



**ALL Briefing No. 38**

**Date : July 2024**

## **Theme: Language Trends (England) 2024**

### **Background:**

Language Trends is the annual review of trends in Languages Education commissioned by the British Council.

### **Key messages :**

The report identifies these headline findings for 2024 (... indicates abbreviation) :

- The 'top four' primary languages are French, Spanish, German and Latin ...;
- Decreases in international engagement in both state primary and state secondary schools;
- One in four teachers are telling us that they perceive more pupils to now be taking a language at GCSE;
- Recruitment of qualified teachers of languages is an issue in over sixty per cent of all state and independent schools;
- One in four teachers expect the new GCSE in French, German and Spanish from September 2024 to have a positive impact on pupil numbers;
- Most state secondary schools support pupils to take examinations in home, heritage and community languages.

### **Points extracted from the report by readers in relation to language teaching for reflection / action:**

#### **International - Primary**

'... decreases suggest that state primary schools need significant support in re-building their international engagement for pupils and teachers.'

*Could you / could an ALL Project support this? How? Let ALL Know at [info@ALL-Languages.org.uk](mailto:info@ALL-Languages.org.uk)*

‘ ... only 5 per cent of respondents have links with universities, and 1 per cent have links to businesses. Seven per cent of schools engage with Cultural institutes, including the following: Confucius Institute, Classics for All, Cervantes Institute, Consejería de Educación , Goethe-Institut, Institut Français, Italian Consulate, and Japan Foundation. Nine per cent of responding state primary schools have links with the Association for Language Learning (ALL).

*Can you encourage your school to explore making more links? The ALL website features activities from, and contacts with, many potential partners.*

## **Useful or interesting quotations selected by readers in relation to language teaching:**

### **Collaborative approaches**

‘In 2022, research by Ayres-Bennett et al. underscored the importance of investing in languages education in the UK and found that languages are key to overcoming trade barriers and fostering business relations worldwide; in particular, the study found that investments in UK languages education could return more than the investment cost, meaning that the benefit to-cost ratios are estimated to be at least 2:1 for promoting Arabic, French, Mandarin and Spanish in education. A more recent report (Ayres-Bennett, 2024) has made policy recommendations that call for collaborative approaches between policy makers and the languages education community to promote a clear, cohesive and aligned message about the value of languages in wider society’.

### **EAL**

‘The most recent school census, carried out by DfE, recorded 20 per cent of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English; this figure is slightly higher for primary schools, with EAL pupils identified in 22 per cent of state primary schools ...

The comments made by teachers emphasised celebrating and sharing the different home and community languages spoken by pupils, encouraging a plurilingual approach to integrating all pupils in the classroom.’

### **Primary Wordlist**

‘For the first time, Language Trends asked state primary schools if they would welcome a language-specific list of minimum vocabulary and grammar to be covered in Key Stage 2. The majority of schools (80 per cent) responded yes.’

### **FLAs**

‘Around one in three state schools employs a language assistant (some schools employ more than one), but independent schools are much more likely to employ a language assistant.’

## **HHCL (Home, Heritage and Community Languages)**

'There are 19 language GCSEs available in England, not including ancient languages: Arabic, Bengali, Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Italian, Japanese, Modern Hebrew, Panjabi, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish and Urdu.'

## **References :**

The Report is available here: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/research-insight/language-trends-england-2024>

There is a bibliography including:

Ayres-Bennett, Wendy (2024). 'Languages and Policy: Building Collaborations between Academics and Policymakers'. Institute of Languages, Cultures and Societies

Ayres-Bennett, W. and E. Humphries (2023). 'The Hidden Face of Public Language Policy: A Case Study from the UK', Current Issues in Language Planning, 24, 508-33

Ayres-Bennett, W., Hafner, M., Dufresne, E., & Yerushalmi, E. (2022). The economic value to the UK of speaking other languages. California: Rand Corporation

Black, Liz (2024). The Power of the Primary Voice. [Online] Available at: <https://all-languages.org.uk/primary-2/primary-voice/>

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