressing.

6.2.2 It is important that the process of recording be manageable. It should not involve extensive written comment and documentation but should be actively useful in supporting learning.

Evidence can be obtained from a variety of sources which may include

- o pupil profiles

- o samples of pupils' work -jotters, cassettes, video recording wall displays, computer generated materials, correspondence with a school abroad.

- o Teachers' forward plans.

## 6.3 Reporting

6.3.1 A report informs pupils, parents and other teachers of progress and shares information on what has been achieved and what the next steps need to be.

6.3.2 Reporting within Modern Languages 5 - 14 will follow local authority advice. Examples of statements on strengths and development needs/next steps (taken from the document Assessment 5-14 - Reporting to parents in SD2 (Perth and Kinross, 1997) are included in Appendix C.

## 6.4 Transfer of Information

6.4.1 In the interests of continuity and progression, it is important that information about pupils' prior learning and attainment be passed on from teacher to teacher and from school to school. Different formats for transfer of information have been trialled in various schools and clusters; two of these are included in Appendix B.

## 7 Resources

Developments in Modern Languages should be part of the school action plan. An important element in the action planning process is the identification of suitable resources. In consideration of resources, the following list should be borne in mind:

- o People Class teachers Pupils Promoted staff Parents Support for Learning Staff Education Department Staff Outside agencies

- o Time

  - Effective timetabling

  - Consultation time

  - Time for cluster liaison

  - Preparation on time

  - Planned activity and Inset time

- o Space

  - Flexible and appropriate use

  - Storage and retrieval

- o Materials Suitable range and variety SOEID training materials Reference to the syllabus framework Technology (video and audio recording, computer, listening centre, television) Display Materials accessed from SALT, Scottish CILT, Goethe Institute, local authority, other schools Materials from partner schools abroad

- o Staff development Courses from the Staff Development Directory Opportunities to network with other staff Courses offered by external agencies, e.g. CILT, Goethe Institute Opportunities offered through the LINGUA programme Audio/video resources SOEID training programme and materials SCET CDi for French