

# 1 Primary Language Learning

## An introduction to the Framework for all users

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This section gives an overview of the Framework and of key questions relating to the introduction of languages into Key Stage 2



## Languages entitlement

The Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages is a national resource to help schools introduce an entitlement to language learning for every child from the age of 7, as set out in the National Languages Strategy. It is a comprehensive document, defining what children need to know and understand in order to learn another language and reach a recognised level by the age of 11. It will also make a contribution to children’s personal development, fostering their interest and understanding in their own culture and that of others.

The Framework will be introduced gradually over the next four years. It is intended that by 2009/2010 every child across Key Stage 2 will be learning a new language. The period between 2005 and 2009/10 should be regarded as the capacity building phase. Schools, working in partnership with one another, with their Local Authorities and with other key agencies can work collaboratively during this time to develop innovative and high quality language learning and teaching to meet the needs and interests of primary children.

### The Primary Languages Entitlement

The key elements of the primary languages entitlement are set out in the National Languages Strategy:

- It is inclusive and for all children.
- It is coherent and operates across Key Stage 2.
- It is part of a broader curriculum involving language and culture.
- It flourishes in a rich learning environment, with high quality teaching, native speakers and ICT.
- Children will reach recognised levels of achievement.
- Their achievement will be celebrated.

*Adapted from Languages for All: Languages for Life. A Strategy for England page 15.*

The Framework is broad and flexible. It can be used in a full range of different contexts and circumstances. It sets out learning objectives across the five strands of Oracy, Literacy, Intercultural Understanding, Knowledge about Language (KAL) and Language Learning Strategies (LLS) for each year.

The Framework is informed by a clear rationale for teaching languages to young learners. It is also based on a number of assumptions about teaching and learning and about current practice relating to staffing, provision and the primary curriculum.

## Rationale for teaching languages in Key Stage 2

Learning a language enriches the curriculum. It provides excitement, enjoyment and challenge for children and teachers, helping to create enthusiastic learners and to develop positive attitudes to language learning throughout life. The natural links between languages and other areas of the curriculum can enhance the overall teaching and learning experience. The skills, knowledge and understanding gained make a major contribution to the development of children's oracy and literacy and to their understanding of their own culture/s and those of others. Language also lies at the heart of ideas about individual identity and community, and learning another language can do a great deal to shape children's ideas in this critical area as well as giving them a new perspective on their own language.

In particular:

### *Language learning stimulates children's creativity*

Children enjoy taking an active part in language lessons. They join in with singing, reciting rhymes and poems, and respond to stories. They create mimes, sketches and role-play, imitating accurate intonation and pronunciation. They play games, take turns, make things, take the role of the teacher and experiment creatively with language.

### *Language learning supports oracy and literacy*

Children spend much of their time in language lessons speaking, listening and interacting – more than in most other subjects. They take part in role-plays, conversations and question and answer work, sing songs and recite, perform to an audience and respond to a wide range of aural stimuli. This emphasis on communication, including language learning's important role in the 'education of the ear', underpins children's capabilities in oracy, which is critical to effective communication as well as a key foundation for literacy.

### *Language learning leads to gains across the curriculum*

Children approach a broad range of learning activities in a new and challenging context; these relate to mother tongue literacy, to Mathematics and other subject areas such as Geography, Music and Citizenship. This can lead to deep learning and significant gains in their general understanding as they recycle and reinterpret existing knowledge. Through the conscious development of language learning they are also learning how to learn.

### *Language learning supports and celebrates the international dimension*

Although it enjoys much more linguistic diversity than in the past, England remains a place where the motivation to learn another language is affected by the position of English as a widely spoken, world language. This makes it even more important that we give all children the chance to learn a language in order to gain insights into their own lives and those of others around the world. They need the chance to make contact with people in other countries and cultures and to reflect upon their own cultural identities and those of other people.

In sum, language learning offers opportunities for children to:

- gain enjoyment, pride and a sense of achievement
- express themselves creatively and imaginatively in another language
- apply and develop their knowledge of languages and language learning
- explore and apply strategies to improve their learning
- explore their own cultural identities and those of others.

## Approaches to language teaching in Key Stage 2

There is no single way to teach a new language. Learners – including young learners – are individuals with different learning styles, and primary teachers are already very familiar with adapting their teaching methods in order to take account of this. Although there is no single method, there is, however, broad agreement about an approach to language teaching and learning which stresses the importance of communication in the language – real language use – as a central component of learning as well as a desired outcome for that learning. Above all this involves a rich and varied input of the new language together with opportunities for learners to interact with the language. Learners’ motivation will also be a key factor.

Teachers are best placed to know how their children learn and will seek to create the best conditions for successful language learning. In many cases this will involve approaches to teaching and learning with which they are familiar from good primary practice. For example:

### *Providing enjoyment and stimulation*

Children learn best when they enjoy what they are doing and, through this enjoyment, are led to challenge themselves in a secure environment and to discover the unknown. In language learning, children are engaged by games and puzzles; they are enthused by taking part in songs and drama and by listening to stories which are already known in their mother tongue and are thus at the same time both familiar and new.

### *Supporting learning through regular routines*

Children hear and use the language repeatedly on a routine basis in classroom interaction. They reinforce their language regularly and frequently by using greetings, numbers, games, stories, pictures and songs.

### *Making use of and developing communication strategies*

Children develop communication strategies which will be of value to them in their everyday lives. They make use of visuals, actions, gestures, labels, toys and ICT to help them understand and use the language.

### *Ensuring opportunities for children to interact*

Children engage with their learning, interacting with language and with other people. They perform to an audience and act out sketches. They communicate with other people, including native speakers. They listen and respond to songs, rhymes and stories and use TV, audio and CD to hear authentic native speaker voices. Such interaction is a part of all learning, but it is particularly important for learners of a new language.

There is also one critical aspect to language teaching and learning which is unique. It is relevant to all learners, and especially to young learners.

### *Exposure to the new language (the education of the ear)*

Learners need to assimilate new sound patterns and to relate them to words and meanings. This process is particularly important in the early stages of acquiring a language when learning habits are being established and with young learners who are particularly receptive to new sounds. In the learning of their first language (mother tongue), children build up a wide experience of spoken language and interaction from birth and draw on this as they become literate. With a new language, exposure to the sound patterns needs to be built into the learning experience because listening to and manipulating the new language are critical for successful language learning. For this to happen, learners need frequent opportunities for intensive exposure to the language. This can be achieved using a range of resources including ICT.

## **Organisation of Primary Language Teaching**

Some key characteristics of the organisation of primary language teaching are outlined below. More detailed advice on some of these issues will be found in Sections 2 – 5 of this guidance pack and in Part 3 of the Framework documentation – *Planning for Entitlement*.

### **Staffing**

Current practice in the teaching of languages in Key Stage 2 includes a variety of staffing models, including:

- an existing primary class teacher with a specialist background in languages
- a primary class teacher with knowledge of and interest in a language who undertakes professional development in order to deliver language teaching either for part of her/his teaching time or full-time
- a language specialist with knowledge of other areas of the primary curriculum. The teacher might only work at one school or may be shared between schools
- support from a teacher from a linked Specialist Language College or other secondary school
- support from a Local Authority advisory teacher, an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) or other professional
- a Foreign Language Assistant working with the class teacher
- an adult with strong language skills, who might support a class teacher as a Teaching Assistant or Higher Level Teaching Assistant.

Teachers can also be helped by:

- wider language learning opportunities offered by business, Higher Education Institutions, parents and the broader community
- ICT and e-learning
- innovative partnerships with schools in other countries.

These models involve a range of different people, who bring different kinds of expertise to support young learners. During the period of ‘capacity building’ in particular the contribution of secondary and other colleagues with linguistic skills will be vital. Advances in technology will also make it increasingly possible to bring a range of models and native speaker voices into the classroom to support the teacher and provide examples for the children. The Framework is designed to facilitate this process.

There are undoubtedly many benefits from an arrangement where children’s regular class teacher is also their language teacher: language teaching can be readily integrated into many other areas of the curriculum; maximum use can be made of the flexibility of the school day, and of learner groupings; and incidental and informal opportunities for language reinforcement or extension (e.g. taking the register, singing, classroom routines) can be exploited. Where another language specialist teaches the language, that teacher needs to work closely and co-operatively with the primary class teacher.

Organising this varied model of provision will be a significant responsibility of Head Teachers, and further more detailed guidance is given in Section 2 of this guidance.

### **Which language to teach**

Schools may choose to teach any modern foreign or community language.

The choice of language will depend on factors such as:

- the availability, expertise, experience and interests of the staff
- the ability to sustain and resource the teaching of a particular language across Years 3 to 6
- the expectations and ambitions of the children and their parents
- support from native speakers in the locality and contacts with countries where the language is spoken
- the languages which are taught in neighbouring primary and secondary schools
- the language policies of the Local Authority.

## Teaching a language with a non-Roman script

Some schools have introduced children to a language with a non Roman script – Urdu, Chinese, Japanese for example. The Framework has been designed for use with any language. It will, however, be necessary to interpret some of the Literacy objectives sensitively when dealing with characters and non-Roman scripts. Additional guidance will be made available on this during the course of 2005/6.

Of particular importance will be the development of links between primary and secondary schools and discussion and agreement about common and compatible approaches within local learning communities. The Framework is designed to help this process.

### Links with other subjects

Effective integration into other areas of the curriculum helps to make cohesive links between subjects, which can raise teachers' and children's motivation and make better use of their time.

Language learning should be planned as an integral part of the whole curriculum, adding a new dimension, rather than as a 'bolt-on' extra. The Framework exists to enable schools to build motivating and imaginative teaching plans and units, which deal with content of real interest and relevance to children. Planning for language learning should also fit in with schools' aims for the whole curriculum, building on the principles described in Excellence and Enjoyment.

To help in this process, examples of cross-curricular links are included in the on-line version of the Framework and will be in Part 3 of the Framework documentation – *Planning for Entitlement*.



## Time and Timetabling

Time allocation across the week should be sufficient to ensure that children have opportunities to interact with the language and for their learning to be properly reinforced. Children benefit from frequent opportunities to practise and assimilate newly presented language, and schools will ideally teach languages regularly throughout the week.

The Framework works on the basis that schools will plan for no less than 60 minutes per week of dedicated ‘language time’. This might be divided into relatively short sessions, for example:

- 15 minutes per day
- 3 x 20 minutes
- 2 x 30 minutes plus one shorter session of 10 minutes.

In addition to this dedicated time allocation, teachers should seek opportunities during the week to enable children to use their newly acquired language skills. The curriculum offers opportunities throughout the day, planned or incidental, to reinforce language work, for example carrying out class routines. Teachers might also introduce some elements of the Framework (for example the Knowledge About Language strand) into general literacy work.

The duration and frequency of the sessions will depend on who is teaching the language. Primary class teachers will have more flexibility than visiting teachers.

## Key Stage 1

Although the Framework is designed for pupils in Key Stage 2, some schools will choose to begin some exposure to the new language or languages in Key Stage 1. This could involve either offering an experience of more than one language, or an early start in the chosen language that will be taught in Key Stage 2.

Work with new languages in Key Stage 1 can be used to:

- build links between school and home, where some children are already speakers of other languages
- develop listening and speaking skills and build confidence
- encourage and develop children’s linguistic and creative skills
- build positive attitudes to languages and culture
- develop learning about other countries and cultures.

Language work can be embedded within routine practices, for example greetings and salutations at the start and end of the day, celebrations such as birthdays and other events, assemblies, book weeks, cultural festivals, inputs by visiting speakers. Language work can also be included in many areas of the curriculum such as Music, PE, English, Mathematics, Geography, Drama and Art.

Schools can use the Framework by planning around the objectives which seem most appropriate for younger learners – Oracy and Intercultural Understanding, awakening and encouraging children's interest in the world around them and in the sounds of the new language. It is recommended that learners of this age have opportunities to hear and use the language regularly for short periods of time.

Further guidance on working with children in Key Stage 1 will be included in Part 3 of the Framework documentation – *Planning for Entitlement*.

### **Continuity to Key Stage 3**

The Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages focuses both on progression in language capability and on developing confidence and curiosity about languages and language learning. Both of these aspects should provide pupils with a sound basis for further study and achievement at secondary school.

They will also create new challenges for secondary schools; in particular as full primary entitlement is achieved. The experience of the 19 Pathfinder Authorities shows that the key to effective transition lies in recognising and building on children's prior knowledge, understanding and achievement. Working in partnership is an essential factor in ensuring that children progress smoothly and with confidence from language learning at primary school to language learning at secondary school. The establishment of links and networks is therefore an important condition for successful continuity across the Key Stages.

In order to identify what is particular to primary language pedagogy teachers will benefit from mutual observation of learning and teaching at the heart of their planning and schemes of work. Secondary teachers are often surprised at the complex and sophisticated ways that young learners function in languages and at the cross-curricular approach that primary teachers develop. Primary teachers welcome more knowledge about what will be expected of their children, particularly in terms of skills and pace, when they progress to secondary language lessons.

Further guidance on transition issues will be included in Part 3 of the Framework documentation – *Planning for Entitlement*.

## Inclusion

The Primary languages entitlement is inclusive and the Framework supports equality of opportunity for all children. Children with special educational needs tend to respond very positively to language learning. Many enjoy the practical and interactive nature of language learning. They feel a sense of achievement in being able to communicate in another language alongside their peers. In planning to meet the varied needs of pupils, teachers can adapt the Framework objectives and choose objectives from any part of the Framework which will be helpful in supporting the learning of individual children. The Framework in this respect fully reflects the principles in *Speaking, Listening & Learning: Working with Children who have SEN*.

Children for whom English is a second or additional language can be greatly encouraged and supported by language lessons. They are able to take pride in their existing linguistic skills and see languages other than English being valued. They can build on their experience of using a number of languages in their daily life and contribute to the Intercultural Understanding of their fellow pupils. Their plurilingual experience may help them to learn the new language or languages.

### The National Curriculum and Equal Opportunities

National Curriculum documentation suggests three principles to guide schools

**1** **Setting suitable learning challenges**

*High expectations, differentiation, choice of objectives.*

**2** **Responding to diverse learning needs**

*Appropriate learning environments, work matched to interests and suitable targets.*

**3** **Overcoming potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups.**

*Addressing the particular needs of:*

- *Children with special educational needs or disabilities.*
- *Gifted and talented children.*
- *Children for whom English is a second or additional language.*

Teachers can also use the Framework to provide suitable challenges for gifted and talented pupils. This can be through planning to address learning objectives from future years, differentiated questioning during whole class activity or through individual projects which encourage children to experiment with language and using models and reference sources to create new meanings with increasing independence.

## Assessment and Evaluation

A key aim of the Framework is to encourage children to understand their learning and progress. The learning objectives provide the basis for self-evaluation as well as guiding informal teacher assessment, which can be linked to the levels of the Languages Ladder, the National Recognition Scheme. The Languages Ladder, a key component of the National Languages Strategy, is a voluntary system which enables children and teachers to assess achievements using 'Can do' statements in the main skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. There is also voluntary external assessment, accredited by Cambridge Assessment.

Many schools have also used a portfolio approach to recognising achievement in languages – as an aid both to self-awareness and to continuity into the secondary sector. Use of a portfolio helps to give children a commitment to and ownership of their learning. By discussing and negotiating the aims, content and processes of their work at regular intervals, they gradually learn to take more responsibility for their own progress. The portfolio encourages children to develop a reflective approach to language learning and supports them in developing language learning strategies, which help them to learn more independently.

More detailed advice on assessment and evaluation will be available in Part 3 of the Framework documentation – *Planning for Entitlement*.



## Further Information and Support

Teachers and planners will need guidance and access to appropriate resources as they extend the opportunities for language learning to all children in Key Stage 2.

The best starting point for more detailed advice, both on the Framework itself and about other sources of support, is to be found on the National Advisory Centre for Early Language Learning (NACELL) website [www.nacell.org.uk](http://www.nacell.org.uk).

### *Other sources of information include*

The National Curriculum online website has details of the non-statutory guidelines for primary language learning [www.nc.uk.net/nc\\_resources/html/MFL\\_k2.shtml](http://www.nc.uk.net/nc_resources/html/MFL_k2.shtml).

The Qualifications & Curriculum Authority (QCA) website has general information, advice and exemplification materials for curriculum subjects [www.qca.org.uk/278\\_2116.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/278_2116.html).

The National Curriculum in Action website uses pupils' work and case study material to show what the National Curriculum in languages looks like in practice [www.ncaction.org.uk/subjects/mfl/index.htm](http://www.ncaction.org.uk/subjects/mfl/index.htm).

The Standards website hosts the details about the Primary National Strategy and wider curricular advice, Schemes of Work for primary French, German and Spanish, and information on how to support children with SEN with their speaking, listening & learning skills [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary), [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes/primary\\_mfl/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes/primary_mfl/) and [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/sll\\_sen/pns\\_sen118705sll.pdf](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/sll_sen/pns_sen118705sll.pdf).

The National Languages Strategy website provides an overview of the Strategy and key developments in its implementation [www.dfes.gov.uk/languages](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/languages).

CILT – The National Centre for Languages offer information on language teaching publications, training and advice on national and regional levels [www.cilt.org.uk](http://www.cilt.org.uk).

The British Council website provides details on visits and courses abroad, school exchanges, and the role and employment of Foreign Language Assistants [www.britishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.britishcouncil.org.uk) and [www.languageassistant.co.uk](http://www.languageassistant.co.uk).

The Global Gateway offers opportunities to forge international partnerships with schools around the world, and wider cultural information about other countries and global citizenship [www.globalgateway.org.uk](http://www.globalgateway.org.uk).

The Languages Ladder is a voluntary assessment scheme to give learners of all ages recognition for their language skills. Languages Ladder accreditation is awarded through the Asset Languages assessment scheme [www.dfes.gov.uk/languages/DSP\\_languagesladder.cfm](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/languages/DSP_languagesladder.cfm) and [www.assetlanguages.org.uk](http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk).

The Training and Development Agency (TDA) offer information on how to train to be a teacher and how to manage your professional development once trained [www.tda.gov.uk](http://www.tda.gov.uk).

Cultural Institutes are a good source of information, advice and materials to supplement language and learning in primary:

Goethe – [www.goethe.de/ins/gb/lon/enindex.htm](http://www.goethe.de/ins/gb/lon/enindex.htm).

Spanish – [www.sgci.mec.es/uk/english.html](http://www.sgci.mec.es/uk/english.html).

French – [www.institut-francais.org.uk](http://www.institut-francais.org.uk).

Italian – [www.italcultur.org.uk](http://www.italcultur.org.uk).

Japanese – [www.jpof.org.uk](http://www.jpof.org.uk).

Further support will also be made available in the coming months. Part 3 of the Framework documentation – *Planning for Entitlement* will be available to schools from the Spring term of 2005/06 and will offer short, medium and long-term planning advice and practical information on making links between languages and other areas of the curriculum. A 'Training Zone' website will also offer resources and video footage of language teaching and training in practice to support the sharing of best practice and aid professional development. This will be made available in phases as from Spring term 2005/06.