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# STATES OF JERSEY



## **MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING: REVIEW (P.166/2013) – RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE**

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**Presented to the States on 2nd October 2014  
by the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## REPORT

This paper has been written in response to Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade's proposition (P.166/2013) Modern Languages Teaching: Review. The main areas of focus and recommendations are summarised below:

### 1. An account of current language provision and take-up

#### *Primary Sector*

French is one of the official languages of Jersey and teaching is compulsory from Year 5 (age 9/10) in Jersey's primary schools. The majority of children begin their French lessons at age 9; however, some schools start as early as nursery or reception. Year 4 students in States schools have a taster course of Jèrriais as part of the citizenship programme. Mandarin, Portuguese, Polish and Jèrriais are also taught outside school hours.

#### *Secondary sector*

French is currently a compulsory subject for all secondary school pupils at Key Stage 3 (11-14 year olds). French is studied by 50% of pupils at GCSE. The great majority of these pupils attend the fee-paying provided and non-provided schools and Hautlieu. Spanish is the next most popular language in the Island, with an uptake of 17%. Table 1 below summarises the languages taught during curriculum time at GCSE across Jersey schools during the academic year 2013-14.

Language teaching in Jersey differs from the UK in two significant respects; Jersey has a high proportion of 'mother tongue' students studying Portuguese at GCSE, and German, which is the third most popular language in the UK, is now taught in only one Jersey school. Languages have been made optional at the age of 14 in the UK and the position in Jersey is the same. This has led to a steady decline in the number of students continuing languages at GCSE. The introduction of the EBacc is beginning to reverse this trend in the UK. Recent media reports<sup>1</sup> suggest that the increasing popularity of Spanish in UK schools could mean that it will soon become the dominant foreign language studied.

*Table 1: Percentage of Jersey students studying a language at GCSE (2013-14)*

Language	11-16 Total (%)	Hautlieu School (%)	Secondary Fee Paying Provided Schools (%)	Secondary Fee Paying Non-provided schools (%)	Total – All Sectors (%)
French	25	65	95	60	<b>50</b>
Spanish	15	40	25	5	<b>17</b>
Italian	1	–	12	–	<b>3</b>
Portuguese	10	–	–	–	<b>5</b>
German	–	–	–	7	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/aug/21/gcse-results-english-pass-rate-first-fall-20-years>

As with the Primary sector, a number of languages are also offered outside school hours. In 2013-14 academic year, these included French, **Jèrriais**, Italian, Latin, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

At A-Level in Jersey, French is the most popular language, followed by Spanish. Very few Jersey students study any other language at A-Level (fewer than 10 students per year). The number of language students fluctuates year on year. Overall, the number of students opting to continue a language to A2 level remains low in comparison to subjects such as English and Mathematics, a trend similar to the UK. Students who take the International Baccalaureate (IB) offered at Hautlieu School are required to study a language as part of the diploma and are currently offered French, Italian and Spanish.

## **2. An examination of additional languages that could be added to the curriculum, in order to meet current and future socio-economic and cultural demand**

A recent internal review recommends that the Island takes a joined-up approach to language learning, to enable continuity for all pupils. French, Spanish, Italian and German have been identified as the main languages that should be taught in secondary schools. French, Spanish and German are the most widely taught<sup>2</sup> in the UK. Italian is the fastest growing of the minority languages<sup>3</sup> in the UK. These four languages all feature in the top 10 languages in the British Council's publication *Languages for the future* (2014)<sup>4</sup>.

## **3. Which languages, if any, should be offered on an optional basis**

In order for Jersey to remain competitive in future trade with BRIC<sup>5</sup> countries, Mandarin (for links with China) and Portuguese (for links with Brazil) are possible choices for the Island. Mandarin is an important language for Jersey because of its developing links with China. Portuguese is important because there is a well-established community of Portuguese speakers in the Island. Latin is experiencing a revival in **some** UK schools at both primary and secondary levels. Where there is a demand, secondary schools could aim to offer these languages in curriculum time, working collaboratively with other schools to make this viable.

## **4. The optimum age at which foreign languages should start to be taught in schools**

Ideally, modern foreign language teaching should begin as early as nursery or reception classes, as research suggests that there is 'a window of opportunity' at this time, when children best learn languages.

## **5. Alternative methods of language tuition, including, but not limited to, immersion learning and bi-lingual tuition**

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/britishcouncil.uk2/files/language-trends-survey-2014.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/gcse-results-at-least-foreign-languages-provided-a-bright-spot-8780445.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/britishcouncil.uk2/files/languages-for-the-future-report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Brazil, Russia, China and India

A recent departmental review briefly looked at Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), whereby a subject such as physics or geography is taught through the medium of a foreign language. Opportunities to develop CLIL in the Island could be explored, as well as the bi-lingual and immersion approaches of other jurisdictions, such as Wales and the Isle of Man, through the British-Irish Council (BIC) where links already exist.

**6. A feasibility study into the creation of one or more bi-lingual and/or immersion learning schools in the Island**

Visits have taken place to bilingual French schools in London and a survey of parents of nursery age children was conducted in order to assess potential demand for a bilingual school in Jersey in future. 256 responses to the survey were received, and 66% of those who responded to a question about bilingual schools indicated that the second language (i.e. in addition to English) should be French rather than another language. Also 60%<sup>6</sup> of the respondents said that they would send their child to a bilingual French school, if one were to be made available. A wider, more statistically relevant consultation or survey would be required if this issue is progressed. There is currently no funding allocated to the creation of a bilingual school and many teachers have suggested that it would be more widely beneficial to enhance French teaching across all schools rather than focus resources on a small group.

**7. An exploration into the viability and desirability of extending School Twinning Programmes and student/teacher exchanges**

Many schools arrange regular trips and have established links with schools in other countries. These exchanges are generally focused on France but also reach as far as India and China. Activities include exchanging emails, videoconferencing and trips. There is a child protection issue to consider when organising school trips that involve staying with host families. Jersey students do not stay with families abroad unless the trip is arranged through a travel company that provides police checks for the host family, and this may put the cost out of reach of some families.

Jersey's status as a Crown Dependency means it is not eligible for funding from schemes such as Erasmus Plus. This is a Europe-wide scheme that funds schools to set up partnerships and exchanges and offers in-service training for teachers.

**8. Extending the use of language resources provided for schools to businesses/adult learners outside of school hours**

Highlands College and the Alliance Française already offer high quality language provision for businesses and adult learners outside of school hours.

**Recommendation**

In order to respond to Deputy Tadier's proposition, an internal review was commissioned into the teaching of languages across the Island. The recently appointed Director of Education, Sport and Culture has proposed an immediate and fundamental review of the curriculum to ensure that it reflects Jersey's history, culture and

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<sup>6</sup> 151 of the 252 responses to this question in the survey (4 respondents did not answer this question)

economy. The place of languages within the curriculum will be of central importance to this review.

It is recommended that the internal review of languages and the response to Deputy Tadier's proposition contributes to this wider review of the curriculum as a whole.