



COUNTY COUNCIL
Education Directorate

PRIMARY NATIONAL STRATEGY

PRIMARY MODERN LANGUAGES IN CUMBRIA

CUMBRIA LEA'S POLICY FOR PRIMARY MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Aims and objectives

In Cumbria, we believe that the aims and objectives of learning a modern foreign language in primary school are to:

- Introduce young children to another language in a way that is enjoyable and fun.
- Make an important contribution to the development of the whole child and thereby promote his/her emotional, creative, social, cognitive and linguistic capabilities.
- Give children a positive, enthusiastic attitude to language learning within a secure supportive environment.
- Stimulate and encourage children's curiosity about languages.
- Develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Provide a wide range of activities to reinforce learning.
- Enable children to experience another culture and its related social customs, thereby raising their awareness of their own culture and adding an intercultural, international dimension to the curriculum.
- Equip children with the skills they will need to learn other languages.
- Ensure that children enter the secondary schools with a positive attitude towards language learning.

We hope through the introduction of MFL into our curriculum our children will:

- Enjoy a broad, enriched curriculum.
- Develop an enthusiastic and confident attitude towards MFL learning.
- Develop enhanced listening and thinking skills transferable to all other curriculum areas.
- See themselves and others in the class as successful learners, regardless of any physical, medical or intellectual differences they may have.
- Acquire transferable language learning skills, useful for additional MFLs.
- Develop a positive, respectful attitude to other countries people and cultures.
- Make progress linguistically.
- Consolidate basic concepts in their first language.
- Develop their communication and social skills.

The children will be taught how to:

- Ask and answer questions.
- Use correct pronunciation and intonation.
- Memorise words.
- Interpret meaning.
- Understand basic language patterns.
- Work in pairs and groups and communicate in the foreign language.
- Look at life in another culture.

PRIMARY LANGUAGES IN CUMBRIA

It will be a statutory requirement for all schools to give children the opportunity to study a foreign language at Key Stage 2 by 2000.

In May 2004, a working party was formed to consider the provision that could be offered to schools by the LEA for the teaching of languages in primary schools.

This working party is made up of the following members:

Maureen Casey	MFL AST	The Alfred Barrow School
Ann Fitzsimmons	MFL AST (Primary)	Southfield Technology College
Sue Gibbs	MFL AST (Primary)	Vicarage Park School
Richard Johnston	MFL AST	Whitehaven School
Helen Kent	MFL Primary Languages Co-ordinator	Trinity School
Hayley Martin	MFL AST	Dowdales School
Declan McArdle	KS3 consultant	Cumbria LEA
Cath Reynolds	SIO responsible for MFL	Cumbria LEA
Barbara Smith	MFL AST	Southfield Technology College

As a group, we are in the process of devising a long-term plan for Schemes of Work for PMFL. Initially, the Schemes of Work (for French, German and Spanish) will be for Key Stage 2, but we will be working on Schemes of Work for Key Stage 1 for those schools that wish to begin languages earlier. The units will be based on those published by QCA. However, in our Schemes of Work we stress the importance of developing the key skills of listening and speaking and of having fun!

In devising this long term plan, we were acutely conscious of two issues – the diverse nature of Cumbria and its existing language provision and the number of initiatives that have faced primary colleagues recently – and this is yet another one!

However, we do believe that the ideal time to begin the learning of languages is in the primary school. Children are more eager and receptive they are naturally more curious about language and absorb new language readily. Most importantly, they are less inhibited and are not worried about making mistakes. The primary school environment, too, affords the flexibility required for active learning and imaginative, creative activities and encourages the organisation of “memorable” events such as special assemblies, European days, meals etc. These bring enjoyment to the children as well as public/parental recognition for the school.

Why the emphasis on listening and speaking skills?

They are important, generic skills. They are the skills needed when visiting another country. One crucial factor for successful language learning is high self-esteem. Most children can be taught to communicate confidently in another language – irrespective of their literacy skills. If they are introduced to the written word too soon, this has a detrimental effect on their confidence and their pronunciation and intonation. We want the children to experience the buzz and the sense of achievement felt when real communication takes place – if anyone has experienced this whilst learning to conjugate regular verbs, please let us know!

One practical reason for recommending that children concentrate on listening and speaking skills is to address the issue of progression from primary to secondary. Whilst there are a small number of secondary schools that have a small number of feeder primaries, the majority of secondary schools have a huge number of feeder primaries.

We would like children to leave the primary school with language skills that will enable them to continue with the study of that language – or, just as importantly, help them to study another language successfully. Above all, we would like them to enter the secondary school as successful, confident and enthusiastic learners. Secondary school colleagues will then have a base on which to build.

Which language should I teach?

To avoid creating the dominance of French, we will be producing Schemes of Work and materials for French, German and Spanish. These will be available in the summer of 2005. One piece of advice - if you hated French at school – then please opt for another language! It should be fun for you too!

How do I begin and what support will I be offered?

There have been concerns expressed as to how to fit in the teaching of a foreign language into an already crowded curriculum. We recommend that children at Key Stage 1 should do approximately 20 minutes per week, children at Key Stage 2, 30 minutes per week. This can be delivered in five minutes slots if that is more appropriate.

We will provide Schemes of Work and the materials needed – videos demonstrating methodology, cassettes, flashcards etc We also envisage, where possible, developing “buddy system” so that primary colleagues can observe/team teach with a language teacher. If there is a demand, we will also provide training through LIN courses.

Please let us know what support you need by completing the attached questionnaire!

If you don't tell us what you need, we can't help you!

Did you know that you can have a foreign language assistant FREE OF CHARGE for 4-9 months through the British council?

www.britishcouncil.org

Cath Reynolds
School Improvement Officer

SSI/SIT/CR/JC
1 December 2004

PRIMARY LANGUAGES QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of School:

Name of Headteacher:

A

1. Is there currently any language provision in your school?
2. In which year groups are languages taught?
3. Who teaches the foreign language (member of staff/parent/other – please specify.
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4. How much time is spent on language learning?
5. Are languages delivered during school time/after school?
6. In the light of this document, would you consider changing the provision for PMFL?
.....
7. Which language is taught?

B

1. Are you considering teaching languages in the near future?
2. What support would you like us to provide?
3. Are you willing to attend training courses?
4. Where would be convenient for you as a centre?
5. What language do you think you would like to teach?

C Any further comments?

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Please return this questionnaire by 17 December 2004 to:

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CARLISLE, CA1 1PU or cath.reynolds@cumbriacc.gov.uk