



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 7TH JULY 2015

SUBJECT: MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN CAERPHILLY SCHOOLS

REPORT BY: PRINCIPAL CHALLENGE ADVISER, EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EAS)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the current situation with regard to provision and pupil outcomes of modern foreign languages(MFL) in Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) schools.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report outlines the current provision within primary and secondary schools and the forthcoming changes to the support of MFL.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 This complements the Local Authority's (LAs) strategy of securing continued improvement in pupil outcomes at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and in particular the performance of pupils and their access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 This section examines the provision of MFL at the various key stages in Caerphilly schools.

4.2 Provision in Primary School

The study of MFL is not a compulsory part of the National Curriculum at KS2. Schools offer lessons on an ad hoc basis. This is usually dependent upon expertise and interest that may exist amongst current members of staff and is normally provided as a voluntary after school or lunchtime club. On occasions this may be as a result of regular visits schools may take to France for older Key Stage 2 pupils, or a British Council Comenius project. One school provides Spanish as part of teachers' planning preparation and assessment (PPA) time.

The table below provides a synopsis of current provision in our primary schools. This indicates that approximately only 18% of schools are engaged in MFL activities.

School	
Hendre Junior	A seasonal after school club for Year 6 during the summer term leading up to transition to KS3. This weekly club is run by one of the teaching staff and focusses on French and Spanish (broadly for half a term each).
Hendredenny Park Primary	A lunchtime club run last summer term for Mandarin. This was led by the secondary school exchange Chinese tutor
Plasyfelin Primary	An after school French Club is beginning in the autumn term, The school did have a French Club previously but it is not operating this term
St. James' Primary	During the autumn and spring terms a French Club for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils is taking place as part of the preparation for the trip that is run to Paris..
Libanus Primary	A link has been formed with EE Anatole France, Blain, nr. Nantes. The headteacher visited this primary school for a week last year using a Comenius grant. Pupils in Year 6 correspond at intervals in basic French and English in the form of a letter. French Club is held after school for Year 6 to develop basic conversational skills. The MFL teacher in Blackwood Comprehensive, assisted by some Year 10 pupils, has delivered some sessions In April Year 6 pupils attended a "French morning" at Blackwood Comprehensive to develop vocabulary and basic language patterns as part of the transition to Year 7 . Every year a party of Year 6 pupils is taken to Mayenne in France for 5 days. Pupils are encouraged at every opportunity to use the French language skills they have learnt in the Club and MFL lessons.
Nant y Parc	A weekly after school club for French for Year 5/6 pupils runs all year round to prepare pupils for their summer Paris trip. Year 5 class have one hour per week Chinese culture/Mandarin lesson.
Risca Primary	Spanish and French clubs are run by external agencies
Bedwas Junior/ Rhydri Primary	The school employs a Spanish tutor to deliver language lessons during teachers' planning preparation and assessment (PPA)time
Cwm Derwen	taught Chinese for two and a half years until Christmas and plan to restart in September

4.3 Provision at KS3

Key Stage 3 is the only phase of education where it is compulsory for pupils to study at least one modern foreign language. The revised programmes of study and attainment targets for MFL become legal requirements by means of an Order made by the Welsh Government (WG) and came into effect on:

- 1 August 2008 for Years 7 and 8
- 1 August 2009 for Year 9.

Schools may offer European or world languages such as Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Urdu. Schools may choose which languages they teach taking into account demand, interest, progression routes and resources.

4.4 KS3 Outcomes 2012-2014

School (* School with SNRB)	% Achievement of Level 5+			% Achievement of Level 6+		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Bedwas High	70	63	72	27	28	22
Blackwood Comprehensive	72	77	88	33	35	29
Cwmcarn High	92	98	82	46	66	47
Heolddu Comprehensive	67	63	79	17	35	41
Lewis Girls' Comprehensive	84	90	90	60	59	61
Lewis School Pengam	73	79	85	40	47	41
Newbridge School	72	84	95	21	36	54
Oakdale Comprehensive	63	73	84	29	31	33
Pontllanfraith Comprehensive*	55	65	77	12	12	32
Rhymney Comprehensive	72	65	70	19	23	20
Risca Community Comprehensive*	51	42	67	8	6	10
St Cenydd Comprehensive*	66	68	64	27	19	22
St Martin's Comprehensive	73	76	89	33	40	63
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni	80	78	77	37	42	36
Caerphilly	72	74	80	31	35	37
Wales	75	78	82	36	40	45

4.4 Data for KS3 performance is reported as a percentage of MFL in total and not divided into the separate subject areas. The majority of languages delivered are French and German. Outcomes as for all subject areas at KS3 are based upon Teacher assessment and not external examination. Assessment is based upon pupils' ability at speaking and listen, reading and writing. Most schools are making year on year progress at expected Level 5 and at Level 6.

4.5 Regional Comparison

	Cohort			L5+ % Achievement			L6+ % Achievement		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Blaenau Gwent	737	690	665	62.8	64.6	69.5	21.0	19.3	27.1
Caerphilly	2153	2076	2041	72.0	74.1	80.3	30.5	34.7	37.1
Monmouthshire	767	809	789	77.8	78.7	87.2	39.8	33.9	47.3
Newport	1791	1640	1696	75.4	75.9	77.4	33.4	36.1	39.5
Torfaen	1281	1224	1102	74.9	78.6	81.3	33.6	34.4	39.5
EAS - South East Wales	6729	6439	6293	73.1	75.0	79.4	31.9	33.2	38.4
Wales	-	-	-	74.5	78.1	82.2	36.3	40.2	45.1

4.6 Performance for Caerphilly as a whole has steadily improved at expected Level 5 and Level 6. Against expected level in 2014 Caerphilly performs well in relation to other LAs and is above the regional average at 80.3%. However for 2014 at Level 6 performance is below the regional average.

4.7 Whilst performance at expected level is generally rising many schools report that the allocation of curriculum time at KS3 for MFL has been reduced to enable greater focus on literacy and numeracy

4.8 KS4 Outcomes

School (* School with SNRB)	2012	2012	2013	2013	2014	2014
	Entries	% Achievement	Entries	% Achievement	Entries	% Achievement

GCSE French

Wales	5733	73	5677	80	4875	78
Caerphilly	291	72	242	83	206	78
Newbridge School	27	67	17	82	13	85
Pontllanfraith Comprehensive*	1	0			9	100
Blackwood Comprehensive	29	86	31	90	22	86
Oakdale Comprehensive	19	100	12	92	24	83
St Cenydd Comprehensive*	14	64	10	60	11	36
Risca Community Comprehensive*	11	55			6	67
St Martin's Comprehensive	24	83	17	88		
Lewis School Pengam	5	60	5	60	16	69
Lewis Girls' Comprehensive	23	52	38	89	38	61
Rhymney Comprehensive	19	42	18	72	13	85
Bedwas High	22	77	13	92	12	83
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni	33	88	21	76	18	100
Cwmcarn High	64	67	60	82	24	83

GCSE German

Wales	1287	77	1183	79	1164	78
Caerphilly	13	38	9	100	10	60
Heolddu Comprehensive	13	38	9	100	8	50
Lewis School Pengam					1	100
Lewis Girls' Comprehensive					1	100

GCSE Italian

Caerphilly	7	100	10	70	19	58
Newbridge School	7	100	10	70	19	58

GCSE Polish

Caerphilly	1	100	0		1	100
Blackwood Comprehensive	1	100				
Risca Community Comprehensive*					1	100

GCSE Portuguese

Caerphilly	0		1	100	0	
Heolddu Comprehensive			1	100		

GCSE Chinese

Caerphilly	0		0		1	100
Bedwas High					1	100
GCSE Spanish						
Wales	1371	76	1628	78	1553	75
Caerphilly	93	77	98	71	78	87
Pontllanfraith Comprehensive*	9	33	16	50		
Blackwood Comprehensive	8	75	10	80		
Oakdale Comprehensive	11	100				
St Martin's Comprehensive	7	71	25	84	33	85
Lewis School Pengam			11	45	7	43
Lewis Girls' Comprehensive	18	61				
Rhymney Comprehensive	1	100				
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni	22	82	26	69	32	97
Cwmcarn High	17	100	10	100	6	100

GCSE French: Written Language (Short Course)

Caerphilly	54	26	85	11	0	
Cwmcarn High	54	26	85	11		

**Level 2 French
(QCF)**

Caerphilly	39	100	64	100	46	100
Blackwood Comprehensive	25	100	34	100	31	100
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni	14	100	30	100	15	100

**Level 2 Reading
French (QCF)**

Caerphilly	39	100	0		0	
Blackwood Comprehensive	25	100				
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni	14	100				

**Level 2 Speaking
French (QCF)**

Caerphilly	34	100	0		0	
Blackwood Comprehensive	20	100				
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni	14	100				

Level 2 Understanding Spoken French (QCF)

Caerphilly	39	100	0		0	
Blackwood Comprehensive	25	100				
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni	14	100				

**Level 2 Writing
French (QCF)**

Caerphilly	39	100	0		0	
Blackwood Comprehensive	25	100				
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni	14	100				

**Level 1 Speaking
French (QCF)**

Caerphilly	5	100	30	100	17	100
Blackwood Comprehensive	5	100			2	100
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni			30	100	15	100

Entry French

Caerphilly	15	100	2	100	16	100
Oakdale Comprehensive	15	100	2	100	16	100

Entry Spanish

Caerphilly	1	100	0		0	
Oakdale Comprehensive	1	100				

- 4.9 MFL is an option subject for pupils at KS4. French remains the most popular option for pupils both across Wales and within Caerphilly followed by Spanish and German.
- 4.10 The number of pupils taking GCSE courses in MFL has significantly dropped over two years. French by 85 and German by 123 pupils. Spanish has gained in popularity from 2012 but dropped by 75 from 2013 numbers.
- 4.11 Where schools indicate GCSEs in e.g., Polish or Chinese, this indicates pupils sitting exams in their native language and not the offer of a direct teaching provision at the school.
- 4.12 Performance and pupil outcomes in German and French has been variable. However Spanish has shown a steady increase.
- 4.13 In an attempt to increase access to MFL a limited number of schools are offering vocational L1 and L2 courses through the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).
- 4.14 **KS5 Outcomes (see table below)**
- 4.15 The number of pupils taking up MFL subjects is low within the Local Authority. Only 6 studied French, no pupils took German and Spanish attracted only 4. The numbers currently sitting A levels in MFL (2015) is also very low.
- 4.16 Student outcomes at the higher grades are also lower which could potentially mean pupils being unable to study languages at Higher education level.
- 4.17 The diminishing trend of pupils opting to take MFL subjects is prevalent across Wales. A recent study by the British Council highlights the issue. In the vast majority of schools (93 per cent) MFL is optional at Key Stage 4 for all pupils. Nearly half of responding schools (47 per cent) report declining numbers for MFL in Key Stage 4 and in one in five schools this decline is by 10 per cent or more of pupils.
- 4.18 In Key Stage 3, the only education phase at which the study of MFL in Wales is compulsory, many pupils are receiving only a minimal or fragmented experience of language learning. When pupils choose their GCSE subjects, foreign languages fare badly as they are seen as more difficult than many other subjects, unpredictable in terms of delivering the top grades needed for continuing to A levels and not as important for future careers as STEM subjects.

The situation at post-16 is of even greater concern. The very low numbers of students opting for MFL mean that, in many cases, courses are becoming financially unviable. Other issues contributing to the decline in numbers at A level are the greater perceived difficulty of A level examinations in MFL compared to those for other subjects and students' need to be more certain of achieving the highest grades at A level in order to take up university places. Three quarters of respondents see low take-up of MFL at post-16 as a challenging issue, even more than those who are concerned about take-up for MFL at Key Stage 4.

- 4.19 WG have recognised the issue through the recent announcement by Huw Lewis Minister for Education. The study of MFL occupy an important place in education. They are also important to Welsh businesses too, as increasing amounts of our trade and commerce is done with new partners overseas. A recognition that a new approach to MFL learning in Wales is needed.
- 4.20 From the end of this academic year the Centre for Information on Language Teaching (CiLT Cymru), who have been responsible for supporting and promoting MFL in schools, will be replaced with the Improving and Promoting Modern Foreign Languages Plan, which will come into effect from September 2015. The Plan will promote a new approach to MFL in schools with a secondary school in each consortium becoming a Modern Foreign Language Centre of Excellence, tasked with working in partnership with other secondary schools and primary schools in their region.
- 4.21 Schools within each MFL Centre of Excellence will benefit from school to school based support and provide a sustainable and self improving model of working for the future. The Plan also includes the establishment of a mentoring programme targeted at Key Stage 3 pupils that will raise the profile of MFL subjects and ensure learners are aware of the benefits of MFL study, both in terms of accessing higher education and in securing employment.
- 4.22 Regional consortia will take over the overall responsibility for MFL. Modest resources have so far been secured to create a lead-school / lead-cluster approach to improvement in MFL. The EAS MFL project team have identified 2 schools that will lead on MFL improvement across the region based on a range of criteria, including feedback from CiLT, analyses of data and the readiness for school-to-school approaches. Both secondary schools identified to lead on the project are from Caerphilly LA: Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and Blackwood Comprehensive School.
- 4.23 It is proposed that a lead-school group is formed consisting of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, Blackwood Comprehensive plus one primary feeder for each school – so four schools with defined areas of leadership in English-Medium Primary and Secondary and Welsh-Medium Primary and Secondary. Both secondary heads have agreed to the initial proposals with an EAS project team.

School (* School with SNRB)	2013									2014												
	A	B	C	D	E	U	Number of Entries	% A*-B (A/AS Level)	% A*-E (A/AS Level)	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	GCSE A*-C	GCSE D-G	Entry Level	Number of Entries	% A*-B (A/AS Level)	% A*-E (A/AS Level)
A Level Chinese																						
Caerphilly								-	-												-	-
St Martin's Comprehensive								-	-												-	-
A Level French																						
Wales							354	54	97											340	54	98
Caerphilly		1	1	1	3	1	7	14	86			1	2	3						6	17	100
St Cenydd Comprehensive*								-	-												-	-
St Martin's Comprehensive								-	-				1	1						2	0	100
Lewis Girls' Comprehensive					1		1	0	100												-	-
Rhymney Comprehensive			1			1	2	0	50					2						2	0	100
Bedwas High		1		1			2	50	100			1	1							2	50	100
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni					1		1	0	100												-	-
Cwmcam High					1		1	0	100												-	-
A Level German																						
Wales							113	67	97											90	67	99
Caerphilly	1						1	100	100												-	-
Heolddu Comprehensive								-	-												-	-
Lewis Girls' Comprehensive	1						1	100	100												-	-
A Level Polish																						
Caerphilly								-	-	1										1	100	100
Bedwas High								-	-	1										1	100	100
A Level Spanish																						
Wales							132	45	91											98	50	94
Caerphilly	1		1	3	3		8	13	100					2	2					4	0	100
St Martin's Comprehensive			1	1	1		3	0	100												-	-
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni				1	2		3	0	100						2					2	0	100
Cwmcam High	1			1			2	50	100					2						2	0	100
AS level Chinese																						
Caerphilly			1				1	0	100												-	-
Bedwas High			1				1	0	100												-	-
AS level French																						
Caerphilly			1	2	4	5	12	0	58					3		5				8	0	38
St Cenydd Comprehensive*						2	2	0	0												-	-
Lewis Girls' Comprehensive			1				1	0	100												-	-
Rhymney Comprehensive								-	-							1				1	0	0
Bedwas High					1		1	0	100					1						1	0	100
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni			1		1		2	0	100							1				1	0	0
Cwmcam High				1	2	3	6	0	50					2		3				5	0	40
AS level German																						
Caerphilly				1	1	1	3	0	67												-	-
Heolddu Comprehensive				1	1	1	3	0	67												-	-
AS level Spanish																						
Caerphilly				3	2	3	8	0	63					1	1	1				3	0	67
St Martin's Comprehensive				1	1		2	0	100												-	-
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni				1		3	4	0	25												-	-
Cwmcam High				1	1		2	0	100					1	1	1				3	0	67
GCSE French																						
Caerphilly																		1		1		
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni																		1		1		
GCSE Short Course Chinese: Written Language (Short Course)																						
Caerphilly																		1		1		
St Martin's Comprehensive																		1		1		
Entry Level Spanish																						
Caerphilly																						
Heolddu Comprehensive																						
Entry Level Spoken German: Communicating Personal Information (Entry 3) (QCF)																						
Caerphilly																				20	20	
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni																				20	20	
Entry Level Spoken Italian: Communicating Personal Information (Entry 3) (QCF)																						
Caerphilly																				21	21	
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni																				21	21	
Entry Level Spoken Mandarin: Communicating Personal Information (Entry 3) (QCF)																						
Caerphilly																				16	16	
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni																				16	16	
Entry Level Spoken Spanish: Communicating Personal Information (Entry 3) (QCF)																						
Caerphilly																				29	29	
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni																				29	29	

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is no specific equalities impact in relation to the content of this report. When performance information is discussed with schools as part of the monitoring, challenge, support and intervention programme, equalities issues, such as gender and ethnicity are taken into account. Similarly the Local Authority self-evaluation considers all equalities issues.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications for the local authority.
- 6.2 The Global Futures programme, which is to be supported by up to £480,000 of funding from the Welsh Government in the first academic year, will come into effect from September. A proportion of this funding will come to the region to support the 'Centre of Excellence'.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 All responses from consultations have been incorporated into this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Members note the content of the report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To provide Members with information on the current provision within primary and secondary schools and the forthcoming changes to the support of MFL.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Education Act 1996.

Author: John Rawlings - Principal Challenge Adviser, EAS
Consultees: Primary and Secondary Headteachers - CCBC schools
Directorate Senior Management Team
Cabinet Member for Education
Chair – Education for Life Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

Written Statement - Global Futures – a plan to improve and promote MFL in Wales Huw Lewis, Minister for Education and Skills June 1 2015 - <http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/130424-foreign-languages-in-the-curriculum-en.pdf>

Modern Foreign Languages in secondary schools in Wales - <https://www.cfbt.com/en-GB/Research/Research-library/2015/r-language-trends-wales-2015>