PLANNING FOR SUCCESS: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MANAGEMENT, ORGANISATION AND FEASIBILITY OF TEACHING MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

KAREN NICHOLSON
Master of Philosophy

THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM

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The University of Aston in Birmingham

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Karen Nicholson
Master of Philosophy
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Summary

The aim of this study is to investigate modern foreign language teaching in the primary sector, in order to establish the factors that are critical to successful learning.

Overviews of the developing histories of primary education, modern foreign language education and primary modern foreign language teaching are presented, in order to provide a picture of how and why current pedagogy exists.

The critical period hypothesis, a claim that argues how young children possess an innate ability to acquire second and subsequent languages effortlessly, has led to assumptions about the success of primary modern foreign language teaching. Theories of language acquisition that have underpinned developments since the 1960s have been included in this study, so that false assumptions may be avoided.

The empirical investigation draws on data collected over a period of four academic years, from numerous sources, by means of interview, observation and questionnaire. A set of critical success factors at the managerial and organisational level are established and then tested in the latter phases of the research. It is intended that conclusions about the current state of primary modern foreign language provision in this country may be drawn, and the feasibility of future successful provision may be assessed.

It is argued in this research that individual schools and teachers cannot, by themselves, provide effective primary modern foreign language education to the same standard for all pupils, without official inclusion of modern foreign languages in the primary curriculum. The findings support this view. The primacy of a sound and sustainable managerial and organisational framework and the dangers of failure in ad hoc experimentation emerge as key considerations. The Joint Schools Council / Nuffield Foundation Pilot Scheme in primary French of the 1960s and the Nuffield Languages Inquiry of the late 1990s feature as critical moments in the developments under investigation.

Key words:
critical period hypothesis
The Joint Schools Council / Nuffield Foundation Pilot Scheme in primary French
Language College
Nuffield Languages Inquiry
second language acquisition

For my family

There is enthusiasm for languages but it is patchy. Educational provision is fragmented, achievement poorly measured, continuity not very evident. In the language of our time, there is a lack of joined-up thinking.

Foreword, Nuffield Languages Inquiry

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I would like to thank all of the staff at the schools under investigation, who allowed me to observe and discuss their teaching, and all of those who took the time and trouble to complete lengthy questionnaires.

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Introduction

During the last two decades, interest in primary modern foreign languages has increased rapidly, mainly in response to the political development of the European Union. This is reflected by the many foreign language initiatives for young learners that are being set up and maintained throughout the country, by the increase in support and guidance provided by leading language learning organisations, by the interest shown by the DfEE[1] in conducting the 'Good Practice Project' and by numerous publications and articles which describe examples of current practice and methodology and which debate current issues.[2]

Although this seems very exciting and encouraging, the reality is that the provision of foreign languages for primary age children is extremely piecemeal and curriculum content and delivery are largely inconsistent. The thesis argues that this will remain the case unless modern foreign languages at Key Stage 2 become part of the National Curriculum.

This research project sets out to investigate how modern foreign language education in English primary schools, where it exists, is managed and organised, with the expectation of identifying factors that are critical to the success of providing a sustained and positive educational experience. Inevitably, the feasibility of introducing modern foreign languages in primary schools is an equally important issue and it is argued that significant conclusions may be drawn with reference to the critical success factors identified in the research conducted for this thesis and derived from the results of previous research carried out in the field of primary modern

foreign language education. Thus the aims of the research project may be set out as follows:

1   To investigate the feasibility of and constraints on the introduction of modern foreign language teaching in the primary school.

2   To investigate the management and organisation of existing primary modern foreign language projects.

3   To relate the empirical research to the historical context of primary modern foreign language teaching.

4   To draw conclusions about the overall feasibility of teaching modern foreign languages in primary schools in the current educational climate.

The empirical research began with the investigation of a case study, a new primary modern foreign language initiative which was launched in September 1997, involving a local secondary school and three of its feeder primary schools, (Phase 1). Early analysis of the progress of the scheme led to the recognition of the key importance of a sound managerial and organisational framework, which was clearly lacking in the scheme. It was decided not to go down the route of testing pupil proficiency or progress, or likewise attempting to investigate the advantages or efficacy of any particular teaching approach or choice of materials, since no provision had been made for assessment or continuity, no coherent syllabus had been devised and because there was resistance towards the researcher conducting any independent assessment or experimentation with teaching styles within the scheme.   The fundamental weaknesses of the scheme had become more and more apparent and thus it appeared obvious that it was vital, rather, to pursue the issues of management, organisation and

feasibility. As background to this line of inquiry, it was necessary to explore the theories that have underpinned views on the value of early language learning, that helped to spur both the experiments of the 1960s and much of the spontaneous experimentation occurring today. A number of provisional critical success factors were identified at the end of Phase 1, with success centrally defined for the purposes of this investigation as a programme which is properly managed, pedagogically organised and sustained as a continuing provision.

An investigation into a broader perspective of different models of primary modern foreign language organisation was subsequently required, in order to test and validate the critical success factors derived from Phase 1. In the second phase, research was carried out in two middle schools and in another scheme containing a secondary school and two of its feeder primaries, based on the criteria established in Phase 1, (Phase 2).

The investigation into a broader perspective of different models continued in Phase 3. The validated critical success factors were used to develop a questionnaire that was sent to 44 schools in England, which were believed to be involved in primary modern foreign language teaching. As a result, it was possible to collect more data concerning management, organisation and feasibility.

In response to the Nuffield Languages Inquiry, (an investigation into current foreign language capability and needs, and a evaluation of the present state of modern foreign language education in this country), the previous government identified Language Colleges as playing a key role in the development of primary modern foreign

language provision. As a result, it was necessary to investigate the claim that had been made by the government and thus the critical success factors were used to develop a further questionnaire addressing the key issues inherent in primary modern foreign language teaching and organisation. This was sent to all of the listed 108 Language Colleges in the country, (Phase 4). From the information collected, the role of Language Colleges in primary modern foreign language teaching could be ascertained and further conclusions regarding management, organisation and feasibility could be drawn.

Finally, it was possible to draw significant conclusions relating to the quality and quantity of primary modern language provision in England from the data gathered in all four research phases. The critical success factors were refined in order to establish a final version.

Although the studies of all the schools involved in this research project as a whole provided much useful information and evidence, it cannot be claimed that they were wholly representative of primary foreign language education throughout the country. Rather, they highlighted examples of management, organisation and general outcomes of teaching and learning from a modest cross section of schools, but it was envisaged that the conclusions and generalisations drawn from the evidence would make a valid contribution to this rapidly expanding field of modern foreign language education research. Since the research was limited to a relatively small time period, it was impossible to observe the longitudinal development of the primary modern foreign language programmes within each of the schools. It was possible, however, to evaluate the current outcomes of the programmes, in relation to their management and

organisational structures and to assess the pedagogical feasibility of teaching and learning within each school and in a wider educational context.

Data collection was carried out primarily by means of interview, observation and the distribution of questionnaires. The development of the Phase 1 case study and the nature of the programmes in Phase 2 were determined by observation of lessons and meetings (the latter in Phase 1 only), and informal interview where appropriate. In this way, the researcher was able to remain unobtrusive and did not have any direct influence on the programmes under investigation. In order to establish a much broader perspective in Phase 3 the findings from Phase 1, which were validated in Phase 2, were used to develop a questionnaire containing all of the issues raised so far. Observation and interview followed, so that a more detailed understanding of a number of programmes could be obtained. The most obvious choice of data collection method in Phase 4 was again by questionnaire since it was necessary to contact all of the designated Language Colleges in order to gain as accurate a picture as possible of their role in primary modern foreign language provision. The questionnaire was developed based on the findings from the earlier phases of research.

Of central importance is the 1960s Joint Schools Council / Nuffield Foundation Pilot Scheme in primary French, its preparation, evaluation and demise. Particularly pertinent is the comparison of the 1960s experiment with the current non-centralised experimentation. Lessons learned from the false expectations of the 1960s initiative compared with actual achievement, and from the positive managerial and staff development aspects which were later ignored, contrast sharply with today's

unformulated expectations and diverse, sometimes loose forms of organisation, non-centralised materials selection and lack of evaluation.

The thesis is divided into five main sections as follows:

Section I   The historical outlines of primary education, modern foreign language teaching and modern foreign language teaching in primary schools. (Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4).

Section II   Theories of language acquisition that have underpinned developments since the 1960s, and some current issues specific to primary modern foreign language teaching. (Chapters 5 & 6)

Section III   The empirical research.

Phase 1   Case study model. (Chapter 7)

Phase 2   A broader perspective of different models (Part I). (Chapter 8)

Phase 3   A broader perspective of different models (Part II). (Chapter 9)

Phase 4   The Language College model. (Chapter 10)

Section IV   Conclusion. From Nuffield to Nuffield: the factors of success – or failure. (Chapter 11)

Section V   Apparatus

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[1] At the time of writing, the recently renamed DfES was known as the DfEE and will be referred to as such throughout the remainder of this thesis

[2] See Chapter 4

SECTION I   **THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Chapter 1   **Primary education in England: an overview**

Primary education in England has undergone major developments since the end of the Second World War. These developments have been the result of changing social conditions as much as a progression in educational ideas. Up until the mid-1940s primary schooling was still carried out according to the nineteenth century elementary school system. Such schools were generally intended for working class children and thus the curriculum was influenced by the notion of 'social utility'- what it is useful to teach the sons and daughters of the working classes'.[1] This meant teaching the 'three R's' - reading, writing and arithmetic – as well as some factual information and knowledge of the Bible. Classes were large, often containing in excess of fifty pupils, on account of the demand that schooling should be cheap. Lessons were followed by drills, tests and revisions, and a uniform standard of achievement was expected from all pupils. Success was often measured by evidence of sufficient memorisation, rather than by testing for understanding.[2] The ethos of the elementary school was authoritarian. Pupils had to respect their teachers, who possessed great authority and influence over them. The children came to school to work hard and the teachers made sure that is what happened. 'There could be no place for anything as time-wasting and trivial as play'.[3]

Prior to the 1944 Education Act, the elementary and secondary school systems were separate and were governed by separate regulations.[4] The experience of the war years led to the notion that all citizens had a right to be given equal opportunities. This

feeling was realised by the development of the Welfare State; and in education by the 1944 Education Act.[5]

The 1944 Education Act prescribed the creation of a Ministry of Education, which was responsible for implementing and maintaining an appropriate provision of education throughout the country. All children of all abilities and social backgrounds were to be educated under the newly organised system, which was divided into three stages: primary, secondary and further education. The age of school-leavers was to be raised to fifteen and later to sixteen. The curriculum was left in the hands of the schools and local education authorities (LEAs), since the politicians considered themselves unqualified to pass judgement on such a professional issue.[6]

The war years and end of the war were accompanied by a rapid increase in the birth rate, which reached its peak in 1947. Consequently, numbers of pupils in schools fluctuated, influencing important decisions on the supply of teaching staff and the provision of new buildings. A large number of new primary schools were also built as a direct result of post-war suburbanisation and the development of new estates. The creation of new suburbs prompted a change in family values. Nuclear family units became more common and an increase in divorce and single parent families occurred. As a result, primary teachers faced new roles in the pastoral care of their pupils. The children themselves developed higher expectations regarding leisure activities and career aspirations, which inevitably affected the ethos of primary schools in general. The role of the teacher also underwent transformation. The old style village teacher was replaced by the professional who commuted to the school

and whose lifestyle was typical of the new middle class suburbs, a development which had already been foreshadowed in the cities and suburbs from the 1930s.[7]

As social conditions changed, so too did the nature and organisation of primary education. New buildings were designed to allow much more freedom of movement and the open plan design became increasingly popular. Children were seated in groups rather than in formal rows and the atmosphere of the classroom became more relaxed. In reaction to the dissatisfaction with traditional methods of primary education, the educational ideology of the late 1940s and 1950s called for a freer approach to learning.[8] Although such ideas were considered 'modern', their essence could be traced back to the philosophy of Rousseau in the eighteenth century and to Dewey in the nineteenth century.[9] The progressive philosophy of education urged teachers to focus on children as individuals. 'Children's educational development is not understood in terms of things that should be known, rules that must be followed, or adult characteristics that ought to be adopted. Children's development is seen as a gradual and 'natural' progression'.[10] Indeed, the progressive methods that were adopted included learning through playing, free activity and child-centred tasks. By the 1960s this new progressivism had become more widespread. The abolition of the eleven-plus examination in 1964 meant that primary schools no longer had rigorously to prepare pupils for examination success and could therefore adopt the progressive approaches to education much more fully[11].

The height of the progressive movement was reached in 1967 with the publication of the Plowden Report. This document outlined the essence of child-centred education, prescribing the superiority of the 'integrated day', the group work approach and

learning through discovery: 'The sense of personal discovery influences the intensity of a child's experience, the vividness of his memory and the probability of effective transfer of learning. At the same time it is true that trivial ideas and inefficient methods may be 'discovered'. Furthermore, time does not allow children to find their way by discovery to all that they have to learn. In this matter, as in all education, the teacher is responsible for encouraging children in enquiries which lead to discovery and for asking leading questions.'[12] It advocated that children should be seen as individuals and should be allowed to develop their own interests at their own pace, the teacher acting more as a guide: 'throughout the primary school, children should have time to follow their own interests and hobbies, to read for pure enjoyment and to record their personal findings and experiences, in words, in pictures and in movement. But from the start, there must be teaching as well as learning; children are not "free" to develop interest or skills of which they have no knowledge. They must have guidance from their teachers.'[13] In this respect, the report rejected the idea of detailed guidelines, schemes of work and statements of skills and standards to be achieved, arguing that anything more than brief schemes would not allow for individual differences in pupils. The report influenced primary schools to become much more visually interesting with the development of creative activities and to make topic work an important part of learning. Relationships between teachers and pupils were much more friendly and relaxed and parents were made more welcome in schools. The introduction of the French Pilot Scheme in primary schools posed a significant problem for the Plowden ideology however:[14] 'The developing tradition in primary education since 1945 has been away from class teaching and from formal lessons, but the early stages of learning a modern language inevitably involve some class teaching and many teachers fear that much hard-won ground will have to be given up.'[15] Thus

the teaching of French was not compatible with the new approach of child-centred education.

By the end of the 1960s, primary education had become important in its own right and was no longer a fairly insignificant precursor to secondary education. However, progressive methods of education came under attack during the Black Paper Movement. A series of 'Black Papers' were published between 1969 and 1977, criticising the whole of the education system from primary schools to universities and colleges. These came about as a reaction to the anti-authoritarian student protests, which reached their peak in May 1968 at the Sorbonne and at Nanterre.[16] Progressive methods in primary education were being blamed for the lack of discipline students exhibited towards their university studies. But since the widespread adoption of progressive methods and the student movement occurred at almost the same time, the lack of discipline among students can only really be attributed to the development of more relaxed social attitudes at that time.[17]

By the 1980s, education had become a political issue and there were concerns that standards had fallen. In primary schools the new child-centred approaches were being blamed for poor standards and there were many reports of chaos in classrooms, which were only exacerbated by the media. It was argued that primary schools should return to 'traditional' methods of teaching and concentrate on a core curriculum. There was a demand for greater accountability from teachers and for the government to have more control over the education system in general.[18]

As a result of the 1988 Education Reform Act, the introduction of the National Curriculum has provided a clear framework for the content of education, what should be taught in schools and what levels of attainment pupils should typically achieve in each subject. Teaching staff are held accountable for fulfilling the rigorous criteria of the National Curriculum and schools are regularly inspected for this purpose. While certain aspects of progressive methods are still evident in primary education today, and which may enrich the educational experience of children, there is a demand from the government for more 'traditional' approaches to teaching. In 1998 all primary schools were sent detailed advice on the National Literacy Strategy which was implemented in September that year. In particular it stressed the need for more whole-class teaching.[19] 'The Literacy Hour is designed to maximise children's time with the teacher. Approximately 75% of their time within the hour should be spent with the teacher each week either in groups or – the greater proportion – in a whole class. This allows for a controlled degree of differentiation, while holding the class together and avoiding a highly individualised approach to teaching. Individualised teaching spreads the ability range and often disadvantages the most and least able children.'[20] Unlike the politicians of the 1940s, today's government is at the forefront of curriculum planning and organisation, and the raising of educational standards is high on the political agenda: 'Our first principle is to ensure that education must be at the heart of government. The Prime Minister has made it clear that education is the Government's number one priority.'[21] The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills in primary schools, using more traditional methods of instruction, is ascribed the highest importance: 'It is virtually impossible for children to make a success of their lives unless, when they leave primary school, they can read and write fluently, handle numbers confidently, and concentrate on their work. We aim to ensure that all

children have that firm foundation for their education.'[22] Interestingly, these latest literacy and numeracy initiatives, (the latter of which was introduced in primary schools in September 1999), despite their modern rationale, could simply be interpreted as a return to the elementary school notion of the teaching of the 'three R's'. However, the somewhat narrow view of elementary education as 'social utility' for the working classes has long since developed into an egalitarian ideal: 'Our children are our future as a civilised society and a prosperous nation. If they are to have an education that matches the best in the world, we must start now to lay the foundations, by getting integrated early years education and childcare, and primary education, right.'[23]

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[1] Dearden, R. F. (1968), *The Philosophy of Primary Education* p3
[2] Dearden op. cit. p3
[3] Dearden op. cit. p4
[4] Graves, N. (1988), *The Education Crisis: Which Way Now?* p7
[5] Graves op. cit. p8
[6] Graves op. cit. p8
[7] Lowe, R. (1987), 'Primary Education Since the Second World War' pp2-3
[8] Darling, J. (1994), *Child-Centred Education and its critics* p2
[9] The Economist (June 20th 1998), 'Plowden's Progress' p31
[10] Darling op. cit. p3
[11] Lowe op. cit. pp3-11
[12] CACE (1967), *Children and their Primary Schools* p261
[13] CACE op. cit. pp273-274
[14] Dearden, R. F. (1987), 'The Plowden Philosophy in Retrospect' pp73-84
[15] CACE op. cit. p225
[16] Darling op. cit. p98
[17] Darling op. cit. p98
[18] Lowe op. cit. p11
[19] The Economist, op. cit. p31
[20] DfEE (1998), *The National Literacy Strategy* p96
[21] DfEE (1997), *Excellence in Schools* p11
[22] DfEE (1997), op. cit. p15
[23] DfEE (1997), op. cit. p15

Chapter 2   A historical outline of foreign language teaching and learning in England

2.1   Introduction

'Language teaching depends on a changing balance of aims, techniques and attitudes derived from the modalities of social intercourse and on what is considered essential to the intellectual life of each society.'[1] For centuries, as a result of the developing beliefs and needs of society, foreign language teaching methodology has fluctuated between two distinct trends: an academic book-based approach and a communicative method focusing on oral skills and participatory learning. As Kelly states, the nature of language teaching is directly influenced by the attitudes of a society towards social intercourse and intellectual life. In addition, Kelly further states that the attitudes of a society towards specific languages and their perceived societal roles also have a significant effect upon the methods used to teach those languages. Language teaching in western Europe has been dominated by Latin and Greek, a position which was only seriously challenged during the twentieth century.[2]

In medieval Europe, Latin was the lingua franca, and together with Greek was the key to classical learning, literature, philosophy, thought and religion. Even though languages other than Latin and Greek were learned before the thirteenth century, they were not formally taught.[3] The curriculum of the Middle Ages, heavily influenced by the study of philosophy and rhetoric, had little purpose for the teaching of 'modern languages'.[4] However, beyond the realms of formal education and the exclusive status of classical languages, a strong interest in the vernacular as an everyday means of communication and in informal foreign language teaching was beginning to emerge. Due to the effects of the Norman Conquest, French had become the language

of the English Court and the lay aristocracy. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it became widely popular among the English gentry, the clergy, merchants and tradesmen. It was also accepted as the vernacular language of the law courts, schools and universities, when Latin was not being spoken.[5] By the end of the thirteenth century French was spreading throughout the European courts as a language of culture, a process which was instrumental in establishing the later predominance of French as the language of diplomacy.[6]

However, the learning of French, when it had to be learned artificially, took place outside the school system, the teaching carried out mainly by native speakers. Since the purpose of learning French was primarily vocational, the methods of instruction adopted were also practical and communicative in nature. To this end, many wealthy families employed French-speaking private tutors.[7]

Although Latin had been overshadowed by the vernacular as a means of everyday communication and Greek had lost much of its popularity mainly due to political reasons,[8] their academic traditions remained firmly established. Latin and Greek continued to be taught using only 'book methods' since their purpose had become purely intellectual and ecclesiastical.[9]

The Renaissance attitude towards modern languages was that they should be learned as a practical means of communication[10] 'but to be accepted in the schools as having the same educational, moral, and intellectual values as Latin, they had to be taught with the same methods and according to the same analysis.'[11]

Although several attempts had been made during the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance to develop modern languages into a respectable discipline by linking them with a formal grammar, they were not accepted as part of school education until the early seventeenth century, and then possessing only marginal importance.[12]

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the utilitarian implications of modern languages were not highly valued since educational ideals were dominated by logic, rules and reason.[13] In this period the 'grammar-translation' method of teaching came into being and was widely favoured since its main objective was a 'discipline for the mind'.[14] However, by the late nineteenth century a shift in social perspective promoted the view that oral communication was the most important aspect of modern language learning.[15] Indeed, linguists began advocating 'the primacy of the spoken word and the use of 'immersion' techniques in the classroom reminiscent of the methods which had long characterized language instruction outside the grammar schools.'[16] Also, the development of the new science of phonetics played an important role in facilitating change in the modern language classroom by promoting the importance of oral skills.[17]

By the nineteenth century, therefore, the study of modern foreign languages had gained wider acceptance in the school curriculum, although its position was in no way secure. French and German were often 'viewed contemptuously' as 'frivolous, undemanding pastimes for inferior intellects',[18] since the universities - notably Oxford and Cambridge, whose academic pursuits influenced the curriculum in secondary schools - failed to attribute any great importance to the study of modern languages as a serious discipline, in order to safeguard their own 'academic respectability'.[19]

However, the growing status of modern languages could not be restrained. Professional importance was attached to the discipline by the formation of the 'Modern Language Association of Great Britain', which was founded in 1892. Among its aims were raising the standard of modern language teaching and providing a forum for discussion, but its chief objective was: 'to obtain for modern languages the status in the educational curricula of the country to which their intrinsic value, as instruments of mental discipline and culture, entitles them – apart from their acknowledged commercial and utilitarian importance'.[20] Indeed, as Stern asserts: 'the last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a determined effort in many countries of the Western world (a) to bring modern foreign languages into the school and university curriculum on their own terms, (b) to emancipate modern languages more and more from the comparison with the classics, and (c) to reform the methods of language teaching in a decisive way'.[21]

Thus, the 'Reform Movement' had evolved and was supported by the commitment of academics and language teachers and by the development of commercially operated language schools. Notable examples of such language schools were those founded by Berlitz (1852 – 1921), who opened his first school in 1878 in the USA. By 1900 there were around seventy of his schools in existence in the USA, France, England and Germany.[22] The growth of industry and foreign trade and travel at this time, as well as the development of phonetics and linguistics as sciences, thus brought greater purpose to the study of modern foreign languages, advancing the need for a more communicative approach to teaching. Indeed, in 1910 the 'Institute of Linguists' was founded, in order to 'promote awareness of the importance of language skills,

particularly in industry, commerce and public services by helping clients to identify their needs and where appropriate to train staff and to recruit qualified linguists'.[23]

In response to this need for a new approach to teaching, the 'direct method' was developed. The major feature of this method was the use of the target language as a means of communication, and the avoidance of the mother tongue and translation exercises. Traditional emphasis on literary language was replaced by the importance of everyday spoken language. The 'direct method' was also known by various other names, for example: the 'reform method', the 'natural method', the 'psychological method' and the 'phonetic method'.[24]

The dawn of the twentieth century, therefore, engendered a move away from the confines of logic, rules and reason, and modern foreign language teaching began to embrace a more pragmatic approach. The recognition of the need to improve foreign language teaching for communicative purposes increased until the onslaught of the First World War. The effect of this harrowing event was such that people became introvert in their opinions and outlook and were against connections with Europe, especially Germany. Prejudices within educational establishments meant that communicative foreign language teaching greatly suffered in favour of the more traditional methods of foreign language instruction as a mental and literary discipline. Even after public opinion began to embrace wider horizons, foreign language teaching was restricted by teachers who had followed traditional language courses at university and who were not familiar with communicative teaching techniques. This situation was perpetuated by the fact that school examinations still required the mastery of

traditional skills and were in no way geared towards methods of communication. Such was the situation leading up to the Second World War.[25]

2.2   Modern foreign language teaching in the 1950s and 1960s

The new General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary 'O' and Advanced 'A' level examinations were introduced in the early 1950s. However, the modern foreign language examinations still required the knowledge of traditional 'academic' skills, with little emphasis on oral and aural competencies. Thus there existed a disparity between new, developing methods and traditional aims and objectives.[26]

Although positive attitudes towards foreign countries and cultures recovered more quickly after the Second World War,[27] modern language teaching was to experience even greater upheaval during the 1960s. The three major developments that brought about this change were: the relaxation of the foreign language requirement for university entrance, which in effect undermined the perceived importance of foreign language learning; the introduction of non-selective schools and the advance of new technology.[28]

Up until this time, the teaching of modern foreign languages took place almost exclusively in independent and grammar schools. A major change in the education system was to have significant impact upon the future of modern foreign language teaching. In 1965 the Department of Education and Science despatched a circular to all the local education authorities proposing the introduction of a comprehensive system of education, which became well established over the next ten years. In addition, a new alternative sixteen-plus examination system was introduced in this

year. The Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) was generally intended for those

pupils who would find GCE 'O' level too demanding. As such, there was greater

emphasis on oral skills. Modern foreign language teachers, who were used to

teaching able pupils aiming for examination success, were suddenly faced with having

to teach mixed ability classes and to cope with pupils of low motivation and aptitude.

The new comprehensive system had succeeded in widening the provision of modern

foreign languages but had also left teachers bewildered as to how best to teach in this

new educational environment. In many cases the approach used in the former

grammar schools was simply transferred to the comprehensive classroom but this was

not appropriate for all pupils. Less able pupils were often excluded from modern

foreign languages altogether, while others were offered a simplified version of the

traditional approach. In many schools modern foreign languages became optional

after three years.[29]

It was soon recognised that new methods and materials were needed for the whole

ability range and for mixed ability classes. The obvious solution was to embrace the

newly developed communicative methods which directed the focus away from the

written form of the language. The advance in new technology meant that a wider

range of communicative methods could be employed in the classroom. Audio-lingual

and audio-visual methods of teaching came into being as a result of the introduction

of tape recorders, filmstrip projectors and language laboratories.[30] The 'audio-lingual

method' was like the 'direct method' in that it advocated the use of target language.

Language learning was divided into separate skills: listening, speaking, reading and

writing, although the greatest emphasis was placed on the essential skills of listening

and speaking. Popular learning techniques included the use of mimicry,

memorisation and drills, highlighting the behaviourist approaches to psychology and linguistics prevalent at that time. The presentation of grammar was not a feature of the 'audio-lingual method', although it was not completely avoided.[31] Here was the origin, not simply of a new version of the 'direct method' but what was to become known as the 'communicative method'. But it was also the origin of the debate whether the method included or excluded explicit grammar teaching. Where there are subsequent references to the 'communicative method' in this thesis, it will be implied that the primary emphasis in teaching is on communication not formal aspects of the language.

With the advent of non-selective language learning, audio-lingual teaching methods proved to be popular since the techniques 'appeared to offer the possibility of language learning without requiring a strong academic background and inclination. The simplicity and directness of approach that was advocated seemed to bring language learning within the scope of the ordinary learner'.[32] The 'audio-visual method' was similar to the 'audio-lingual method', except that a visual presentation provided the stimulus for learning, therefore, also highlighting a social context in which the language could be used.[33] Commercially produced audio-lingual and audio-visual courses became increasingly popular especially since they also often featured native speakers in authentic situations. Modern foreign language departments experienced great change in acquiring and making use of the latest technology and methods. However, teachers soon became disillusioned as limitations and problems presented themselves.[34]

Another major development in modern foreign language teaching in the 1960s was the launch of the French Pilot Scheme in primary schools in 1963. The initial belief that simply starting to learn a modern foreign language at an earlier age would transform levels of linguistic achievement in the secondary sector was soon rejected and expected outcomes were challenged by the many difficulties inherent in the project. Secondary school teachers had to cope not only with all the problems of comprehensive reorganisation and the introduction of new technology and methods but also with classes of new pupils who had widely differing experiences of learning French in primary school. By the middle of the next decade the experiment had ended and was described as a failure.[35] Primary modern foreign languages continued in only a minority of schools and modern language teaching in general was believed to have reached a crisis point.[36]

2.3   The new age of modern foreign language teaching

During the 1970s the government began to express concern about the current state of the education system. Among the many considerations, as we saw above, it was emphasised that there was a need for higher standards and the implementation of a core curriculum. Although no action was taken to realise this initiative, the idea had been firmly established and would only require a matter of time before it would be introduced. A further concern was the dual examination system at age 16, which was regarded as unsatisfactory.[37]

Modern foreign language teaching in comprehensive schools reached a low point towards the end of the decade. Indeed, the 1977 HMI report, 'Modern languages in comprehensive schools', articulated some very harsh criticisms, including 'lack of

planning, inadequate schemes of work, unclear objectives, inappropriate approaches for slower learners, insufficient challenge for able pupils, and lack of leadership by heads of department'.[38] Many teachers felt the criticism was unfair considering the great challenges that modern language teachers had recently experienced. Modern language advisers, however, were prompted by the report to organise in-service training programmes based on the areas of concern. Further positive development in modern language teaching was facilitated by the introduction of the Graded Objectives in Modern Languages (GOML) scheme. The idea of teaching modern foreign languages in small, manageable steps by means of communicative tasks proved to be very popular. By the middle of the 1980s graded objectives schemes existed in the majority of LEAs, and the number of pupils opting to carry on with modern foreign languages after the age of 14 continued to increase.[39] Even though the new scheme appeared to be successful in improving the status and popularity of modern foreign languages in schools, it was not without its critics. Concerns were raised about the lack of emphasis on formal grammar instruction. It was almost impossible to simulate authentic communicative scenarios to cover all the aspects of grammar.[40]

The GOML scheme appeared to be a natural progression from the development of the Council of Europe's 'Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in School'. Published in 1976, after the earlier publication of the 'threshold level' for adult language learning, the 'threshold level' for schools stated its objective would:

1   be such as to enable the great majority of pupils to reach it;

2   correspond to a minimum level of proficiency;

3   make possible communication, especially oral communication, with children or
    adults in the language studied;

4   be based on the exploitation of everyday real-life situations;

5   include a methodological initiation which would, on the one hand, facilitate
    continued study of the language and, on the other hand, make it possible to
    acquire a sufficient understanding of the learning-processes used, so that these
    may be profitably applied to the study of other languages.[41]

Language was analysed as consisting of two elements: functions and notions, and this
concept formed the basis of the approach to teaching.[42]   The 'threshold level' was
important in the development of modern language teaching because it attempted to
define teaching objectives in a European dimension: 'whatever the ulterior aims of
foreign language teaching, all member states of the Council of Europe recognize at
least one common aim, which is the ability to *use* the foreign language in one way or
another.'[43]

The education system as a whole experienced important changes during the 1980s
under the newly elected Conservative government. A long-term aim was set at raising
pupil performance at all levels of ability in all subjects. In 1985 the white paper
'Better Schools' was circulated and plans for a national curriculum were drawn up.
The 1986 Education Act transferred curriculum responsibilities to the LEAs,
governing bodies and headteachers. This was followed by the publication of the
consultation document 'The National Curriculum 5-16' in 1987. The Education
Reform Act was passed in 1988 and in that year the new General Certificate of
Secondary Education (GCSE) examination system was introduced which replaced the
old dual system of GCE 'O' level and CSE. By September 1988 provisions for

religious education had to be made in all schools, in accordance with the national criteria. By September of the following year, it became a general requirement for all National Curriculum subjects to be taught.[44]

During this period of major change, the teaching of modern foreign languages also underwent further development. In 1987 HMI proposed in the 'Matters for discussion' series (DES, 1987) that the study of modern foreign languages should be compulsory between the ages of eleven and sixteen. Indeed, modern foreign languages became a foundation subject within the National Curriculum, which meant that it had to be studied by all pupils throughout their compulsory secondary school career.[45] The National Curriculum listed nineteen languages, which were acceptable as a first foreign language to be studied by pupils. Although the government appeared to support the notion of diversification in modern foreign language teaching, no attempt was ever made to resource the development of the teaching of the other less traditionally taught languages.[46] In 1993 the National Curriculum was reviewed and consequently adjusted. It was suggested that instead of all pupils studying a full modern foreign language course at Key Stage 4, most would follow at least a short course. In this way, teachers would be able to overcome the problem of teaching pupils of low ability who could not cope with a full GCSE and yet who would still be required by law to study a foreign language until the age of sixteen.[47]

Modern foreign language teaching today still presents many problems even though the National Curriculum and the GCSE examination system are firmly established. There are concerns that innovative teaching will be lost and stagnation may set in because teachers have to follow strict national guidelines. Many teachers are

disappointed with the GCSE examination. The continued emphasis on communicative teaching and the use of target language prolongs the debate about the teaching of grammar. Multiple choice, 'true or false' and 'tick the box' answers are not examples of authentic language tasks although they are common features in the examination papers.[48] The move away from a more academic method of teaching at this level has widened the gap in the skills and knowledge required at 'A' level, which still requires a more traditional academic approach. As a result, pupils are often ill prepared for 'A' level modern foreign language courses and in fact, there is a declining candidature for all modern foreign languages at 'A' level, except Spanish.[49] Inevitably, these problems filter through into higher education.

Despite the problems of policy and organisation the actual business of teaching modern foreign languages has witnessed exciting developments in recent years with the advent of new technology. Television and video allow the target country to be presented directly to the learners and provide them with the opportunity of experiencing authentic language situations. The advance in information technology has enabled learners to work independently with interactive language programs and to present their work in a professional format. The introduction of email and the Internet presents the opportunity to establish a direct and efficient link to the target countries, which fosters authentic target language interaction. However, the resulting difficulty that teachers in many schools have to address is the lack of funding available to invest in such valuable and motivational resources.

2.4 Conclusion

Modern foreign language teaching in the late 1990s continues to be affected by controversy and debate. Although the need for foreign language learning is widely recognised and accepted, and teaching methodology is firmly committed to the communicative approach, the difficulties of effective modern foreign language teaching provision in this country are still a widespread concern. Until recently, modern foreign languages has commanded fairly high status as a compulsory subject in the National Curriculum. Inevitably, a variety of organisational as well as motivational problems have been encountered due the 'languages for all' policy. However, this development also supported the argument in favour of the need to begin foreign language teaching in primary school, a practice that has been regaining popularity in recent years. It was announced in 2001 that modern foreign languages may not survive as a compulsory subject resulting from new revisions to the National Curriculum. If pupils are free to discontinue their foreign language studies at the age of fourteen, it may be argued that there is little need for foreign language teaching to take place in the primary sector. Primary foreign language teaching is, indeed, a controversial issue in itself, but is also one of the many aspects of modern foreign language teaching in this country which need to be seriously addressed. 'Languages have been a perennial source of friction and controversy',[50] and it appears from the development of modern foreign language teaching throughout history that this state of affairs may well be set to continue.

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[2] Kelly op. cit. p365
[3] Kelly op. cit. p2
[4] Kelly op. cit. p368
[5] Orme, N. (1973), *English Schools in the Middle Ages* p71
[6] Kelly op. cit. pp366-367

[7] Radford, H. (1985), 'Modern Languages and the Curriculum in English Secondary Schools' p205
[8] Kelly op. cit. p366
[9] Rowlinson, W. (1994), 'The historical ball and chain' p7
[10] Kelly op. cit. p382
[11] Kelly op. cit. p375
[12] Kelly op. cit. p381
[13] Kelly op. cit. p382, p399
[14] Radford op. cit. p212
[15] Kelly op. cit. p399
[16] Radford op. cit. p212
[17] Radford op. cit. p213
[18] Radford op. cit. p208
[19] Radford op. cit. p208, p214
[20] Quoted in Radford op. cit. p217
[21] Stern, H. H. (1983), *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching* p98
[22] Stern op. cit. p98
[23] Institute of Linguists, (1999) *Mission Statement*
[24] Stern op. cit. pp456-458
[25] Rowlinson op. cit. pp12-13
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[27] Rowlinson op. cit. p3
[28] Radford op. cit. p223
[29] Moys, A. (1996), 'The challenges of secondary education' pp83-84
[30] Moys op. cit. p84
[31] Stern op. cit. pp462-465
[32] Stern op. cit. p465
[33] Stern op. cit. pp466-468
[34] Moys op. cit. p84
[35] Hawkins, E. (1996), 'The early teaching of modern languages – a Pilot Scheme' pp155-164
[36] Radford op. cit. p226
[37] Emerson, C. & Goddard, I. (1989), *All about the National Curriculum* pp1-3
[38] Moys op. cit. p85
[39] Moys op. cit. pp84-85
[40] Page, B. (1996), 'Graded Objectives in Modern Languages (GOML)' pp103-104
[41] Van Ek, J. A. (1977), *The Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools* p3
[42] Van Ek op. cit. p5
[43] Van Ek op. cit. pp2-3
[44] Emerson & Goddard op. cit. pp5-13, p56
[45] Moys op. cit. p85
[46] Moys op. cit. pp90-91
[47] Moys op. cit. p85
[48] Page op. cit. p104
[49] Boaks, P. (1998), 'Languages in Schools' p41
[50] Radford op. cit. p203

Chapter 3   The Joint Schools Council / Nuffield Foundation Pilot Scheme in primary French (French Pilot Scheme)

3.1   Introduction

'Outmoded methods, a stultifying examination system and too little time spent on language learning are often blamed for the low standards. A frequent criticism is the poor spoken command of the foreign language after four or five years of study.'[1] Such was the attitude towards the linguistic competence of British citizens in the mid-1950s. As a result of the criticisms about the state of language learning in Britain, educators became interested in the local experiments in early language teaching which were being carried out at the time, as a possible means of improving competence. In 1956 the Ministry of Education confirmed its support of primary language teaching but by 1959 had issued warnings about introducing foreign languages into the primary sector.[2]

However, local experiments continued and opinions became more favourable. These experiments were carried out with a view to assessing the feasibility of teaching languages in primary school. One experiment of particular interest took place in Leeds.

3.2   Experiments in Leeds primary schools 1961-1962

The Leeds Education Committee, in collaboration with the Nuffield Foundation began the first stage of the experiment in the Spring of 1961. A bilingual secondary school teacher taught French to a selected group of twenty pupils aged between ten and eleven years. Selection was restricted to those pupils who had passed the entrance examination to grammar school.[3] With the aid of a good supply of resources, the

pupils were taught in French for the remainder of the school year, and this occupied most of their time, except for eight periods per week which were reserved for English and religious studies, etc.[4]

The principles of the teaching methods involved in both stages of the experiment were outlined as follows:

1   an oral approach to language, in which the pupils are not presented with the written word in the early weeks

2   the presentation of language units as a complete sequence of sounds, i.e. as a phrase or sentence rather than as individual words (the normal speed of speech is used by the teacher from the start)

3   the use of audiovisual aids involving tape recorder and filmstrip projector

4   the use of activities such as games, songs, acting, so that sentences in the language are related to situation in which the pupils is involved

5   the use of language as a means of communication in learning other subjects, such as history, geography, arithmetic and poetry

6   virtually no formal grammar except what can be explained in the language

7   work on or in the language for a considerable part of each day in school, so that the children are soaked in the language[5]

After two months, the achievement of these pupils was impressive. It was particularly noted that they could speak French fluently and with accurate pronunciation and intonation, they could understand rapidly spoken French, they were eager to speak and to answer questions, they had a wide vocabulary and showed enthusiasm for their

work and an interest in France and the French.[6] As well as showing that languages taught at the primary level could be successful, this stage of the experiment also highlighted the value of intensive language teaching and the advantage of using material with real content, such as topics taken from geography and history, rather than concentrating on matters relating specifically to the target language.[7]

However, this first stage of the experiment was conducted under ideal conditions which would have been unrealistic on a wider scale. It would have been impossible to find a large supply of other suitably qualified bilingual teachers, or to restrict groups to just twenty of the most able pupils, or for schools to devote large amounts of time exclusively to the study of French.[8] With these issues in mind, the second stage of the experiment was begun in March 1962. French was taught in five selected primary schools in different parts of the city, under normal classroom conditions. Pupils aged ten to eleven years were unselected and groups numbered up to thirty-six. Pupils received between nine and ten hours of French per week and the teachers, who were not bilingual, attempted to use the same principles as those used in the first stage. The methods used were similar, although English was used at times, especially for the introduction of a topic or to explain something. The outcome of this second stage of the experiment was regarded as positive and it was found that even pupils of less than average ability benefited from learning a foreign language and learnt it successfully.[9]

3.3   The origin and organisation of the French Pilot Scheme

3.3.1   Initial planning

The increased interest in teaching foreign languages in the primary school in the early 1960s was just one element of the growth of modern foreign language teaching in

Britain, which also focused on developing secondary school courses in languages other than French and adapting to the new audio-visual courses and technological resources. [10]

Prior to the introduction of the Pilot Scheme, attitudes towards language learning at all levels had begun to change, and new teaching techniques and resources had been developed. Relations with the other European nations were improving and were becoming much more important. Together with the positive outcomes of local experiments of teaching French in primary schools around the country, these factors assisted in the decision to develop a national pilot scheme. The experiment in Leeds had been supported by the Nuffield Foundation and as a result of its success, the Foundation began discussions with the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Study Group about the establishment of a national pilot scheme. [11]

Thus, in July 1962, the Nuffield Foundation outlined four important areas that would need to be developed:

1   fundamental linguistic research into language learning

2   the development of new forms of teacher-training courses

3   the provision of new forms of examination

4   the production of ranges of aids to teaching with special reference to an extended experimental programme for introducing a foreign language into the curriculum of primary schools [12]

The Ministry of Education's motivations were to gather 'useful information about the feasibility of introducing French into the primary curriculum, in terms both of the training that would be required by the average primary school teacher in order to be able to teach French in accordance with modern ideas on the presentation of the subject, and of revealing the implications for primary school teaching generally, and especially its effect on children's attainments in other subjects.'[13]

In 1962, detailed plans for the Pilot Scheme were drawn up in collaboration with the Nuffield Foundation. The Foundation was responsible for developing a range of teaching resources, based on the audio-visual method, suitable for younger learners. The Ministry of Education was responsible for recruiting schools to take part in the experiment and for providing in-service training for the teachers who would be involved. French was chosen as the language to be taught because it was regarded as the 'second most widely used international language', the proximity of France was a great advantage and it was considered that the provision of teacher training in any other language – German, Russian or Spanish – would create more difficulties than would French. It was argued that as a result of starting French at the age of eight, there would be more opportunity for learning a second foreign language at secondary school, if the experiment proved to be successful. Thus on 13th March 1963 the launching of the Joint Schools Council / Nuffield Foundation Pilot Scheme in primary French was announced in Parliament.[14]

3.3.2   *The aims of the scheme*

The aim of the Pilot Scheme was not to establish if French could be taught successfully in primary schools since evidence from previous experiments had already

proved this to be the case, given the right conditions. The most important issue was rather to investigate 'on what conditions it would be feasible to contemplate the general introduction of a modern language into the primary school curriculum'.[15] This was divided into five principal questions:

1. Is any substantial gain in mastery of a foreign language achieved by beginning to teach it at 8 instead of 11?

2. Do other aspects of educational and general intellectual development gain or suffer from the introduction of a foreign language in the primary school?

3. What are the organisational, teaching and other problems posed by such an experiment?

4. Are there levels of ability below which the teaching of a foreign language is of dubious value?

5. What methods, incentives and motivations are most effective in fostering learning of a foreign language?[16]

3.3.3 *Planning and preparation*

In March 1963 the Ministry of Education invited LEAs to consider if they wanted to take part in the scheme. The aim was to locate nine areas that would reflect a wide cross-section of educational conditions. The primary schools should feed into a limited number of secondary schools and in each area there should be about 480 children in each year group. It was vital that the secondary schools should be willing to take part. LEAs were also asked if they were prepared to make arrangements for in-service training and to release primary teachers to enable them to attend intensive courses.[17]

The reaction to the invitation was enthusiastic, with over half of the LEAs expressing interest in the scheme. Finally, thirteen pilot areas were selected and the others that expressed interest became associate areas, which meant that although they would not be part of the evaluation, they would be encouraged to adhere to the principles set out for the pilot areas.[18] Other LEAs took the initiative to organise their own projects, some of which employed the principles of the pilot scheme, while the remainder adopted a more relaxed approach.[19]

3.3.4 Principles of the scheme

3.3.4.1 Teacher training

It was thought that primary teachers with an O-level in French would be able to teach the early stages of the scheme well, providing that they attend additional training in French and in primary foreign language teaching methodology. Training requirements thus involved a minimum of six months at a French language refresher course, followed by a three-month intensive language course in France or Britain and then a short methodology course. It was also decided that secondary school teachers would benefit from additional training to enable them to manage the new situation of receiving pupils with three years' experience of French. Those secondary schools which did not already offer French would be given assistance in recruiting, training or retraining staff.[20]

3.3.4.2 Continuity between the primary and secondary phases

It was stipulated from the outset that 'both for the benefit of the pupils and to ensure that secondary schools took advantage of the earlier start in learning a language, the

pupils entering secondary schools from primary schools in the Pilot Scheme must be taught separately from beginners in French'.[21] It was also essential that primary pupils who had been taught French should not be dispersed over a large number of secondary schools 'each of which would be receiving only small batches of pupils for whom it could scarcely hope to make proper arrangements'.[22]

3.3.4.3 Starting age

It was agreed that a common starting age should be decided upon and that it would be best to begin teaching French to pupils at the age of eight, since this would give them a chance to settle into junior school life for a year first. From a practical point of view, it was already acknowledged that recruiting or training a supply of competent teachers would be a great difficulty, and thus to begin a year earlier, or even at the infant level would increase the difficulties further.[23]

By establishing a common starting age it was hoped to avoid the increasingly common practice of occasionally introducing a small amount of French to selected pupils in their last year of primary school. 'Such haphazard teaching of French adds to the difficulties of the secondary teachers who take on the responsibility for the pupils' French later on, without materially adding to the pupils' knowledge of the language'.[24]

3.3.4.4 The integration of French into the primary curriculum

There was some concern that teaching French would be at odds with the child-centred approach to primary education that was widespread at that time. Indeed, a foreign language could not be taught using 'discovery methods'. In order to ease the

situation, teachers were encouraged to make links with other subjects, such as art, craft, history and geography and to employ similar active methods. 'En Avant', the audio-visual course specially prepared by the Nuffield Foundation was designed to assist with this issue. The pilot areas were given these resources free of charge but teachers were at liberty to use different resources if they so desired.[25]

In addition, it was believed that French would only be feasible if taught by specialists. However, it was decided that it would be of greater benefit if primary teachers delivered the lessons, but the impossibility of training every class teacher in every school was acknowledged. Thus, it had to be ensured that each year group had one specially trained teacher who would teach all the classes in that year group.[26]

3.3.4.5 The evaluation of the scheme

It was stated that the Pilot Scheme would be evaluated in three ways. Firstly, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) would evaluate pupils' attainment, producing an interim report and then a final report. Its aim would be to answer the initial questions set by the Ministry of Education and to provide evidence on which to base future decisions about a national introduction of French in primary schools. Secondly, members of H.M. Inspectorate would be making an appraisal of the scheme and finally everyone involved would be making their own informal evaluation of the experiment.[27]

3.4   The early years of the French Pilot Scheme

The teaching of French in the pilot areas began in September 1964. In addition to the pilot and associate areas, many other schools were conducting their own random

experiments. In 1965, the Schools Council conducted a survey and found that French was being taught in about one-fifth of primary schools. Schools not involved in the Pilot Scheme were at liberty to introduce French into their curriculum if they so desired. A number of important issues were evident from the outset: 'If the results were everywhere commensurate with the enthusiasm shown by the teachers, the progress made would have been remarkable. Experience has shown, however, that teaching a living language by the audio-visual method is an exacting process, demanding considerable fluency and skill on the part of the teacher. More than this, very real obstacles to continuity of teaching are set up unless co-operative arrangements are made with the secondary schools which the primary pupils will attend on transfer.'[28] Indeed, many secondary schools found themselves 'receiving pupils from a range of primary schools with widely varying lengths of course and practices in French teaching'.[29]

3.5   The evaluation of the French Pilot Scheme 1964 – 1974

3.5.1   The achievement tests[30]

Although a number of French courses were being followed by pupils, all were based on the audio-visual method. Since no suitable means of assessment was available at the beginning of the experiment, a programme of test development was established.

The initial tests had to be compatible with the oral phases of instruction, which took place in the first and in some cases also in the second year of teaching. The only possibility was to conduct the tests aurally in which the pupils were required to respond to pictorial material, since at this stage they had not been introduced to reading or writing in French, and use of English which would have constituted translation, was considered at odds with the essence of the audio-visual method.

After this phase, more conventional tests were developed at various levels of difficulty in each of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Tests measuring achievement in the receptive skills were easy to administer and score, but tests measuring the expressive skills presented more difficulties and required specialist scoring.[31]

3.5.2   The HMI report

Although it was agreed that there would be an HMI appraisal of the pilot scheme, no such evaluation appeared in the NFER Final Report. HMI reported its findings only in the interim report, which was published in 1970, and even then it was not a direct evaluation, but rather an interpretation by Burstall of the research carried out by HMI. Classes were observed and after each lesson a report in questionnaire form was completed. The HMI report took the form of a description of its findings from these questionnaires relating to teacher, pupil and institution variables, which were analysed statistically. It contained no objective opinion about the feasibility of primary French based on its findings, nor did it provide guidance or advice regarding the difficulties that were apparent. It remained solely a description of what had been taking place, providing little analysis that could be used to shape the future of the experiment, or indeed of primary languages in general.[32]

3.5.3   The NFER evaluation

The NFER evaluation of the French Pilot Scheme was carried out between 1964 and 1974 and took the form of a longitudinal study of three cohorts of pupils. Originally

it was intended to study just two cohorts but the first year of the experiment could only be regarded as exploratory, due to unforeseen staffing difficulties.[33]

Burstall's interim and final reports were both presented in a descriptive, statistical format throughout, and much of what was described could have been representative of foreign language teaching in general and not just relating to the primary school experiment. Thus the conclusion reached by Burstall may have been unfair, considering the extensive range of foreign language learning issues which were included in the study.

The main aims of the evaluation were set out as follows:

1   to investigate the long-term development of pupils' attitudes towards foreign language learning

2   to discover whether pupils' levels of achievement in French are significantly related to their attitudes towards foreign language learning

3   to examine the effect of pupil variables (such as sex, age, socio-economic status, perception of parental encouragement, employment expectations, previous learning history, contact with France, etc.) on level of achievement in French and attitude towards foreign language learning

4   to investigate whether teachers' attitudes and expectations significantly affect the attitudes and achievement of their pupils

5   to investigate whether the early introduction of French has a significant effect on achievement in other areas of the primary school curriculum.[34]

In order to achieve these aims, tests in all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) appropriate to the stage of learning, were given to the pupils and to control groups at various intervals and questionnaires designed to determine attitudinal factors were distributed amongst the pupils and teachers.[35]

The main findings of the evaluation have been summarised as follows:

1   There are no indications of an optimum age for learning a foreign language. Pupils taught French from the age of eight do not show any substantial gains compared with those who were taught French from the age of eleven. There is no evidence to suggest that younger children are more efficient than older children at acquiring foreign language skills. If anything, the reverse seems to be true. The sheer amount of time spent learning a foreign language appears to be the dominant factor affecting success, not the age at which the period of learning began.

2   On all tests measuring achievement in French, girls scored significantly higher than boys. This was true throughout the primary and secondary stages of schooling.

3   There is a close relationship between the child's performance in French and his socio-economic status. High mean scores on French tests coincided with high-status parental occupation and vice versa.

4   a) Throughout the primary stage of the experiment, the pupils in small rural schools maintained a higher level of achievement in French than did those in larger urban schools.

        b) Furthermore, a follow-up study showed that even after two years in secondary schools, these pupils *continued* to achieve significantly higher

scores on French tests than did their classmates who had formerly attended large primary schools.

5   The attitude of the head towards the teaching of primary level French appeared to exert a real influence on pupils' level of achievement.

6   Pupils from the south of England took a significantly more favourable view of learning French than did those from the north of England.

7   At the secondary level, both boys and girls in single-sex schools reached a higher level of achievement than did those of either sex in co-educational schools.

8   An early *experience of success* affects later achievement in French and attitudes towards learning languages to a far greater extent than earlier attitudes affect later behaviour. Absolutely nothing succeeds like success!

9   The introduction of French into the *primary* school curriculum did not exert any significant influence on children's other attainments.

10   At the secondary level, the early introduction of French tended to exert a negative effect on the teaching of other foreign languages in the following ways:

a) by reinforcing French as the dominant foreign language taught in schools;

b) by increasing the number of pupils who reached secondary school already convinced that further foreign-language learning was not for them.

11   The most powerful incentive to learn French from the pupils' point of view is the opportunity to go to France and meet French people. If pupils are convinced that they will never go to France they tend to condemn learning French as a waste of time.

12 Children who actually go to France do reach higher levels of achievement in French than other pupils; however, they come from more favoured backgrounds in the main and tend to have better attitudes towards learning French even before they visit France.

13 The research findings support the view that affectionate and outgoing attitudes towards foreign peoples reach their peak at about the age of ten and thereafter become progressively less favourable.

14 No single teaching method appeared suitable for all pupils. High-achievers preferred the traditional methods on the whole and low-achievers preferred the audio-visual approach. However, they were united in their attitudes towards certain aspects of learning French. There was universal dislike of the repetitious use of the tape recorder and reading aloud in French excited uniform loathing.

15 Summarising the results of ten years' research, Dr Burstall reaches the conclusion that the weight of evidence has combined with the balance of opinion to tip the scales against a possible expansion of the teaching of French in the primary schools.[36]

At the beginning of the experiment, it was clearly stated that 'the pilot scheme was not set up to determine whether French can be introduced into the primary curriculum, but to find out the profit and loss of doing so'.[37] Thus the questions set out in the aims of the experiment were answered in the final report in terms of 'profit and loss':

1 'Do other aspects of education and general development gain or suffer from the introduction of French teaching in the primary school?'

a) The introduction of French into the primary school showed 'neither profit nor loss' in regard to the other areas of the curriculum which were tested.

b) The report states that the general view of secondary schools of the pilot areas was (i) that primary French had reinforced the dominance of French, and (ii) that '…it had increased the number of pupils who reached the secondary school convinced that further foreign-language learning was not for them'. 'So,' concludes the NFER, 'at the secondary level more loss than profit.'

2   'Are there levels of ability below which the teaching of French is of dubious value?'

An unequivocal answer could not be given; but the researchers consider that the root of the matter lies in differentiation among children of varying ability. 'Unless there is a sustained effort to redefine the objectives of teaching French in order to meet pupils' differing needs, some children will inevitably experience failure.'

3   'Is any substantial gain in mastery achieved by beginning to learn French at the age of eight?'

This question is answered 'unequivocally in the negative' because the researchers do not regard the superiority of Cohort 2 in year 8 of their French course to the control group in year 5 as 'a substantial gain'. The experimental pupils at this age were able to understand spoken French better than the control group, and were more willing to speak French. The latter gain is dismissed as one of attitude and not of achievement.

4   'What methods, attitudes and incentives are most effective in promoting the learning of French?'

a) 'No single method is equally appropriate for all pupils.' High-achieving pupils tend to reject the audio-visual approach in favour of the more traditional emphasis on grammar and the written language. The reverse is true of low-achieving pupils. The researchers say that certain teaching methods, e.g. those involving passive and repetitive listening to a tape-recorder, are unpopular with all children.

b) The greatest incentives for pupils are (i) early achievement and (ii) the prospect of establishing contact with French-speaking people.

c) On the other hand, '…if pupils are convinced that they will never go to France, they tend to condemn learning French as "a waste of time".'

5   'What organisational and teaching problems are posed by the introduction of French teaching in the primary school?

a) In primary schools, most organisational problems stem from '…the fact that not all class teachers are able to teach French to their own classes'.

b) In secondary schools, most organisational problems arise from '…a mixed intake of pupils with varying degrees of previous contact with French teaching'.

c) At both levels '…the major teaching problem was that of coping with pupils varying widely in aptitude and achievement, but who are nevertheless expected to strive towards the same goals at a reasonably uniform pace'.

d) The report emphasises that both primary and secondary pupils 'tended to unite in the view that pupils of like ability should be grouped together for French, so that each group could proceed at an appropriate pace'. Many primary school teachers and most secondary school teachers took a similar view.[38]

3.6   Reactions to the NFER evaluation of the French Pilot Scheme

The candid final paragraph of the NFER report provided a disappointing conclusion to the French Pilot Scheme: '…it is hard to resist the conclusion that the weight of the evidence has combined with the balance of opinion to tip the scales against a possible expansion of the teaching of French in primary schools.'[39]   Government support of teaching French in primary schools was withdrawn in 1974.[40]

The disappointing analysis of the findings from ten years of research seemed to be reinforced by the high expectations that had been formed at the beginning of the experiment. These were:

1   that the earlier start would make French as a second language available to a much larger section of the school population across the entire ability range than previously

2   that it would ultimately lead to a substantial improvement in French at the secondary stage of education than was previously possible, when French was taught only during the secondary phase of schooling

3   that it would offer a better chance for more prolonged programmes at the secondary stage in other languages, such as Spanish, German and Russian.[41]

Indeed, the biggest expectation of all was the belief that by simply beginning French at a younger age, pupils would reach high levels of achievement. This was based on the critical period hypothesis, which was popular at the time. Stern states: 'On developmental grounds each age in life probably has its peculiar advantages and disadvantages for language learning…In the sixties the mistake was made of

expecting miracles merely by starting young. The miracles have not come about. Starting late as such is not the answer either.'[42]

It has been argued that the analysis of the experiment was not a fair interpretation of the results and the difficulties encountered. One such critic comments: 'Experiments of this type are, however, extraordinarily difficult to carry out, and it is, therefore, important to assess whether the design and analysis produced evidence strong enough to provide a basis for decision-making.'[43]

Bennett goes on to analyse Burstall's response to the five questions on which the evaluation was based:

'1   Do other aspects of education and general intellectual development gain or suffer from the introduction of French into primary school?

The evidence did not suggest any influence – thus no profit and no loss.

2   Are there any levels of ability which the teaching of French is of dubious value?

This is a dubious question itself since analyses by ability level were not carried out in the study. Nevertheless, it is claimed that some children developed a sense of failure, a fact that is considered a 'loss'. But cannot this be said of any subject in the primary curriculum? Do not some pupils feel that they have failed in learning maths on entry to secondary school? Would it be legitimate to argue on the basis of such evidence that maths be discontinued from being taught at primary level?

3   Is there substantial gain in mastery achieved by beginning to learn French at the age of 8?

Burstall felt able to answer this unequivocally in the negative despite evidence to the contrary. The answer to the question rests on how one defines 'substantial' and 'mastery', and at what stage the evaluation is made. If substantial is equated with statistical significance for the sake of this argument, and mastery is equated with performance on specially developed French tests of unknown content validity, then after two years in secondary school the answer is unequivocally positive. Even after five years the experimental pupils performed better than one control group on all tests. Add to this the superior performance at CSE, and no difference in aspiration for A-levels, would seem to indicate an answer somewhat different from that indicated by Burstall.

4   What methods, attitudes and incentives are most effective in promoting the learning of French?

This is another question that cannot be adequately answered by the data reported. No comparison of methods was made, although pupil attitudes to an audio-visual approach apparently differed. The high achievers liked it less that the low achievers. It was claimed that 'undoubtedly' the most powerful incentive to learn French is the prospect of being able to establish contact with the French-speaking people. This conclusion is based on an analysis of attitude items, but it is probably not too sceptical to hypothesise that the most powerful incentive is the fact that it is on the timetable and they are required to study it.

5   What organisational and teaching problems are posed by the introduction of French into primary schools?

The main disadvantages appear to be a reduction in flexibility in the primary school curriculum, although this argument seems to be based on the erroneous assumption that all primary schools are progressively oriented, and mixed intakes at secondary level. It became increasingly difficult to provide separate classes for experimental pupils even when it was thought desirable. However, it would be naïve to blame this on the introduction of French. This situation developed because of the implementation of the experiment on a small scale. If French were introduced on a larger scale this problem would progressively decline.

My interpretation of the results is that both the weight of the evidence and the balance of opinion favours the experimental group. What, I wonder, tipped the scales the other way?'[44]

The Nuffield Foundation reacted strongly against the abrupt end to the French Pilot Scheme, in which they had invested a great deal. A national consultative committee was formed to review the arguments and to devise a way forward, both of which were documented in the 1977 report *The Early Teaching of Modern Languages.*[45] The report stated that the French Pilot Scheme had created much interest in Europe. It was affirmed at a Council of Europe seminar in September 1976 that the fate of the French Pilot Scheme should not imply that further experimentation must be abandoned.[46]

In reaction to Burstall's report, it was asserted: '…the researchers confined their conclusions to a 'profit and loss' account of the experimental work without producing a specific answer to the Schools Council's 'chief question'… 'What are the conditions of success for primary French?' To have done so would have switched the conclusion

from the retrospective to the forward-looking, from the depressing factual statement that certain conditions of success had not been fulfilled, to the more inspiriting statement that future success was likely to result from the establishment of identifiable conditions.'[47]

3.7   Conclusion

The difficulties encountered in the French Pilot Scheme had already been predicted, but perhaps not to the extent that they actually manifested themselves. From the outset it was already known that French could be taught successfully in primary schools and which conditions were needed for success, as described in the Leeds experiments. The biggest problem was how to establish these conditions on a large scale, without the advantages with which the Leeds experiment were blessed.

The evidence from the reports and criticisms of the French Pilot Scheme suggests that the biggest difficulties were teacher competence and continuity between the primary and secondary phases. Although a retraining programme for primary teachers had been planned in detail, it was not enough to ensure the appropriate level of linguistic competence. The number of training colleges offering French as a main subject increased during the ten years of the scheme but most teachers were being absorbed into the rapidly expanding secondary sector.   Indeed, the introduction of comprehensive secondary schools in 1965 dictated a need for many more secondary language teachers, as well as the nature of the French Pilot Scheme itself, which stipulated that all experimental pupils in the first two years of secondary school must continue to learn French. According to Hawkins, this meant that 75% of pupils in secondary schools who were previously excluded from French lessons now required

specialist language teaching.[48] Thus the primary sector was unable to recruit many specialist French teachers and was relying on teachers who were unable to deliver the language competently.

A further criticism of teacher competence was focused on methodology, specifically on differentiation. It was found that many teachers were failing to differentiate the learning objectives in French according to the needs and abilities of their pupils. These appeared to be overlooked in many cases, in favour of the belief that starting early was the sole key to success in foreign language learning.[49]

Such a difference in teaching competence at the primary level must have contributed to the difficulties experienced at transfer by providing pupils with widely varying learning experiences. However, although arrangements for continuity had been made through the demand for 'compactness' in the pilot areas, in the event, the whole process was ineffectively managed. Only 13% of classes in the first year of secondary school were exclusively for pilot scheme pupils. The others were put into classes with pupils who had not previously learnt French. Many teachers raised objections to separate classes and some schools were unable to provide separate classes because of staff shortages. Thus, effective liaison between the two sectors was insufficient.[50]

The French Pilot Scheme demonstrated how unrealistic expectations and inadequate solutions to problems that had already been anticipated, could undermine a potentially beneficial educational and linguistic innovation. What remained unresolved was how more effectively the 'issues' could have been managed and the ensuing difficulties

overcome. With the lessons from the French Pilot Scheme in mind, it will be appropriate to investigate how effectively the difficulties inherent in teaching modern foreign languages in the primary phase have been managed in more recent projects and experiments.

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[1] Stern, H. H. (1963), *Foreign Languages in Primary Education: The Teaching of Foreign or Second Languages to Younger Children* p51

[2] Stern op. cit. p51

[3] Stern op. cit. p52

[4] Riddy, D. C. (1965), 'The Teaching of Modern Languages in the Primary Schools' p61

[5] Stern op. cit. p52

[6] Stern op. cit. p52

[7] Riddy op. cit. p62

[8] Riddy op. cit. p62

[9] Stern op. cit. p52

[10] The Schools Council (1966), *French in the Primary School* piii

[11] The Schools Council op. cit. p1

[12] The Schools Council op. cit. pp1-2

[13] The Schools Council op. cit. p2

[14] The Schools Council op. cit. p2

[15] The Schools Council op. cit. p3

[16] The Schools Council op. cit. p3

[17] The Schools Council op. cit. p8

[18] See Appendix 1 for *The Joint Schools Council / Nuffield Foundation Pilot Scheme – Pilot Areas and Associate Areas*

[19] The Schools Council op. cit. p8

[20] The Schools Council op. cit. pp3-4

[21] The Schools Council op. cit. p4

[22] The Schools Council op. cit. p4

[23] The Schools Council op. cit. p4

[24] The Schools Council op. cit. p5

[25] The Schools Council op. cit. pp5-6

[26] The Schools Council op. cit. p5

[27] The Schools Council op. cit. p15

[28] The Schools Council op. cit. ppiii-iv

[29] The Schools Council op. cit. p15

[30] Burstall, C. (1974), *Primary French in the Balance* pp270-292

[31] See Appendix 2 for *Characteristics of the Achievement Tests (Final Version)*

[32] Burstall, C. (1970), *French in the Primary School* pp76-86; pp123-131

[33] Burstall, C. et al. (1974), *Primary French in the Balance* pp11-12

[34] Burstall op. cit. p13

[35] Burstall op. cit. p11

[36] Hoy, P.H. (ed) (1977), *The Early Teaching of Modern Languages* pp20-22

[37] The Schools Council op. cit. p16

[38] Hoy op. cit. pp22-24

[39] Burstall op. cit. p246

[40] Hawkins, E. (1996), 'The early teaching of modern languages – a Pilot Scheme' p161

[41] Stern, H. H. & Weinrib, A. (1977), 'Foreign languages for younger children: trends and assessment' p11

[42] Stern, H.H. quoted in Johnstone, R. (1994), *Teaching Modern Languages at Primary School* p56

[43] Bennett, S. N. (1975), 'Weighing the evidence: a review of 'Primary French in the Balance'' p337

[44] Bennett op. cit pp339-340

[45] Hoy op. cit.
[46] Hawkins op. cit. p161
[47] Hoy op. cit. p25
[48] Hawkins op. cit. p160
[49] Document of the Week (1974), 'Primary School French' p732
[50] Bennett op. cit. pp338-339

Chapter 4   Primary modern foreign language teaching since the end of the French Pilot Scheme

4.1   Post-Burstall primary foreign language teaching in England

Despite the negative conclusion of the NFER Final Report and the withdrawal of funding from 1975, a small number of LEAs and individual schools persevered with primary French. In Tameside, a 'pyramid' team of eleven peripatetic French specialist teachers was set up. They liaised between a secondary school and its feeder primary schools, where they taught two French lessons per week. The team produced materials to suit their own needs and eventually exported these materials to other LEAs. The pyramid model of peripatetic teachers was not suitable for all areas of England, however, particularly for secondary schools in large counties, which often received pupils from many feeder primary schools.[1]

The best examples of foreign language teaching in primary schools in the 1980s tended to be found where there was ongoing support from advisory teachers. They were able to provide class teachers with help in the classroom, advise them on resources and organise in-service training courses. However, problems were still encountered, notably, lack of funding, lack of commitment from headteachers and other colleagues, lack of support from secondary school language teachers and the absence of national or regional policies.[2]

By the mid 1980s, there seemed to be a serious decline of interest in primary school foreign language teaching. However, in 1989, when preparations for the opening of the European Market began, there was a sudden renewal of interest in primary school foreign languages, especially among parents. Difficulties in finding competent and

willing teachers in primary schools to carry out the foreign language lessons were widespread. The number of teacher training colleges in England offering courses with an option in French had fallen from around twenty in the early 1980s to just three by 1995. (Today, according to the Teacher Training Agency, there are three courses available for primary teacher training with a modern foreign language. Two of them are undergraduate courses at the University of Brighton and the University College of St. Martin, and the other is a postgraduate course at the University of Newcastle.[3]) Many schools were persuaded by parents to provide premises for after school language clubs run by individuals or private enterprises.[4]

4.2   Primary foreign language teaching in England in the late 1980s, and 1990s.

Interest in primary school foreign languages continued to rise and was supported by a number of LEAs. French was no longer the only foreign language being taught, as projects involving other languages began to develop. Some notable examples of LEA initiatives set up at this time were to be found in Kent, the London Borough of Richmond, Surrey, Cornwall, West Sussex, North Yorkshire and Manchester. Most of these projects involved the retraining of primary teachers and in-service training courses, but in individual projects the development and publication of materials, links with schools abroad, the provision of foreign language assistants and the introduction of two European languages for all pupils were initiated.[5]

Alongside LEA initiatives, many primary schools around the country developed their own foreign language projects, some in collaboration with local secondary and other feeder primary schools, and others as a totally individual venture. As the growth in popularity of the subject increased, it became ever more difficult to assess the extent

to which foreign languages were being taught in the primary sector. One recent attempt to conduct such an evaluation was in August 1994 and was carried out by CILT (Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research).[6]

A questionnaire was sent to language advisers in 125 LEAs: 83 in England and Wales, 33 in London, 4 in the Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Scilly, and 5 in Northern Ireland. Out of the 125 LEAs, 53 responded to the questionnaire, of which 13 were nil returns. Thus, 40 LEAs gave details of involvement with primary foreign language teaching, ranging from optional, extra-curricular language clubs to organised, compulsory curriculum programmes. In some schools, more than one language was being taught. A breakdown of the languages offered may be seen as follows:[7]

Language	No. of schools	Proportion of positive responses	No. of LEAs
FRENCH	1795	93.5%	40
GERMAN	67	3.5%	20
ITALIAN	60	3.1%	13
SPANISH	35	1.8%	15
DUTCH	5	0.26%	1
PORTUGUESE	3	0.16%	3
ESPERANTO	1	0.05%	1
NORWEGIAN	1	0.05%	1
JAPANESE	1	0.05%	1

Information on the nature of provision, staffing, staff training, and continuity was also included in the report. Although the results of the survey highlighted a variety of

issues and indicated trends in the choice of languages taught, they represented

provision in less than half of the LEAs. Thus it was impossible to establish a

complete picture.

4.3   Primary foreign language teaching in Scotland

At the time of the French Pilot Scheme in England and Wales an initiative in primary

foreign language teaching was also taking place in Scotland. The project involved

approximately 500 primary schools and experienced similar difficulties. The 1969

HMI report indicated the lack of continuity between phases and the lack of

linguistically competent teachers as major issues.[8] However, an evaluation carried

out by Nisbet and Welsh highlighted some positive aspects of the project: 'primary

school French confers some initial advantage, but this advantage diminishes and

disappears during the first two secondary years. This is perhaps to be expected, as no

provision was made for continuity of teaching from primary to secondary school....

The effect of primary school French in this study appears to have been on attitude

rather than on attainment, and possibly this is in keeping with the objectives of those

who advocate the teaching of French in primary school.'[9]

Interest in modern language learning began to increase in the late 1980s with the

approach of the single European market. A new national pilot project for Modern

Languages at Primary School (MLPS) was announced. Politicians in Scotland

believed that the early learning of a foreign language would eventually enhance the

competitiveness of businesses in Scotland. The national introduction of foreign

languages in Scottish primary schools would perhaps have been impossible without

such strong political support.[10]

The national pilot projects consisted of twelve secondary schools and 76 associated primary schools. These were referred to as 'clusters'. The cluster model was designed to ease the difficulty of continuity between primary and secondary teaching. Phase 1 of the project began in Autumn 1989 with six clusters. French was taught in three of the clusters and German in the remaining three. It was mainly Primary 7 pupils who received the foreign language instruction. (In Scotland, pupils go to secondary school at the age of 12, thus pupils in Primary 7 are a year older than pupils in their last year of primary school in England and Wales.) Phase 2 began in Autumn 1990 and consisted of another six clusters: one Italian, one Spanish, and French or German in the other four. As the project progressed, teaching was introduced into Primary 6 and even a one-off experiment with Primary 4 was implemented.[11]

Teaching in eleven of the clusters was carried out by visiting teachers from the secondary school, in collaboration with the primary classteachers. The other cluster made use of a tutor-trainer who supported the primary classteachers. The project was supported in a number of ways: '(i) support and advice from HM Inspectorate of Schools, National Development Officers, regional advisers and others, on a range of aspects including curriculum, staffing, resources, management, pedagogy, formative evaluation and language; (ii) the provision of specialist language teaching, mostly in the form of additional FTE (full-time teacher equivalent) provided by SOED (Scottish Office Education Department) for the pilot secondary schools, enabling their languages teachers to visit the associated primaries in order to work with the primary schools classteachers; (iii) two guidelines documents, distributed in the name of SOED and based on classroom experiences within the pilots and on participants' views; (iv) newsletters that provide up-dated information for all projects and other

interested bodies; (v) a national committee for the projects as a whole, plus regional steering committees for almost every project, designed to bring primary and secondary school interest together; (vi) language training for many of the primary school classteachers, provided by a variety of agencies and including in some cases courses abroad.'[12] This support network indicated 'a clear intention on the part of those responsible for [the projects] to learn from the experiences of the 60s.'[13] Thus, the major difficulties of teacher competence and continuity had been considered and provided for.

The organisation of the project contained four major elements. 1) It was not intended that all pupils should learn French. German, Spanish and Italian were also included, which indicated the importance of diversification. 2) The emphasis of the project was on language acquisition and not on language awareness, as this would lead to too much discussion in English. However, language awareness was seen to be supportive of the acquisition process. 3) The foreign language was not taught as a separate subject but was embedded into other areas of the primary curriculum. 4) The teaching was shared between the visiting specialist language teachers and the primary classteachers. Thus language expertise was complemented with appropriate primary methodology and knowledge of the pupils and curriculum.[14]

The SOED commissioned an independent evaluation, which was carried out by a team of researchers from the University of Stirling. The aims of the evaluation were to asses the linguistic attainment of children compared with those who had not learnt a foreign language at primary school, and to evaluate the courses and methods employed in the projects.[15] The data for evaluation was collected from assessment of

pupils, classroom observation and interviews with participants at all levels. The linguistic assessment of pupils was carried out by means of paired interviews with a researcher and later also by vocabulary retrieval tasks.[16]

Phase 1 of the research began in January 1991 and continued until the end of 1992. Pupil performance was assessed at the end of the first and second years of secondary school and it was found that those who had begun a foreign language at primary school had some advantages over those who had not. The advantages included better pronunciation, production of longer utterances, more use of communicative strategies, higher motivation and more willingness to answer in class, and these advantages were evident across the ability range.[17] Phase 2 of the research was carried out during the years 1993-1995 and issues that had come to light in the first phase were explored. These were categorised as teaching and learning, pupils' attainments and professional development, and included three topic areas: knowledge about language, learner strategies and continuity between the primary and secondary sector. Continuity was still a difficulty in terms of methodology. The 'embedding' approach in the primary school exposed pupils to a greater range of vocabulary and structure than they received at the secondary level, which tended to be more restricted by course materials. Progress in pupil performance increased in the secondary school, although pupils were unable to manipulate language, and could only produce set phrases. Vocabulary improved in terms of the number of words acquired rather than the range of words that pupils had learnt. Although it was impossible to draw definite conclusions, it was found that the pilot secondary schools were entering a wider range of pupils than before and were still able to maintain their standards of achievement.[18]

When the project was launched, it was emphasised that the initiative would not necessarily lead to an extension of foreign language teaching in all Scottish primary schools. In 1992 the Secretary of state for Scotland was able to announce that within approximately five years all Scottish primary schools would have a foreign language in their curriculum. Since the end of the evaluation phase a strong commitment to extending the provision of foreign language teaching into all primary schools in Scotland has been carried, and has been supported by the government. An important feature of this programme has been the training of primary classteachers to enable them to deliver the foreign language.[19] In addition, the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum recently published 'Modern Languages 5-14 Guidelines' for consultation. The consultation phase ended on 17th December 1999.[20]

4.4   *Recent developments in England and Wales*

On 25th March 1999, Charles Clark, the Under Secretary of State for School Standards announced an initiative from the DfEE 'to promote and develop the provision and quality of Modern Foreign Language learning in the Primary sector.'[21] In order to carry out the initiative in the first instance, the 'Good Practice Project' was set up, and was co-ordinated by CILT. After the announcement, schools were invited to apply to take part in the project. The benefits of participation would include sharing information on a local and national scale, support and guidance from 'Good Practice Project' officers and a grant of between £1000 and £4000 to investigate key issues, share practice and prepare reports. Selection criteria included:

- the prior existence of provision for early foreign language learning;
- links with the teaching of English (literacy);

- partnerships with other primary schools and between primary and secondary schools;

- in-service training for teachers;

- use of ICT, e.g. use of electronic links for networking / dissemination, as well as for MFL teaching;

- attention to equal opportunities issues, especially raising achievement of boys and experience of other societies and cultures.[22]

Eighteen schools and LEAs in England and Wales were selected to take part in the project, which ran from September 1999 to March 2001. These were:

- Bawburgh School (Norfolk)

- Bishop Rawstorne School

- Liverpool LEA

- London Borough of Havering LEA

- London Borough of Hounslow LEA

- London Borough of Richmond upon Thames LEA

- Longton Lane Community Primary school

- Nottingham City LEA

- Ocker Hill Junior School

- Sheffield Multilingual City Project

- Shireland Language College

- South Gloucestershire LEA

- South Hunsley Cluster

- Stockport LEA

- Surrey LEA

- Welsh Joint Education Committee

- West Sussex LEA

- York LEA[23]

Key partners in the project included the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTa), the Central Bureau, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), the Association for Language Learning (ALL), the National Association of Language Advisers (NALA), the BBC, educational publishers and others. These key partners form the National Advisory Group.[24]

Although the purpose of this initiative was not to establish modern foreign languages in the Key Stage 2 curriculum, the work carried out could benefit the development of important elements, should the government decide to introduce modern foreign languages into the primary curriculum in the future.[25] The general objectives of the initiative, then, were to:

- provide advice and support for institutions involved in or considering the provision of early MFL learning

- offer greater support and coherence for existing initiatives

- support networks for sharing experience

- establish a basis for future developments

Specific outcomes of the project included:

- NACELL – the establishment of the National Advisory Centre on Early Language Learning at CILT

- the development of high quality curriculum materials for teachers

- the establishment of a network of practitioners making particular use of ICT

- the development and dissemination of models of good practice, including models of primary / secondary progression

- review and coordination of training for teachers of MFL in the Primary sector.

Activities included:

- the development of high quality teaching resources in various media

- funded projects to develop curricular models in partnership with schools and LEAs

- the development of guidelines

- dissemination via in-service training

- electronic networking

- the development of new training packages and courses.[26]

In reaction to the 'Good Practice Project', CILT established the National Advisory Centre on Early Language Learning (NACELL), in order to provide information, advice and support for early language learning. The purpose of CILT has always been to provide information and support in all areas of language teaching and research, which includes the primary sector. Information is available on resources,

documents, reports, policies and current research and many of these may be consulted in the Resources Library. CILT also organises opportunities for professional development for teachers of primary foreign language teachers through workshops, courses, conferences, exhibitions and even courses abroad. The aim of NACELL is to enhance the service already in place by providing 'a unique showcase for early language learning resources' and access to high quality advice and support. One important area of development is the establishment of electronic resource banks and electronic networking between teachers. NACELL has its own website, which contains detailed information about the 'Good Practice Project' and news of current developments in the field of primary modern foreign languages.[27]

A second development, as a result of the 'Good Practice Project', was the publication of non-statutory 'Guidelines for Modern Foreign Languages at Key Stage 2', which were sent to schools in Autumn 1999; and a non-statutory 'Scheme of Work for Key Stage 2 French', which was available in Autumn 2000.[28]

Further support of primary modern foreign language teaching is provided by the ALL. It publishes articles about primary language teaching in its language journals and often includes lectures and workshops on primary language teaching in its language conferences which take place every year. In 1997 the ALL published a 'Policy statement on an earlier start to foreign language learning' and guidance notes for 'Starting to learn a Modern Language at Key Stage 2'.

Also in existence is the National Primary Languages Network. This is made up of a group of advisers, advisory teachers, teacher trainers and representatives from the

ALL, the central Bureau, the Goethe-Institut and other agencies. The Network meets twice a year at CILT in order to exchange news and ideas on modern foreign languages in primary schools.[29]

With such an expansion of interest and support, initiatives in primary modern foreign language teaching continue to be set up all the time, from individual school projects to larger programmes of teaching. Recent information reported to NACELL by OFSTED indicated that 'a modern foreign language is included in the curriculum at Key Stage 2 in about one primary school in five – that means that there are around 4000 primary schools currently teaching languages to early learners'.[30]

One initiative, called 'The Language Mine'[31] was developed following the establishment of the 'Good Practice Project', and is supported by the Goethe-Institut. In Spring 2000, this new course developed specifically for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, was piloted in eighteen schools throughout England. The aim of 'The Language Mine' is to introduce pupils to elements of a variety of foreign languages. Initially the languages available are German, French and Spanish but other languages are being considered. It has been made clear that 'The Language Mine' is neither a language acquisition course nor a language awareness course, but rather a 'language sensitisation programme'[32]. Its objectives are stated as follows:

- to train pupils to develop the linguistic skills needed for future successful language learning by comparing English with carefully selected elements from various languages

- to encourage pupils to build up a bank of defined useful vocabulary such as numbers, days, dates and colours in each of the languages studied

- to motivate pupils by introducing them to background and cultural information about the countries in which the languages are spoken, thus bringing a cultural element to the course.

Each language is divided into four levels of difficulty (Amber, Ruby, Emerald and Sapphire) and each level takes six weeks (i.e. half a term) to complete. Thus pupils may work with up to three languages during their intended involvement with the programme. The teaching is resourced by specially developed pupil booklets, cassettes and teacher notes. The programme is intended to be taught through the medium of English and primary teachers are not required to have any experience or knowledge of the target languages.

'The Language Mine' has facilitated great enthusiasm and a possible expansion is being planned. Two-thirds of the experimental sample reported that pupils were enthusiastic about the lessons. Interestingly, the pupils who did not enjoy the lessons were the ones taught by specialist teachers, and the conclusion was reached that this course is not suitable for communicative teaching methods, but rather for teachers using an investigative approach. However, no information has been reported on the actual achievement of pupils in the sample.

On inspection of the pilot pupil booklet for German,[33] it was found that English cognates were being used as an aid to learning German words that sound similar but otherwise have no connection. For example, the third person singular of the verb

'haben' (hat) was introduced in some simple sentences. The pupils were then instructed to draw a picture of a hat to help them remember it. It is concerning that this approach of using English as a platform for other languages and thus requiring an extra and misleading thought process in order to retrieve simple lexical items, may only lead to confusion.

It must be acknowledged that 'The Language Mine' is contrary to what is regarded as best practice in modern language teaching methodology, which requires constant use of the target language and as little use of English as possible. Although much short-term 'success' and enthusiasm has been reported, and although this type of language course offers easy solutions to the problems of teacher competence and continuity between the primary and secondary phases (i.e. the small amount of linguistic knowledge will not significantly affect the Key Stage 3 curriculum), it cannot replace the need for a thoroughly founded course of language acquisition for early language learners.

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[1] Satchwell, P. (1996), 'The present position in England' p165

[2] Satchwell op. cit. p165

[3] Enquiry made to the Teacher Training Agency 08/02/00

[4] Satchwell op. cit. pp165-166

[5] Satchwell op. cit. pp166-168

[6] The results of the survey were published in the report: *Modern Foreign Languages in Primary Schools: CILT Report 1995*

[7] CILT Report 1995 op. cit. pp3-5

[8] Johnstone, R. (1996), 'The Scottish Initiatives' p171

[9] Nisbet, J. D. & Welsh, J. (1972), 'A Local Evaluation of Primary School French' p174

[10] Johnstone op. cit. p171

[11] Low, L. et al (1993), *Evaluating Foreign Languages in Primary Schools* p3

[12] Low op. cit. pp3-4

[13] Low op. cit. p4

[14] Johnstone op. cit. p172

[15] Johnstone op. cit. p173

[16] Low op. cit. pp12-13

[17] Johnstone op. cit. p173

[18] Johnstone op. cit. p173

[19] Johnstone op. cit. p172, p174

[20] http://www.sccc.ac.uk 28/02/00

[21] CILT (May 1999), *Early Language Learning Bulletin* Issue 1 p2

[22] http://www.cilt.org.uk/projects/goodprac.htm 10/06/99

[23] CILT (December 1999), *Early Language Learning Bulletin* Issue 2 p2

[24] CILT (May 1999) op. cit. p2

[25] Since the time of writing, the government has unveiled long-term plans to give every primary-aged pupil the opportunity to learn a foreign language DfES (2002), *14 – 19: extending opportunities, raising standards* p27

[26] CILT (May 1999) op. cit. p2

[27] CILT (May 1999) op. cit. p3

[28] http://www.nacell.org.uk/schools/happening/happening.htm 01/02/00 and 18/05/01

[29] CILT (1996), *Primary Languages Bulletin* Issue 1 p1

[30] http://www.nacell.org.uk/schools/happening/happening.htm 01/02/00

[31] http://www.languagemine.co.uk 18/05/01

[32] For definition of language awareness and language sensitisation programmes see 6.3

[33] Coe, J. (2000), 'The Language Mine' – Information distributed at a conference on primary foreign language teaching organised by the Goethe-Institute 29/01/00

SECTION II   **THEORIES OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Chapter 5   Language acquisition and language teaching

5.1   Introduction

The aims of this chapter are to outline some important theories of first and second language acquisition and to discuss in greater detail the specific issue of the effects of age on the process of second language acquisition, which is central to this investigation as a whole. In particular, the critical period hypothesis has been used to justify primary school language learning and was influential at the time of the Joint Schools Council / Nuffield Foundation Pilot Scheme in primary French, which was examined in Chapter 3. A further aim, then, is to consider how these theories may be applied to language pedagogy and how they may specifically relate to and support the case for early language learning.

It must be noted that the term 'language acquisition' is synonymous with 'language learning' except where a specific distinction between unconscious and conscious learning has been made.

5.2   A historical overview of language acquisition research

5.2.1   Introduction

The question of how languages are actually learned – whether the mother tongue or second and subsequent languages – is a source of constant debate and conflicting theories. Indeed Mitchell and Myles assert: 'we have not yet arrived at a unified or comprehensive view of how second languages are learned'[1] and judging by the

multitude of theories and research trends that have been pursued over the last five decades, it seems unlikely that a definitive explanation of how languages are acquired will ever be reached. However, Ellis asserts that 'the study of SLA [second language acquisition] is still in its infancy and there are still more questions than answers'.[2]

In the 1950s and early 1960s, research into second language acquisition was carried out merely to justify language teaching methodology[3] but by the mid-1980s second language acquisition research had become 'a much more autonomous field of enquiry' and was linked with cognitive science, neuropsychology, sociocultural frameworks and first language acquisition research.[4]

While today, first language acquisition research and second languages acquisition research are two independent research fields which may be engaged in for their own sakes, the impact of such research on foreign language teaching methodology should not be underestimated. Indeed, instead of trying to find an answer to the elusive question of how languages are acquired, it is perhaps more pertinent to consider how research in this field could be employed in order to promote more effective second language teaching and learning. This issue will be discussed in section 5.4.

Although there are many theories of language acquisition, the most influential ones will be discussed here in order to provide a clear framework of how language acquisition research has developed over the last fifty years.

5.2.2   Behaviourism

The question of whether first language acquisition is partly an innate biological function or totally dependent upon learning, is an issue that has occupied philosophers and researchers for hundreds of years.[5]   In the 1950s the behaviourist view of language acquisition had become popular, reflecting the general theories of human learning prevalent in mainstream psychology at that time.[6]   The behaviourist theory of language acquisition, like the development of any kind of human behaviour, describes the process as a formation of habits, based on the idea of stimulus and response, which become stronger with reinforcement.[7]   In 1957, the psychologist B F Skinner published a book entitled *Verbal Behaviour*, which aimed to explain the acquisition of language as a set of habits built up over time.   In Skinner's view, no internal language 'mechanism' is required, but rather the observation of external events, in order to prompt the utterances of existing units of language.[8]

However, the popularity of the behaviourist approach to child learning began to decrease in favour of more developmentalist theories[9], which described learning as a result of 'inner forces' that drive the child, in relation to its environment.[10]

5.2.3   Universal grammar and first language acquisition

In 1959, Chomsky published a review of Skinner's *Verbal Behaviour* and argued that children are creative with language and do not simply reproduce set phrases and sentences.   Therefore they must internalise rules, which is only possible because of an innate language learning ability.   Regardless of which mother tongue children learn, the common yet mysterious ability to do so, Chomsky labelled 'the black box'.[11]

Research into first language acquisition during the 1970s was much inspired by this new approach to language study. Evidence showed that in all mother tongues, children 'go through similar *stages*, use similar constructions in order to express similar meanings, and make the same kinds of errors.'[12] Also, a uniform order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes was found, through the study of various structures in English.[13]

5.2.4 *Second language acquisition theories in the 1970s*

At the time of the popularity of behaviourism, it was believed that acquiring a second language was similar to acquiring the mother tongue – a formation of habits. Researchers began comparing structures in pairs of languages to find similarities and differences, in order to assess how difficult each language would be to acquire. This was called 'contrastive analysis'.[14] However, it was soon revealed that the predictions of simplicity and difficulty made by contrastive analysis were not always correct in practice and researchers became disillusioned with this line of enquiry. As a result, and combined with the developments in first language acquisition research, there began a growing interest in the language that learners produce, rather than in the complete language systems to which they are exposed. This was the beginning of 'error analysis'.[15] Error analysis showed that the majority of errors were not due to interference from the learners' mother tongue, as was predicted by contrastive analysis, and therefore must be 'learner-internal'.[16]

The next stage in second language acquisition research was the development of 'interlanguage' studies, which moved beyond error analysis. Interlanguage can be described as consisting of two notions: 'the language produced by the learner is a

system in its own right, obeying its own rules, and it is a *dynamic* system, evolving over time'.[17] Interlanguage studies, therefore, focus 'on the learner system as a whole, rather than only on what can go wrong with it'.[18]

One of the major developments in second language acquisition research during this period was the work carried out on morpheme studies. It was found that grammatical morphemes are acquired in a set order, regardless of the mother tongue of the learner. This suggested that learners of second languages are 'guided by internal principles'.[19] Many studies during this period hypothesised that second language acquisition is systematic, it is mainly independent of the mother tongue and that there are many similarities with the process of first language acquisition, although there are differences.[20] For example, one similarity shows an order of acquisition in the development of both the first and second languages, but these orders are different. Thus, both processes are governed by internal principles, although these principles must be different.[21]

5.2.5 *Krashen's Monitor Model*

In the late 1970s, Krashen attempted to conceptualise the issues that had arisen in second language acquisition research, in order to 'provide the foundation of a theory of second language acquisition'.[22] As a result he developed the 'Monitor Model'. The Monitor Model consists of five hypotheses: the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis.[23]

In the acquisition-learning hypothesis, Krashen states there are two separate ways of developing second language competence. ' 'Acquisition' is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language, while 'learning' is a conscious process that results in 'knowing about' language'.[24]

The natural order hypothesis asserts that we acquire language rules in a set order. Through evidence, these rules are shown to be independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes.[25]

The monitor hypothesis states how acquisition and learning operate in language production. Krashen suggests that our ability to produce the language comes from our acquired competence while our 'learning' performs the role of monitor. The monitor makes corrections to the acquired system before the output is produced. The monitor can only be used if two conditions are met: 'the performer must be consciously concerned about correctness; and he or she must know the rule'.[26] However, Krashen then adds that 'both these conditions are difficult to meet'.[27]

The input hypothesis states that we can only acquire language by first receiving 'comprehensible input'. Our current level of language competence is described as 'i' and we move to the next stage, 'i+1', containing grammar just beyond our current understanding.[28]

The affective filter hypothesis claims that although comprehensible input is necessary for acquisition, it is not totally sufficient. 'The 'affective filter' is a mental block that

prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition'.[29] This may occur through lack of motivation, lack of confidence or anxiety, for example.[30]

Krashen's Monitor Model attracted much criticism. The main weakness was 'the presentation of what were just hypotheses that remained to be tested, as a comprehensive model that had empirical validity. He then used his hypotheses prematurely as a basis for drawing pedagogical implication'.[31] However, this model has been of great influence in developing many research projects, and as a result has helped to further our understanding of second language acquisition.[32]

5.2.6 Second language acquisition research in the 1980s and 1990s

By the mid-1980s second language acquisition research had become a much more independent field of research, no longer subordinate to language teaching methodology. It embraced extensive research programmes with their own particular methodologies and theories, and sought to investigate new links with other scientific disciplines – cognitive science and neuropsychology – as well as to analyse language acquisition in a sociocultural context.[33]

However, a number of key issues from the 1970s continue to be the focus of many second language acquisition agendas: i) the role of internal mechanisms; ii) the role of first language; iii) the role of psychological variables; iv) the role of social and environmental factors.[34]

5.3   Age and second language acquisition

5.3.1   Introduction

One important issue in language acquisition research is the effect of age on the success[35] and efficiency of developing ability in a second language. Much research has been carried out in trying to establish how and why children successfully acquire their first language and this phenomenon, it was argued, indicated that 'children are pre-programmed to acquire language at a *definite point* in their development.'[36] It was therefore asserted that because children have a special ability for acquiring their first language, they must have a certain advantage over older learners in learning a subsequent second language. 'The view that the child possesses a capacity for language that the adult has lost is widely shared and has been formalized in what is known as the "critical period" hypothesis.'[37] This hypothesis has prompted extensive research in the fields of both first and second language acquisition.

5.3.2   A biological explanation of the critical period hypothesis

The perceived superiority of the child in acquiring language was accounted for by Penfield with his 'brain plasticity hypothesis'.[38] He asserted that the flexibility of children's brains would allow them to switch from one language to another without any confusion and without a mother tongue accent interfering with the pronunciation of the second language.[39] However, since this hypothesis was based on research into aphasia, it was considered that 'the ability of the damaged brain to regain lost or disrupted language is not necessarily related to the ability of the healthy brain to acquire a new L2.'[40]

However, the notion of a critical period for language acquisition based on biological factors was still firmly supported. Lenneberg described the critical period for language acquisition as being between the ages of two and thirteen, based on research into the language development of the mentally retarded.[41] He linked the close of the critical period to 'the completion of cerebral lateralization of language function'.[42] While there is a difference of opinion on the exact age at which lateralization may occur, there is a consistent claim that 'puberty represents a maturational turning point in the ability to master a native-like accent in a second language.'[43]

5.3.3   A cognitive explanation of the critical period hypothesis

Another argument for the close of a critical period for second language acquisition, which would thus suggest its existence, is based on Inhelder and Piaget's hypothesis concerning the cognitive development of formal operations, which begin around puberty.[44] It was thus suggested that 'the ability of the formal operational thinker to construct abstract hypotheses to explain phenomena may inhibit the individual's natural language learning ability.'[45] Krashen went on to hypothesise that personality changes at puberty also affect second language acquisition and these changes may in fact be a result of formal operations. Thus the self-consciousness and vulnerability of adolescents hinder the second language acquisition process by building up an 'affective filter'.[46]

However, since adolescents and adults are able to apply abstract rules, it is argued that they are superior to children in the early stages of second language acquisition because they can produce language 'academically' and thus take part in conversations – gaining more input as a result. Even so, it is asserted that children are superior in

eventual attainment because they are less likely to be inhibited by the 'affective filter' at puberty.[47]

5.3.4   Additional considerations

It has been argued that older learners may be able to learn some aspects of a second language more efficiently than children due to their greater cognitive maturity. However, a possible reason why there seems to be a 'lack of uniform success in adult second language acquisition'[48] could be the presence of affective variables, namely lack of motivation and negative attitudes towards the target culture.[49]

Research suggests that children are more successful in acquiring a native-like accent. They are more flexible in undertaking new learning activities, which may give them a clear advantage in second language learning. However, it is argued that adults have the greater advantage since they already possess an extensive vocabulary in their first language and thus do not have to acquire new concepts while learning the new language. It has also been suggested, contrary to Krashen's assertions, that the ability of adults to apply abstract rules helps the learning process, rather than hinders it. Children are restricted by the inefficient process of discovering rules only through exposure to models.[50]

It is, however, difficult to compare the performance of children and adults in second language acquisition, in order to identify if a critical period is advantageous or even exists, because the expectations in competence for both groups are very different. 'Less is demanded of the child in achieving linguistic competence – constructions are simple, vocabulary relatively small – when compared with what is necessary for an adult to speak at an adult's level of competence.'[51]

5.3.5 Conclusion

It is apparent from the above hypotheses that there is no firm evidence to support the existence of a critical period for second language acquisition, although it is widely accepted 'that there is at least some potential advantage to an early start in childhood.'[52] One such advantage could be the amount of time that would be spent learning the language: '[there is] no clear evidence that there is any special advantage in starting the study of a foreign language very early other than the fact that this may provide the student more time to attain a desired performance level at a given age.'[53]

Conversely, it has also been reported that in a formal school environment, older learners eventually catch up with those who began at an earlier age.[54] However, this trend may have been partly the result of 'inappropriate learning conditions' in the earlier years.[55] 'The combined advantages of extended time and opportunities furnished by early instruction probably make it more conducive to attaining the higher levels of second language proficiency, provided that full advantage is taken of them through effective pedagogy.'[56]

A further possible advantage in early language learning could be the difference in attitude towards the target culture and towards learning a new language in general: 'as the capacity for 'empathy' declines abruptly in children, especially boys, with the onset of the self-consciousness and shyness of puberty, the age of eleven is surely the very worst time to ask the young learner to go to meet a challenging new language (and perform publicly in it).'[57]

In summary, there appears to be little evidence to support the notion of a critical period for second language acquisition, although there may be certain advantages in starting to learn a second language at an early age. Indeed, a more important consideration would seem to be the environment and conditions in which learning takes place.

5.4 The application of language acquisition research to language pedagogy

5.4.1 Introduction

Prior to the 1980s, the study of second language acquisition was pursued mainly as a theoretical basis for foreign language teaching. During this decade, second language acquisition research became a much more independent field with its own aims and objectives.[58] However, despite its growing autonomy, it was never intended that second language acquisition research should be divorced from a practical application to language pedagogy. Indeed, '...a major goal for many SLA researchers is to provide a sound psycholinguistic basis for SL *teaching*.'[59]

Thus, an important area of investigation has been the relationship between second language acquisition and classroom instruction, although many of the studies conducted have focused on the effect of instruction on the second language acquisition process. However, various language acquisition theories have been applied to classroom instruction in the context of creating an optimal learning environment for foreign languages. It is therefore important to consider the definition of classroom language learning and how this differs from learning a language in a naturalistic setting.

5.4.2   A definition of classroom language learning

Ellis[60] describes 'classroom language learning' as the opposite of 'naturalistic language learning' and defines the difference between them from three distinct viewpoints: sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and educational.   In a sociolinguistic context, the difference between classroom and naturalistic learning is determined by 'domains': 'the constellations of factors that affect the way language is used', for example, 'location, participants, topics and purposes'.[61]   Naturalistic language learning ' is likely to be characterized by a greater range of settings, participants, topics and purposes, although…the classroom can provide the richer, more diverse learning experiences'.[62]

In a psycholinguistic context, the distinction is between formal and informal learning: learning about the language through grammar rules or learning spontaneously by means of 'direct participation in communication'.[63]   Ellis states that it would be wrong to equate classroom learning with formal learning and naturalistic learning with informal learning since instances of formal and informal learning can take place in both settings. However, 'it is probably true to say that the classroom setting affords more opportunities for formal learning and naturalistic settings more opportunities for informal learning'.[64]

In an educational context, the distinction is between formal training and apprenticeship: 'a deliberate attempt to shape the learning experiences' and 'picking up skills through observation and practice'.[65]   Again, it is noted that formal training and apprenticeship can take place in both settings but 'classrooms are ideally suited to formal training, while naturalistic settings tend to give rise to apprenticeship.'[66]

The definition of classroom language learning is therefore important in trying to understand 'how a typical constellation of social factors leads to attempts on the part of the teacher to control the environment in order to provide opportunities for language learning.'[67] A variety of theories have been applied to the creation of this classroom environment, which will now be discussed in greater detail.

5.4.3 Applicable theories of language acquisition

In the 1950s and 1960s a popular explanation for language acquisition was based on behaviourist learning theory and from this the audio-lingual method of language teaching was developed. The key feature of this method was to teach the foreign language through repetition and drill.[68] Learning should be 'directed from the outside by manipulating the behaviour of the learner'[69] and therefore, 'the classroom should not try to replicate the conditions of natural learning'.[70] However, this method was criticised by those who argued that the learner plays a central role in language learning.[71]

The theory of first language acquisition, which was developed from Chomsky's notions about the nature of language, was used to support two different views about the nature of classroom foreign language learning. One view, called the 'cognitive anti-method' was based on the assumption that classroom foreign language learning was similar to first language acquisition and 'would proceed most effectively if no attempt was made to interfere with the natural processes of learning.'[72] The other view, called the 'cognitive code method' used Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance as an argument that the real aim of classroom language

learning was competence and thus 'learners should be encouraged to engage in the conscious 'analysis' of linguistic forms'.[73] However, neither of these methods had much impact on classroom teaching, although they are important as the first attempts to challenge audio-lingual learning theory.[74]

Research into second language acquisition in the 1960s and 1970s supported the view that the process of adult second language learning was indeed similar to the process of first language acquisition in children and thus reinforced the approach to classroom language learning as proposed by the cognitive anti-method. The role of the learner became a key feature and it was suggested that 'learning should be allowed to take place naturally in the course of using the L2 for communication.'[75] Naturalistic second language acquisition was regarded as a model for successful learning and the aim of language teaching was 'to reproduce the conditions that made it successful.'[76]

The most well known theory of second language acquisition is Krashen's 'monitor model', which he applied to language learning and teaching in great detail. His main ideas from this, as summarised by Ellis[77] are as follows:

1. The principal goal of language teaching is to supply comprehensible input in order to facilitate 'acquisition'

2. Teaching should be seen as a preparation for 'acquisition' in the wider world

3. The teacher must ensure that learners do not feel anxious or are put on the defensive

4. Grammar teaching should be restricted to simple forms and its goal is to enable the learner to monitor

5. Errors should not be corrected when the goal is 'acquisition' but should be corrected when the goal is 'learning'

These ideas formed the basis of what came to be known as the 'Natural Approach' method.[78] The main principles of this approach are as follows:

1. The goal is communicative skills

2. Comprehension precedes production

3. Production emerges when the learner is ready

4. Acquisition activities are central

5. The affective filter needs to be kept low[79]

The natural approach provided a marked alternative to the audio-lingual method by rejecting 'any attempt to shape the main process of acquisition through the systematic presentation and practice of the linguistic code.'[80]

Although the monitor model has undergone much criticism, highlighting its weaknesses and thus calling into question its pedagogic validity, Krashen has made a vital contribution to the field of language teaching: 'he has provided a coherent set of ideas firmly grounded in L2 acquisition research. His work has stimulated not only a discussion of key issues in language pedagogy but, most important, has contributed to the growth of the empirical study of classroom L2 learning itself.'[81]

5.4.4 Conclusion

The application of second language acquisition research to language pedagogy has been considered in numerous studies and a variety of positions have been identified:

1. The results of SLA research cannot be safely applied to language pedagogy because they are too uncertain

2. SLA research provides a basis for teacher 'education' but not for teacher 'training'. That is, it can help teachers develop reasonable expectations about what they can achieve in their teaching, but cannot be used to tell them how to teach

3. SLA research provides information and actual data that can be used in the construction of tasks designed to raise teachers' awareness of the likely relationship between teaching / learning behaviours and L2 acquisition

4. The results of SLA research (and, in particular of classroom-oriented research) provide 'hard evidence' which should be used to advise teachers about what techniques and procedures work best[82]

It thus remains unclear from these opposing views just how significant second language acquisition research is to language teaching, although some positive application has been reported: 'it is clear that we have come a long way from the uncertainties of the 1970s. There is now greater confidence in SLA research and more conviction that its results can inform language pedagogy.'[83] However, many researchers agree that second language acquisition research cannot be used as a basis for language teaching theory because of its abstraction and limitations. It has been suggested that action research may be of more value to language teachers, 'where

[they] become researchers by identifying research questions important to them and seeking answers in their own classrooms.'[84]   It appears, therefore, that although second language acquisition research can provide teachers with an understanding of how foreign languages are learnt, which may be beneficial to classroom teaching, it cannot prescribe how they should be taught.

5.5 Conclusion

Second language acquisition research has been influenced by theories of first language acquisition and as a result has grown into an autonomous field of investigation, indeed separate from merely providing theoretical explanations for the popular language teaching methods of the day. However, there is now a variety of opinion concerning the relevance of second language acquisition research to language pedagogy and although the results of research may provide useful information for language teachers, it has been suggested that second language acquisition research should not have a direct impact on classroom practice. Language teaching is an independent field altogether and has its own specific issues and questions to address. One method of achieving this is through action research within the classroom.

One important issue taken from second language acquisition research, which is significant to this investigation as a whole, is the effect of age on the acquisition process. The results of empirical studies suggest that there is little evidence to support the idea of a critical period for second language acquisition, and in fact, older learners may be more efficient in learning a new language, despite popular beliefs to the contrary. However, children have certain advantages over older learners, such as possessing greater empathy towards the target culture, not being quite so inhibited to

perform in the target language and possessing more effective powers of mimicry, thus enabling greater levels of phonetic accuracy. On the surface, such findings may lead to the conclusion that there is no special advantage in starting foreign language learning at a young age and therefore this should not be attempted. However, it could also be argued that there is no specific disadvantage in starting early and therefore no reason why foreign language learning should be left until age eleven, considering the fact that modern foreign languages is the only subject at Key Stage 3 not on the primary school curriculum.

Based on the relationship between second language acquisition research and language pedagogy, research into the critical period hypothesis can provide useful information to educationalists concerned with early language learning, but perhaps it should not be used as the firm basis of an argument for or against the wisdom of teaching language to young children. Rather, evidence to support the case for or against early language learning needs to be collected directly from early language learning schemes because only then can the unique combination of teaching a second language, in a classroom setting, in a modern primary school, to young, inexperienced learners be properly assessed.

Beyond the issue of providing a rationale for early language learning, one vital question is to consider how best foreign languages should be taught to young children. In order to attempt to answer this question, evidence from action research needs to be evaluated and the reported successes and failures of past initiatives need to be analysed.

[1] Mitchell, R. & Myles, F. (1998), *Second Language Learning Theories* p ix

[2] Ellis, R. (1985), *Understanding Second Language Acquisition* p1

[3] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p23

[4] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p40

[5] Aitchison, J. (1989), *The Articulate Mammal* p7

[6] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p23

[7] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. pp23-24

[8] Aitchison op. cit. p7

[9] Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory is referred to in this context.

[10] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p25

[11] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p26

[12] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p26

[13] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. pp26-27

[14] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. pp24-25

[15] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. pp29-30

[16] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p30

[17] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p31

[18] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p31

[19] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p33

[20] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. pp33-34

[21] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p35

[22] Krashen, S. (1985), *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications* p1

[23] Krashen op. cit. pp1-4

[24] Krashen op. cit. p1

[25] Krashen op. cit. p1

[26] Krashen op. cit. pp1-2

[27] Krashen op. cit. p2

[28] Krashen op. cit. p2

[29] Krashen op. cit. p3

[30] Krashen op. cit. p3

[31] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p39

[32] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p39

[33] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p40

[34] Mitchell & Myles op. cit. p40

[35] 'Success' is used here in the context of comparing ability with that of native speakers of the same age.

[36] McLaughlin, B. (1978), *Second Language Acquisition in Childhood* p47

[37] McLaughlin op. cit. p47

[38] Discussed in Harley, B. (1986), *Age in Second Language Acquisition* p4

[39] Harley op. cit. p4

[40] Harley op. cit. p5

[41] Discussed in Harley op. cit. p5

[42] Harley op. cit. p5

[43] Harley op. cit. pp7-8

[44] Harley op. cit. p8

[45] Harley op. cit. p8

[46] Harley op. cit. p9

[47] Harley op. cit. p11

[48] Taylor, cited in Harley op. cit. p15

[49] Taylor, discussed in Harley op. cit. pp14-15

[50] Ausubel, discussed in Harley op. cit. p15

[51] McLaughlin op. cit. p56

[52] Harley op. cit. p22

[53] J B Carroll cited in Hawkins, E. (1996), 'The early teaching of modern languages - a Pilot Scheme' p158

[54] Harley op. cit. p22

[55] Harley op. cit. p36

[56] Genesee cited in Harley op. cit. p22

[57] Hawkins op. cit. p158

[58] Mitchell, R. & Myles, F. (1998), *Second Language Learning Theories* p40
[59] Larsen-Freeman, D. & Long, M. H. (1991), *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research* p299
[60] Ellis, R. (1990), *Instructed Second Language Acquisition* p1
[61] Ellis op. cit. p1
[62] Ellis op. cit. p2
[63] Ellis op. cit. p2
[64] Ellis op. cit. p2
[65] Ellis op. cit. p2
[66] Ellis op. cit. p2
[67] Ellis op. cit. p3
[68] Stern, H. (1983), *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching* p465
[69] Ellis op. cit. p19
[70] Ellis op. cit. p61
[71] Ellis op. cit. p19
[72] Ellis op. cit. p32
[73] Ellis op. cit. p32
[74] Ellis op. cit. p61
[75] Ellis op. cit. p61
[76] Ellis op. cit. p61
[77] Ellis op. cit. pp58-59
[78] See Krashen, S. & Terrel, T. (1984), *The Natural Method: Language Acquisition in the Classroom* Pergamon
[79] Summarised in Ellis op. cit. p59
[80] Ellis op. cit. p59
[81] Ellis op. cit. p60
[82] Ellis, R. (1994), *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* pp686-687
[83] Ellis (1994) op. cit. p689
[84] Ellis (1994) op. cit. p689

Chapter 6   The principles and practice of primary modern foreign language teaching: some current issues and models

6.1   Introduction

Research and practice in primary modern foreign language teaching have highlighted a number of issues which need careful consideration when a new scheme is being planned or indeed if a project is already in existence. Each of these issues will be examined in the context of current practice and debate.

6.2   Rationale

In the 1969 Hamburg Report, Stern stated that: 'effective teaching of languages to young children is a feasible achievement...this important and positive answer to earlier questions on language learning in childhood has to some extent in past discussions been obscured by the exaggerated desire to prove that young children are better language learners than adolescents and adults. It is in our view not necessary to justify language learning at the primary stage on such excessive expectations. The more restrained claim that can be made is that children have been proved to make an effective start in language learning under school conditions and this early start appears to lay a good foundation for continued language study throughout the total period of full-time schooling.'[1] Indeed, research into the critical age theory has been unable to prove that a young child will be a better second language learner than adolescents or adults, simply because they are at a stage in their development where they acquire their mother tongue with relatively little difficulty.[2] Current practitioners are all too aware of the dangers of subscribing to popular, unsubstantiated assumptions in foreign language learning, as the outcome of the 1960s French Pilot Scheme can testify. The argument in favour of teaching modern foreign languages in primary

school reflects the educational and social development of the child and is based on the simple notion that the more time spent learning a particular subject or skill can only be advantageous in improving levels of attainment. The following reasons provide a comprehensive argument in favour of teaching modern foreign languages in primary schools:

- children under ten are more receptive and eager to take on a new language than teenagers in secondary school

- young children are naturally curious about language and are self-motivating

- they absorb new language like a sponge and do not see the foreign language as a problem

- they have no inhibitions about performing in front of others and making mistakes

- they become personally involved in language tasks and improvise readily in the target language

- they show empathy with foreigners and foreign cultures / customs

- young children readily accept 'childish' tasks, stories, songs in a foreign language

- early foreign language learning helps children to consolidate many basic concepts in their mother tongue

- it helps to educate both ear and tongue by enhancing sensitivity to new sound clusters, intonation patterns and rhythms

- it teaches useful listening skills and develops learners' powers of concentration

- it helps children to see patterns in the new language and in their own language and to draw up simple rules

- it builds self-confidence, develops communication and social skills and raises the self-esteem of children of all abilities

- it provides all children with a skill for life; a foundation upon which they can build later when learning any other foreign language

- foreign language learning in primary schools can be supported and reinforced daily by the class teacher

- teachers in primary schools have scope and flexibility to involve children in active learning and in imaginative and creative activities

- memorable foreign language events in the school calendar, such as French breakfasts, foreign language assemblies, European weeks, parents' evenings with food served by the pupils, concerts and plays and visits abroad all provide enjoyment and boost pupils' self-confidence as well as bringing public and parental recognition to the school

- an early start on FL1 (first foreign language) in primary school should ultimately provide more scope for secondaries to find more time for FL2 (second foreign language)[3]

Since modern foreign languages became a foundation subject at Key Stage 4 of the National Curriculum in 1996, there seems to be a disparity in provision of the subject. It is the only foundation GCSE subject and the only Key Stage 3 subject not to be included in the primary national curriculum. Possibly, the practical implications of such a development prevent further action to be taken at this time. However, Driscoll points out that 'as Europeans, primary schoolchildren are entitled to language learning

and we can no longer avoid the need to take concerted action at the national level to support this initiative.'[4]

6.3   Policy

'Given the evident diversity of practice, those approaching primary MFL for the first time might be tempted to make their choice of approach on the basis of wishful thinking but success lies in a realistic assessment of prevailing conditions and the actual context.'[5]   Thus schools attempting to set up a primary modern foreign language project must realistically consider the aims and objectives of such a project, given the time, resources and teachers that they may or may not have. Some primary schools benefit from liaison with secondary schools or from participation in organised projects with specialist teaching staff and a budget to be invested in resources. However, the average individual primary school, wishing to provide its pupils with foreign language experience may encounter numerous difficulties. Even if they can squeeze an extra thirty minutes per week from an already overcrowded timetable, the likelihood of having or finding a linguistically competent member of staff and of having sufficient funding to invest in resources, training and development will be minimal. Therefore, schools must match their expectations of the outcomes of foreign language learning with the resources that they do possess.

Primary foreign language projects fall into two categories: 'language acquisition' projects and 'language sensitisation' or 'language awareness' projects.[6] A competent teacher will be able to develop the linguistic attainment of his or her pupils and specific linguistic outcomes should be expected throughout the programme.   The

pupils will learn the chosen language according to their intellectual abilities. This is a project based on the 'language acquisition' model.

Realistically, under current circumstances, most primary schools are only able to offer teaching based on the 'language sensitisation' model. The emphasis in this type of project is on learning how to learn a language, cultural awareness, learning some basic vocabulary, having a go and having fun. Pupils are not expected to achieve any level of linguistic competence. It is an isolated primary school experience that may improve the confidence of pupils when they begin foreign language learning in secondary school. However, it is still crucial that such a project is delivered effectively and competently, otherwise the potential damage to motivation and attitude may never be repaired in the later stages of language learning. The implications of planning a primary foreign language programme based on the two models can be described as follows[7]:

Aim	Language acquisition model	Sensitisation model
Curriculum outline	Intense subject content. More likely to incorporate 4 skills. Highlights specialised knowledge and skills. Need for long term planning.	Limited subject content. More likely to incorporate 2 skills. Highlights motivational and attitudinal aspects of learning. Less long term planning needed.
Teacher's subject knowledge	More demanding on teacher's linguistic knowledge and skills.	Less demanding – a teacher requires purposeful knowledge of the content and limited 'conversational' command of classroom language.

Curriculum time (length and frequency)	Requires between 4% - 8% (1 – 2) hours per week)	Requires between 2% - 4% (up to an hour a week)
Age	Usually in the upper stages of junior school – progression is an important factor.	Can start at any age, even the early years – with songs, rhymes and some classroom commands.
Choice of language	Usually one language (because demanding on curriculum time)	Can offer a flavour of more than one language.
Evaluation and assessment	Emphasis on performance and product. Monitoring and assessment important tools – use of explicit measurable objectives.	Emphasis on enjoyment and willingness to 'have a go'. Difficult to determine external procedures.
Progression and continuity to secondary school	Progression and continuity key features. Influences the learning programme in secondary school and has implications for the transfer of information and liaison with the secondary school.	Intrinsically a primary experience, a foundation in learning how to learn a language. Progression to secondary school less of a key factor for success.

(Driscoll, (1999) p21)

6.4   Teachers

There is ongoing debate about who is best placed to teach foreign languages in primary schools. Visiting specialist teachers possess the necessary linguistic ability but may not be trained in teaching primary children. In addition, they do not know the children well and teaching can only take place at specific times, giving the language the status only of a 'subject' rather than as a living means of communication. Primary classteachers know their children and are confident with primary approaches to learning and teaching. They are potentially able to include the foreign language in many different areas of the curriculum and in daily classroom routines. However they often lack the suitable linguistic competence and confidence needed to deliver an effective foreign language programme.

In reality, specialist teachers of foreign languages are difficult to find, especially considering the national shortage of foreign language teachers at the secondary level. In addition, many schools are not in a position to pay for a visiting teacher. As a result, foreign language provision may take the form of an optional after school club that is paid for by parents, or as is more often the case, primary staff are expected to teach the language. The need for a specialist language teacher should not be underestimated. However current research[8] suggests that enthusiastic and confident primary classteachers are capable of delivering adequate foreign language programmes, providing realistic expectations have been identified and that schools and staff have made a firm commitment to personal and professional training and development.[9]

The reality of the situation is not ideal but it is viewed to be the only practical way forward in the present educational climate. Recent organised schemes – the National Pilot Scheme in Scotland being a notable example – have invested money into training primary classteachers in order for them to become confident teachers of a foreign language. Indeed, this was also characteristic of the 1960s French Pilot Scheme, the difference being that expectations were unrealistic and it was assumed that pupils would achieve high levels of linguistic competence. Language learning associations frequently run training courses, conferences and workshops in order to equip primary classteachers with the skills they will need in the foreign language classroom.

6.5   Methodology

As Satchwell states, the emphasis of foreign language lessons in the primary sector must be on fun. Both pupils and teachers should enjoy the activities. It is important that the teacher should be seen to be taking an active part in the tasks with the children and having as much fun as the children. Thus a 'traditional didactic approach' will not be suitable in this context. It should be aimed to make maximum use of the target language through lots of activities where pupils are involved in using language for their own authentic purposes. It is also important to offer a choice of activities so that pupils can maximise their interests and learn at their own pace. Language lessons should never become dull. Thus there is a need for a wide variety of teaching techniques, materials and activities.[10]

In the early stages activities will be primarily aural / oral in nature, but reading and even simple writing activities can be included later. Pupils should be given the

opportunity to work in pairs and groups, to learn in a supportive atmosphere where it is acceptable to make mistakes, to experience songs, role-play, drama, rhymes, stories, poems, games, puzzles and craft activities.[11] Above all, foreign language learning, at any level should be a positive and enjoyable experience.

6.6   Curriculum content

Language and topics covered should be relevant to the pupils' experience of the world. Satchwell points out that there appears to be 'some international consensus' that highlights a number of core topics that may be extended and adapted to the age and interests of the learners. These are as follows:

- **Me** – my family, my body, my favourite things, likes and dislikes
- **My home** – my house, my pets, my friends
- **My home town / village** – where I live + the immediate environment
- **My school** – preferences and activities
- **Wider world** – the environment, nature, conservation, how food is produced / grown, how things are made……

In addition, language should be exploited in as many different contexts as possible – in other areas of the curriculum and in daily classroom routines, for example. [12] In this way, it is perhaps easier to integrate foreign language learning into the weekly timetable.

6.7   Choice of language and continuity

In most cases, the choice of language will depend upon the availability and expertise of the teachers. Since most teachers learnt French at school, this is more likely to be the language that primary schools will opt for initially. Although diversification in the secondary sector is expanding, with many schools now able to offer Spanish and other languages in addition to the traditional French and German, the primary sector will be locked into the cycle of teaching just French, unless more primary initial teacher training institutions develop the linguistic skills of its students and in a range of languages nationally. A conscious decision to diversify language provision in the National Pilot Scheme in Scotland led to the teaching of French, German, Italian and Spanish. [13]

However, language diversification in the primary sector leads to a further debate about continuity between the primary and secondary phases. If the project is based on the language awareness model, then the choice of language is insignificant. The purpose is for pupils to experience learning a language and to acquire skills that will help them in their foreign language studies at secondary school. If the aim of the project is for pupils to achieve certain levels of linguistic competence, then choice of language is crucial and continuity into the secondary sector must be carefully considered. However, in practice this is a difficult issue which cannot easily be resolved: '...we enter the minefield currently being faced in Scotland, England and also in France: how can you ensure sensible and manageable continuity across the primary – secondary divide when there can be no real consistency of teaching across a group of 12 or more primaries feeding into the one secondary school?' [14]

As yet, there are no practical answers to the question of how to achieve effective continuity between the two phases. For many secondary teachers receiving pupils with foreign language experience, 'trial and error will be the only approach'.[15] Unless all primary schools are able to deliver modern foreign languages to the same standard and with the same curriculum content, then continuity will remain elusive. In order to achieve progression, as in all other primary school subjects, a national curriculum and a supply of subject-competent primary teachers would be required. As a realistic compromise, many schools can only offer foreign language courses based on the language awareness model. Continuity may be approached by informing secondary schools of the language covered, by providing a record of achievement for all pupils and by other sources of cross-phase liaison, but ultimately this approach cannot assuage the difficulties that will inevitably emerge when secondary teachers are faced with new classes of pupils who have widely differing foreign language competence and experience.[16]

6.8   Assessment

Assessment of progress and learning is a crucial element of any educational programme. Formal testing may be considered a hindrance to the fun approach employed in primary foreign language teaching, but without some measurement of progress, the aims and objectives of the project will become meaningless, pupils and teachers will only have a vague sense of what they are trying to achieve and it will be almost impossible to be accountable to interested parties, such as senior management, parents, governors, OFSTED and secondary schools.

One approach is to identify several tasks per term or per topic 'which are fun for the pupils and arise naturally out of the learning process',[17] thus building up a continuous assessment profile of each pupil and a record of achievement and language covered. 'The important principle is not testing the pupils, but motivating them! Once children have experienced success in using the language, they will want to learn more.'[18]

A record of achievement is a simple way of measuring progress and this may be carried out on a self-assessment basis. In 2001 CILT published a 'European Language Portfolio' which was aimed at recording 'experiences of language learning, formal and informal, in the home, in primary school, secondary and through to adult life.' [19] The primary school version of the portfolio, which was piloted in schools in England, consists of three sections: 1) Languages I know; 2) What I know and can do in languages; 3) My Dossier. In the first section, pupils can record other languages they know and languages they are learning at home or at school. The second section is a more detailed record of achievement. It contains a number of 'I can...' statements that may be coloured in when the pupils have achieved them. There is also an optional self-assessment grid for pupils to evaluate their language competence. The third section is a record of pupils' work. It could include written work, pictures, speaking tasks recorded on audiocassette or videocassette and homework. Reports of the European Language Portfolio have been positive. The 'dossier' section provides pupils with a great incentive to produce work of a high standard, in the knowledge that it will be shown to others. It is hoped that the European Language Portfolio will aid continuity between the primary and secondary sectors and will help to develop awareness of the benefits of plurilingualism.[20]

[1] Stern, H. H. (1969), 'Languages for young children: an introductory survey of current practices and problems' pp27-28

[2] See Chapter 5

[3] Satchwell, P. & de Silva, J. (1995), *Catching them young* p2

[4] Driscoll, P. (1999), 'Modern foreign languages in the primary school: a fresh start' p24

[5] Driscoll op. cit. p19

[6] Driscoll op. cit. pp19-23

[7] Driscoll op. cit. p21

[8] See Satchwell, P. (1996), 'Foreign language learning in UK primary schools' pp36-37

[9] Driscoll, P. (1999), 'Teacher expertise in the primary modern foreign languages classroom' pp27-49

[10] Satchwell op. cit. p38

[11] Satchwell & de Silva op. cit. p20

[12] Satchwell op. cit. p37

[13] Satchwell op. cit. p37

[14] Satchwell op. cit. p37

[15] Low, L. (1999), 'Policy issues for primary modern languages' p61

[16] Satchwell & de Silva op. cit. pp18-19

[17] Satchwell & de Silva op. cit. p17

[18] Satchwell & de Silva op. cit. p18

[19] McLagan, P. (1999), 'The European Language Portfolio: a model for young learners' p8

[20] McLagan op. cit. pp8-9

SECTION III   **THE MANAGEMENT, ORGANISATION AND FEASIBILITY OF TEACHING MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND FINDINGS**

Introduction

As was stated in the introduction to this thesis, the research questions are as follows:

1   To investigate the feasibility of and constraints on the introduction of modern foreign language teaching in the primary school.

2   To investigate the management and organisation of existing primary modern foreign language projects.

3   To relate the empirical research to the historical context of primary modern foreign language teaching.

4   To draw conclusions about the overall feasibility of teaching modern foreign languages in primary schools in the current educational climate.

For the purposes of this investigation, 'success' is defined as a foreign language programme which is properly managed, pedagogically organised and sustained as a continuing provision. As was also stated in the introduction to this thesis, it was not possible for the researcher to conduct objective assessments of the pupils' attainment.

Summary of Research Design

To assist the transparency of the analysis of the empirical data that follows in this section, chapters 7 – 10, this overview of the research design is provided:

RESEARCH PHASE	CONTENT	RESEARCH METHODS / DATA	OUTCOMES
History / Theory			Pmfl Issues
Phase 1	Case Study: Charting and analysing the progress of a local pmfl initiative, partly funded by the University	Lesson observations Meeting observations Research Diary Lesson plans Lesson evaluations	Critical success factors defined
Phase 2	Broader perspective of models: another pmfl project and mfl in two middle schools	Lesson observations Research Diary Interviews	Critical success factors tested and confirmed
Phase 3	Broader perspective of models: a cross section of pmfl programmes around the country	Questionnaire Lesson observations Interviews Research Diary	Critical success factors used to develop questionnaire More data collected on management, organisation and feasibility
Phase 4	Language College model	Questionnaire	Critical success factors and issues gathered from data used to develop questionnaire Government claim tested More data collected on management, organisation and feasibility Overall conclusions and final definition of critical success factors possible

Chapter 7   Phase 1: Case study model

7.1   Introduction

What follows is a descriptive record of the developments of the Phase 1 initiative, which will then be analysed in order to draw conclusions about the factors that are critical for success when implementing and maintaining a primary modern foreign language programme. The critical success factors will be tested against the primary modern foreign language programmes in Phase 2 and then used to evaluate the programmes in Phase 3 and Phase 4. They will also be compared with the outcomes of the 1960s French Pilot Scheme in the final chapter.

7.2   Methods of research

The Phase 1 primary modern foreign language initiative comprised a secondary school (School 1A) and three of its feeder primary schools (School 1B, School 1C, School 1D).[1] A research diary was kept from the beginning of the project in which accounts of lesson observations and informal interviews, notes from meetings and telephone conversations and any other relevant information was written. Many lesson observations were carried out and a number of planning meetings were attended.[2] At the beginning of the project the language teachers were asked if they would complete lesson plans and evaluation sheets that had been designed by the researcher, as this would provide useful data about the outcomes of lessons, especially those lessons that would not be able to be observed. Although they agreed to do this, the researcher encountered a varied response in collecting the completed sheets. It became clear that while some of the teachers were efficient in this task, others were reluctant to write out lesson plans and evaluations for their lessons and the researcher often received brief evaluations weeks after the lessons had taken place, which by then were

practically worthless. A similar response was also met in asking the classteachers and student tutors supplied by Aston University[3] to complete evaluations. As a result, this method of data collection was abandoned, especially since the research focus had moved away from specific teaching / learning outcomes.

By the second year, the initiative had all but collapsed, with only School 1C showing firm commitment to the provision of a foreign language. The researcher carried out occasional lesson observations and during the third year she kept in touch with the development of the project by telephone conversations with the headteacher.

7.3   Conception and implementation of the initiative

In the Autumn of 1996 the secondary school headteacher proposed the idea of introducing modern foreign languages into three of the feeder primary schools, since the school was intending to apply for Language College status[4] and thus needed to prove its commitment to the development of modern foreign languages in the local community.   It was felt to be especially relevant to introduce modern foreign languages to these primary pupils because the schools are situated close to Birmingham International Airport, which provides employment for some of the parents and may provide employment for the pupils themselves in the future. Therefore, the greater need for foreign language skills was obvious. Preliminary discussions about the project also included representatives from Aston University and the Children's University.   However, the bid for Language College status was unsuccessful and the Children's University withdrew its involvement. Despite these initial disappointments, it was agreed to continue with the project, therefore dictating a need for research and evaluation. Prior to the beginning of the new academic year

in which teaching was to commence, (i.e. one year after the initiative was first proposed), the headteacher of the secondary school took early retirement, thus leaving the realisation of his initiative in the hands of a new manager.

It was agreed that School 1A would provide specialist foreign language teachers to deliver the lessons in the three primary schools for one hour per week. The primary schools would make available curriculum time for the lessons and Aston University would provide funding for resources and development and student tutors to assist in the schools in the Spring term of each academic year. Although this initiative had been the idea of the former headteacher of School 1A, everyone concerned approached the new project positively and enthusiastically.

The researcher's initial involvement with this project began on 1st October 1997 at the plenary meeting held at School 1A. Those present also included Professor Nigel Reeves, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Aston University, the Schools Liaison Co-ordinator at Aston University, the headteacher, the head of modern foreign languages and the three language teachers from School 1A, the classteacher from School 1B, the headteacher and two classteachers form School 1C and the headteacher from School 1D. A significant absence was the headteacher from School 1B.

At this meeting it was clear that many arrangements had already been made. (19.11.97a)[5] Each language teacher knew which school they would be visiting and all three primary schools had decided to begin with Year 4 pupils. (1.10.97a) Originally, it was intended that French should be taught in all three schools, but later it was decided that German should be the language taught because of future job prospects at

the then still active BMW / Rover works and the International Airport. However, two of the three language teachers were French specialists and the other a joint German / French specialist. One of the French specialists showed resistance to delivering German, arguing that she could deliver a better, more fun programme in French since she is more experienced in this language and had taught primary French in the past. It was finally agreed that French would be taught in two of the schools and German in the other. School 1C was interested in the possibility of teaching both languages, but this idea was never pursued further. (1.10.97b)

Clearly staff were eager to begin teaching immediately, although no subject planning had taken place, no aims and objectives or schemes of work had been devised and no resources had been evaluated and purchased. From the University's point of view, it would have been preferable to spend much more time on planning the curriculum and resources and researching other primary modern foreign language projects, but due to the constraints of a research commitment as opposed to a direct University involvement, the University was not at liberty to intervene. (1.10.97c) The enthusiastic anticipation of the project generated numerous ideas about possible ways of enhancing the teaching programme. These included recording French and German children's programmes from satellite television, exploiting twin town links, organising Saturday morning and school holiday events which could involve all four schools, organising trips abroad, using email and advertising for other LEAs that were involved with primary modern foreign languages to get in touch. (1.10.97d)

It was expected that teaching would begin after half term. In the meantime, each specialist language teacher would visit their respective primary school for a day of planning, meeting the children and gaining insight into primary methodology.

The first planning day took place on 7th October 1997 at School 1B. The staff and pupils were very friendly and welcoming and very enthusiastic about the foreign language project. The specialist teacher and the researcher spent a lot of time in the classroom, getting to know the children and observing how a primary classroom operates. At this school there was only one Year 4 class, made up of twenty-two children. It was decided that the foreign language lesson would take place on Monday afternoon between 2.30pm and 3.30pm, although in reality lessons usually took place between 2.40pm and 3.10pm, in order to allow previous activities to be completed and for end of day dismissal. Later in the day time was spent with the classteacher, discussing ideas and planning activities for the first lesson, which was due to begin the following week. At this stage there was no scheme of work, although the classteacher was keen to have this in place because the school was due to undergo an inspection by OFSTED, later in the academic year. (7.10.97a) The pupils would be given folders in which to keep their work. The specialist teacher was very enthusiastic about starting the project and was only concerned about small administrative details. (7.10.97b) The classteacher suggested that staff from all three primary schools involved in the project should spend a day at the secondary school in order for them to get a perspective of secondary education, but this idea was never followed up.

The second planning day took place at School 1D on 8th October 1997. It had been arranged that the two Year 4 classes would be taught for half an hour consecutively on Monday morning between 11am and 12 noon. One class contained twenty-six pupils and the other twenty-seven pupils. In reality, the timetabling of these lessons was unrealistic for the specialist teacher and so lessons took place on Friday afternoon between 2pm and 3pm. The headteacher and staff at this school were taking the project very seriously and were enthusiastic. Although not a linguist, the headteacher had previously run a foreign language group, which had proved to be successful, and was well aware of the benefits of providing foreign language teaching, both for the pupils and for the profile of the school. (8.10.97a)

The two classteachers, the specialist teacher and the researcher spent most of the day planning an overview of topics for the year and producing worksheets. Enquiries about trips were made and questions raised by the headteacher were discussed. The children would be working on worksheets, which would be kept in folders. Most of the children were excited about learning a foreign language, although two children expressed negative comments. (8.10.97b) It was decided that teaching would incorporate the usual reward system used in the school and even perhaps special foreign language stickers and end of year certificates of attainment could be used. The specialist teacher was looking forward to starting the teaching but was worried about the little amount of time there had been for planning.

The third planning day took place on 10th October 1997 at School 1C. The staff at this school were taking the project very seriously and were enthusiastic for it to succeed. (10.10.97a) The specialist teacher and the researcher spent the first part of

the morning observing and helping the two Year 4 classes. One of the classes contained twenty-one pupils, the other twenty-five pupils. The rest of the day was spent planning. The specialist teacher devised a scheme of work for the first two terms and the classteachers began planning a parallel course on cultural awareness to be taught in their own class time. It was decided that the pupils would work on paper and worksheets to be kept in folders.

By the end of the planning days it was clear that most teachers involved were enthusiastic about the project and were keen to begin, although plans were vague and no consideration had been given to assessment or continuity. However, the head of modern foreign languages at School 1A was negative about the project and did not think it a good idea. The specialist teachers from this school also reported that they had been told not to use any resources from the school, or to spend much time on preparation. (10.10.97b) A crucial element of the project, which became apparent from the start, was that no one was taking overall responsibility for the organisation and management of the project as a whole. The primary schools were relying on the secondary school and its specialist staff; the specialist staff gave the impression that the University and each individual primary school were responsible for organisation and development, bearing in mind the negative views of the head of department. The University perspective was that the secondary school had overall responsibility, since the project was the initiative of the former headteacher. With such an obvious lack of leadership, it could only be a matter of time before the project would lose its cohesion. (8.10.97c / 10.10.97c / 10.10.97d / 10.10.97e)

7.4   Progression of the initiative: October 1997 – July 1998

During the first year of the project the researcher carried out eleven lesson observations at School 1B, ten observations (two lessons per observation) at School 1C and ten observations (two lessons per observation) at School 1D. Lessons at School 1B began positively and enthusiastically. The specialist teacher and classteacher were both positive about how the children had responded to the introduction of the foreign language and it was evident that the children were clearly enjoying themselves. The classteacher commented how easily many of the children seemed to be picking up the new language, even one of the special needs pupils. It was observed that this pupil responded positively to the lessons. He often put up his hand to answer questions, even if he could not answer with total accuracy, and seemed to be happy in lessons. (13.10.97a / 13.10.97b)

In School 1C the foreign language lessons also began enthusiastically and positively. The specialist teaching was supported by the classteachers who reinforced the language already learnt every day wherever possible. They were also doing a project about the target country. The classteachers commented how enthusiastic the pupils were, particularly the special needs pupils. Foreign language learning provided something new for everyone. (19.11.97c)

After the first lesson, the specialist teacher noted the difference in classroom management techniques required for 8-year-old pupils. Since she was only accustomed to dealing with teenagers, she was slightly concerned that her tone was not appropriate. (19.11.97d / 22.11.97a / Commentary 1[6])

The specialist teacher also commented after the first lesson that she had expected to have some resources, rather than having to make them herself. She was concerned that the preparation time for the project did not justify the actual time spent in the classroom. After each of the following two lessons this criticism was reinforced and it was documented how disappointed the three specialist teachers were, not to have any resources. (22.10.97b / 5.11.97 / 12.11.97) This criticism, which seemed to be aimed at the university, emphasised the obvious lack of responsibility that School 1A was taking for the management of the project. This in turn highlighted a real lack of organisation and leadership. (14.1.98 / Commentary 2)

Pupils at School 1D were enthusiastic to be learning a foreign language for the first time but from the beginning the pace was too slow. The first lesson was disappointing because the children were not really given the opportunity to get involved and use the new language and they had to be frequently reprimanded for not listening, which created an unpleasant atmosphere. The pupils were enthusiastic but their curiosity was not fully exploited. (17.10.97) As the lessons progressed, it was observed that pupils did not know vocabulary well enough to be able to carry out the activities they had been asked to do, which led to confusion and eventually lack of motivation and interest among some individuals. Pupils were often noisy and distracted but responded well when given fun activities to carry out. For example, they particularly enjoyed and responded positively to a song about numbers. (7.11.97a)

The two problems which were thus apparent in this school were lack of appropriate methodology and timing of lessons. It was observed that the style of teaching was

inappropriate for young learners. The crucial element of fun was all but missing and much more repetition and reinforcement was required. (Commentary 3) The second problem would have been more difficult to overcome, since it involved the constraints of time. The lessons, originally timetabled for Monday morning, had to be moved to Friday afternoon because that was the only time the specialist teacher was able to get to the school. One classteacher expressed her concern about the lesson taking place at this time because the children are at their 'worst' then. (7.11.97b) Indeed, the specialist teacher was also concerned about the bad timing of the lessons, but the head of modern foreign languages at School 1A pointed out that learning a foreign language at primary school was an 'extra' for the children and thus not as crucial as learning maths and English. Therefore, it did not matter too much if the children did not really take it in. This statement reinforced the negative attitude of the head of modern foreign languages, which had begun to influence the specialist teacher, since she felt reassured by his comments. (7.11.97c / Commentary 4)

The next plenary meeting took place on 19th November 1997. Those present were the researcher, Professor Reeves and the Schools' Liaison Co-ordinator from Aston University, the headteacher of School 1A, the head of modern foreign languages and the three specialist teachers from School 1A, the classteacher from School 1B, the headteacher and classteachers from School 1C and one of the classteachers from School 1D. Notable absentees were the headteachers of Schools 1B and 1D.

The headteacher of School 1C reported that pupils at his school had made a good start. Parents were very keen about the project and the children were very enthusiastic. They looked forward to Wednesday afternoon! Comments about the

introduction of a foreign language boosting the confidence of special needs pupils were also made. (19.11.97c) He had also invited the Chief Education Officer from the LEA to come and observe the lessons, with the hope of attracting financial support from the local authority in future years. He talked about his plans for organising a 'lesson in the air' in order to provide an end of year goal for pupils and to attract publicity and was planning to send one of the classteachers on a course about setting up primary modern foreign language projects.

The specialist staff commented on the challenge of adapting to the different teaching style and classroom management techniques required for small children. (19.11.97d) There was a general concern about the financial arrangements for resources, photocopying, etc. It was agreed that the schools could spend money from their own funds and then claim it back from the university. (Commentary 5)

The classteacher from School 1B reported that she practised the language with the children at other times during the week in order to reinforce it. The children were still very keen but the only difficulty was developing resources. The classteacher from School 1D reported the difficulties they were experiencing with the timetabling of lessons. Friday afternoon was the worst time to have a language lesson. It was decided that the two classes at that school would alternate times in order to avoid the situation of the same class being last. She did comment, however, that the children were keen.

It was suggested that each primary school should devise a list of aims and objectives for each year of modern language teaching because this would be necessary policy documentation. (Commentary 6)

The most important issue raised was the question of the continuity of teaching and learning between the primary and secondary school phases. (Commentary 7) No arrangements had thus far been considered. There was the suggestion of creating a special French group at School 1A for those youngsters who had been learning French for three years at the primary schools involved in the project. However, the pupils who were learning German would be at a disadvantage because German was not offered in Year 7 at School 1A. It was alarming to discover that only very few pupils from Schools 1B, 1C and 1D actually undertake their secondary education at School 1A. (19.11.97e) At this point it became clear that the project had been built on very weak and perhaps idealistic foundations and that overall 'success' would be an unachievable goal. The project had begun hastily on the waves of novelty and enthusiasm without due consideration being given to vital issues. Since School 1A would be gaining very little from the project in terms of numbers of new pupils with foreign language experience and since the headteacher responsible for the idea of the project had left the school, it seemed questionable whether the investment of time and resources would be justifiable in the future. Also, progress made by the pupils during this project would almost certainly be lost on arrival at new secondary schools, where staff would be unaware of or unprepared for a handful of pupils with foreign language learning experience. (Commentary 8)

Teaching arrangements for the second year of the project were discussed. The researcher had assumed that the specialist teachers would be teaching both Year 4 and Year 5 pupils but this was not to be the case. The classteachers at School 1C were intending to take over the teaching of the new Year 4 pupils in their school, based on what they had observed and experienced during the first year. The possibility of employing a part time specialist language teacher from the LEA who would visit all three schools was discussed but was never pursued beyond the suggestion stage.

It was further recommended that each primary school arrange a 'Review Meeting' with their respective specialist teacher in order to review and discuss issues from the term and plan ahead for the next term.

By the beginning of December the specialist teacher at School 1B noted that the pupils did not seem quite so keen as they did at the beginning. (1.12.97a) The novelties of learning a language for the first time and of having a new adult in the classroom were beginning to wane. The pupils had become accustomed to the structure of the lessons and knew what would be expected of them.

The lessons given by the specialist teacher continued to be entirely oral / aural based. She produced worksheets for the classteachers to use at other times during the week for reinforcement, preferring to exploit the lesson time for learning and practising the language communicatively. She also produced some wonderful language posters for the classroom. Both classteachers had created a display about the target country and the pupils were encouraged to bring in appropriate items. One of the teachers made a

display of questions and phrases that had been learnt, but which contained small spelling mistakes. (Commentary 10)

As arranged, the Chief Education Officer from the LEA visited School 1C on 17th December 1997 in order to observe the project in action. The specialist teacher was unable to attend the lesson due to illness but had planned the lesson in advance and provided the relevant materials. Thus, the classteachers were able to conduct the lesson and show off what the children could do. The children performed brilliantly and the Chief Education Officer was impressed by what he had seen, although he could not promise financial assistance for the future. However, he could see no reason why pupils could not start the first year of the GCSE course in Year 6 and then complete it in Year 7. Then a second foreign language could be started in Year 8. A similar scheme was taking place in a school in the city with mathematics. Obviously, competent teaching and carefully managed continuity would be required but the feasibility of such a scheme is questionable given the problems thus far encountered.

The pace and approach of lessons at School 1D, up until Christmas, showed no signs of improvement. (5.12.97a) The suggestion of alternating the time of the two classes so that the same class was not always last had not been put into practice. Even the 'Christmas' lesson was tedious and pupils were noisy and inattentive. (12.12.97a) At this stage, the project in this school seemed to be least successful. There were no displays and no hint of foreign language learning at all. The children did not seem to be learning and could not remember language from previous lessons. The timing of lessons was an obvious disadvantage and the socio-economic background of many pupils in this school may have contributed to a lack of interest in foreign language learning. However, the uninspired approach to teaching had a definite impact on

learning outcomes. Good teacher – pupil relationships were not evident. The teacher only knew the names of the most naughty children.

The specialist teacher at School 1B had a good relationship with the pupils and knew most of their names, although she only taught one class. There were foreign language displays in the classroom and the pupils seemed to enjoy the lessons. At School 1C, the specialist teacher did not know the names of pupils or have any particular relationship with them. There were good target language and target country displays and language learning was supported and reinforced by the classteachers during the week. Of the three schools, the pupils at School 1C appeared to have learnt the foreign language more successfully at this stage in the project. (10.12.97a)

By January in School 1B, the children were still very keen to be learning a foreign language. However, the pace of lessons was still too slow and the pupils were not exposed to enough language or variety of learning media. (12.1.98a)

It had been agreed that each specialist teacher liaise with the classteacher for a 'Review Meeting' in order to discuss progress so far and plan ahead for the next term. However, the researcher was informed that these meetings were unlikely to take place since School 1A was experiencing problems with staff absence and so the specialist teachers would not be allowed to have any extra time out of school. (Commentary 11) This would have provided an excellent opportunity for staff to discuss the issue of resources. Money had been made available by the University for the purchase of commercial resources and the teachers were in desperate need of fun, primary orientated resources with which to support their lessons. This issue was indeed

becoming a concern among the specialist teachers and was one that was never resolved. The researcher supplied the staff with information about primary modern foreign language resources. They could order anything they thought appropriate and then invoice the University later. An order was placed, but the resources never arrived and it was never followed up by the staff at School 1A. It seemed that apathy had spread to the specialist staff and it confirmed that no one was taking overall responsibility for the management of the project. It appeared that the managers of School 1A were losing interest in the project. This was no surprise, since the head of modern foreign languages was negative from the outset and the headteacher had a different agenda from the previous headteacher, who had initiated the project.

By the middle of January at School 1C, the specialist teacher had begun to feel that some of the pupils were 'turning off', mainly from the methods because they had 'seen it all before'. She also expressed her frustration at how the project was being managed: 'I am becoming tired of preparing everything and using all [School 1A's] resources. Ordering of resources for this project should have been done in the summer. All three teachers are going from week to week wondering what to do next and what to use. A project with this much funding needed much more planning to benefit everyone (not least the pupils).' (14.1.98a) These sentiments reflect yet another example of lack of leadership. The specialist teachers were clearly disappointed and frustrated by the lack of resources and this teacher correctly observed how insufficiently the project had been planned. This appeared to be a criticism of the University and an assumption that the University was controlling the project. It was surprising that they did not feel more responsible, given that the original idea came from their teaching establishment and that they were teaching the

programme, without which the project would not have existed. School 1C had by now acquired some resources specifically formulated for primary foreign language learning, without consultation with the specialist teacher. She was unaware that this was even taking place. It appeared that the cohesion of the project was rapidly disintegrating. The headteacher of School 1C was adamant that foreign language learning in his school would be successful, for the sake of the pupils and also because his credibility was at stake, and thus had taken charge of what was happening in his school. This line of action was perfectly understandable since direction was coming from no other sources. However, it also meant that the likelihood of the project 'succeeding' as an integrated whole was diminishing. Progress was now dependent upon the will of individuals and their personal priorities.

By this point, the specialist teacher seemed to be uninterested in the acquisition of extra resources. She said she was doing what she would do normally but at a slower pace and that in thirty minutes there was only time for oral work. The classteachers had commented that there should be more group work included in the lessons. The conflict of approach was evident here. In the short lesson time and without appropriate resources, the specialist teacher felt that group work was unfeasible. (14.1.98c) However, 'doing what I would do normally' suggested a more secondary school approach. Due to the way in which the project had haphazardly progressed, it seemed that this specialist teacher had begun to lose interest. However, she did point out that the pupils needed a goal for the end of the year, such as a trip or other event, as a culmination of Year 4 language lessons.

On 21st January 1998, at School 1D, the next plenary meeting took place. Those present were the researcher, the headteacher, head of modern foreign languages and specialist teachers from School 1A, the classteacher from School 1B, the headteacher and one of the classteachers from School 1C and the headteacher and one of the classteachers form School 1D. The meeting was chaired by the headteacher of School 1C. There was no fixed agenda for this meeting, although there were various issues that the headteachers of Schools 1A and 1C wanted to raise. The meeting began with participants describing their impressions of the project so far. The head of modern foreign languages at School 1A had nothing to contribute and passed on to the specialist teachers. The specialist teacher at School 1D reported that everything was fine, both she and the pupils were still keen, and she described a particularly good lesson they had had the week before. Her only concerns were the timing of lessons and the lack of resources. The specialist teacher at School 1B reported that everything was going well. The specialist teacher at School 1C reported that the children were still enthusiastic, although the classteacher thought that the children were slowing down with the rate at which they were taking in the new language. Everyone was happy with the student tutors who had been assigned to them for one afternoon per week by the university. The only problem was with School 1D. Initially, staff were unaware they were receiving a student tutor, and did not know what she was there for!

The first issue to be discussed was the question of resources. The headteacher of School 1C talked about the commercial resource packs they had purchased recently and suggested it would be a good idea for School 1B to purchase the same packs and for there to be a copy of the resources at School 1A. It was also suggested that staff

spend half a day evaluating and buying resources. However, like the majority of ideas and suggestions made at all of the plenary meetings throughout the project, everyone agreed this was a good idea but then no-one took the responsibility to put the idea into practice. Further planning and development was simply not taking place. It was also felt that some of the funding could be used to develop the classteachers' language skills as this could have implications on the amount of teaching time School 1A would need to provide in the second year of the project.

Surprisingly, the headteacher of School 1A raised the question whether the three primary schools intended to carry on with the project in the next academic year. It was clear that individual expectations of people involved in the project were very different indeed! It had been understood by the researcher that this initiative was a long-term programme and once established would continue to run indefinitely. Obviously, the headteacher of School 1A saw it more as a one year taster of foreign language learning, which highlighted a further possible reason for the school's lack of commitment and responsibility. He informed everyone that there could be a problem with allocating staff time. Timetables for the next year had not yet been discussed and in order to provide adequate teaching time a part time teacher may be required. Staff at School 1C strongly expressed their wishes to continue with the project, as did the headteacher of School 1D who said she also wanted to introduce a second foreign language. (21.1.98a) Again, this idea was never realised. The possibility of the classteachers delivering the teaching in Year 4 was also strongly considered.

Further issues discussed were plans for the 'lesson in the air' which was proving difficult to organise and putting in a bid for the 'Airport Environmental Fund' in order to raise more money for the project.

On 28th January 1998 an informal meeting was called at School 1C, involving the researcher, the headteacher, the specialist teacher and one of the classteachers, in order to discuss various issues relating to the foreign language teaching at that school. It was clear that although School 1C was still part of the project, the headteacher was following his own agenda, since there was no central direction or long-term plan.

In a conversation prior to the meeting, the specialist teacher said that at the beginning of the project she was told to do whatever she wanted but had begun to feel this was now not the case. The classteachers' request for more group work had clearly upset her. She went on to comment how non-specialist language teachers tend to think everything is wonderful with no idea of the level the children are at and with unrealistic expectations, which had been the downfall of many primary modern foreign language projects in the past. She had attempted to include group work in the lesson, but had found there was no room for the use of target language. (28.1.98a / Commentary 12)

One of the main points raised in the meeting was the issue of resources. The headteacher identified the vital need to acquire many more resources in order to support the teaching and learning. His idea was that each of them should visit a different High Street bookshop and purchase whatever they could find relating to primary level foreign languages. They should then come together and decide what

they would use from what had been collected. The specialist teacher also suggested looking at book clubs and visiting CILT and was quite keen to investigate the resources catalogues that the researcher had given her. However, the headteacher was keener to search the shops. This seemed to be a pointless exercise, since only a few very general materials aimed at the mass market would be available. (Commentary 13)

The headteacher also talked about developing a three-year scheme of work, which would be a forecast based on what had been done so far. He hoped to invite parents to the school in order to see what was happening. One of the classes was soon to present a class assembly which would include some of the language they had been learning. His idea of a 'lesson in the air' was proving difficult to organise due to high costs. Although lacking current information of primary modern foreign languages, the headteacher was keen for the project to succeed, at least in his school, and was making every possible attempt for it to happen. The display of firm leadership was a powerful influence and motivating factor to the teachers involved in the project at this school.

An unfortunate development that occurred at School 1C was the long-term illness of the specialist teacher. In order for the foreign language teaching to continue, the classteachers were obliged to take the lessons, although they were intending to do this in the next academic year anyway. The style of the first lesson that was observed was noticeably different from those conducted by the specialist teacher, but this was only to be expected under the circumstances. The children repeated a list of words on the topic of 'family' and said what they were in English. Then they were required to

complete a worksheet. The last five minutes were spent practising questions they had previously learnt, although there was a small error in the teacher language. (11.2.98a) Subsequent lessons took this format because the classteachers were unable to teach communicatively. In effect, the pupils encountered many words but were no longer given the opportunity to use them in context or to develop effective language learning skills. (Commentary 14)

The lessons in Schools 1B and 1D continued in much the same manner as before. School 1B had an OFSTED inspection in early February. The foreign language lesson was planned to take place but the specialist teacher was ill and thus the lesson was cancelled. Earlier, the headteacher had enquired if the specialist teacher was 'any good' but at no stage did he come to observe or get involved in any way. The classteacher was asked about the foreign language teaching by the inspector. He was dismayed to learn that the classteacher would be delivering the Year 4 foreign language teaching next year, while the specialist teacher continued with Year 5. It was thought to be inconceivable that a non-specialist would be teaching a foreign language. (23.2.98a / Commentary 15)

The specialist teacher had been thinking about the issue of assessment. She was aware that assessment was necessary but had no idea how it should be carried out. (23.2.98b / Commentary 16)

At School 1D there was still no evidence of foreign language teaching even taking place. (13.2.98a) In one lesson pupils were practising simple conversations in pairs and groups. The performance of some of the more able pupils was very impressive.

In another lesson the pupils were asked to do a quiz as a revision exercise, although this would have been a good form of assessment. The approach to the quiz was drawn out and boring and showed a great lack of preparation. The teacher should have collected in the papers and recorded the marks. Without this information, we had no indication of how far the pupils had progressed. The value of appropriate methodology was evident at the end of the lesson. The teacher did a rhyme and a game of 'hangman' and it was amazing to see how the children suddenly 'switched on' to what was happening and showed renewed interest and enjoyment. (13.2.98b)

At the end of February, each school had been assigned a native speaking student tutor to help out in the foreign language lessons. The presence of the native speakers had a positive effect in all three schools, although from the observations in School 1D, the native speaker could have been used much more effectively in order to maximise authenticity and communication. (27.2.98a)

The specialist teacher who was teaching German was concerned that her pupils were being left out of the arrangements for the 'lesson in the air' or an alternative end of year trip or event because of the different language being taught. She intended to make enquiries for their own German language event but this was never pursued, as interest in the project declined rapidly by the end of the academic year.

The next plenary meeting took place on 4th March 1998 at School 1B. Those present included the researcher, Professor Reeves, the head of modern foreign languages and two of the specialist teachers from School 1A, the classteacher from School 1B and the headteacher and two classteachers from School 1C. There were no representatives

from School 1D. The meeting was chaired once again by the headteacher of School 1C. The two main issues discussed were putting in a bid to the National Primary Centre, the purpose of which was to gain funding for primary school initiatives, and arranging Easter activities.

It was stated that assessment of learning was required. One of the classteachers at School 1C had recently been on a primary foreign language course and assessment was one of the main issues. It had been suggested that teachers use the attainment target levels prescribed for the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum[7] as a means of assessing Key Stage 2 learning. However, this advice went unheeded by the specialist teachers and learning remained unassessed.

By now, the idea for the 'lesson in the air' had been abandoned because of the cost and the failure to attract sponsorship. School 1C had been following a link to a school in the target country but this had proved to be unsuccessful because the school abroad was only interested in an exchange, which would have been too difficult to organise at this end. The only alternative was to organise their own trip. It was felt there was not enough time to arrange an Easter festival, therefore ideas for a spring festival in late April or early May were put forward instead. Staff were enthusiastic and contributed many good ideas and it was agreed that all the schools would get together for the event. Sadly, plans for the festival developed no further than this meeting. No-one took overall responsibility for ensuring that the event was organised and thus nothing happened.

On 9th March 1998 a planning meeting was arranged at School 1C. The researcher, the headteacher and both classteachers were present. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the resources they had collected, although other issues were included. The continuation of the project into the next academic year was discussed and it was stated that commitment to the project was only noticeable from School 1C. Indeed, no other project members had tried to initiate development or pursue issues raised, beyond the enthusiasm of the early stages of the project. (9.3.98a) The two classteachers at School 1C were devising an official scheme of work for Year 4 with the possibility of also including plans for Year 5. They planned to use the Key Stage 3 attainment target levels as an indication of pupil progress, as well as vocabulary tests, a termly assessment and a Record of Achievement at the end of the year.

The next plenary meeting took place on 18th March 1998 at School 1C. Those present were the researcher, the headteacher and one classteacher from School 1C, the classteacher from School 1B, one of the classteachers from School 1D and the remaining two specialist teachers from School 1A. The key management figures from all of the schools except School 1C were absent. This was further evidence of declining interest and lack of commitment. The bid for the National Primary Award was discussed, along with School 1C's plans for organising a trip to the target country, although they seemed not to include the other two schools. Without the 'managers' from the other schools, the meeting focused on School 1C's plans and the classteachers and specialist teachers from the other schools were not in a position to make important decisions about trips, events, policy, etc. Thus the meeting was fairly unproductive.

The specialist teacher at School 1D had attended a course about teaching modern foreign languages in primary schools. The emphasis had been on methodology and she tried out what she had learnt. Instead of using a simplified 'secondary school' approach, she presented a familiar nursery rhyme in the target language. There was a staggering difference in the response of the pupils. They were totally absorbed in the lesson and loved being able to join in and make silly animal noises! There were lots of related activities which could have lasted for several lessons, although unfortunately the teacher did not pursue them. The behaviour of the pupils was much improved. They were exposed to more target language than ever before and were beginning to pick up the vocabulary under the disguise of having fun. This was the best lesson that had been observed so far and emphasised the need for appropriate methodology and materials. (20.3.98a)

The next plenary meeting had been arranged for 30th April 1998 at School 1D but when the researcher arrived she was told it had been cancelled. The reason given was that union policy dictated that teachers could only attend one meeting after school per week and thus a telephone call had been received from School 1A to say that the specialist staff would not be attending. The headteacher of School 1C contacted the researcher the next day and said that he and the classteachers also went along to School 1D for the meeting and were angry that it had been cancelled and no-one had informed them. He reported that the headteacher of School 1A also said he had been intending to go to the meeting but had to see someone. It was unclear exactly who had cancelled the meeting. However, the headteacher of School 1C commented that he thought it was not worth having any more meetings. He also informed the

researcher of the firm arrangements for the day trip to the target country which was to take place on 11th July 1998.

The project continued in the same apathetic manner until the end of the academic year. There were no more plenary meetings and no collective plans for the development or continuation of the project. Lessons continued in all three schools in much the same format. One pupil at School 1D had been allowed to 'drop out' of the foreign language lessons and work on the computer instead because he did not like it and was otherwise disruptive. The specialist teacher at School 1D had also begun to miss lessons for a variety of reasons and therefore the continuity of teaching was being affected. Pupils at School 1C were highly motivated by the approach of the day trip to the target country. They were concentrating on the language they would need to use while they were in the country and were generally quite excited. The trip proved to be highly successful and enjoyable although it was felt to be too costly an exercise for the amount of actual time spent in the country. It was decided that they would not be repeating the day trip the following year.

A final end of year meeting was arranged for 1st July 1998 at School 1B in order to review the project and look ahead for the next year. Those present were the researcher, the head of modern foreign languages and one of the specialist teachers from School 1A, the classteacher from School 1B, the headteacher and one of the classteachers from School 1C and the two classteachers from School 1D. It was evident from this meeting that interest in the project had dwindled. The headteacher of School 1C was now in effect running his own foreign language programme and no longer needed to be involved with the other schools. The other two primary schools

would be happy for teaching to continue but were not actively seeking to develop an organised programme. If specialist teaching were offered they would accept it, but it seemed the headteachers were indifferent towards taking any further action. Indeed, several weeks prior to this meeting, the researcher wrote to the headteacher of School 1D offering her services as a qualified language teacher in order to ease the teaching situation for the second year of the project. However, the letter was ignored and when the researcher tried to contact her by telephone she refused to speak to her in person and instead relayed messages through the secretary. School 1A could not offer specialist teachers for the first term of the next academic year because of staffing difficulties and so it seemed probable that only School 1C would continue with foreign language teaching. In a later conversation with the headteacher of School 1A he confirmed that he was still keen for his school to be part of the project and hoped to supply some teaching time in the future. The possibility of sending sixth form students to do the teaching was also raised. At the end of the meeting the classteachers from School 1D had a private conversation with the researcher to complain about the specialist teacher. They said that she frequently missed lessons so that there was no continuity. They thought her pace was slow and that she had no idea what she was doing because there was no scheme of work. This may have been a possible reason why the headteacher of School 1D had lost interest in the project and wanted no more involvement in it, considering she had been one of the keenest people at the beginning.

As a final summary of the year the researcher wanted to get the views of the 'key managers' involved in the project. It was decided not to approach the headteacher of School 1B because he had distanced himself from the project from the very beginning

and would not be able to offer any insight into what had taken place. Instead the classteacher was asked for her views. She said it had been a good year and the children had enjoyed learning the foreign language. She added that nothing was going to take place now until January, when the staffing difficulties at School 1A were expected to be resolved. The headteacher of School 1C was happy with what had taken place in his school over the last year. Parents were enthusiastic and supportive and they had even included foreign language learning in the school report. It had always been his ambition to have a foreign language on the timetable and he was happy that it was now in place. He was disappointed that there was no enthusiasm or support from the LEA. The researcher was unable to learn the views of the headteacher at School 1D because she refused to talk to her. The headteacher of School 1A said he had been very pleased with what had taken place. It had been difficult with the illness of one of the specialist teachers and added that it would be fine again when they get a new member of staff. He said that the fact the project was continuing into the next academic year showed that it was going well. The researcher was shocked at this statement, since the project had collapsed and only one school was continuing with foreign language teaching through their individual endeavours. It was obvious that the headteacher at School 1A was not taking any responsibility for the project and was not in touch with what was really happening. As far as he knew it was going well!

7.5   *Continuation of the initiative: September 1998 onwards*

In early October the headteacher of School 1C reported that the foreign language was taking place in Year 4 and Year 5, although the two original project classteachers were no longer involved in the teaching since they had been assigned to Year 3.

However, one of them had been made into foreign language co-ordinator and was responsible for planning and development. All the staff were keen and enjoying the teaching and the parents were also keen. However, the teachers were concerned about appropriate methodology and pronunciation of words. The scheme of work had been written and the researcher was given a copy.

The researcher contacted the school again in April 1999 to see how the 'project' was progressing and if School 1A had resolved their staffing problem. The foreign language teaching was still taking place and the children were progressing. The school was working on its own with classteachers delivering the language as best they could, although the headteacher from School 1A had hinted that he may be able to provide some specialist teaching from September 1999 in order to support the Year 6 pupils at their more advanced stage. School 1C continued to make use of the student tutor scheme run by the University and valued the support they had received from the students. They were not planning a trip for this academic year because the cost and amount of travelling did not warrant the short amount of time spent in the country and staff were unwilling to give up a Saturday in order to go on a school trip. However, alternative foreign language related events were being planned.

On 21st April 1999 the researcher visited School 1C in order to observe lessons. The Year 4 teacher began with oral questions covering name and age but the children did not seem confident and were quite unsure of what to say. Next, they learnt some words for breakfast food items. A grammar point was introduced but was not pursued and it seemed confusing. The pupils were then required to draw a picture of their breakfast and label the items in French. There was little oral practice and one boy

said he was bored. The teacher explained that she only really felt confident in teaching lists of vocabulary and did not have the skills to talk to them in the target language. Even then, she was unsure of pronunciation. The Year 5 class began with greetings in the target language but then no further oral work took place. The pupils were given two sheets with pictures of sports and the words in the target language. They tried to pronounce the words as a whole class and then later recall the meaning in English. The classteacher was unsure of pronunciation. The pupils were then required to choose six of the sports and draw and label them. The staff were doing the best they could but the difficulties were evident. It was clear that a specialist teacher was needed in order for pupils to gain any real foreign language competence. It was clear that the emphasis of teaching had shifted from language acquisition to language awareness.

In November 1999 the researcher contacted School 1C again to find out if the foreign language teaching was still taking place. The headteacher was still very committed and the language was being taught in Years 4, 5 and 6. School 1A was still unable to provide a specialist teacher for the year 6 pupils although the headteacher still asserted that he was keen for this to happen in the future. The Year 6 classteachers were carrying out the teaching themselves but felt their capabilities were being tested and identified a vital need for specialist teaching. It was hoped that this could be provided for the summer term before the pupils transferred to secondary school. The headteacher of School 1C also re-emphasised his disappointment about the lack of support from the LEA.

Final contact with School 1C was on 14th July 2000. School 1A had been unable to deliver any specialist teaching for the summer term because it was still experiencing its own staffing problems. However, the foreign language was still a firm part of the curriculum in School 1C and was well received by parents, although the headteacher did acknowledge that all they could realistically offer was basic foreign language awareness. He was still keen to arrange extra curricular activities and links with other schools, although his ongoing disappointment with the lack of interest from the LEA was clearly evident.

7.6   Analysis of Phase 1

The Phase 1 primary modern foreign language initiative was fundamentally flawed from the outset. Although the initiative was a potentially pertinent and important contribution to modern foreign language education and to primary education, it was realised through naïve enthusiasm rather than through informed planning and organisation. The idea for the project was put forward by the headteacher of the secondary school. The educational value of the project was obvious, although the relevance of the initiative to the bid for language college status was also a highly influential factor. Three of the feeder primary schools were to be involved in the project but the validity of their involvement was never questioned. They were situated in geographical proximity to the secondary school but did not yield very many pupils at the point of transfer each year. Thus the issue of continuity was already a potential problem.

A major contribution to the 'failure' of the project was the relatively small amount of time that was spent planning before teaching began. No guidance from authoritative

organisations was sought and no research into historical and existing primary modern foreign language practice had taken place. Aims and objectives, schemes of work and assessment criteria had not been devised and resources had not been purchased. Similarly, long-term issues, namely the provision of specialist teaching in subsequent years and continuity of learning between the primary and secondary sectors had not been considered. Even after teaching had been well established, these issues had not been developed and it was assumed that each school would do this individually. I believe that a common policy was required so that each school could work to the same structure and at the same depth and pace. In reality, only two schools devised aims and objectives and only one of these schools developed an official scheme of work and some vague plans for assessment.

A significant flaw in the project was that it lacked leadership. A teacher designated as a project manager was needed to co-ordinate and develop the initiative, to address issues, to delegate responsibilities, to ensure that duties were being carried out, to evaluate progress and to inspire the other project members to be more accountable for their individual involvement. In my own considered view, this person should have been a representative of School 1A, since the idea originated from that school and because it was providing the teaching. However, the change of headteacher with different priorities may have been a contributing factor to the problem of leadership. In reality, no-one assumed or was given the role; therefore, important issues were never effectively managed and ideas were never pursued. Feelings of powerlessness amongst the teaching staff were evident and the involvement of key managers i.e. headteachers and the head of modern foreign languages at School 1A was minimal. The headteacher of School 1A was clearly out of touch with the reality of the project,

wrongly assuming it had been successful after the first year! Only the headteacher of School 1C showed firm commitment because he felt his credibility was at stake if the foreign language teaching in his school did not 'succeed'. Although he did assume responsibility for chairing and influencing the agenda of the plenary meetings, because no-one else had volunteered, his interest was understandably biased towards his own school. It was not long before School 1C branched away from the project, since no-one else was providing any input to arrange events, seek sponsorship or address necessary planning issues for the schools as a combined whole. Thus, School 1C struggled on, meeting challenges as best it could, while the others let events take their course until the project dwindled to its inevitable end.

Other contributing factors to the downfall of the project was the lack of long-term support from School 1A in terms of providing specialist teaching, the unavoidable problem of long-term staff illness, the lack of appropriate teaching methodology, the failure to measure pupil progress and the inappropriate timing of lessons in the case of School 1D.

In summary, the naïve enthusiasm to begin the project led to insufficient planning and preparation. Thus, avoidable problems were encountered from the outset, which affected long-term motivation and interest. Bigger challenges such as the continuity of learning and the provision of specialist teaching beyond the first year of the initiative were never addressed and thus the project was doomed to failure from the beginning. The project lacked leadership, line management and accountability. No-one had to account for its success as a whole and thus it was no surprise to witness unresolved issues and ideas, increasing lack of interest and in some cases dull and

poorly prepared lessons. Only School 1C 'succeeded' with the initiative in terms of retaining the foreign language as part of the school curriculum, primarily because the headteacher felt personally accountable to the governors, parents and pupils. However, even with his firm display of leadership, without the support of specialist teaching, the pursuit of foreign language acquisition soon evolved into little more than a course in basic foreign language awareness.

Thus the flaws may be categorised under two main headings: i) management and organisation and ii) teacher competence. The first category includes lack of leadership, line management, accountability, curriculum planning and syllabus design. The second category includes foreign language competence, pedagogical professionalism and curriculum planning and syllabus design seen as a teacher responsibility. The inability to seek advice on methods of teaching, to investigate best practice and sources of proven materials would also fall into this category.

This analysis, therefore, suggests a number of factors that may be critical for success. They would be: management, organisation, leadership, accountability, teacher competence and pedagogical professionalism.

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[1] See Appendix 3 for Brief Description of Schools
[2] See Appendix 4 for Lesson Observation / Meeting / Interview Schedule
[3] Aston University is involved in the Community Service Volunteers (CSV) initiative and makes its contribution by sending students to assist in local schools and colleges for one morning or afternoon per week for the ten weeks of the Spring term.
[4] See 10.3
[5] See Appendix 5 for Excerpts from Collected Data
[6] See Appendix 6 for Commentary on Phase 1
[7] See DfEE (1999), *Modern Foreign Languages The National Curriculum for England* pp37-47

Chapter 8   Phase 2: A broader perspective of different models (Part 1)

8.1   Methods of research

It was necessary to set up Phase 2 of the research not simply since Phase 1 had to be deemed a failure, but also because it would provide a good comparison of approaches to organising and managing primary modern foreign language programmes, and a necessary opportunity for validating the critical success factors identified. In order to locate new initiatives the researcher telephoned language advisers at seven LEAs, hoping they would be able to provide information about primary modern foreign language activities in their local areas. The general response highlighted a lack of involvement at the advisory level, thus indicating the way in which primary modern foreign language teaching is largely unsupported in an official capacity within the educational system.[1]

One adviser reported that some primary schools were offering a foreign language on an individual basis, even though there was nothing organised through the LEA. He did not know explicitly which schools were involved but was able to provide a list of possible names. Another adviser acknowledged that there were a number of primary schools teaching foreign languages, even though there was no LEA policy. Prior to the National Curriculum there had been a big push to encourage primary schools to teach foreign languages but since the introduction of the National Curriculum there had been a decline in the number of schools offering a foreign language. He also stated that many language specialists who were primary school teachers moved into the secondary sector so that they could make use of their linguistic skills. He was unwilling to offer the names of specific primary schools teaching modern foreign languages.

Other LEAs were vague or did not return telephone calls. However, the researcher was able to locate two LEAs, whose advisers were knowledgeable about the primary modern foreign language situation in their areas. One reported that several primary schools ran language clubs but also there was an initiative involving a secondary schools and two feeder primary schools in existence. The teacher in charge of the initiative was contacted and permission to carry out research was granted. The adviser at the second LEA commented that the LEA cannot promote foreign languages in primary schools because they lack resources and because there is no government support. However, they do offer consultations for any schools that wish to set up primary modern foreign language schemes. He reported that many primary schools offer some modern foreign language teaching but suggested that some of the middle schools[2] in the area should be contacted since language teaching for the younger pupils is properly organised and has been for a number of years. He gave the names of five middle schools, which were contacted and permission to conduct research in two of them was given.

Based on the outcomes of the Phase 1 research, an initial interview was devised and conducted with the head of modern foreign languages at the secondary school (School 2A), which was involved in the initiative with two of its feeder primary schools (School 2B, School 2C); and with the head of modern foreign languages at both of the two middle schools (School 2D, School 2E).[3] Several lesson observations were carried out in Schools 2B, 2D and 2E and data from these and from further telephone conversations were recorded in the research diary.

8.2   Management and organisation

The first initiative (Schools 2A, 2B and 2C) was similar to the Phase 1 initiative, in that visiting secondary school teachers were providing specialist foreign language instruction in local primary schools as a new venture. The Key Stage 2 teaching programmes in Schools 2D and 2E differed from Phase 1 because the teaching of the younger pupils had long been established and because of the nature of middle school organisation. Middle schools, along with their feeder first schools are organised in a pyramid structure, which includes just one high school. The same foreign language is taught within each individual pyramid so that there is no interruption in foreign language studies when pupils transfer to high school. Pupils have to start learning a modern foreign language when they reach Key Stage 3 (i.e. Year 7). As a result, middle schools employ foreign language specialists to carry out the teaching and provide a number of specialist classrooms for this purpose. If middle schools decide to include modern foreign languages at Key Stage 2, pupils will benefit from the specialist teaching and from the specialist language environment, and the issue of continuity between the two Key Stages will not arise.

8.2.1   Leadership

The headteacher of School 2A had previously been a modern foreign language teacher and head of department and as a result modern foreign languages had a high status in the school. In addition, the school was strongly interested in primary school liaison and all departmental heads were given the responsibility of marketing their subject and initiating / maintaining links with the local primary schools. As a result, the head of modern foreign languages introduced taster lessons in French for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils but was keen to implement a more formal Key Stage 2 programme in the

future. Eventually, the headteachers of Schools 2B and 2C approached her to request that the initiative be started. The headteacher of School 2A fully supported the scheme and allowed the time needed to deliver the lessons on a weekly basis. The head of department sought guidance from the language adviser at the LEA and also won two financial awards in order to set up and run the initiative. It was thus clear that strong leadership was firmly in place. The head of department had taken responsibility for the initiative and was fully supported by the interest of the headteacher.

The head of German at School 2D considered German to be a strength in the school and wanted to build on it. As a result, German teaching at Key Stage 2 was introduced and had been in existence for three years at the time the research was carried out. Owing to the organisation of middle schools, leadership was not an issue in Schools 2D and 2E, since the heads of department were responsible for all aspects of subject teaching and development. However, the belief of the head of department at School 2D in the importance of learning foreign languages from an early age and his enthusiasm for his subject was the motivation behind implementing and maintaining the Key Stage 2 German programme.

The Key Stage 2 French programme at School 2E had long been established since the early 1970s and was an accepted part of the Key Stage 2 curriculum within the school. When the new headteacher joined the school, he was unsure that the provision of French at Key Stage 2 was a worthwhile endeavour. However, after several lesson observations he concluded that French was an important part of the curriculum.

8.2.2   Accountability

The manager of the School 2A initiative was thus accountable to a number of people for the success of the scheme. She was accountable to School 2A for making effective use of the teaching time allowed and for maintaining the reputation of the school; to herself for maintaining her own reputation as an effective head of department and modern foreign language teacher; to the LEA adviser who requested evidence of teaching and learning; to the financial awarding bodies, who also requested evidence of teaching and learning in the form of lesson plans and evaluative data; and to the staff, pupils and parents of Schools 2B and 2C, for delivering the promised foreign language programme. Such a strong need for accountability combined with personal belief in teaching foreign languages to young children provided ample motivation to set up and maintain a 'successful' foreign language initiative.

Accountability, like leadership, was never an issue in Schools 2D and 2E because of the nature of middle school organisation. The teaching at Key Stage 2 was an integral part of the work of the modern foreign language departments, for which the heads of department and foreign language teachers were already responsible.

8.2.3   Curriculum planning

The School 2A initiative began its foreign language teaching programme with Year 3 pupils in January 1998. There was only enough funding available to continue with this same year group through to the end of year 6, therefore, subsequent year groups could not be included in the scheme. It had been decided that the language to be taught would be French since that was the language taught in Year 7 at the secondary

school. The head of department would teach in one of the primary schools and a colleague would teach in the other primary school, both teaching a thirty-minute lesson per week.

The aim of the initiative was to measure how far the pupils progressed in four years and to observe and evaluate problems as they arose, in order to develop an effective approach to primary foreign language teaching. Although the issue of continuity could not be satisfactorily managed without widespread provision, she hoped to create an 'express' set for those pupils entering Year 7 who had taken part in the four year programme, with the possibility of taking the GCSE examination early.

Foreign language teaching was carried out in Year 5 and Year 6 in both Schools 2D and 2E, in addition to the Key Stage 3 teaching. In School 2D, the younger pupils received one lesson lasting fifty-five minutes each week, taught by the specialist German teachers. However, not all staff were happy with the inclusion of German in the Key Stage 2 timetable because of the great demands in curriculum time made by the National Literacy Strategy. Some staff felt that German should be forfeited in order to create more time for the statutory Key Stage 2 curriculum but the head of department was prepared to fight for the continuation of German teaching.

Since the continuity of teaching between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 is not an issue in middle schools, the modern foreign language department was able to develop a progressive scheme of work from Year 5 up to Year 8. It was intended that they could begin the Key Stage 3 work earlier, so that pupils would be more advanced when they moved on to the high school. The aims of the Key Stage 2 programme

were to provide pupils with a fun and enjoyable educational experience, to raise awareness and improve attitudes towards language learning and to equip pupils with the basics of the target language. The head of department intended to develop the Key Stage 2 programme over time. In particular he wanted to improve differentiation, research resources and revise the scheme of work.

In School 2E, pupils in Year 5 received two thirty-five minute lessons and pupils in Year 6 received four thirty-five minute lessons per week. However, because of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, two of the Year 6 lessons were in danger of being lost. The overall aim of the Key Stage 2 French programme was that pupils should feel comfortable and confident with spoken French, whether in pairs, with the teacher or other adults. It was hoped to develop the programme by including more opportunities for IT.

8.2.4   Syllabus design

It had been decided in the School 2A initiative to use the commercially produced French course *La Jolie Ronde*, which is specifically aimed at primary age pupils. The course contains pupils workbooks, cassettes, flashcards and teacher notes. It was chosen because there is a support network available for teachers using the materials and because it is well structured. The course was being used as a comprehensive scheme of work since it contained structured activities in all four foreign language skills, although the emphasis was on listening and speaking in the early stages. The assessment of listening and speaking was built in to the course and pupils had a Record of Achievement page to complete as the course progressed. The Key Stage 3 level descriptors were also used as a measure of pupil progress. The teachers used the

scheme of work to create their own lesson plans each week, which were officially documented as evidence of teaching. It was clear that much careful research and planning had been carried out in the preparation of syllabus content, assessment and acquisition of resources.

In School 2D, syllabus content had not been planned in great detail at the beginning of the programme, but had been allowed to evolve. This approach was feasible because continuity was not an issue, the school was equipped with a specialist modern foreign language department and specialist resources and the modern foreign language teachers were committed and conscientious in their work. Informal assessment had been built into the Key Stage 2 programme. Pupils were given marks for the activities they had completed in their class books and they were awarded a grade from A to E for their performance in speaking, based on pronunciation, fluency and retention. Reading and writing were not a key feature of the Key Stage 2 programme. No specially produced resources were used, rather the modern foreign language teachers made use of the language resources already available at the school.

In School 2E, the syllabus content had long been established over many years. Year 5 pupils were taught basic topics, complemented with teacher based resources. In Year 6, pupils began working with the *Route Nationale* French course, designed for secondary school beginners, although teachers adapted the activities to suit the needs of the pupils. *Route Nationale* was thus used as the scheme of work, although they frequently made their own additions to the course and were able to include more fun activities at this level. Board games and French readers were also used. Assessment in Year 5 was made by general teacher impression and was included in the school

report. Year 6 pupils worked through the assessments in the *Route Nationale* course and speaking was assessed by the professional judgement of the teacher.

8.3   Teacher competence

Observation data from Phase 1 indicated that teacher competence had a direct influence on the attainment, confidence and motivation of pupils. The researcher observed in the School 2A initiative that pupils were very enthusiastic about their French lessons. They could say and understand a lot of target language, there were lots of volunteers to answer questions and even pupils with special educational needs made a large contribution to the lessons. A later observation carried out by the researcher revealed that pupils were still keen, that they knew and understood a wider range of vocabulary, that they were comfortable with the explanation of points of grammar and that in general they had gained confidence. It was thus to be concluded that teacher competence was a strength of this initiative.

The researcher also observed pupils in Schools 2D and 2E to be focused and enthusiastic in their foreign language lessons, including pupils with special educational needs, and comfortable with the exposure to the target language.

8.3.1   Language competence

A high linguistic ability was to be expected of the teachers in the Phase 2 programmes since they were all specialist modern foreign language teachers. This was confirmed by the observation of competent linguistic delivery and confidence during lessons. Much use of the target language was made including classroom instructions, and it was observed by the researcher that the pupils were comfortable with the exposure to

the target language and understood most of what was happening. There were no negative reactions, and instructions were carried out accordingly.

8.3.2 *Pedagogical professionalism*

The School 2A initiative had been thoroughly planned before the teaching programme began. The resources had been carefully selected and purchased and the scheme of work and arrangements for assessment had been considered. The specially produced resources included activities appropriate to primary school pupils, for example games and songs, and the teacher tried to incorporate activities in all four language skills in each lesson. Pupils were even expected to undertake a very simple homework activity in their workbooks each week. Detailed lesson plans were written for each lesson. The pace of lessons was brisk and efficient and the teacher conveyed good classroom presence. She appeared to be confident, competent, interesting and friendly with the pupils but firm in her expectations of their behaviour and attention. She was enthusiastic about the initiative and this was reflected in her approach to teaching.

The overwhelming feature of the quality of the German teaching in School 2D was the sheer enthusiasm and motivation communicated by the head of department in his lessons. The language environment he had created in his classroom was outstanding and the rapport he had with the pupils was excellent. Although the approach to teaching was adapted from the Key Stage 3 syllabus, the Key Stage 2 programme included more pupil interaction, games, role-play and songs, making it more appropriate for younger learners.

Although the style of teaching at School 2E was more formal, which was observed to be a reflection of the whole school ethos, rather than an example of inappropriate methodology, pupils appeared to be enthusiastic in their French lessons and displayed a notable level of attainment and confidence in their observed speaking activities.

8.3.3   *Curriculum planning and syllabus design*

In the School 2A initiative, the syllabus content had already been planned by means of using a commercially produced primary French course. Therefore, there was no need for individual teachers to be responsible for planning schemes of work. However, they were required to produce individual lesson plans for each lesson, although this is an expected duty of any competent teacher.

In Schools 2D and 2E, curriculum planning and syllabus design was organised at the departmental level; therefore, individual teachers were only responsible for their own lesson plans.

8.4   *Analysis of Phase 2*

The Phase 2 primary foreign language programmes could be described as successful in terms of the observed outcomes of pupil attainment and enthusiasm. Each of the three programmes had a specified manager who was accountable for the co-ordination and development of teaching and learning. The aims and objectives of each programme had been clearly identified and schemes of work and resources had been organised or were in the process of being developed. Pupils in all three programmes benefited from specialist language teaching and from clearly designed lessons which contained activities appropriate to their level of educational development. Pupil

progress was also constantly monitored by means of informal assessments throughout the programmes. The strong management, organisation and competent teaching could thus be linked to the outcomes of pupil enthusiasm, motivation and linguistic attainment.

However, practical problems were still a major challenge to the continuation of these programmes. The School 2A initiative could only afford to run the scheme for four years with the same year group. Unless sufficient ongoing funding could be secured, the scheme would have to cease at the end of four years. Although Schools 2D and 2E were not faced with this problem, since funding for Key Stage 2 was taken from the departmental budget, the issue of time had become a real challenge. Due to the increasing demands of the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum, foreign language lessons were under threat of being reduced.

The Phase 2 programmes have thus shown what can be achieved given effective management and teaching, but have also highlighted that even with those vital elements in place, the ongoing success of Key Stage 2 foreign language programmes cannot be guaranteed in the face of practical issues which are beyond the control of the teachers.

The findings from this research phase suggest that the factors of management, organisation, leadership, accountability, teacher competence and pedagogical professionalism are indeed critical to the success of teaching and learning modern foreign languages in the primary sector. They would seem to confirm the findings from Phase 1.

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[1] However, there are notable exceptions. Kent and the London Borough of Richmond, for example, offer highly organised programmes of modern foreign language teaching in primary schools.

[2] Middle schools are attended by pupils from Year 5 to Year 8.

[3] See Appendix 7 for *Initial Interview Questions (Phase 2)*

Chapter 9   Phase 3: A broader perspective of different models (Part 2)

9.1   Methods of research

Phase 3 of the research project was set up in order to compare the outcomes of the Phase 2 programmes with data from a wider range of primary school foreign language programmes. The purpose was to employ, and thus further evaluate the identified success criteria and this was carried out by means of a questionnaire in the first instance.

The first draft of the questionnaire was devised based on the evidence from the 1960s French Pilot Scheme and the outcomes of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 initiatives. Before the questionnaire could be distributed to the schools, it was piloted in order to elicit professional comment and criticism. It was thus sent to the head of modern foreign languages at School 2A and to a foreign language adviser at CILT, who provided positive feedback. It was then possible to draw up the final draft[1], which was sent to forty-four schools throughout the country. The schools were known to be involved with primary modern foreign languages and were identified through a variety of sources: through LEA recommendation, from lists of participants at primary modern foreign language courses organised by CILT and from articles in the *Times Educational Supplement* and national newspapers. Four of the schools, (Schools 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D), which responded positively to the questionnaire, were visited in order that lesson observations and interviews could be carried out.

9.2   Results of the questionnaire[2]

There were thirteen positive responses and five negative responses to the questionnaire. Ten of the schools that responded positively were mainstream schools,

two were independent schools and one was a Church-aided school. Two of the schools were in fact secondary schools and one of the schools was running only a language club.

The data gathered from the positive responses highlighted a significant difference in the provision of foreign language teaching from school to school, in terms of management, organisation, curriculum planning, syllabus design, teacher competence and approach to practical difficulties. It is difficult to assess from a questionnaire whether these foreign language programmes could be described as 'successful' since the mere existence of foreign language provision is no proof that pupils are being taught effectively and are progressing. However, it may be conjectured that this small cross-section of schools is typical of the wider picture of primary foreign language provision in England and Wales. Despite the efforts of CILT and other language learning organisations to develop primary modern foreign language pedagogy, and to assist in the development of policy guidelines[3], primary foreign language teaching remains unregulated and thus huge differences in the quality of provision exist.

The questionnaire showed the key areas of teacher competence, (Organisation: Question 8), assessment (Organisation: Question 13) and continuity between the Key Stages (Organisation: Question 17) to be clearly lacking; and timetabling and staffing were identified as common problems (Evaluation: Question 14). In addition, the five negative responses highlighted the fragile nature of foreign language provision in primary schools. All five schools had previously taught a foreign language but at the time the research was carried out, the foreign language programmes had been terminated. Two of the schools gave no reason for this but the remaining three

schools explained that it was due to the retirement / resignation of the individual members of staff involved.

9.3   Phase 3 observations and interviews

Based on the questionnaire responses, interview questions and observation criteria were devised in order to carry out the interviews and observations at the four schools that had agreed to participate further in the research.[4]

9.3.1   School 3A

The French teaching programme in this school had been running for six years and had been implemented as a result of the belief and enthusiasm of the headteacher. (See Appendix 11: 1, 8, 10, 16) The aim of the programme was to promote enjoyment, confidence and fluent conversation and had been set up by the headteacher for the educational benefit of the pupils, stemming from her strong feeling about the importance of European citizenship. (8) Thus, leadership was observed to be a strong element of the programme. (1, 8) The visiting specialist teacher, who was not at that time working in any other area of modern foreign language teaching, was responsible for planning and developing the subject and assessing new resources, and was therefore accountable to the headteacher. (5) A thirty-minute lesson took place on Monday mornings for each of the three mixed Year 5 / Year 6 classes and the headteacher had allowed one class to miss assembly each week in order to accommodate the lessons.

The teacher was observed to be competent both linguistically and in her approach to lesson delivery. As a result, pupils were observed to be enthusiastic and there were

many examples of good pronunciation. The pupils were also very well behaved. (17) However, there were no arrangements for assessment, French was not included in the school report and there were no real plans for the continuity of learning between the Key Stages, although it was stated that these areas were under development. (12, 13, 14) The greatest challenge to the programme had been fitting the lessons into the already overcrowded curriculum.

9.3.2   School 3B

The French teaching programme in School 3B had been in place for eight years and had been implemented by a very enthusiastic headteacher who had strong personal European links. (See Appendix 12: 3, 8) The aim of the programme was to give Year 6 pupils a 'bridge' into secondary school modern foreign language learning. (6) Thus the teaching focused more on language awareness and on European awareness in general. (1, 7) Other reasons for implementing the programme were because the city in which the school is based has European links with industry, and also to keep abreast of pending developments in modern foreign language / European education. Leadership and accountability were observed to be the strengths of the programme. (3, 5, 8)

Pupils in Year 6 received a forty-five to sixty minute lesson each week, which was taught by the headteacher who had an A-level in French. Access to observe lessons was not granted, therefore the researcher was unable to determine whether the teacher was linguistically and pedagogically competent, or to observe pupil performance. However, the researcher was invited to attend a special 'extended lesson' which focused on cultural awareness – on this occasion a French food-tasting session. (10,

11) Much enthusiasm amongst the pupils was observed although almost no French was used throughout the lesson. (12, 13)

No scheme of work had been devised, although a Modern Foreign Language Policy Document existed. (9) Progress was assessed informally by means of a quiz, and school reports had a space for a comment about French. No arrangements for continuity had been made, although this may have been unnecessary for a course based on language and cultural awareness. (7) The headteacher admitted that if he were to leave the school, the French programme would probably stop. (8)

9.3.3 *School 3C*

Modern foreign languages had been taught at School 3C for so long that there was no-one left who knew when and why it had begun. The headteacher had no involvement in the foreign language programme, although leadership did not appear to be an issue because the subject was managed and developed by a visiting specialist teacher, who was not currently working in any other modern foreign language teaching sector. (See Appendix 13: 3) The modern foreign language programme was perceived as a learning experience, which would broaden pupils' horizons whilst at primary school. (1) The aims of the programme were to develop an enthusiasm for language learning, to demonstrate that foreign language learning is for all pupils and to raise awareness and curiosity about how language works.

Pupils in Year 5 received one thirty minute French lesson per week and pupils in Year 6 received two thirty minute French lessons for the first three half-terms and then two thirty minute German lessons for the remaining three half-terms. The focus of the

modern foreign language programme was thus on language awareness. A policy for modern foreign language teaching existed, as well as a detailed scheme of work. A variety of commercial and home-produced resources were used. Pupils were taught by a linguistically competent teacher, (10) although her approach was observed to be rather academic, (12) and a loss of interest and inappropriate behaviour from some pupils was noted. (13, 16) However, pupils did respond positively to instructions given in the target language. (14) Assessment was carried out informally and no arrangements for continuity had been made due to the large number of feeder secondary schools involved at the point of transfer. (8, 9)

9.3.4   School 3D

School 3D was a secondary school involved in a larger initiative with a cluster of nine feeder primary schools. It had in fact become one of the DfEE Good Practice Projects, although it had begun five years ago, including a pilot year. The initiative was introduced because one of the primary schools expressed an interest in foreign language teaching, which the secondary school followed up. The aims of the programme were to encourage fun and participation, to develop language learning skills and to promote cross-curricular content. No specific reference to language acquisition was made, however.

Leadership and accountability were very strong in this initiative. The secondary school had employed another language teacher in order to cover the time spent in the primary schools by the two specialist teachers involved in the programme. These two teachers were responsible for the programme and were accountable to the individual primary schools, which were paying for the teaching, to the LEA, which had provided

a lump sum of money and also in recent times to the DfEE, which was monitoring progress as part of the Good Practice Project. (See Appendix 14: 1, 3, 10) The choice of language[5] and length of lessons were determined by each individual primary school, although only pupils in Year 6 or mixed Year 5 / Year 6 classes received lessons. There were detailed schemes of work for both languages and resources were mostly home-produced, although some commercial resources were used.

Both teachers were specialist linguists and they were also experienced in primary modern foreign language pedagogy and actively involved with professional development in this field. One of them was a member of the Primary Languages Network based at CILT. Thus pupils benefited from competent teaching, which was inspiring to observe. (10, 11) Pupils displayed a positive attitude and enthusiasm, and linguistic confidence was especially evident in the performance of many pupils. (12) Assessment was carried out informally by means of a Record of Achievement. (14) The teachers expressed no difficulty with the issue of continuity. They receive most of the pupils they teach in the primary schools and employ specific pedagogical approaches in Year 7 in order to overcome the differences in the foreign language experiences of the pupils. (4) The greatest challenges had been timetabling the primary visits into the secondary school day and making all their own resources.

9.4   Analysis of Phase 3

Strong management and organisation and competent teaching were among the essential elements of the success of the Phase 2 foreign language programmes. All three programmes were managed and organised by specialist language teachers who also worked in specialist foreign language departments. However, issues of

practicality were discovered to be a potential threat to the existence of the programmes. The initiatives under observation in Phase 3 reflected a wider picture of current primary modern foreign language teaching in a variety of contexts. The striking feature of these programmes was that they often lacked the essential elements of teacher competence and organisation, but they also highlighted the similar problem of timetabling, in addition to the problem of staffing. Indeed, the isolated nature of many of the individual primary school programmes meant that if the 'language' teacher were to leave the school, it would be quite likely that the foreign language programme would stop, as was the case in three of the schools. Although lesson observations were only carried out in programmes with specialist teachers, the most successful observed pupil outcomes were those where the linguistic and pedagogical competence of teachers were evident. No invitations to observe lessons given by non-specialist teachers were offered. The programme in School 3A could be described as successful in terms of pupil outcome, although progress was not assessed. The programme in School 3B was successful in terms of realising its prescribed aim of promoting language and cultural awareness. The academic approach to foreign language teaching in School 3C was perhaps a barrier to pupil motivation and interest and may well have had an impact on progress. However, direct language acquisition was not specified as an aim of the programme. The School 3D initiative could be described as successful because of the observed outcomes of competent pupil performance. This programme was the most striking of all the thirteen schools that replied positively to the questionnaire. It was similar to the Phase 2 programmes in two ways: i) in its structure of teaching delivered by specialist language teachers operating from a specialist language base; ii) in the existence of the essential elements

of management, organisation (which includes assessment and continuity), leadership, accountability, teacher competence and pedagogical professionalism.

It may be concluded, therefore, that all of the above six critical success factors are necessary for a successful primary modern foreign language programme where language acquisition is an expected outcome. Initiatives are more likely to be successful if they are organised by specialist teachers with experience of modern foreign language subject management, and these teachers are more likely to be found in secondary schools in the present educational structure. In general, primary modern foreign language programmes with no access to secondary school modern foreign language expertise can only realistically offer courses in language awareness. This, of course, raises the question of what could or should be the realistic aims of primary modern foreign language teaching today.

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[1] See Appendix 8 for the *Questionnaire Final Draft (Phase 3)*
[2] See Appendix 9 for *Results of the Questionnaire (Phase 3)*
[3] See Chapter 4
[4] See Appendix 10 for *Interview Questions and Observation Criteria (Phase 3)*
[5] French or German

Chapter 10   Language Colleges and modern foreign language teaching in the primary school

10.1   The Nuffield Languages Inquiry

In the Spring of 1998, the Nuffield Languages Inquiry was launched, with the intention that it would run until the end of 1999.   The inquiry was set up by the Nuffield Foundation in order to 'take stock of our national capability in languages'.[1]   This meant estimating the country's needs for linguistic ability over the next twenty years and assessing whether the present situation represented 'a firm foundation for the future'.[2]   As part of the inquiry, all sectors of language education including the primary sector were investigated and many recommendations were made as a result of the findings.   In general it was concluded that: 'The UK needs a change of policy and practice to fit us for the new millennium.   We want to see language skills built into the culture and practice of British business.   One way or another we must give our children a better start with languages and equip them to go on learning through life.   We should make the maximum use of the opportunities opened up by European links and funding.   We need to aim higher and deliver better.   In practical terms, this demands a coherent national strategy for languages, reflected (and earning its place) in our changing educational curriculum and driven with determination.'[3]

Specifically, the inquiry recognised the importance of early language learning as a foundation on which to build linguistic capability: 'Parents, employers and the wider public alike believe that language learning should start early.   A clear national action

programme is now needed to introduce the learning of other languages into primary school education. For this to become generalised in UK schools, a range of imaginative short- and longer-term measures will be necessary to overcome the organisational and resource issues.'[4]

The inquiry highlighted a number of related issues and recommendations. It was recognised that starting to learn a foreign language from an early age is of great educational and social benefit. Communication and literacy skills are enriched and much linguistic progress can be made since pupils are at a very receptive stage in their cognitive development. Positive attitudes to languages and language diversity can also be developed.

National initiatives since the 1960s were highlighted as a means to show that there has been a history of uneven policy direction regarding primary modern foreign language teaching in the UK. The collapse of the French Pilot Scheme caused attitudes towards primary modern foreign language teaching to be cautious, although public interest rapidly increased in the late 1980s and 1990s. However, no commitment to a national policy was made, except in Scotland. In more recent times, the government has given its support to a feasibility study, with the possibility of a future policy initiative (The Good Practice Project).[5]

It was further pointed out that at present the provision for learning is haphazard. Although it has been estimated that around 25% of primary schools teach a foreign

language, there are major differences in features such as course objectives, time allocation, starting age, teaching arrangements and the degree of integration into the primary curriculum. Conversely, most schools offer French, although the Scottish initiative has made a deliberate commitment to language diversification.

The inquiry recognised the fact that continuity into secondary schools is a key problem. This was identified by the 1960s French Pilot Scheme and still remains unresolved today, proving to be one of the major obstacles to success. Frustration and disillusionment have often been the result and the situation has been made more difficult with the advent of parental choice of secondary school. Secondary schools have increasingly large numbers of feeder primary schools. Therefore, the primary modern foreign language experience of Year 7 pupils is likely to be quite diverse and thus difficult to manage effectively.

The difficulty in finding suitably qualified teachers, another obstacle to success, was directly linked to initial teacher training courses. Aspiring primary teachers are not required to have qualifications in modern foreign languages and there are only a few training institutions that offer modern foreign language study at this level. In some areas in-service training is offered to existing primary teachers but this can only be a temporary solution.

The argument that French is the only language that the UK could realistically aim to teach nationally at the primary level was questioned. The central concern of the Inquiry

was ultimately to promote language diversification, although it was conceded that French might have to be the more dominant language in the short term.

It was also highlighted that radical approaches are more likely to attract success than less ambitious schemes. Research suggests that the more radical the scheme, the more successful the outcome. For example, children taught from the age of five, or those who receive most of their education through the medium of a foreign language make more progress than those who start later, or who receive one or two foreign language lessons per week, respectively.

Finally, the Inquiry underlined the great benefit that awareness of modern foreign languages can have on literacy, thus enhancing the National Literacy Strategy that is now central to the National Curriculum.[6]

As a result of the above findings, a number of recommendations were drawn up and detailed as follows:

'Early learning should be a key part of the national strategy. The government should declare a long-term commitment to early language learning by setting up a national action programme to cater for all pupils in primary school education, within the framework of a coherent of a coherent national strategy for languages education in the UK. A package of measures is needed, to raise the profile of early language learning, to address long-term solutions, and at the same time to support and strengthen existing

provision. The national strategy must also provide a framework for schools to use when planning their long-term arrangements.

The government should spearhead development. In the light of the success of its Language Colleges initiative in raising the profile of languages and encouraging innovation, the government should establish an ongoing fund to support the progressive designation of primary schools as 'international primary schools' for parents who would like their child educated from age 5 through the medium of a new language. The level of funding should allow at least 100 schools a year to be designated for the next ten years. The aim would be for children to become bilingual in the new language by the age of 11. Schools bidding for funding would undertake to provide for at least one class each year to be educated mainly or wholly through the medium of the target language. The choice of language would not be limited to French. There would be agreement with a partner secondary school or schools to ensure continuity.

Provide targets for all primary schools. In tandem with the development of designated international primary schools, the government should declare a ten-year target to provide an entitlement for all pupils to learn a new language from age 7, based on 10% of curriculum time, integrated with other subjects or taught separately.

Reward co-operation between schools. Continuity into secondary education is a cornerstone of success, and diversity should not be allowed to dissolve into confusion. The government should offer financial incentives to encourage primary and secondary

schools to form groups in order to agree a common pattern of provision for early language learning, including the choice of languages and continuity arrangements.

Equip, train and support new teachers. A series of measures is needed to ensure enough teachers in the longer term:

- All entrants to higher education – and therefore to initial teacher training – should be required to show evidence of continued and accredited study of a language beyond 16;
- Initial teacher training should include the opportunity for entrants to develop the further linguistic and professional skills required for teaching a language;
- An ongoing programme of retraining and incentives for existing primary school teachers should be funded immediately, alongside a drive to recruit returners and speakers of other languages. These measures should be underpinned by the developments of high-profile part-time courses addressing issues specific to early language teaching;
- Primary schools should be offered incentives to recruit foreign language assistants as classroom helpers.

Make the most of expert teachers. The government should, as a matter of urgency, develop pilot projects with a view to making the skills of expert teachers available to support primary teachers. Online networks allow the experience and expertise of

excellent language teachers to be widely shared. They also provide teachers with access to direct exchange of ideas and experience with other teachers.

Language awareness should contribute to the Literacy Strategy. Modules of language awareness should be introduced into the National Literacy programme in primary schools. The content would be designed to bridge the gap between English, literacy and foreign languages. A number of models of effective language awareness teaching already exist and could be used as the basis for trial schemes before wider implementation.'[7]

10.2 *The government's response to the Nuffield Languages Inquiry*

In reply to the Nuffield Languages Inquiry, the government published a report[8] which set out its current position regarding foreign languages. The report was vague and dealt with each area highlighted by the Inquiry in a rather superficial manner, presenting little indication of how necessary developments are to proceed. Lots of promises were made but no concrete plans or specific time scales were mentioned. In general, it supported the aims contained within the Inquiry and claimed that many steps had already been taken or were in progress to strengthen the position of modern foreign languages. Indeed, the biggest argument presented to show the government's already existing commitment to the development of foreign language capability was the existence of the Language Colleges initiative. This expanding initiative was mentioned time and again as a solution in part to the many weaknesses in foreign language education, as highlighted by the

Inquiry. In particular the government stated that Language Colleges would play a key role in raising the standards of modern foreign language provision in the primary sector.

In reference to early language learning the government stated that a great deal has already been done to support teaching in primary schools. As well as the role of the Language Colleges, the 'Good Practice Project', managed by CILT, and the development of an early years languages framework were highlighted. In addition it was stated that the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has been asked to look at the feasibility of extending language learning at the primary level. Whilst these measures are positive they only vaguely hint at a possible change in policy in the future. In the concluding paragraph to this section the government stated: 'There is thus a great deal already being done or in train to enable primary schools to offer Modern Foreign Languages opportunities to young children, without the need to include Modern Foreign Languages in the statutory framework for the curriculum. We see the Specialist Language College programme as playing an increasingly important role in facilitating the delivery of Modern Foreign Languages to children in primary schools.'[9] This statement would seem to imply that the government is indeed reluctant to include modern foreign languages in the primary National Curriculum and would prefer to employ alternative ways of providing modern foreign language opportunities for young children. Unless opportunities are provided to all children and to the same level of professionalism, which means inclusion in the National Curriculum, then not all children will be able to benefit from the work being carried out, since not all primary schools will have access to Language Colleges. In this way, the foreign language experience of young children will

remain unequal and the problem of continuity between the primary and secondary sector will be upheld. The educational value of early language learning should neither be underestimated nor left to chance in the hands of inexperienced and uninformed practitioners.

10.3 Language Colleges

The Language College initiative began in 1995 and is part of the Specialist Schools Programme, which also includes the development of specialist schools for sports, arts and technology. The Specialist Schools Programme helps schools, in partnership with private sector sponsors and supported by additional Government funding, to build on their particular strengths, establish distinctive identities through their chosen specialisms, and achieve their targets to raise standards. There are currently 108 designated specialist Language Colleges, although nine of these will not function under their new identity until September 2001.[10]

The Language College initiative aims to extend the range of opportunities available to students which best meet their needs and interests, including a richer diversification of foreign and community languages, opportunities to study more than one language at Key Stage 4 and broader provision at the post-16 level; to raise the standards of teaching and learning of modern foreign languages in schools; to develop within the school characteristics which signal their changed identity and which are reflected in the school's aims; to benefit other schools and community groups in the area and to strengthen the links between schools and private or charitable sector sponsors. In return for the

financial support that is received as a result of being awarded Language College Status, schools are expected to develop a visible Language College character. Specifically, they must ensure that parents and pupils understand the meaning of a Language College education; they must make imaginative use of ICT[11] to raise standards of teaching and learning in modern foreign languages, with ICT being used to enhance and support teaching and learning; they must be involved in national initiatives and competitions in order to enrich provision for their own pupils and those in their partner schools; they must develop and disseminate good practice to share with other schools and the wider community; and they must provide educational opportunities to explore and use a range of learning experiences for members of the wider community.[12]

10.4   *Phase 4: The Language College model*

Given the importance the government has attached to the role of Language Colleges in facilitating the improvement and expansion of modern foreign language teaching in the primary sector, it is necessary to investigate the nature and extent of that role and thus be able to support or negate the claims made by the government. In addition it is hoped that further data concerning the current position of primary modern foreign language learning in terms of its quality and organisation will be yielded, especially since, it could be argued, Language Colleges are in a much stronger position to deliver an effective primary modern foreign language programme, based on the six critical success factors, as identified in this research.

10.4.1 Methods of research

Firstly, the researcher identified all 108 Language Colleges by contacting the DfEE and then approached each Language College individually by means of a questionnaire. The first draft of the questionnaire was devised based on the six critical success factors, as established earlier in this research project. Before the questionnaire was distributed to the Language Colleges it was evaluated by a professor of modern languages at the University, in order to establish any areas of weakness or omissions. The final draft[13] was then drawn up and sent to all 108 Language Colleges in the country.

10.4.2 Results of the questionnaire[14]

68 replies were received from the total 108 questionnaires that were sent out (63%). Of those replies received, 52 Language Colleges were involved in primary foreign language teaching to varying degrees (77%). Of the remaining 16, nine Language Colleges stated they would be starting primary programmes from September 2001 or in the near future.

21% of the Language Colleges that replied positively had been involved in primary modern foreign language teaching prior to the application for Language College status, while 77% began primary teaching as a result of the application. Clearly the Language College initiative has encouraged the increase in provision of primary modern foreign language teaching, although the nature of that provision is diverse in quality.

10.4.3 Analysis of Phase 4

10.4.3.1 Management, leadership and accountability

Since Language Colleges are obliged to set up links with partner schools, are encouraged to strengthen links with feeder primary schools in particular and have the funding available to do so, the management of primary foreign language programmes is taken seriously. All except one Language College reported that there is a designated colleague responsible for the primary foreign language programme, who is accountable to one or more of a list of line managers, senior managers, primary headteachers and governors. Leadership is demonstrated through organising meetings, evaluating the progress of the programme, informing colleagues about progress, developing schemes of work, arranging professional development, etc. Thus, management, leadership and accountability can be seen as strengths in this context.

10.4.3.2 Organisation

It was found that the organisation of the primary programmes depends upon the wishes of the primary headteachers to a large extent, and upon what the Language Colleges are able to provide in terms of teachers, resources, etc. The number of primary schools involved in any one programme range between one and eighteen. The most popular language is French, followed by German and Spanish equally. The majority of teaching is delivered to Year 6 pupils, although Year 5 and then Year 4 are also popular. 63% of primary foreign language programmes are part of the formal weekly primary school curriculum, while 30% offer teaching in limited periods (e.g. weekly teaching for two terms; one session per term; 10 sessions throughout the year; etc.) although this is also considered to

be a part of the formal curriculum. 25% of programmes are extra-curricular lessons / clubs. (It should be noted that some Language Colleges are running more than one type of programme.) The majority of weekly lessons last between 30-60 minutes.

It emerged that although the Language Colleges are in a strong position to successfully initiate and manage their primary modern foreign language programmes, they have no authority over the primary schools involved to dictate choice of language, year groups, length of lessons, formal timetabling etc. As a result of so many variables, the nature of provision in terms of organisation is diverse. In a number of cases, disappointing progress was directly linked to infrequent teaching sessions. Practical organisational issues such as these are beyond the control of the Language Colleges.

Thus the impact of diverse organisation upon continuity of learning between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 is obvious. 60% of Language Colleges have made an attempt to address this issue by restructuring schemes of work, testing pupils on entry to Year 7 and providing 'fast-track' sets, for example; but in the majority of cases the arrangements made are not sufficient as a long term solution. 33% have made no arrangements at all.

While the problem of continuity cannot easily be solved by individual schools and teachers, it is well within the reach of all programme managers to organise an effective assessment policy. This is especially important so that colleagues can keep track of progress and have proof of pupil achievement. Surprisingly, 33% of Language Colleges have made no arrangements for the assessment of their primary foreign language

programmes. In one case it was even suggested that implementing assessment would diminish the element of fun vital to a primary language course. It would appear there is a danger in assuming that primary language courses do not need to be taken too seriously, and the benefits of relieving staff of the burden of extra marking and paperwork is all too tempting. 63% of Language Colleges have made arrangements for assessment, although some are much less convincing than others.

10.4.3.3 Teacher competence

Teacher competence is a definite strength in Language College-led primary foreign language programmes. 75% of programmes are delivered by specialist foreign language teachers from the Language Colleges. However, 23% of programmes are still being taught by primary classteachers, with little indication of their linguistic competence.

10.4.3.4 Pedagogical professionalism

This is yet another area of strength in Language College-led primary foreign language programmes. At the initial planning stage, only 4% of Language Colleges stated they did not seek any guidance in setting up their primary foreign language programmes, and a further 13% did not respond to the question. Thus in the majority of cases thorough planning had taken place. 77% of Language Colleges use detailed schemes of work and 79% use detailed lesson plans. Although perhaps a bigger percentage would have been expected in these basic areas, this shortfall may be attributed to the number of extra-curricular programmes (25%), including many language clubs, which may be run on a more ad-hoc basis. 90% of Language College programmes use resources devised by the

teachers concerned and 39% use commercial resources. 12% of Language Colleges stated they had made no arrangements for the professional development of colleagues and 17% did not answer the question. The remaining majority take part in INSET days and primary conferences, courses and workshops, as the most popular forms of professional development. These figures show that pedagogical professionalism is taken seriously and that day to day planning, organisation and development are an integral feature of primary foreign language programmes facilitated by Language Colleges.

10.4.4 Conclusion

Since Language Colleges have demonstrated their strengths in all except one area critical to success, it appears that they occupy a more advantageous position in implementing and running a successful primary modern foreign language programme, than individual primary schools or secondary schools with limited resources and knowledge. Indeed, the government would have us believe that Language Colleges provide the simple key solution to the problem of how to improve the quality and quantity of early language learning in this country. However, the findings of this research suggest that even Language Colleges are lacking in one critical area, which could undermine all of their other positive strengths. In terms of organisation, Language Colleges have no power to dictate a uniform programme in all the primary schools that they visit. They must conform to the wishes of each individual headteacher. As a result, provision is diverse and only superficial and inadequate attempts at providing continuity between the two Key Stages can be made. The response to the question about assessment was also

disappointing, considering that Language College staff should realise that any serious educational programme must be effectively assessed.

At the end of the questionnaire, the Language Colleges were invited to give feedback about the progress of their primary foreign language programmes and any other general comments. There were many positive and enthusiastic comments, which indicate the success, albeit, relatively short-term, that many Language Colleges are experiencing. However, some Language Colleges reported difficulties and 'patchy' and 'erratic' progress. Staff shortages and timetabling pressures were common complaints, as well as the frustration of having to adhere to the 'whims' of primary headteachers.

Thus, the concept of Language Colleges adequately providing for the needs of early language learners in this country is not as straightforward as the government depicts. Indeed, one angry response included in one of the questionnaires states: 'Utter disappointment at the government's half-hearted response to [the] Nuffield [Inquiry]. Amazement about the apparent belief that Language Colleges can by themselves replace a national strategy for language learning'.

It must also be remembered that only 99 Language Colleges currently exist, with a further nine to start in September 2001. While most of them provide some sort of primary foreign language teaching, it is only a small cross-section of primary pupils who benefit, compared with the total number of primary pupils in the country. Therefore, it is obvious that Language Colleges, while they may be able to innovate and raise the profile

of foreign languages in their local areas, cannot deliver what the government is promising. Furthermore, the problems of organisation, variations in the nature of provision, continuity, staff shortages and timetabling constraints will never be solved by individual schools and teachers alone, no matter how much enthusiasm, belief, professionalism or official status they may possess. Clearly, a national policy is needed.

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[1] Moys (ed) (1998), *Where are we going with languages?* p1

[2] Moys op. cit. p4

[3] The Nuffield Languages Inquiry (2000), *Languages: the next generation* p5

[4] The Nuffield Languages Inquiry op. cit. pp40

[5] See Chapter 4

[6] The Nuffield Languages Inquiry op. cit. pp40-42

[7] The Nuffield Languages Inquiry op. cit. pp42-43

[8] DfEE (2001), *Modern Foreign Languages: A response by the Department for Education and Employment to the final report and recommendations of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry.*

[9] DfEE (2001), op. cit. para. 21

[10] DfEE (2000), *Language Colleges   A Guide for Schools* p3

[11] Information and Communication Technology

[12] DfEE (2000), op. cit. pp3-5

[13] See Appendix 15 for *Questionnaire Final Draft (Phase 4)*

[14] See Appendix 16 for *Results of the Questionnaire (Phase 4)*

SECTION IV   **CONCLUSION**

Chapter 11   From Nuffield to Nuffield: the factors of success - or failure

11.1   Introduction

In order for primary modern foreign language initiatives to be effective, modern primary methodology must be combined with appropriate communicative language teaching techniques. Rigorous and competent management, organisation and delivery of the foreign language programmes are critical to success. The belief that young children possess an innate ability to master foreign languages with ease cannot be proven and must not be relied upon to counteract insufficient planning and poor teaching.

It was concluded from the first three research phases that the six key elements of management, organisation (including assessment and continuity), leadership, accountability, teacher competence and pedagogical professionalism are fundamental to the success of primary modern foreign language initiatives. Although these elements provide a framework for achieving and measuring success, they may also be used as a means to evaluate failing initiatives. These critical success factors can thus be measured against the outcomes of the Phase 1 initiative, unique to this research project, and the outcomes of the 1960s French Pilot Scheme – two programmes which could be described as 'failures' – in order to assess and compare why, how and to what extent they failed.

11.2   Failure assessment

11.2.1 Management and leadership

The Phase 1 initiative lacked any form of integrated management structure. The responsibility of managing the initiative as a whole was never raised as an important issue at the planning stage, possibly because it was assumed that staff at School 1A would take on this role, since the idea was originally presented by the former headteacher. This may have been a possible reason why the headteachers of Schools 1B and 1D contributed little or no input to the organisation and development of the programme. However, the staff at School 1A did not take responsibility for the management of the programme and it soon became obvious that it lacked real direction and leadership. Many important issues were raised and many good ideas put forward but nothing was done about them. After the initial feeling of novelty, the programme soon lost momentum because the problems that arose were not being solved and there was no-one in a position of authority to demonstrate enthusiasm and belief when staff became disillusioned and discouraged. Only the headteacher of School 1C showed firm commitment and leadership but only with regard to his school. It could not have been expected that he should assume responsibility for the whole initiative.

On the other hand, since the French Pilot Scheme was a national initiative supported by the government and involving many schools, teachers and pupils under the supervision of the LEAs, management and leadership were central elements of the scheme.

11.2.2 Organisation

Only basic arrangements had been made, prior to the beginning of the Phase 1 initiative. The allocation of staff, timetabling of lessons, starting age and choice of language had been decided but otherwise no detailed planning had taken place. There were no aims and objectives, schemes of work or materials. Methods of assessment and the long-term development of the programme had not been considered. There were no arrangements for continuity into the secondary sector and in fact it was later discovered that only very few pupils from Schools 1B, 1C and 1D actually move on to School 1A. In reality, even the continuity of learning into the next academic year became an issue due to staffing problems and lack of motivation. The feasibility of such an initiative should have been evaluated beyond just the first few lessons. Without adequate planning including reference to existing literature and guidelines, it appears that there is little value in commencing a programme that cannot be maintained for the benefit of the pupils involved. The Phase 1 initiative clearly illustrates this point.

The French Pilot Scheme had been subject to rigorous planning and organisation. In 1962, detailed plans for the Scheme had been drawn up by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Nuffield Foundation, although teaching in the pilot areas did not begin until September 1964. The aims and objectives of the initiative were identified, pilot areas and schools were selected, training programmes for teachers were set up, special resources were developed by the Nuffield Foundation, stipulations for the continuity between the primary and secondary phases were asserted and assessment was organised by means of the tests that were developed for the purposes of the NFER evaluation.

However, continuity between the primary and secondary phases was highlighted as one of the greatest difficulties of the scheme, despite the stipulations made at the outset, that on entering secondary school, pupils who had taken part in the primary experiment should be taught separately from beginners in French. Many schools were unable to provide separate classes due to staff shortages and indeed many teachers objected to separate classes. The difference in teaching competencies was also a contributing factor to the problem of continuity, since the learning experiences of the 'experimental' pupils varied widely. The process of continuity as a whole was ineffectively managed.

11.2.3 Accountability

The Phase 1 initiative was also found to be lacking in this area. Since there were no direct lines of management and responsibility, the need for accountability was not a high priority. The only example of accountability observed in this initiative was demonstrated by the headteacher of School 1C, who commented that his professional credibility was at stake if the foreign language programme was not effectively established and maintained. However, this meant that his interest extended only as far as his school was involved and thus his accountability would not include the initiative as a whole. For this reason, School 1C continued with the foreign language programme beyond the collapse of the integrated initiative, albeit in a somewhat altered format.

Like management and organisation, accountability in the French Pilot Scheme was never an issue due to the nature and scale of the initiative. All schools, LEAs and other parties involved were directly accountable to the Ministry of Education and

learning was subject to constant monitoring and evaluation in the form of classroom observations and progress tests.

11.2.4 Teacher competence and pedagogical professionalism

In the Phase 1 initiative, the three teachers who delivered the lessons were specialist foreign language teachers and were thus linguistically competent and experienced in communicative foreign language teaching methodology. However, a lack of competence in teaching foreign languages at the primary level was observed in two cases; and in one of these cases pedagogical professionalism was also severely deficient. The lessons were ill prepared and delivery was dull. The teacher was also often absent, which may have affected continuity from week to week. Following the long-term absence of the specialist teacher at School 1C, the classteachers, who were neither linguistically competent nor trained in foreign language pedagogy, were obliged to continue the foreign language lessons. As a result they were only able to offer what amounted to a course in language awareness, despite valiant efforts in producing schemes of work, acquiring resources and developing extra-curricular activities.

Although training programmes were provided for primary French teachers in the French Pilot Scheme, the area of teacher competence was highlighted as a general weakness of the initiative. Many primary school teachers were not sufficiently linguistically competent to teach French using the audio-visual method, despite attending the training courses. Since the expectation of the Pilot Scheme was to facilitate language acquisition, an inevitable discrepancy between the expectation of progress and the actual outcome occurred.

11.2.5   Unavoidable practical problems

Although the six critical success factors provide a framework for a potentially effective primary foreign language programme, there may still be issues which are beyond the limits of even the most rigorous planning. The Phase 1 initiative was subject to the problem of long-term staff illness and this immediately caused a shift in emphasis of teaching in one school, from language acquisition to language awareness. Another problem was the inability by the secondary school to provide specialist language teachers beyond the first year of the initiative, which was a major contributing factor to the collapse of the programme as a collective whole.

Although these problems were unavoidable they highlight a need for feasibility assessment and long-term planning. Obvious potential problems, such as staff absence / resignation, staff shortage, lack of funding and increasing timetable pressures need to be seriously considered in order to assess possible solutions, and also to determine whether the likelihood and nature of such problems would far outweigh the benefits of implementing a primary modern foreign language scheme.

11.2.6 Conclusion of failure assessment

In general and despite individual strengths, the Phase 1 initiative was found to be lacking in all six critical success elements. Inevitably, the programme collapsed at the end of its first year and can be described as a failure.

The French Pilot Scheme was found to be lacking in one main area (teacher competence) and in part of a second main area (organisation: continuity). Although the initiative did not meet all of the success criteria, as identified in this research

project, it cannot be regarded as a complete failure, despite the conclusions that were reached at the time of the final evaluation. Indeed, it has been argued that the initiative provided a positive educational experience, and it was reported that the experimental pupils performed better than the pupils in the control group. However, due to the overall negative evaluation of the experiment, which could not support the popular but false expectation that significant linguistic mastery could be achieved simply by starting at a young age,[1] (a view derived from the critical period hypothesis reviewed in Chapter 5), the initiative was officially abandoned.

Despite lacking in two areas critical to success, the French Pilot Scheme facilitated a positive foreign language learning experience and pupils made measurable progress, although not to the levels that were originally anticipated. Even though, in retrospect, positive conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the experiment, based on more realistic expectations, the severity of the areas that were found to be lacking should not be underestimated. Measurements of pupil achievement and enthusiasm cannot be used as evidence to excuse incompetent teaching and weak organisation. Had these two areas critical to success been effective, then the final evaluation of the experiment may have been somewhat different.

The most important outcome of the French Pilot Scheme is the lesson it provides, namely, that with realistic expectations, some measure of early success is likely, but unless all six critical success factors are firmly in place, the long-term benefits of any primary modern foreign language initiative will be minimal, and in some cases the effects could even be damaging.

11.3 Summary of research findings

The outcome of the 1960s French Pilot Scheme highlighted teacher competence and continuity of learning between the primary and secondary phases as the two most significant obstacles to success. The scheme was abandoned on the strength of unrealistic expectations regarding language acquisition. These expectations engendered inevitable disappointment and were instrumental in Burstall's conclusion that primary French should not be expanded into all primary schools.

The analysis of the Phase 1 research identified two areas that were critical to the success of the primary foreign language programme under investigation, but which were clearly lacking: i) management and organisation and ii) teacher competence. Continuity was included in the first of these two categories and thus the major findings from the 1960s research were still evident in a primary foreign languages initiative conducted in excess of thirty years later.

The analysis of the Phase 2 research confirmed the two areas of management and organisation, which included leadership, accountability, curriculum planning, syllabus design, assessment and continuity; and teacher competence which included linguistic ability, pedagogical professionalism, curriculum planning and syllabus design. In addition practical problems were also highlighted as potential threats to success, in particular lack of funding and the pressures on the primary school timetable.

The analysis of the Phase 3 research highlighted the diverse quality of foreign language teaching provision that currently exists in the primary sector. Teacher competence, assessment, continuity, timetabling, staff shortages and the fragility of

individual primary school-led schemes were the most significant problems. As a result, and taking into consideration the findings from the first two research phases, the six critical success factors were identified. These were management, organisation, leadership, accountability, teacher competence and pedagogical professionalism.

The analysis of the Phase 4 research also demonstrated the diverse quality of primary foreign language teaching provision that currently exists, even when it is facilitated by specialist Language Colleges. Little can be done to improve the situation while the specific wishes of individual primary headteachers have to be taken into account. Continuity was again an area of concern and one which was shown to be beyond the control of the schools and teachers involved. Assessment was once again highlighted as an area in need of great improvement and the problems of staffing and timetabling also reoccurred.

In view of the evidence from all of the research phases it is now possible to redefine the critical success factors for any primary modern foreign language programme. Since continuity and assessment were recurring features in all phases it is necessary to include them as separate headings in order to attach the vital importance that they command. The ten critical success factors may now be confirmed as:

1. Management

2. Leadership

3. Accountability

4. Organisation

5. Teacher Competence

6. Pedagogical Professionalism

7. Continuity

8. Assessment

9. Ability to overcome practical problems (e.g. staff shortages, timetable constraints)

10. Realistic Expectations

In its recommendations for early language learning, which it asserts should be available for all pupils in primary school education, the Nuffield Languages Inquiry specifically mentions organisation, the need for the increased provision of competent teachers, which implies a radical teacher training programme, continuity and measures to enable schools to address long-term solutions, as crucial areas for development within a national strategy. Management, leadership, accountability, pedagogical professionalism, assessment and the setting of realistic expectations were not mentioned in the report, and yet are central to the findings of this research project. It can only be assumed that such areas of educational practice are expected to be professionally executed as a matter of course.

11.4 Feasibility

In the current educational system, where modern foreign languages are not part of the National Curriculum below Key Stage 3, it is unlikely that primary modern foreign language programmes will survive unless schools are able to meet the criteria of all ten critical success factors. Indeed, the feasibility of running such programmes will vary from school to school, depending on individual variables such as staff availability, enthusiasm and belief of the headteacher, funding, adequate timetable allocation, etc. Ultimately, the feasibility of any primary modern foreign language

programme hinges on setting realistic aims and expectations. The future of the French Pilot Scheme, for example, was jeopardised because it was expected that pupils would gain substantial mastery of French simply by starting young. Today, without government commitment to the implementation of modern foreign languages in the primary National Curriculum, many schools are only able to realistically offer a course in language awareness, since the difficulties of finding suitably qualified foreign language teachers and effectively managing the continuity of learning into the secondary sector are still the two biggest obstacles to providing a successful programme of language acquisition. However, even programmes of language awareness, which are also of great educational value, must be thoroughly planned and competently delivered in order to ensure that pupil attitude and motivation are not in any way undermined.

With the benefit of hindsight from the lessons of the French Pilot Scheme and the wealth of recent research into teaching modern foreign languages in the primary sector, modern educators are well placed to make informed decisions before they embark on new initiatives. However, research conducted in Phase 3 of this project clearly suggests that although this information is available, it is failing to be consulted, possibly because many teachers are unaware of its existence or because background research has not been carried out for a variety of reasons. Indeed, only 2 out of a total of 13 schools who replied positively to the questionnaire in this phase stated that they had consulted information about the French Pilot Scheme. Unfortunately, the lessons from the past are going unnoticed and the same mistakes will be made again and again until strict mandatory requirements for the teaching of primary modern foreign languages are legislated. At present, many primary modern

foreign language schemes are described as 'fun' or 'extra-curricular', probably in order to excuse inherent failings and weaknesses. Indeed, in some cases, important issues such as assessment and continuity have purposely not been addressed with the reasoning that it would detract from the fun element of the subject! In such cases, amateurish dabbling should not be attempted. Foreign language education is a serious issue and thorough foundations must be laid in primary school in order for pupils to effectively progress throughout secondary school and beyond.

11.5   Primary modern foreign language teaching in the twenty-first century

As we enter the new century, it must be seriously considered whether the haphazard, unofficial provision of foreign language education in primary schools is sufficient or whether it is vital that our youngsters are given the opportunity to begin serious foreign language study at an earlier age, in order for them to maximise their potential at Key Stage 4 and in further and higher education, and be better equipped in adult life to integrate themselves in the international world.

The fundamental question posed at the beginning of the 1960s on the launch of the French Pilot Scheme – namely, 'whether it would be feasible and educationally desirable to extend the teaching of a foreign language to pupils who represented a wider range of age and ability than those to whom foreign languages had traditionally been taught'[2] – is no longer a major issue. Modern educators take for granted the fact that it is educationally desirable for all young children to learn foreign languages. Today's concerns are rather, how this can best be achieved, and this is highlighted in part by the results of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry. The future of primary modern foreign language education in any significant terms is in the hands of the government.

The establishment of uniform organisation, effective continuity and the ability to cope with the problems of staff shortages and timetabling constraints are beyond the control of individual teachers, primary schools, secondary schools and Language Colleges. It is clear that only a national policy in partnership with the work of committed schools and professionals will be able to satisfy all ten factors critical to the success of primary modern foreign language teaching. It is hoped that the 'Good Practice Project' supported by the DfEE[3], the government's feasibility study and the work carried out by the Language Colleges are the first steps towards establishing this desperately needed national primary modern foreign language programme for England and Wales. However, it must be emphasised that they are only initial steps and the dangers of failure are already clear to see in many of the existing programmes.

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[1] Burstall et al (1974), *Primary French in the Balance* pp33-34, p123
[2] Burstall op.cit. p11
[3] See Chapter 4

SECTION V   APPARATUS

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Appendices

1   The Joint Schools Council / Nuffield Foundation Pilot Scheme - Pilot Areas and Associate Areas (May 1966)

Pilot areas

Bedfordshire (N.E. Beds)
Blackpool
Devon (Plympton and Plymstock)
Dorset (Bridport and environs)
Durham
Hillingdon (Ruislip and Uxbridge)
Hull

Monmouthshire (Ebbw Vale)
Northumberland (Blyth)
Nottingham
Oxford
Staffordshire (Stafford)
West Sussex (Chichester and environs)

Associate areas

Barrow (part)
Berkshire (Woodley area)
Bradford (part)
Brighton (part)
Bristol (part)
Cheshire (Bromborough and Alsager area)
Croydon (New Addington area)
Cumberland (Whitehaven)
Darlington (part)
Derbyshire (Chesterfield)
Devon (Torquay)
Doncaster (part)
East Suffolk (parts)
East Sussex (Newhaven, Bexhill and
                East Grinstead)
Essex (Harlow)
Exeter (part)
Gloucester (part)
Gloucestershire (Brockworth area)
Hastings (part)
Havering (Hornchurch)
Herefordshire (Hereford City)
Isle of Wight (Sandown / Shanklin and
                surrounding area)
Kent (Strood area)
Lancashire (Urmston area)
Leicester (part)

Birmingham (part)
Blackburn (part)
Leicestershire (Oadby and Thurnby area)
Lincoln (part)
Lincolnshire (Lindsey) (part)
Liverpool (part)
London (parts)
Middlesborough (part)
Newcastle upon Tyne (part)
Newham (part)
Northampton (part)
Nottinghamshire (Ollerton area)
Oldham (part)
Plymouth (Whitleigh area)
Reading (Tilehurst area)
Somerset (Weston-super-Mare)
Southend-on-Sea (Leigh-on-Sea area)
South Shields (part)
Sunderland (part)
Surrey (Guildford)
Tynemouth (part)
Warley (part)
Warwickshire (Rugby)
Wakefield (part)
Wolverhampton (part)
Worcester (part)
York (part)
Yorkshire (East riding) (Bridlington
                                area)[1]

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[1] The Schools Council (1966), *French in the Primary School* pp16-17

2   **The Joint Schools Council / Nuffield Foundation Pilot Scheme –
        Characteristics of Achievement Tests (Final Version)**

1   **Test LCA (Listening)**

        Target group: pupils in the pre-reading stage

        Test content: 65 multiple-choice items, 5 used as practice examples.

                               Pupils listen to a meaningful statement, recorded by a

                               native speaker, and match it to one of a set of four

                               pictures.

        Instructions: English

        Maximum score: 60

        Time allowance: 30 minutes

2   **The Battery 1 Listening Test**

        Target group: pupils with at least two years' instruction

        Test content: 45 multiple-choice picture items, 5 used as practice

                               examples. The items are similar to those used in the

                               Test LCA but of a higher level of difficulty.

        Instructions: English

        Maximum score: 40

        Time allowance: less than 20 minutes

3   **The Battery 2 Listening Test**

        Target group: pupils with two or more years' instruction at the

                               secondary level

        Test content: Part 1: 20 multiple-choice picture items.

Part 2: 14 remarks or questions. Pupils select the most

appropriate response from four alternatives.

Part 3: 6 short passages with multiple-choice questions

in French.

Instructions: English

Maximum score: 40

Time allowance: less than 20 minutes

4   **The Battery 3 Listening Test**

Target group: pupils with five years' instruction at the secondary level

Test content: 30 multiple-choice items, 2 used as practice examples.

Pupils listen to a short passage followed by a question

and four responses, they select the appropriate response.

Instructions: English

Maximum score: 28

Time allowance: 30 minutes

5   **The Battery 1 Reading Test**

Target group: pupils with at least two years' instruction

Test content: Part 1: 30 multiple-choice picture items. Pupils select

the appropriate picture to correspond with the printed

statement.

Part 2: 12 prose passages with 30 multiple-choice

comprehension items.

Instructions: English

Maximum score: 60

Time allowance: 35 minutes

6   The Battery 2 Reading Test

Target group: pupils with two or more years' instruction at the

secondary level

Test content: Part 1: 20 multiple-choice sentence completion items.

Pupils select the missing word from four alternatives.

Part 2: 8 short prose passages with 25 multiple-choice

questions in French.

Instructions: English

Maximum score: 45

Time allowance: 35 minutes

7   The Battery 3 Reading Test

Target group: pupils with five years' instruction at the secondary level

Test content: Part 1: 20 multiple-choice sentence completion items.

Each sentence has a word or phrase underlined. Pupils

select a similar word or phrase from a list of four

alternatives.

Part 2: 15 short passages each followed by one

multiple-choice question; 2 longer passages both

followed by five multiple-choice questions in French.

Instructions: English

Maximum score: 45

Time allowance: 40 minutes

8   The Battery 1 Speaking Test

Target group: pupils with at least two years' instruction

Test content: 16 items, 2 used as practice examples. Pupils answer

questions, which refer to a black and white drawing.

Each question is spoken once. Responses are recorded

and later scored on a four-point scale for phonetic

accuracy and on a separate four-point scale for

grammatical accuracy. 0 = no response, very poor

response, 'je ne sais pas'; 1 = poor response; 2 = fair

response; 3 = excellent response.

Instructions: English

Maximum score: 84

Time allowance: no time limit

9   The Battery 2 Speaking Test

Target group: pupils with two or more years' instruction at the

secondary level

Test content: Part 1: 20 items to test accuracy of pronunciation.

Pupils repeat the question or statement.

Part 2: 10 picture items similar to those in the Battery 1

Speaking Test but of a higher level of difficulty.

Part 3: Designed to test fluency. Pupils describe a large

picture of a farmyard scene.

Part 4: Pupils read aloud a passage of French prose.

Parts 1 and 4 are scored on a discrete point system. In Part 2 each response is scored on a five-point scale: 0 = no response, unrelated response, 'je ne sais pas'; 1 = an incomplete response or containing several serious grammatical errors; 2 = a complete response with no more than one serious grammatical error; 3 = a complete response with no more than one grammatical error; 4 = a complete and grammatically correct response. Part 3 is scored according to four characteristics: volume, fluency, variety of structure and extent of vocabulary.

Instruction:	English
Maximum score:	170 (although Part 3 is open-ended, no pupil ever scored more than 76 so a maximum of 80 was set for this section)
Time allowance:	no time limit

10   The Battery 3 Speaking Test

Target group:	pupils with five years' instruction at the secondary level
Test content:	25 items, preceded by 3 practice examples. Pupils give a response in French to an instruction printed on a card in English. Responses are scored on a four-point scale: 0 = no response, a response in which any of the 'essential' elements of the communication have been

omitted or incorrectly rendered, 'je ne sais pas'; 1 = a response including all the 'essential' elements of the communication, but in which serious errors have been made; 2 = a response including all the 'essential' element of communication, but in which errors have been made which do not seriously affect the intelligibility of the response; 3 = a complete, appropriate, and grammatically accurate response.

Instructions: English

Maximum score: 75

Time allowance: no time limit

11   The Battery 1 Writing Test

Target group: pupils with at least two years' instruction and who have progressed beyond the stage of simple copy writing

Test content: Part 1: 30 pictorial items, 3 used as untimed practice examples. Two related pictures are given and a descriptive statement is printed beneath the first. Pupils write a similar statement to describe the second picture. Part 2: 15 sentence-completion items, preceded by a practice example. Pupils supply a single word to complete each sentence.

Instructions: English

Maximum score: 70

Time allowance: 35 minutes

12   The Battery 2 Writing Test

Target group: pupils with two or more years' instruction at the secondary level

Test content: Part 1: 17 sentence-completion items similar to those in the Battery 1 Writing Test, 2 used as untimed practice examples.

Part 2: Pupils supply ten missing words to a passage of continuous prose.

Part 3: 10 sentence-beginnings. Pupils supply an appropriate ending. Each response in this section is scored on a five-point scale: 0 = no response, incomprehensible response; 1 = a partial response or a complete response with more than one major error or omission; 2 = a complete response with no more than one major error or omission and not more than two minor errors or omissions; 3 = a complete response with no major errors or omissions and not more than two minor errors or omissions; 4 = a complete response with neither errors nor omissions.

Instructions: English

Maximum score: 65

Time allowance: 30 minutes

13   The Battery 3 Writing Test

Target group: not specified

Test content: pupils write a letter in French on a specific topic,

including certain required details. Each script is scored

for length, accuracy, complexity (ratio of subordinate

clauses to main clauses) and expressiveness.

Instructions: English

Maximum score: 45

Time allowance: 35 minutes

3   Brief Description of Schools, 1997 (Phase 1)

School 1A   Secondary School
                         Mixed 11 – 18 Community Comprehensive School
                         873 pupils
                         GCSE 5+ A* - C 18%
                         Four modern foreign language teachers
                         French is taught in Year 7 and Year 8
                         German is also taught in Year 9
                         A-level French and German are available but the courses are
                         not currently running due to lack of students

School 1B   Primary School
                         Mixed Community Junior School
                         103 pupils
                         MFL introduced in Year 4 (22 pupils)

School 1C   Primary School
                         Mixed Community Junior School
                         184 pupils
                         MFL introduced in Year 4 (21 pupils + 25 pupils)

School 1D   Primary School
                         Mixed Community Junior School
                         212 pupils
                         MFL introduced in Year 4 (26 pupils + 27 pupils)

4   Lesson Observation / Meeting / Interview Schedule (Phase 1)

01.10.97   Plenary Project Meeting

07.10.97   Planning Day – School 1B

08.10.97   Planning Day – School 1D

10.10.97   Planning Day – School 1C

17.10.97   Lesson Observation – School 1D

19.10.97   Plenary Project Meeting

05.11.97   Lesson Observation – School 1C

07.11.97   Lesson Observation – School 1D

10.11.97   Lesson Observation – School 1B

12.11.97   Lesson Observation – School 1C

17.11.97   Lesson Observation – School 1B

19.11.97   Lesson Observation – School 1C

24.11.97   Lesson Observation – School 1B

26.11.97   Lesson Observation – School 1C

28.11.97   Lesson Observation – School 1D

01.12.97   Lesson Observation – School 1B

05.12.97   Lesson Observation – School 1D

08.12.97   Lesson Observation – School 1B

10.12.97   Lesson Observation – School 1C

12.12.97   Lesson Observation – School 1D

15.12.97   Lesson Observation – School 1B

12.01.98   Lesson Observation – School 1B

14.01.98   Lesson Observation – School 1C

21.01.98   Plenary Project Meeting

26.01.98	Lesson Observation – School 1B
28.01.98	Lesson Observation – School 1C
28.01.98	Informal Meeting – School 1C
30.01.98	Lesson Observation – School 1D
11.02.98	Lesson Observation – School 1C
13.02.98	Lesson Observation – School 1D
23.02.98	Lesson Observation – School 1B
27.02.98	Lesson Observation – School 1D
04.03.98	Plenary Project Meeting
09.03.98	Planning Meeting – School 1C
18.03.98	Plenary Project Meeting
20.03.98	Lesson Observation – School 1D
30.04.98	Cancelled Plenary Project Meeting
01.05.98	Telephone Conversation with Headteacher – School 1C
06.05.98	Lesson Observation – School 1C
06.05.98	Informal Interview with Classteacher – School 1C
08.05.98	Cancelled Lesson Observation – School 1D
11.05.98	Lesson Observation – School 1B
15.05.98	Lesson Observation – School 1D
29.06.98	Lesson Observation – School 1B
01.07.98	Plenary Project Meeting
11.07.98	Lesson Observation – School 1C
07.10.98	Telephone Conversation with Headteacher – School 1C
07.10.98	Telephone Conversation with Headteacher – School 1A
07.10.98	Telephone Conversation with Classteacher – School 1B

12.04.99	Telephone Conversation with Headteacher – School 1C
21.04.99	Lesson Observation – School 1C
10.11.99	Telephone Conversation with Headteacher – School 1C
14.07.00	Telephone Conversation with Headteacher – School 1C

5   Excerpts from Collected Data (Phase 1)

(Key: RD = Research Diary; LP = Lesson Plan; LE = Lesson Evaluation)

01.10.97a   RD
It has already been agreed which teachers will be going to the individual schools and the groups of children taking part in the primary schools have already been selected. All three schools have chosen Year 4 pupils.

01.10.97b   RD
The project was to be originally set up with French. This was then changed to German because of the future job prospects at the airport and BMW / Rover and because of a general lack of primary German projects. Of the three staff at School 1A, two are French specialists, the other a joint German / French specialist. One showed some resistance to delivering German, arguing that she could deliver a better, fun programme in French since she is more experienced in this language. However, should this make such a difference to her at such a basic level as this? Since I am able to teach German, School 1C was interested in running both languages (curriculum model to be arranged) which would provide a further angle of research: the comparison of the two languages within the project.

01.10.97c   RD
All participants are enthusiastic about this project and much is in place for the beginning of it, although we [at Aston University] would have preferred to spend much more time planning curriculum and resources. However, since the staff are keen to get started immediately it would be unwise to hold them back. My concerns are that i) French does not take over as the main language; ii) I get the opportunity to take part in the teaching of German; iii) a curriculum model is agreed; iv) Aston University must have recognition in the name of the project.

01.10.97d   RD
Other ideas raised: twin town links, Saturday morning events, Easter holiday events, trips, email, advertise for other LEAs involved in primary languages to get in touch, Manchester Goethe-Institut – Nursery German.

07.10.97a   RD
At present, we have no set curriculum and so I think it is best to introduce the 'obvious' elementary topics in a 'trial and error' fashion and then after a few weeks we can decide upon a scheme of work. This needs to be in place since School 1B have OFSTED next year, but we all need to get together to decide upon this.

07.10.97b   RD

The specialist teacher is very enthusiastic about starting the project and is only worried about small administrative details: e.g. who will pay for photocopying?

08.10.97a   RD

The staff at this school are taking the project very seriously and are indeed very enthusiastic. The headteacher had previously run a German group herself(although she is not a linguist). The headteacher said that the Year 3 pupils were more successful than the Year 4 pupils! She gave the specialist teacher a book and cassette that she had used previously.

08.10.97b   RD

They [the pupils] are excited about learning German although one child said: 'German on Monday? I'm not coming in!' and another said: 'Why do we have to learn German?'

08.10.97c   RD

The classteacher then set about making enquiries at BA for prices of flights. I am not sure whether these things should be left for Professor Reeves to initiate, or whether anyone can go ahead with their own ideas.

10.10.97a   RD

Staff are taking this project very seriously although I did not sense much excitement. However, they are enthusiastic for it to succeed.

10.10.97b   RD

I learnt from one of the specialist teachers that the Head of Department at School 1A was negative about the project and did not think it was a good idea. Further to that, one of the other specialist teachers added that they had been told not to use any resources from School 1A – homemade or otherwise – on the project or to spend lots of time on preparation.

10.10.97c   RD

My major concern at present is that each teacher / school wants to do their own thing in their own way and I get the distinct impression from School 1C that the involvement of Aston University is a possible hindrance – are they only interested in the money?

10.10.97d   RD

The parameters of this project are not clear – i) how much say / influence does the University have? ii) how much say / influence do I have? iii) how much autonomy do the schools have in this project? iv) to what extent does the University provide money for resources?

10.10.97e   RD

Overall impression: the classteachers are very committed to the teaching / learning. Will everyone co-operate for the common good of the project or will they all want to do their own thing? The first step away from this has been the insistence from some staff to teach French instead of German!

13.10.97a   LP

Aims: Introductory lesson
                 Introduction of classroom instructions

Activities: Explain what we're hoping to achieve (enjoyment and fun)
                 Decorate folders (use travel brochures)
                 Talk about French flag
                 Make name cards
                 Perform actions using classroom instructions

13.10.97b   LE (Specialist teacher)

3. Please comment on the activities and materials used.
Pupils seemed to enjoy looking at the brochures and decorating their folders.

4. What were the reactions of the pupils to the lesson?
Pleased! Seemed to enjoy it. Very enthusiastic.

17.10.97   LE (Researcher)

1. What did the pupils do in the lesson?
They listened to background details about Germany and other countries, recited country names and colours and coloured in and labelled a map of Europe.

2. What did they learn?
Colours and countries vocabulary, although they have not fully acquired these.

4. What did you think of the lesson?
I think this was a disappointing start to the course. Pace was too slow – lots of time was spent doing the same activity and presentation was not engaging or particularly lively. They were not given the opportunity to properly learn the words before doing the exercise.

5. What were the reactions of the pupils?
They were enthusiastic but their curiosity was not fully exploited. There was lots of 'telling off' which created a bad atmosphere.

7. Please comment on anything else concerning this lesson and / or the foreign language project so far.
It seemed that the teaching of colours was an afterthought and so there were no ready 'props' to deliver the new vocabulary. The children were not really given a chance to get involved and use the language and had to be told off frequently for not listening.

For a first lesson, their enthusiasm could have been exploited much more and certainly they needed to learn the vocab much better than they did. I am also concerned about the lack of German being used.

22.10.97a   LE (Specialist teacher)
10. Please comment on anything else concerning this lesson and / or the foreign language project so far.
Classroom management is different with 8 year olds. I wasn't sure whether my tone was correct, too patronising or too 'mumsy'. Talking to teenagers is very different!

22.10.97b   LE (Specialist teacher)
10. Please comment on anything else concerning this lesson and / or the foreign language project so far.
I had expected, by this point, to have some materials to use and not to have to prepare all materials myself. I am concerned that the preparation time for this project does not justify the actual time in the classroom at the moment.

5.11.97   LE (Specialist teacher)
10. Please comment on anything else concerning this lesson and / or the foreign language project so far.
I'm still disappointed that we have no access to alternative resources for the project.

7.11.97a   LE (Researcher)
1. What did the pupils do in the lesson?
Revise basic greetings
Learnt numbers 1 – 10
Number worksheet
Number song
Bingo

4. What did you think of the lesson?
Pace too slow. Not enough oral reinforcement of numbers. Pupils did not know them properly by the end of the lesson. The song was good fun.

5. What were the reactions of the pupils?
They enjoyed the song very much but were otherwise too noisy and distracted.

6. Please comment on the activities and materials used in the lesson.
Presentation of materials needs to be slicker. Song – excellent. Bingo – not really sure what they were doing. Didn't know the numbers well enough.

7.11.97b   LE

7. Please comment on anything else concerning this lessons and / or the foreign
    language project so far.

One class teacher expressed her concern about the lesson being on Friday afternoons.
The children are at their 'worst' then. She would prefer the original Monday morning
time but this is difficult for the specialist teacher. I would be happy to help out with
the teaching if it is a big problem in the coming weeks.

7.11.97c   RD

The specialist teacher was concerned about the timing of lessons and had spoken to
her head of department. She felt reassured by his comments that foreign language
learning in primary school should be seen as an 'extra' and is not crucial like maths
and English so she should not worry about the outcome.

12.11.97   LE (Specialist teacher)

*10. Please comment on anything else concerning this lesson and / or the foreign
     language project so far.*

Still disappointed about no resources! (as are the others in this project!)

18.11.97   RD

Professor Reeves asked me how the project was going and if the teachers had worked
out their aims and objectives for the year and beyond. So far they have not and I get
the impression that no-one is taking overall responsibility for what is happening. He
agreed that it was up to the staff at School 1A, what they wanted to get out of this.

19.11.97a   RD

This meeting confirmed to me the true nature of the project and my role within it.
The schools and staff are at liberty to do anything they please and to exploit their own
ideas and initiatives.

19.11.97b   RD

The headteacher at School 1C has contacted the Chief Education Officer from the
LEA and he will be coming to visit the school in order to observe the lessons. [Note:
this is only taking place in School 1C.] He also has plans to get the LEA / MPs
behind the project, hoping to get funding for future years. He is still looking into the
idea of a 'lesson in the air' and he is planning to send one of the classteachers on a
course about setting up a primary MFL programme. [It was never mentioned that the
other schools would be involved in these initiatives, except the 'lesson in the air',
although even this would be difficult since one of the schools teaches a different
language and so could not realistically participate.]

19.11.97c   RD

The headteacher at School 1C felt his school has made a good start. The parents are
very keen about the project and the children very enthusiastic – they look forward to

Wednesday afternoon! The classteacher reported that the introduction of French has really boosted the confidence of one of her special needs pupils and this has had a positive effect on the rest of his work.

19.11.97d   RD

The staff from School 1A commented at their having to adapt to the different teaching styles needed for small children and to learn a different type of classroom management.

19.11.97e   RD

I was concerned to hear that only very few pupils from these primary schools actually go to School 1A. Why are they involved in the project if this is the case? The rest of the pupils go to schools in a nearby town. It is important that the secondary schools concerned know what is happening and make some provision for their new pupils.

1.12.97a   LE (Researcher)

The specialist teacher commented on how the class do not seem so keen now (when saying 'Au revoir' at the end for example). Perhaps the novelty of having a new adult in the room is wearing off, rather than the interest of the language.

5.12.97a   LE (Researcher)
10. Please comment on anything else concerning this lesson and / or the foreign language project so far.
I do not hear the children saying very much German at the moment.

10.12.97a   RD

The pupils appear to be more successful at School 1C so far. They can understand simple target language, can answer simple personal questions and can recall a fair amount of vocabulary. The pupils in the other schools and particularly in School 1D cannot do these things.

12.12.97a   LE (Researcher)
1. What did the pupils do in the lesson?
Pupils attempted to sing 'Stille Nacht'
Pupils sang '1,2,3, Polizei' – the children responded much better to this which indicates a need for more songs and rhymes and things really fun!

4. What did you think of the lesson?
I think it was not a good idea to spend the whole half hour lesson on this song – which they found difficult anyway.

5. What were the reactions of the pupils?
Noisy, not well behaved. Only a few pupils really tried to join in. I think they were bored after a while.

6. Please comment on the activities and materials used in the lesson.
Not properly thought out (there was an error by the teacher in reading the words 'Kna beim' = 'Knabe im')

7. Please comment on anything else concerning this lesson and / or the foreign language project so far.
It would have been better to do just the first verse and perhaps write the words out (with explanations) on to a separate sheet. The 'original' that I supplied must have looked daunting to the children with all the music on it.

This lesson was not successful and was not properly thought through. The children needed more variety in tasks. Perhaps it would have been better to prepare a worksheet with the first verse on, pictures labelled for them to colour in and make it into a Christmas card.
The behaviour of the children was not so good (although there are several individuals who are normally quite disruptive). Both classes were put together, although many were elsewhere involved in something else. The approach of Christmas and the change in their normal routine and Friday pm all contributed to their noisiness and lack of attention and motivation.

12.1.98a   RD
The lesson seemed very teacher centred with hardly anything required of the pupils other than to listen, answer questions where appropriate, repeat and take part in a bingo game.

The pupils still seem very keen to be learning French and this was confirmed by the classteacher who said they were really excited when she reminded them earlier in the day that they were having French.

However, I do feel that the pace is a bit too slow now (tasks are predictable and drawn out) and the pupils are not exposed to enough language or variety of learning media.

14.1.98a   LE (Specialist teacher)
10. Please comment on anything else concerning this lesson and / or the foreign language project so far.
I am becoming tired of preparing everything and using all [School 1A's] resources. Ordering of resources for this project should have been done in the summer. All 3 teachers are going from week to week wondering what to do next (and what to use). A project with this much funding needed much more planning to benefit everyone (not least the pupils).

14.1.98b   LE (Specialist teacher)
10. Please comment on anything else concerning this lesson and / or the foreign language project so far.
I am reaching the point where I feel some pupils are turning off – mainly from the methods – they have seen it all before!

14.1.98c   RD

I gave the specialist teacher the leaflets and booklets on resources and she is going to look through them. I almost got the impression that she was not bothered about extra resources any more. She said she was doing what she's normally do but at a slower pace. She said the 30mins go by so fast that there is no time to do anything other than 'talking' and that she had to make the class teachers aware of this. They wanted to see more group work as this fitted in more with their way of doing things.

21.1.98a   RD

Indeed, the question was raised by the headteacher of School 1A if the schools intended to carry on with the project next year! He was saying there could be a problem with staff time. Timetables for next year have not yet been discussed and he was saying he may have to bring in a 0.5 teacher to cover the extra time. School 1C strongly expressed their wishes to carry on next year, as did the headteacher from School 1D, saying she hoped to start off some French as well, using some of the classteachers who have a 'smattering' of the language.

28.1.98a   RD

Prior to the meeting, the specialist teacher expressed her concern about the differences of opinion between primary staff and herself, as to how lessons should be taught – group work versus whole class teaching. She commented upon how non-specialists tended to think everything is wonderful with no idea of the level the children are at, and with unrealistic expectations. She said this is the reason why so many attempts at primary mfl in the past have failed. At the beginning she was told to do whatever she wanted but now feels this is not exactly the case.

11.2.98a   RD

The classteacher did a lesson on 'Ma famille' and taught them the new words by repeating and saying what they were in English. They then did a family tree worksheet. There did seem to be some confusion as to what to write down. In the last few minutes, they practised language they had done before in preparation for the forthcoming assembly. Unfortunately, there was small mistake in what the teacher was telling them: J'habite **en** Birmingham instead of J'habite **à** Birmingham. This is the problem of non-specialists teaching the language. As such, they tend to stick to lists rather than real language which is not totally beneficial. Even the specialists at the other schools tend to teach in 'lists' rather than communicatively.

13.2.98a   RD

Still no sign of display materials. Still no lesson plans and evaluation.

13.2.98b   RD

The specialist teacher did a 'quiz' with the children but I felt it was drawn out and boring. There appeared to be no preparation for the quiz – she was making up the questions as she was going along. She should have collected in the papers and recorded the marks. We have no indication where the children are at.

At the end of the lesson she did 'Eins, zwei, Polizei' and hangman and it was amazing to see how the children suddenly switched on to what was happening. Such a transformation!

23.2.98a   RD

I asked the classteacher how OFSTED went. Eventually, the specialist teacher did not do the lesson because she was ill. However, she was asked about the French. The inspector was dismayed to learn that the class teacher would be doing Year 4 French next year, while the specialist teacher carries on with Year 5. It was thought inconceivable that a non-specialist would be teaching a foreign language.

23.2.98b   RD

The specialist teacher spoke about assessment. She is aware of the necessity of this but said she had no idea how it would be done. This is too vague. If she does not implement assessment then it will not happen.

27.2.98a   RD

She could have used him [the student tutor] a lot more in the beginning of the lesson to go over the basic questions and give the children a chance to hear some real German. The classes seemed very interested in him and were going to him to talk! His presence seems to be very positive.

9.3.98a   RD

We discussed continuing into next year and it was agreed that commitment is only noticeable from School 1C.

20.3.98a   RD

What a difference! The specialist teacher tried out 'Old McDonald' – 'Onkel Karl hat einen Bauernhof' and the children's interest was captured more than ever before. They seemed to enjoy what they were doing and behaviour was much better, although one group was still very noisy. Apparently there are lots of related activities so this could last several weeks, with the possibility of doing an assembly. In this way, they were exposed to more German than ever and were beginning to pick up the vocabulary under the disguise of having fun. This was the best lesson yet. I hope it continues like this.

6   **Commentary on Phase 1**

1   This point highlights the need for adequate training in primary methodology. Although linguistic competence is crucial, it must be combined with appropriate methods of teaching and managing young children, in order for the learning to be effective. This issue should have been addressed before the teaching programme began and the expertise of the classteachers could have been exploited to this end. However, since the project was implemented with only vague plans, the need for training in primary methodology was never identified.

2   Staff were unaware of their role in the project and how much responsibility they should have had. It seemed clear to me that the staff delivering the teaching would have ultimate responsibility for evaluating and ordering the resources they required for their lessons. It was surprising that resources had not been ordered in advance, so that they could be used when the teaching began. This was another example of insufficient planning.

3   This problem may well have been avoided, had there been training in primary methodology prior to the commencement of teaching.

4   It could be argued that if the project was to be successful (i.e. the children learn a substantial amount of language and language learning skills and enjoy it in the process) then it should have been taken very seriously and every effort should have been made to overcome or ease obvious difficulties.

5   However, arrangements such as this should have been clarified at the planning stage of the project so that the initial enthusiasm of staff could have been exploited. In this way, resources may have been purchased at the beginning of

the project, which may have had a more positive effect on teaching and learning.

6   However, since this was a combined project, the aims and objectives should have been drawn up centrally and in advance of the beginning of teaching, so that each teacher would have been working towards common goals. Although lack of forward planning had created this situation, the emergency creation of individual aims and objectives for each primary school only contributed to the growing sense of separateness that was to become a hallmark of the project.

7   Again, this crucial issue should have been carefully considered prior to the beginning of the project, since without adequate provision, the feasibility of the project would come into question.

8   The mismanagement of continuity, therefore, may partly explain why interest and commitment from School 1A rapidly declined by the end of the first year.

9   The researcher was slightly concerned that the pace of lessons was fairly slow and that the format was predictable. Lessons often began with reinforcement of previous language, introduction of new vocabulary, a game, then a worksheet for the remainder of the lesson. The researcher thought that by the end of the first year the pupils would have learnt many words but would not be able to produce and manipulate longer structures. The teaching thus far was very much modelled on a secondary school approach, where the main aim is to cover a syllabus and pass an exam, restricting language to clearly defined topics. Although the pupils enjoyed playing games based on specific vocabulary, there was a clear need for activities appropriate to primary methodology, such as stories, poems, rhymes and games to be played in groups.

The lack of appropriate methodology, occurring in all three schools at varying levels, can be directly linked to the implementation of the project as a whole. A specialist teacher of foreign languages in the secondary sector will approach all language teaching in this manner unless they have had specific training in other sectors. Thus, more time was required at the planning stage of the project, in order for the specialist staff to become informed of primary approaches. This could have involved researching existing methods of teaching primary modern foreign languages, observing other primary modern foreign language projects, liaising with LEA advisers and attending courses or workshops, for example. However, this was never an issue at the planning stage. It was assumed that specialist teachers would be able to deliver a successful primary programme. It never occurred to any of the teachers that learning from past experience and from existing practice would be crucial to the successful implementation and development of the project. In effect, they were starting from scratch, with all the problems and pitfalls ahead that had already occurred in the past, and for which approaches had been tried and tested. Much information existed which reported and documented the practice of teaching primary modern foreign language, but it was suspected that most of the teachers were unaware of it. Their key objective seemed to be to start teaching as soon as possible. The quality and quantity of planning required had been seriously underestimated.

10   Again, the issue of teacher competence arises. The researcher was concerned that since the classteachers would be delivering the foreign language lessons to the new Year 4 pupils in the following academic year, would they be

linguistically capable of doing so, or would the emphasis of teaching shift to language awareness, rather than language acquisition.

11 Although it can be appreciated that the practical aspects of managing a school and its resources must be taken into account, it was felt that the decision not to allow the meetings to go ahead showed a lack of commitment to the project from School 1A. Time and money had been invested in the project and there was an expectation among staff, parents and pupils that foreign language learning would become established in these schools. Since relatively little planning had taken place prior to the beginning of teaching, parallel planning sessions seemed crucial.

12 This 'conflict' highlighted a real need for awareness of and training in current primary modern foreign language methodology.

13 It would have been more beneficial to approach the specialist publishers offering appropriately developed materials. Again, ignorance of developments in primary modern foreign languages was evident here. A significant amount of research into current practice, methods and materials should have taken place, long before any teaching was attempted.

14 Again this 'problem' raises the issue of teacher competence and highlights the need for adequate contingency arrangements, should the foreign language teacher be unavailable. On several occasions in Schools 1B and 1D lessons were cancelled due to staff absence.

15 This was a justifiable statement and one that should have been properly addressed at the planning stage.

16 She was in need of guidance and it was clear this should have come from a central policy that should have been drawn up in advance of the teaching. At

this stage of the project it was evident that if she did not implement some form

of assessment then it would not happen.

7   **Initial Interview Questions (Phase 2)**

Organisation / Background

1.   **Middle schools only:** How does the middle school system work? Do Y5 and Y6 move around?

2.   How long has MFL been taught at KS2?

3.   How long are the lessons? How many sessions per week? How many pupils?

4.   Why was MFL introduced into KS2? Whose idea was it?

5.   Description of MFL department. Staff / which languages / KS3 course / extra-curricular activities?

6.   How was the project started? What were the initial reactions encountered?

7.   What is the status of MFL within the school?

Teaching / Methodology

1.   What teaching methods are used? Are they different from those in KS3?

2.   What resources are used in KS2? How were they selected and why?

3.   What are the Aims and Objectives of KS2 MFL? *Impact on KS3? Did KS3 need to be changed? Will the pupils be taking GCSE early? Is KS2 just an add-on? A fun way to approach MFL, to raise awareness and improve attitudes before the real work begins?

4.   What methods of assessment are used?

5.   Continuity? KS2 – KS3 not a problem? Transition into High School? How is this managed?

6.   Are there any specific extra-curricular activities involving KS2 learners?

7.   Scheme of work

8.   Planning and development

Support

1.   Are you given any financial support for KS2 MFL?

2.   Is there any support / encouragement / guidance from the LEA?

3.   Do you take part in any training courses / INSET for KS2 MFL?

4.   Have you made any links with outside organisations / other schools for support in KS2 MFL?

Outcomes / Attitudes

1.   What were / are the reactions of senior management / other staff / pupils / parents to KS2 MFL?

2.   Has the project been successful? In what ways?

3.   Have you encountered any difficulties?

4.   Is there anything you would do differently with hindsight?

5.   Has KS2 MFL had any significant effect on pupils learning / attitudes?

6.   Has KS2 MFL had any significant effect on SEN pupils?

8   Questionnaire Final Draft (Phase 3)

PRIMARY MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES QUESTIONNAIRE

Please could you complete and return this questionnaire in the envelope provided, by **Friday 17th September 1999.**

Name of school

....

Mainstream / Independent?

....

CONCEPTION

1.   Who put forward the idea of introducing modern foreign language teaching in your school?
- ❑ Headteacher
- ❑ Senior management
- ❑ Classteacher
- ❑ Local secondary school
- ❑ Governor
- ❑ Parent
- ❑ LEA
- ❑ Other (please specify)..

2.   Why was it decided to introduce modern foreign language teaching in your school?

IMPLEMENTATION

1.   How much time was spent planning the initiative?

2.   Who was responsible for planning the initiative?
- ❑ Headteacher
- ❑ Senior management
- ❑ Local secondary school
- ❑ Classteachers
- ❑ Modern foreign language co-ordinator
- ❑ Modern foreign language committee
   Who belongs to the committee? ....
   ....
- ❑ LEA
- ❑ Other (please specify) ....

3. Which sources of guidance did you use?
   - ❑ LEA advisors
   - ❑ Local secondary schools
   - ❑ Primary schools operating similar initiatives
   - ❑ CILT
   - ❑ ALL
   - ❑ Reports from the 1960s Primary French Pilot Scheme
   - ❑ Articles / literature about existing primary modern foreign language projects
   - ❑ Other (please specify) ....
   - ❑ No guidance was sought

4. Did you receive financial support for the initiative? If yes, please state from whom.

5. Was the financial support for a fixed time only or is it ongoing?

ORGANISATION

1. Are modern foreign languages recognised as part of the main school curriculum?

2. Who is responsible for the co-ordination and development of the subject?
   - ❑ Headteacher
   - ❑ Senior management
   - ❑ Individual classteachers
   - ❑ Modern foreign language co-ordinator
   - ❑ Modern foreign language committee
   - ❑ Local secondary school
   - ❑ LEA
   - ❑ Other (please specify) ....

3. Which languages are taught?

4. In which year group are modern foreign languages introduced?

5. Do all pupils in each participating year group learn modern foreign languages?

6. How many modern foreign language lessons do pupils receive each week?

7. How long are the lessons?

8. Who teaches the lessons?
   - ❑ Visiting specialist foreign language teachers
   - ❑ Local secondary school language teachers
   - ❑ Native speakers (who are not trained teachers)
   - ❑ Specialist language teacher in the school (please state language qualifications)

    ❑ Individual classteachers (please state language qualifications)
    ❑ Other (please specify) ....

9.   What materials and resources do you use?
    ❑ Commercial resources (please specify) ....
    ❑ Textbooks (please specify) ....
    ❑ Flashcards
    ❑ Games
    ❑ Songs
    ❑ Television / video
    ❑ Computer software
    ❑ Email / internet
    ❑ Authentic materials
    ❑ Other (please specify) ....

10.   Do you have a detailed scheme of work for each year group?

11.   What are the aims and objectives for each year group?

12.   How are the lessons structured? What activities are used?

13.   How is pupil progress assessed?

14.   Are there any extra-curricular activities, e.g. visits abroad, exchanges, language days, festivals, etc.?

15.   Do you receive ongoing guidance for modern foreign language teaching in your school? If yes, please state from whom.

16.   Do teachers take part in training courses for modern foreign languages in primary schools?

17.   What arrangements have been made for the continuity of modern foreign language learning between the primary and secondary phases?

EVALUATION

1.   What are the attitudes of the pupils, staff, senior management, governors, parents, etc. towards the teaching of modern foreign languages in your school?

2.   Have there been any noticeable benefits resulting from teaching modern foreign languages in your school? If yes, please state which.

3.   Has the implementation of the foreign language in any way benefited the literacy programme? Please give details.

4.   What have been the greatest challenges experienced in the planning, implementation and delivery of modern foreign languages in your school and how have they been overcome?

5.   What is the future of modern foreign language teaching in your school likely to be?

6.   Are you aware of the present work on primary modern foreign languages being carried out by CILT and QCA?

7.   Do you have any further comments?

8.   If necessary, would you be prepared to discuss these issues in greater depth and / or allow me to carry out some observation of lessons?

Contact Name: ……………………………………………

Position:……………………………………………………..

Thankyou for taking the time and trouble to fill in this questionnaire.

9   **Results of the Questionnaire (Phase 3)**

PRIMARY MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES QUESTIONNAIRE

Number of questionnaires sent: 44
Number of replies: 18 (41%)
Number teaching PMFL   13 (72%)
Number not teaching PMFL   5 (28%)

N.B.   Not every question was answered on each questionnaire

CONCEPTION

1.   Who put forward the idea of introducing modern foreign language teaching in
        your school?
        ❑ Headteacher   5
        ❑ Senior management   1
        ❑ Classteacher   3
        ❑ Local secondary school   0
        ❑ Governor   1
        ❑ Parent   1
        ❑ LEA   1
        ❑ Other   2*
        *2 ex-teachers of PRISM scheme when employed at the school (secondary
        into primaries)
        *Italian Consulate

2.   Why was it decided to introduce modern foreign language teaching in your
        school?

        *More confident with an earlier start
        *11 can be too late – can get embarrassed
        *Enjoyment   2
        *To stimulate a different intellectual activity
        *To meet the needs of working in Europe 2000+
        *City has European links with industry
        *To give Y6 pupils a bridge into Y7
        *To keep abreast of developments in MFL / European education
        *Headteacher's belief and enthusiasm
        *French has been long established
        *To aid learning in secondary school
        *Being part of the EU
        *Proximity of continent
        *To raise achievement in KS3 / 4 (secondary)

*Children need to be able to converse in a Fl for their future benefit
*To accustom their ears to listening
*After school language club
*Offered a teacher from Italian Consulate in return for an afternoon club for Italian pupils

IMPLEMENTATION

1.   How much time was spent planning the initiative?
*3 meetings
*4 meetings
*Considerable amount of annual lesson planning / timetable juggling
*3 Inset days
*One academic year
*Evolved over a number of years
*2 hours (Lang Club)
*Very little

2.   Who was responsible for planning the initiative?

❑ Headteacher	4
❑ Senior management	1
❑ Local secondary school	0
❑ Classteachers	3
❑ Modern foreign language co-ordinator	2
❑ Modern foreign language committee	0
❑ LEA	1
❑ Other	0

3.   Which sources of guidance did you use?

❑ LEA advisors	4
❑ Local secondary schools	1
❑ Primary schools operating similar initiatives	0
❑ CILT	4
❑ ALL	0
❑ Reports from the 1960s Primary French Pilot Scheme	2
❑ Articles / literature about existing primary modern foreign language projects	4
❑ Other	4*
❑ No guidance was sought	1

*French exchange with twinning association
*Previous experience
*Scottish primary scheme
*Goethe Institute

4.   Did you receive financial support for the initiative? If yes, please state from whom.

*No	7		
*Yes	3	**LEA	2
		**Secondary school	1
		**Annual capitation from participating primaries	

5.   Was the financial support for a fixed time only or is it ongoing?
*Lump sum from MFL advisor at LEA
*Cost of materials / small library from secondary school
*LEA provided scheme and material; money for courses and resources
*Ongoing

ORGANISATION

1.   Are modern foreign languages recognised as part of the main school curriculum?
*Yes   8
*No   1 (Club only)

*Also as voluntary club
*An extra element

2.   Who is responsible for the co-ordination and development of the subject?

❑ Headteacher	6
❑ Senior management	1
❑ Individual classteachers	1
❑ Modern foreign language co-ordinator	4
❑ Modern foreign language committee	0
❑ Local secondary school	0
❑ LEA	0
❑ Other	1*

*Italian teacher

3.   Which languages are taught?

*French	10
*German	8
*Italian	1

4.   In which year group are modern foreign languages introduced?

*Year R	1
*Year 1	1
*Year 2	1
*Year 4	1

*Year 5   4
*Year 6   4**
*All pupils
**One is the beginning of a second foreign language in the last term
**Second FL

5.   Do all pupils in each participating year group learn modern foreign languages?
        *Yes   10
        *No   1 (Club)

6.   How many modern foreign language lessons do pupils receive each week?
        *1   9
        *2   2

7.   How long are the lessons?
        *45 mins   2
        *40 mins   2**
        *45 – 60 mins 1
        *20 mins   1
        *30 mins   4
        *20 – 30 mins 1
        *30 – 60 mins 1
        **Lang club

8.   Who teaches the lessons?
        □   Visiting specialist foreign language teachers   2
        □   Local secondary school language teachers   2
        □   Native speakers (who are not trained teachers)
        □   Specialist language teacher in the school   1***
        □   Individual classteachers   5**
        □   Other   1*
        *Headteacher
        **One school – classteachers have done residential courses
        **A-level German; O-level French
        ***BA Fr Ge / MA Fr

9.   What materials and resources do you use?
        □   Commercial resources   6   (Ca va; Pilote; Eins,Zwei,
           Drei…Los!; J'aime ecouter; Tricolore; Tambourin)
        □   Textbooks
        □   Flashcards   10
        □   Games   11
        □   Songs   10
        □   Television / video   6
        □   Computer software   3
        □   Email / internet
        □   Authentic materials   6
        □   Other   4*
        *Home-made
        *Le club (BBC radio programmes)

*Storybooks
*Own worksheets

10.   Do you have a detailed scheme of work for each year group?
    *Planned by the French teacher
    *No – have to be flexible – successful lessons are repeated annually
    *Yes   6
    *Follow Pilote / 123 Los!

11.   What are the aims and objectives for each year group?
    *Enjoyment   2
    *Confidence   2
    *Fluent conversation
    *There is a school MFL policy (but no SoW)
    *Learning how to learn a language   2
    *Attitudinal development
    *Limited language objectives
    *Develop an enthusiasm for language learning
    *Demonstrate that FL learning is for all pupils
    *Raise awareness and curiosity about how language works
    *Cross-curricular
    *Number work
    *Participation in the lessons and therefore the language
    *Y4 – knowledge of France; greetings; numbers; colours; days of the week; date & birthdays
    *Y5 – revision of previous year; family; pets; food at the restaurant; numbers
    *Y6 – revision of previous year; numbers; colours; introduce verbs; hobbies; the body
    *To liaise closely with class teacher
    *To extend class topics to give an Italian dimension
    *To offer French as an optional extra (already teaching Italian as part of curriculum)

12.   How are the lessons structured? What activities are used?
    *Lots of conversation – Q&A   2
    *Pupil – pupil Q&A
    *Lots of practical activities
    *Whole class teaching   2
    *Warm up with very basic conversation
    *Worksheets
    *Mapwork
    *Hands on experience
    *Some lessons about EU / French specific
    *Oral / aural – games / songs – brisk pace – fun
    *Minimal copy writing
    *Occasional sentence manipulation (Y6)
    *Listening comprehension
    *Aim for variety
    *Recap / new element / practise in a fun way

*Poems; songs; pelmanism games; mime; storytelling
*Games; songs; repetition; colouring; written work
*Reinforcement – new material – standard closure
*Games, songs, conversation

13.   How is pupil progress assessed?
        *Being developed – will liaise with Y7 teachers in secondary school
        *Quiz (test!) at the start of Y6 and in term 3. Reports have a space and a
        comment for MFL
        *Deliberately not assessed
        *Very informally – marks out of 10 for written work
        *Grading indicating unsatisfactory / satisfactory / good / very good
        *Not formally assessed
        *Visual – through oral response
        *Classroom interaction and observation / marking of worksheets
        *Questioning
        *Informally

14.   Are there any extra-curricular activities, e.g. visits abroad, exchanges,
        language days, festivals, etc.?
        *No   2
        *French drama in assembly
        *Letters to penfriends with a view to possible exchange visit
        *Links with 2 French schools (letters / visits)
        *Exchange programme with a German primary school in Dusseldorf
        *Extended lessons – food tasting afternoon / Boules tournament
        *School linking project about to begin to enhance the programme
        *Not any more
        *Language days   2
        *French breakfast / picnic
        *4 day trip to France with Y6
        *Usually a class trip abroad once per year
        *Planning to join an exchange of interests topic

15.   Do you receive ongoing guidance for modern foreign language teaching in
        your school? If yes, please state from whom.
        *No   6
        *The Y7 language teacher has been invited to visit
        *Keep in touch with feeder comp.
        *LEA advisor
        *It would be available though (from LEA)

16.   Do teachers take part in training courses for modern foreign languages in
        primary schools?
        *No   3
        *Yes   6
        *The 2 PMFL teachers from sec school provided Inset for primary staff – 12
        teachers 8 x 2hr sessions

17.   What arrangements have been made for the continuity of modern foreign language learning between the primary and secondary phases?
*Being developed – secondary phase are offering to come in to teach French & Spanish
*No formal liaison pre-transfer
*Limited discussion
*None – parental choice has meant that there are many feeder schools / sec schools also receive from many primaries – liaison is impossible
*None 2
*Liaise with HoD at secondary school (secondary)
*Contact between feeder schools and secondary schools

EVALUATION

1.   What are the attitudes of the pupils, staff, senior management, governors, parents, etc. towards the teaching of modern foreign languages in your school?
*Very positive 3
*All seem very positive and 'pro' despite the time squeeze with NLS & NNS
*Governors very positive; pupils & parents largely so; staff attitudes vary
*Accepted as part of normal school life – some pupils like it – others hate it
*Brilliant public relations
*Positive and supportive   2

2.   Have there been any noticeable benefits resulting from teaching modern foreign languages in your school? If yes, please state which.
*Children and staff are confident users of French
*Feedback from ex-pupils – gives them a head start in Y7 and a little bit more confidence   2
*Children's attitudes and confidence improved
*Access to learning a FL (in the secondary school) has increased in speed due to motivation and technique / skills learnt at primary school; also now able to offer a second language from Y7 rather than Y8
*GCSE candidates who participated in the scheme have achieved good pass grades
*Confidence of children
*Enjoyment of subject on transfer to sec school
*Ability to succeed on transfer to sec school
*Increased listening skills

3.   Has the implementation of the foreign language in any way benefited the literacy programme? Please give details.
*No   1
*Focus on listening skills – pronunciation etc.
*Understanding of common roots to words
*Grammar – focus on structures and parts of speech
*Learning a second language makes you think about your own (Inversely, NLS has justified the continuation of French teaching)
*Too early to say   2

*Qualified language teacher a useful resource for the NLS
*Storytelling key to primary lang lesson content – extended by class teacher into assemble or play

4.   What have been the greatest challenges experienced in the planning, implementation and delivery of modern foreign languages in your school and how have they been overcome?

    *Time – fitting it into the timetable   5
    *Staffing   2
    *Teacher competence
    *Time (as a Head) in planning, delivery and marking.
    *Training
    *Keeping up personal enthusiasm in what seems like a very isolated position (the only lang teacher)
    *Resourcing
    *Timetabling primary visits into secondary school day
    *Energy levels do not allow more than 3 energetic primary lessons per day

5.   What is the future of modern foreign language teaching in your school likely to be?

    *Would like to develop it more – have more sessions – introduce Spanish
    *Would like to see MFL develop as a fully integrated natural programme
    *Has been running for 7 years – would be opposition if he tried to drop it
    *Will continue as it does now
    *If the teacher left, she is unsure whether she would be replaced, but there is a general feeling that MFL should be offered
    *Continuing – but trying to find Spanish teacher to train in primary methodology (secondary)
    *It should continue
    *Hope to continue – the scheme has been in existence for 9 years
    *Not to be formally introduced – club only
    *Positive

6.   Are you aware of the present work on primary modern foreign languages being carried out by CILT and QCA?

    *Yes   9**
    *No   1
    **One of the 12 'Good practice' schools

7.   Do you have any further comments?

    *Enthusiasm helps – (cosmopolitan family & keen interest in foreign cultures / countries)
    *EBD / SEN get an extra big 'kick' and 'success'
    *An enjoyable experience teaching MFL to primary children, giving them confidence at speaking before inhibitions of adolescence

10   Interview Questions and Observation Criteria (Phase 3)

1.   How did the decision to introduce a foreign language programme into your
        school come about?

        e.g.   *following a growing trend
                 *educational benefit of pupils
                 *linguistic benefit of pupils
                 *a missing element of the curriculum

2.   How do you perceive the mfl programme?

        e.g.   *an extra fun activity
                 *a learning experience to broaden pupils' horizons whilst at primary
                 school
                 *the first stage of pupils' second language development, which
                 continues into secondary school and possibly beyond

3.   During the planning stage, what were the main issues that needed to be
        resolved?

4.   How is the project financed?

5.   To what extent are parents and governors involved in the project?

6.   How much involvement do you / does the Headteacher have in the project?

7.   Have there been any negative reactions to the project?

*Questions regarding TEACHERS / CONTINUITY / ASSESSMENT as appropriate
to the questionnaire responses.

*Further questions arising from the questionnaire responses.

Observation Criteria

*teacher competence

*methodology: activities, resources, pace, delivery, etc.

*pupil response: attitude, enthusiasm, linguistic confidence / competence

*language learning environment

11   Excerpts from Collected Data – School 3A

(Interview and observation notes as recorded in the Research Diary)

1   The decision to introduce mfl came about because of the Headteacher's strong feeling about the growing importance of Europe

2   The school liaises with the Head of MFL at the local secondary school

3   The programme gives pupils confidence and a good start

4   The programme is perceived as an extra fun activity, a learning experience to broaden pupils' horizons whilst at primary school and the first stage of pupils' second language development, which continues into secondary school and possibly beyond

5   The French teacher – a specialist French teacher, currently not employed and mother of a pupil – is on the school payroll

6   Resources and materials are all devised by the teacher

7   The specialist teacher liaises with the classteachers

8   The Headteacher has a big involvement in the project. She is in contact with a school in France. She is very committed.

9   There have been no negative reactions to the project.

10   The project has been running for 6 years

11   French is recognised as part of the main school curriculum

12   French is not yet included in the pupils' school report. It is currently being reviewed

13   There is no assessment – they want to keep it relaxed!

14   Continuity is being developed through liaison with the local secondary school. Information is passed on regarding what has been taught. Certain topics are left out so that the secondary school has something new to teach.

15   This is a good school. It is well resourced with computers in all classrooms.

16   The Headteacher is very approachable and very committed to the project.

17   The observed lesson was about the pronunciation of place names. The pupils had good pronunciation of French sounds. All of the pupils were interested in the lessons and took part in answering questions. No-one misbehaved.

12   Excerpts from Collected Data – School 3B

(Interview and observation notes as recorded in the Research Diary)

1   The programme is perceived as a learning experience to broaden pupils' horizons whilst at primary school. Linguistic attainment is not the aim

2   The school has links with companies in France

3   The Headteacher is very enthusiastic about France and its language and culture and visits at least twice every year. Some of his relations are French

4   The biggest problem was obtaining resources

5   French was chosen because of the Headteacher's links with France and because of his A level in French

6   French takes place only in Year 6 because of the problems of time. There is no time to teach it in other years. The aim is to give pupils a taster of the language before they go to secondary school

7   There is no need for continuity due to the nature of the programme which is based on language awareness

8   If the Headteacher left the school he thinks the project would probably stop

9   The school has an MFL policy document

10   A food tasting session was observed. A selection of food and drink was distributed among the pupils and they had to mark their comments on a worksheet.

11   The food tasting was good for cultural awareness, helping to foster positive attitudes towards foreign things, and helping the pupils to be more adventurous

12   No French was spoken in the food tasting session apart from *bonjour / au revoir* and *merci*.

13   The pupils enjoyed the session – there was much enthusiasm

14   Tesco donated £30 worth of food for the event and supplied two employees to help out

15   Two French-speaking members of the 'Crusaders' basketball team came along too – but did not really add to the event in any significant way

13   Excerpts from Collected Data – School 3C

(Interview and observation notes as recorded in the Research Diary)

1   The mfl programme is perceived primarily as a learning experience to broaden pupils' horizons whilst at primary school

2   Parents and governors are not involved in the mfl programme

3   The Headteacher has no involvement in the mfl programme – it is co-ordinated and delivered by the visiting specialist language teacher

4   There are no noticeable differences in attainment in French compared with German, although in some cases there is higher esteem for German amongst the boys

5   French and German are included in the pupils' school report in Year 6 but not in Year 5

6   Extra-curricular activities had to stop because of time pressures

7   There was a good report for the mfl programme in the recent OFSTED inspection

8   There are no arrangements for continuity since pupils feed into over twenty different secondary schools

9   Assessment is carried out informally, usually by giving a mark out of 10 for written work

10   The teacher was observed to be very competent in both her linguistic ability and her delivery of the lesson. She knew what she was doing and what she wanted to achieve and was very organised

11   The lessons began with corrections of written work, some work on negatives and a revision of animals, using small plastic toys

12   The approach to teaching was very 'academic'

13   Lots of pupils lost interest in what was happening

14   The pupils' understanding of spoken instructions was observed to be good

15   Pupils were expected to understand the written word and in turn be able to write. Pupils have exercise books for written work

16   Some pupils in the second class were very distracted and were 'messing about'

14   Excerpts from Collected Data – School 3D

(Interview and observation notes as recorded in the Research Diary)

1   The primary schools pay the secondary school to deliver the mfl programme – thus they choose which language they want to be taught

2   Parents and governors are invited to attend demonstration lessons and assemblies

3   No other colleagues, apart from the specialist language teachers who run and deliver the programme, are involved in the project

4   There is no problem with continuity – they use the experienced pupils who join them in Year 7 to 'help' the pupils who have not done mfl before. The work they have done before is expanded. The others pick it up more quickly because they are motivated by those who already have experience

5   They recycle language wherever possible

6   They do not teach long lists of vocabulary – rather just a few words that can then be used in structures

7   The project has been running for 4 years plus a pilot year

8   The emphasis is on listening and speaking. Worksheets are given out with the written words already on so there is no chance of mistakes!

9   Reading is introduced in an infant style – large words on flashcards

10   Teacher competence – linguistic and pedagogic – was evident. Both are very much involved in primary mfl development and are active in this field. They are very committed to teaching pmfl.

11   It was inspiring to watch such interesting, fun lessons where it was evident that pupils were learning simultaneously to being amused

12   A positive attitude, enthusiasm and linguistic confidence was observed among the pupils

13   A language learning environment was noted in all three schools observed

14   Assessment is carried out by means of a Record of Achievement

15   Questionnaire Final Draft (Phase 4)

LANGUAGE COLLEGE / PMFL QUESTIONNAIRE   MARCH 2001

Please could you complete and return this questionnaire in the envelope provided, by **Friday 23rd March.**

Name of School…………………………………………………

Contact name…………………………………………………

1.   How long has your school been a Language College?

2.   How has the provision of modern foreign languages developed in your school and in the wider community as a result of receiving Language College status?

3.   Are you involved in modern foreign language teaching programmes at your feeder primary schools? **(If 'NO' then you are not required to answer any further questions!)**

a.   Were primary mfl initiatives implemented in support of the application / as a result of the award or did they exist prior to the application? Please state when primary mfl teaching began.

b.   Is there a designated colleague at your school who is responsible / accountable for the primary mfl programme? To whom are they accountable?

c.   How is leadership demonstrated in the context of managing and developing the primary mfl programme?

d.   How many primary schools are involved in the primary mfl programme?

e.   Which languages are taught, which primary year groups are involved and how much teaching do those pupils receive per week?

f.   Are the primary mfl lessons recognised as part of the formal timetable or do they take place as an extra curricular activity?

g.   Do you use commercial teaching resources or are resources devised by the teacher? (Please specify titles where appropriate.)

h.   What arrangements have been made for the assessment of pupil progress and performance?

i.   What arrangements have been made for the continuity of learning between the primary and secondary school phases?

j.   Are the primary mfl lessons taught by specialist foreign language teachers from your school or by the primary classteachers?

k.   Are detailed schemes of work used?

l.   Are detailed lesson plans drawn up by the teachers?

m.   What sources of guidance were sought in setting up the primary mfl programme?

n.   What arrangements have been made for the professional development of colleagues involved with primary mfl teaching?

o.   How would you describe the progress of the primary mfl programme?

p.   Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to complete this questionnaire.

16   Results of the Questionnaire (Phase 4)

LANGUAGE COLLEGE / PMFL QUESTIONNAIRE   MARCH 2001

Number of questionnaires sent   108
Number of replies   68 (63%)
Number teaching PMFL   52 (77%)
Number not teaching PMFL   16 (23%)

N.B. In many cases, multiple answers have been given for each question.

1.   *How long has your school been a Language College?*

From Sept 2001   7
0+ YEARS   18
1+ YEARS   10
2+ YEARS   4
3+ YEARS   8
4+ YEARS   9
5+ YEARS   7
6+ YEARS   4

NOT ANSWERED   1

2.   *How has the provision of modern foreign languages developed in your school
and in the wider community as a result of receiving Language College status?*

Diversificationof languages	37
Adult / community classes	23
Two languages at Key Stage 4 / GCSE	15
Two languages at Key Stage 3	11
Improved resources / facilities	10
Increased uptake post-16	7
Extra-curricular classes	4
Regular access to a foreign language assistant	3
Better results	3
Arrange INSET	3
Three languages at Key Stage 3	2
Smaller classes	2
Some pupils studying three languages at GCSE	1
Numeracy / literacy for feeder primary schools	1
Developing a programme of French for families	1
Summer language courses	1
Introduction of the International Baccalaureate	1
Wider range of courses	1
More foreign trips	1
Work experience in France	1
Language courses abroad for A-level students	1

Raised status of the subject as a whole   1

NOT ANSWERED   8

3.   *Are you involved in modern foreign language teaching programmes at your feeder primary schools?* ***(If 'NO' then you are not required to answer any further questions!)***

YES   52

NO   15   (STARTING SEPT 2001   5)
            (PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE   4)

NOT ANSWERED   1

a.   *Were primary mfl initiatives implemented in support of the application / as a result of the award or did they exist prior to the application? Please state when primary mfl teaching began.*

PRIOR TO APPLICATION
No date given 9
1991   1
1994   1

SUPPORT / RESULT OF APPLICATION
No date given 12
Sept   1996   1
Sept   1997   1
Sept   1998   4
Oct   1998   1
Jan   1999   1
Sept   1999   6
Jan   2000   3
Sept   2000   8
Oct   2000   1
Feb   2001   1
May   2001   1

NOT ANSWERED   1

b.   *Is there a designated colleague at your school who is responsible / accountable for the primary mfl programme? To whom are they accountable?*

YES   50   ACCOUNTABLE TO:
                              Headteacher   14
                              Head of MFL   14
                              Language College Director   12
                              Deputy Head   7
                              Governors   3

Primary Heads	2
Assistant Deputy Head	1
Assistant Vice Principal	1
Head of Community Education	1

OTHER   1
*Language College steering group

NO   0

NOT ANSWERED   1

c.   *How is leadership demonstrated in the context of managing and developing the primary mfl programme?*

*Steering group with representatives from each primary school.
*The co-ordinator develops ideas, negotiates with primary heads, organises staffing, monitors and evaluates progress.
*As PMFL co-ordinator, I manage the team of 5 teachers who visit our feeder primary schools. We all contribute to the programme, as every school wants something different.
*Scheduled community meeting with Director of Language College, Community Programme Manager, Colleague responsible for delivery of MFL programme and Heads of feeder primary schools.
*The teacher in charge of primary teaching is allowed considerable flexibility and autonomy to develop the programme as she wishes. As the project becomes more ambitious this may reduce.
*Organisation of annual INSET, provision of scheme of work and support materials, deployment of FLA into primaries, regular consultation with primary colleagues.
*Still in early stages
*(Question clearly not understood): All involved need to take a broader and longer view of languages
*Deputy Language College Manager has primary MFL as part of her remit
*Programme has had to be co-ordinated under auspices of LEA.
*There is no leadership except that I co-operate with the other member of staff involved.
*Scheme of work content / Inset for primary teachers
*The second in department delivers and manages the primary mfl programme. Initial letters are drafted by the Deputy Head.
*Language college co-ordinator meets with primary colleagues once a term to go through progress, use of resources, etc.
*Discussions with primary Headteachers / A primary Headteacher representing all primary Headteachers on Language College Management Board / Curriculum committee which includes membership of Year 6 classteachers.
*We have regular meetings to discuss progress and to evaluate our future plans.

*The Director of the Language College meets regularly with the teacher in charge of primary French and meets annually with the primary Heads and visits the schools.

*By taking full responsibility in the development of the project and the training of the MFL assistants.

*Leader of the Language College responsible for development and implementation.

*Planning syllabus / organising INSET / Purchasing resources / organising assessment / monitoring meetings.

*Termly review meetings with each primary school / raised at meetings / Headteacher observes lessons.

*Strategies discussed with Heads of middle schools and MFL staff. Also discussed at management meetings.

*Head of MFL oversees the programme

*The two primary headteachers are enthusiastic about the project. We have worked with our own staff to organise the programme.

*Co-ordinating meeting with primary colleagues. Agreeing targets in terms of what we can offer, what primaries would like and what is appropriate in the light of what we require of our pupils when they start in Year 7.

*We inform the primaries of any new developments. We have organised conferences to look at timetabling and curriculum content.

*Training with teacher in charge of PMFL

*Meetings headed by High School Language College Management Group which involves all first and middle feeder schools.

*Designated colleague manages tutors. Deputy Head oversees the programme and reports to the Governors.

*Through regular meetings to discuss progress of work.

*She is expected to meet targets, set up initiatives, evaluate, report back to senior staff and committee.

*The fact that our primary programme is one of the strengths of our status as a Language College is really dependent upon the designated colleague's hard work, enthusiasm and organisational skills.

*The teacher in charge of Spanish is responsible for the primary Spanish scheme of work and for monitoring the work of other colleagues in this respect.

*Links with other primary Heads / monitoring colleagues informally / organising primary language festival / lesson observation / provision of new reading resources.

*By successful running of programme / successful learning outcomes / good relationship with middle schools.

*The Language College pays half a day's salary to a part-time primary teacher who is trained in French. She works with the Language College Director to develop ideas and materials for the French club, which we hope to see in future with other primary schools.

*The advanced skills teacher leads the programme – liaising with the Language College manager and primary heads / teachers and uses other MFL colleagues; sixth form students and FLA's to implement programme.

*Mrs. XXX looks after / runs her project. I run mine and keep a watching brief on the other project.

*Language College steering group.

*Through training meetings, update circulars, information letters to primary heads, a rare primary heads meeting (because of time). Very regular material / teaching programmes.

*Weekly contact between co-ordinator and schools involved. Lesson plans, resources and support provided to MFL teachers. Newsletter each half term to update headteachers on progress of the project.

*A difficult area. Communication a problem given very wide geographical spread of feeder schools (25-30 mile radius).

NOT ANSWERED   10

d.   *How many primary schools are involved in the primary mfl programme?*

1	3
2	3
3	6
4	8
5	7
6	9
7	3
8	4
9	2
10	2
11	1
14	1
18	1

NOT ANSWERED   2

e.   *Which languages are taught, which primary year groups are involved and how much teaching do those pupils receive per week?*

LANGUAGE
French	49
German	17
Spanish	17
Japanese	4
Italian	3
Portuguese	2
Urdu	2
Gujerati	1
Panjabi	1
Russian	1

NOT ANSWERED   1

YEAR GROUP
Year 1	1
Year 2	3

Year 3   4
Year 4   11
Year 5   15
Year 6   33

NOT ANSWERED 15

DURATION OF TEACHING

Weekly:		
	<1hr	18
	1hr	12
	2 hr	2
	Length of lesson not stated	3

Other:		
	6 x 1hr	1
	5 x 40 mins	1
	30 mins p/w for two terms	1
	10 x 45 mins	1
	6 afternoons (half a term)	1
	30 – 60 mins p/w for 1 term	1
	1 hr p/w for 1 term	1
	2 x 1hr per term	1
	1 session per term	1
	3 – 4 sessions in Summer term	1
	10 sessions	1
	1 lesson per half term	1
	2-4 afternoons per half term	1

NOT ANSWERED   5

f. *Are the primary mfl lessons recognised as part of the formal timetable or do they take place as an extra curricular activity?*

FORMAL TIMETABLE: ONGOING   33

FORMAL TIMETABLE: LIMITED PERIOD ONLY 14

EXTRA CURRICULAR   13

NOT ANSWERED   1

g. *Do you use commercial teaching resources or are resources devised by the teacher? (Please specify titles where appropriate.)*

TEACHER DEVISED   47

COMMERCIAL   20
*Métro (Heinemann) (2)
*Mini Flashcards

*Resources from CILT
*Route National 1 (Secondary school text book)
*Early Start Spanish
*Folens Specials
*Gaston
*Forza
*La Jolie Ronde   (2)
*C'est façile comme Bonjour
*Caminos 1
*Passe Partout

NOT ANSWERED   2

h.   *What arrangements have been made for the assessment of pupil progress and performance?*

NONE   17
*Not applicable
*The course is seen as an introduction so there is no formal assessment
*To be determined this term
*No real formal assessment because of variations in teaching

ARRANGEMENTS MADE   33
*Informal   (7)
*Ongoing assessment   (4)
*Use of National Curriculum targets / levels   (4)
*End of year formal assessment   (2)
*Certification   (2)
*Portfolio for Year 6 pupils to take to secondary school
*Homework
*Review by Language College Manager
*Follow assessment procedures already in existence in primary schools
*Vocabulary tests
*End of year prizes
*Pupils tested with Foundation Tier GCSE papers towards the end of Year 7
*Integral to the course
*Pupil work is marked – students keep books
*Comments sent to parents
*Informal observation
*Tests
*Reports
*National Curriculum assessments in course book
*Primary phase will be completed by the same teacher, wherever possible, so that all pupils have the same pre-secondary experience.
*Pupils keep a folder of all work completed. The course is not formally assessed.
*Assessment programme written to test to Level 1 (National Curriculum)
*Record-keeping and schemes of work.
*Classteachers complete an evaluation sheet each term
*European Languages Portfolio

*The same as Year 7
*Our own assessments have been devised
*Oral work
*Teacher assessment
*Weekly / fortnightly outcomes are marked, assessed, and a file kept.

NOT ANSWERED   2

i.   *What arrangements have been made for the continuity of learning between the
        primary and secondary school phases?*

ARRANGEMENTS MADE 31
*Grouped according to progress
*Year 6 portfolio / Writing to Heads of MFL Departments in Summer term to explain what is happening
*A test will be taken on entry to secondary school. Secondary staff produced the scheme of work and have adapted the Key Stage 3 scheme of work accordingly to ensure progression.
*Early examination on entry to secondary.
*We make sure we don't use same materials that they will use in Year 7.
*Scheme of work devised by secondary school and followed by primary schools.
*Names of pupils are made available. Fast track system available for talented pupils who have had primary French.
*We are not teaching 'primary' French – the former Year 7 curriculum is now started in Year 6.
*We are going to take the teaching into account when teaching Year 7 next year. A summer school for other pupils entering the school who have had no French teaching.
*Primary French teacher liaises with the department on a regular basis and we update our schemes of work in accordance.
*We have looked at what they will be learning in Year 7 and we have created the materials accordingly.
*Re-organise scheme of work
*We have restructured schemes of work slightly for next year to take account of prior learning. We hope to be able to increases pace and to deliver more linguistic structure in Year 7.
*Liaison meetings.
*Pupils who have taken part in the project are grouped together to help maintain their progress
*The Year 6 course is an introduction to the Year 7 curriculum. Topics covered in Year 6 are re-visited in more depth at the College.
*Consultation with primary teachers re: curriculum. Survey being conducted at the moment of current Year 7 and Year 8 to assess impact.
*Fast-track in Year 7 and banding from Christmas.
*Joint scheme of work between middle and high school.
*Specially developed scheme of work.
*Tracking learning through Year 6.
*We audit all incoming pupils. Year 6 programme dovetails into Year 7 curriculum, with Out of School club for out of area pupils.

*Single syllabus and single co-ordinator.
*Masterclass students continue with Book 2 in separate after school class.
*European Languages Portfolio informs secondary school about previous learning.
*The same person is responsible for devising the Year 6 and Year 7 schemes of work.
*Liaison meetings, liaison teacher and recommended continuity of resources.
*Initially the co-ordinator has observed several Year 7 lessons so as to see the level of attainment at secondary level. In future we hope to encourage dialogue and sharing of ideas, concerns, etc. between secondary and primary mfl teachers.
*Assessment on entry.
*In the Summer term we will organise a half day session using our ICT facilities to teach the pupils a little more and to give them a taster session in the style of mfl teaching.

NONE   17
*Currently at planning stage (3)
*(Question clearly not understood): teaching language acquisition skills / interest in languages / aspects of literacy
*Very difficult because of the nature of the catchment area
*Difficult – we have 35 feeder primaries. Emphasis on skills rather than content.
*PMFL considered an opportunity to give students language learning skills, transferable between languages.
*Next year all pupils will learn the same in primary and thus we will not teach them same in secondary
*We have introduced twilight sessions in Russian this year for Year 7 but will offer the language in the timetable from next year for those who studied French and Russian in primary school.
*Spanish was deliberately chosen as a 'neutral' language. In Year 7 French and German are taught. However, all pupils will pick up Spanish again in Year 8.
*Research in place at the moment.
*Difficult with 46 feeder schools.
*Only very few of the children come on to us.

NOT ANSWERED   4

j.   *Are the primary mfl lessons taught by specialist foreign language teachers from your school or by the primary classteachers?*

SPECIALIST LANGUAGE COLLEGE TEACHERS   39

PRIMARY CLASSTEACHERS   12
*Primary teacher is MFL trained
*Minimum qualification A-level language

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS   4

NATIVE SPEAKERS   1

SIXTH FORMERS   1

OTHER   1
*All tutors are specially employed. Many are French. Trained by us and
CILT.

NOT ANSWERED   2

k.   *Are detailed schemes of work used?*

YES   40

NO   9

NOT ANSWERED   3

l.   *Are detailed lesson plans drawn up by the teachers?*

YES   41

NO   7
*Classteachers deliver 5-10 mins per day.

NOT ANSWERED   4

m.   *What sources of guidance were sought in setting up the primary mfl
      programme?*

CILT / NACELL   18

LEA ADVISER   11

OTHER   21
*QCA (5)
*Other Language Colleges (4)
*Discussions with feeder primary Headteachers / staff (3)
*Conferences (2)
*DfEE (2)
*INSET (2)
*Prior experience of teaching primary French (2)
*My own initiative
*Consultation between myself, Headteacher of each school and classteacher of
pupils to be taught to ascertain their expectations, discuss logistics, etc.
*Prior Language College experience
*A primary school which already teaches French

*Parents and pupils
*Researched by Head of MFL
*Schemes of work used by neighbouring middle schools for Year 6
*Goethe Institute
*Research for MA
*We talked to other language colleagues
*Liaison with primaries
*Eurozone meetings between all schools involved
*National Curriculum guidance.
*Discussion with University researcher
*Endless research
*Lesson observations
*Reading written research

NONE   2
*All specialist teachers capable

NOT ANSWERED   7

n.   *What arrangements have been made for the professional development of
      colleagues involved with primary mfl teaching?*

*Training days / INSET   24
*Conferences   6
*Primary courses / workshops   6
*CILT / NACELL website   2
*Subscribe to NACELL   1
*Annual ½ day for preparation of resources   1
*Informal   1
*Optional observation of colleagues   1
*Exchange of ideas / new materials   1
*Trip abroad   1
*Resources purchased   1
*Meetings

NONE   6

NOT ANSWERED   9

o.   *How would you describe the progress of the primary mfl programme?*

POSITIVE
*We have made good progress this year.
*Excellent (5)
*An enormous success – one of the great strengths of the work of the school
as a Language College.

*In the first year many teachers were enthusiastic but daunted. Nevertheless, even after just one year there was an impact on the start of Key Stage 3. Colleagues are all keen to continue with Phase 2.

*Still very much in its early stages but about to lead to a very exciting and rewarding phase.

*Good (4)

*Excellent and hopefully on the increase

*Promising

*Pupils enjoy it. It gives them confidence when they arrive here. Primary schools like it. It seems to have become an integral part of primary school curriculum.

*Very good. Well established now, we need to move it towards some assessment scheme, however, we don't want it to be assessment based.

*A great success!! Some schools are continuing a bit of French with their classroom teacher.

*Promising – much better now we have the money!

*Very good parental feedback. Very good feedback from Year 6 teachers.

*Very good

*Very pleasing

*Very positive

*Excellent – pupils have made excellent progress. Teachers and parents very supportive.

*Excellent – but should be started sooner. Possibility of teaching Latin to Year 5 to raise language awareness.

*The beginnings of a structure are in place. Pupil enthusiasm is developed.

*Pupils are highly motivated and enjoy learning French. No data yet on achievement, but over 90% of pupils achieved Level 1 in all four skills last year.

*Pleasing – very enthused staff and pupils.

*We are very pleased with the continued interest of pupils, which in most cases is voluntary, although parents pay.

*Good. Kids are very enthusiastic, which I feel is the key aim.

*Very good. Primary aim – to encourage positive attitudes to language learning and to develop transferable skills for study of other languages in Year 7. Spanish is the vehicle for this, rather than an end in itself.

*Positive

*Excellent! Staff and pupils appreciate it. We at the Language College recognise the value of investing in our future students.

*Progress is being made – slowly yet steadily. Enthusiasm among teachers and heads is high.

*Excellent motivator.

*Excellent – the primaries involved have been very enthusiastic and grateful. Pupils are keen to be involved.

*I have been delighted with the response of the Year 6 pupils. They show a lot of enthusiasm and the numbers have steadily increased. Our other partner primary schools are now keen to become involved and the teachers are coming into school to see the ICT resources we have available.

NEGATIVE / PROBLEMS

*Very well appreciated by primary schools, but won't progress until compulsory.

*We have made a very positive start, but the programme has a great deal of scope for development. Question of funding and logistics (staffing etc.)

*Patchy

*Patchy and tortuous. All staff get a lot from it, but we are working very hard.

*Good, though restricted by constraints of primary National Curriculum.

*Not as fast or as consistent as we would have hoped for.

*Very good. We'd like to extend, but staffing is a problem.

*Good but dependent on decent staffing as there is a serious shortage. We rely heavily on supply teachers to deliver this programme.

*Erratic

*Little linguistic progress up to now – lessons too infrequent.

*Patchy. Depends on the continuity within the primary schools. Out of 4 schools, 2 headteachers have changed.

NOT ANSWERED   4

p.   *Do you have any other comments?*

POSITIVE

*The experience of the MFL programme has determined the school's subsequent commitment to the deployment of literacy and numeracy co-ordinators to work in local primary schools each for one morning per week.

*We are pleased it is working this year – particularly as the initiative did not work last year due to pressure on primary curriculum.

*I fully endorse the Nuffield proposal. MFL should be taught from a very early age. Primary teachers need to be trained to be independent in the teaching of MFL.

*We like to keep language learning fun so that pupils are enthusiastic.

*Language College status will give the financial resources to improve the Key Stage 2 provision.

*We also operate an e-mail scheme with the primaries. Year 6 pupils can e-mail answers from a booklet matching the course and have their corrected work zapped back to them!

*I am also planning to have the Japanese teachers at the College teach one 30min lessons of Japanese in each primary school after the SATS and I have provided each school with a Japanese culture internet pack (4 topics and a worksheet on each). Signs in French and Japanese to put around the school have also been sent to each primary school.

*We also work with 4 local nursery schools teaching 3-5 year olds with amazing results.

*One of the most positive impacts has been on fostering closer feeder school ties generally. Weekly contact of this type has very much benefited our relationships with the students.

*It's a big logistical exercise to merge timetables between middle schools and secondary, but worthwhile in terms of continuity.

*I try to go to the French club every week. I take our FLA. The children have responded so positively – it has been very encouraging to see them take so

much cultural interest and ask her so many questions. I can really see the value of the primary mfl programme.

*Children have made good progress with French. We have also noticed more confidence, higher aspirations and better cultural awareness of French / English and their first language which is often Urdu / Punjabi etc.

*It is a very exciting time for those who believe language is best introduced at a young age. As other areas of the country have already learned, early language learning can and does work.

NEGATIVE

*Depends on whim of primary heads

*Conversations with other Language College principals suggest very clearly that the pyramid model, where it exists in an area, can be powerful in raising achievement. Where you have a diverse catchment area, like us, you have a challenge in reaching targets.

*We would extend our delivery at Year 6 but are very squeezed for time. Primary schools do see time as an issue. Senior staff in primary schools are generally supportive but literacy and numeracy etc. are priorities for space. Timetabling an issue for both Key Stages. We are hoping to extend the programme to Key Stage 1 through assistants programme. We are expecting to deliver support to pupils coming from non feeder schools at some point in summer term.

*We want to offer more to our other two main feeder primaries. The issue is shortage of staff. To meet both our needs and that of primary schools we are prepared to take on a training role of primary colleagues and share our resources. Staffing issues do mean that we have to prioritise the needs of our students / school first.

*There are timetabling repercussions for teacher involved e.g. losing classes at their secondary school.

*The crunch will be when our pupils join main curriculum classes after long enough in the programme to make a substantial difference to skills. It is essential we prepare middle school colleagues properly.

*Staffing is a very significant issue. We cannot recruit enough teachers at secondary level – it does not bode well at primary level.

*Difficult to arrange timetable for Year 6 as they are involved with SATs. Will be difficult to have continuity from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 3. So far primaries are not seen regularly enough to have good impact.

*Utter disappointment at the government's half-hearted response to Nuffield. Amazement about the apparent belief that Language Colleges can by themselves replace a national strategy for language learning.

*The logistics of adding 30-60 minutes a week of mfl into a full curriculum is difficult. Training of teachers, bridging primary and secondary phases and utilising all available resources are areas which we need to address.

*MFL is not a National Curriculum subject (in primary school) so it is difficult to do any of the above in a systematic way. We have no authority over feeder schools.