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Acknowledgements

The Primary Languages Pilot commenced in 2005. The pilot has required the efforts of many people and the perseverance of those who believe in the importance of exposing young children to a second language.

Special thanks are extended to all persons involved, who have provided insightful feedback and information on the pilot. CCEA would particularly like to thank:

- The SEELB (Languages adviser) and Principals and teachers who have had a critical role in the success of this pilot;
- Pupils who have enthusiastically participated in the pilot ; and
- Parents who have participated in this evaluation.

1.0 Executive Summary

Rationale

For the past four years CCEA has worked in conjunction with the South Eastern Education and Library Board on the introduction of second language teaching and learning at primary school level, with particular focus on the development of French. 15 schools are currently involved in this project, which aims to cater for the diversity of schools and their ability to include Languages in the primary curriculum. This is the final year of this longitudinal study which has tracked the language learning experience of pupils from Year 1 to Years 3 and 4.

The overall purpose of this study was to conduct a thorough evaluation of the final year of Primary Languages. For the evaluation to be as inclusive as possible, information was collected from all participants involved (Principals, teachers, parents and pupils).

Key Findings

Findings from the evaluation are overwhelmingly positive. All stakeholders highly rated the continuation and development of language learning in Years 3 and 4. Outlined below is a summary of the feedback provided by Principals, teachers and parents.

Principal Feedback

- All Principals (n = 5) agreed there is a role and future for Primary Languages in their school.
- Principals believe learning languages has had a positive impact on their pupils (n = 5) and their whole school community (n = 3).
- Four out of five Principals believe that Languages should be a statutory component of the primary curriculum.

Teacher Feedback

- All teachers (n = 18) believed that learning languages has had a positive impact on their pupils.
- All teachers (n = 18) highly rated their pupils' enjoyment of learning French.
- All teachers (n = 18) used a multi sensory approach to teaching languages, which they believe creates a stimulating and enjoyable learning experience for pupils.
- Teachers highly rated their confidence (n = 18) and competence (n = 16) in teaching French.
- Teachers felt the training and support provided by CCEA and the SEELB had increased their confidence (n = 17) and skills (n = 15) to teach French.
- Teachers (n = 17) felt the resources provided were user friendly; adaptable to their needs; and appropriate for Key Stage 1.
- The majority of teachers believed learning languages has reinforced pupils' skills (n = 14) and learning (n = 12) in other curricular areas.

Although teacher feedback was extremely positive, teachers felt ongoing support is necessary to sustain language learning in their school.

Respondents indicated that further training (n = 11) and resources (n = 10) are required. Three teachers commented that ongoing training is necessary as topics evolve and change, while two teachers felt they would benefit from refresher training to update their linguistic skills.

Parent Feedback

- All parents (n = 116) agreed primary school pupils should have the opportunity to learn a second language.
- 99.1% of parents (n = 112) would like their child's language learning experience to continue.
- 97.3% of parents (n = 110) felt their child enjoyed learning French.
- 95.6% of parents (n = 108) believe their child has benefited from their involvement in learning a second language.
- 83.2% of parents (n = 94) agreed learning another language has made their child more aware of other cultures.
- 71% of parents (n = 76) agreed that their child shows evidence of language acquisition at home.



2.0 Introduction

In December 2006, the Northern Ireland Department of Education commenced a review of language learning in schools and colleges. The Education Minister made this review based on evidence highlighting the numerous advantages of language learning for young people. Such advantages include increased creativity, increased confidence and an awareness of other cultures and people. Learning a language at primary school also opens up opportunities for pupils both in post-primary school and later life.

In addition, previous evaluations of the Primary Languages pilot have demonstrated that the development of language learning at Key Stage One reinforces skills and capabilities in other curricular areas, including the World Around Us and Personal Development and Mutual Understanding.

Primary Languages Pilot

In September 2005, CCEA in conjunction with three Education and Library Boards (SEELB, NEELB and BELB) began a longitudinal study to introduce languages into the primary curriculum. The aim of this study was to cater for the diversity of schools and their ability to include languages in the primary curriculum.

Initially, the languages selected for the pilot were French, Spanish and Irish. There were two chosen models of teaching languages: the Teacher Capacity Model and the Peripatetic Model. Schools in the SEELB and BELB adopted the Teacher Capacity Model, which involved the class teacher delivering language lessons. All teachers who participated in the model were non language specialists and had varying degrees of linguistic competence.

The Peripatetic Model used by the NEELB involved a peripatetic tutor delivering language lessons alongside the class teacher. The Department of

Education has continued to fund the development of Irish and Spanish in primary schools using the Peripatetic Model. Meanwhile, CCEA has continued to work with the SEELB in the development of French using the Teacher Capacity Model. 15 schools are currently involved in CCEA's pilot. Seven of these schools joined the pilot in 2005, while eight schools have since become involved. This is the final year of the longitudinal study which has supported the development and integration of French for primary teachers and pupils.

CCEA's Research and Statistics Unit has been involved in evaluating the development of languages throughout Key Stage One. This final evaluation aims to determine the level of language acquisition in Years 3 and 4, and obtain the views of all involved in the development of Primary Languages.

The overall objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- Determine the role of Languages within primary schools, including the benefits it has for pupils and teachers.
- Evaluate pupils' experience of learning a second language.
- Evaluate training and resources provided to teachers and establish whether further support is required.
- Collect opinions on the degree of development of second language learning.
- Establish whether parents believe it is beneficial for their child to study Languages in school.
- Gain evidence of pupils' language acquisition both at school and home.

3.0 Method

The following section includes a summary of the methodology used to evaluate the final year of the development of French within primary schools.

3.1 Design

For the evaluation to be as inclusive as possible, information was collected from all stakeholders involved in the 2008-09 Primary Languages Pilot. This included Principals, teachers, parents and pupils. The overall purpose of the study was to conduct a thorough evaluation of the final year of the Primary Languages Pilot.

3.2 Summary of Participants & Research Tools

Questionnaires were the main method of collecting data from stakeholders (Principals, teachers and parents). However, various qualitative methods were also employed in order to obtain feedback from pupils, reinforce feedback from the teacher questionnaire and observe the teaching process. Such methods included class observations, teacher interviews and pupil discussions.

3.3 Feedback from Principals

15 schools from the South Eastern Education and Library Board were involved in the final year of piloting French at Key Stage One. A total of five Principal evaluation questionnaires were completed and returned.

Respondents were asked to indicate their position in school and their school's management and centre type. All respondents (n = 5) held the position of primary Principal. Two respondents teach in a controlled primary school and three teach in a maintained primary school.

3.4 Feedback from teachers

A questionnaire was distributed to Year 3 and 4 teachers (n = 43) in all schools involved in the final evaluation (n = 15). A total of 18 questionnaires were completed and returned.

The breakdown of respondents can be found in Table 1 below:

Sector	Responses
Teacher	14
Assessment Coordinator	2
SENCo	1
Other	1
Total	18

Table 1 demonstrates that the majority of respondents are teachers (n = 14). 10 respondents teach in a maintained school and five teach within a controlled school. All respondents teach in a primary school.

Teacher Interviews

In April 2009, the Project Manager for Primary Languages, an officer from CCEA's Research and Statistics Unit and the SEELB Adviser for Languages visited a total of five schools, in order to observe a French lesson and engage in discussion with Year 3 and 4 pupils.

During each school visit, one teacher from each school was interviewed by the Research Officer. The interview was an extension of the teacher questionnaire. Questions were semi-structured and a standard list of discussion areas were covered. However, scope existed to re-order the schedule and deviate into any other areas teachers wished to highlight or discuss.

3.5 Feedback from Parents

Questionnaires were distributed to all parents of Year 3 and 4 pupils from the 15 schools involved in the pilot (n = 674). A total of 116 parents completed and returned questionnaires.

3.6 Feedback from Pupils

During school visits, discussions were also carried out with Year 3 and 4 pupils. The discussions were designed to be as enjoyable and interactive as possible. Pupils were asked a series of questions, and asked to run to the corner of the room which best described how they felt. Discussions were based on the following areas:

- Opinions of French classes.
- Knowledge and understanding of French.
- Evidence of language acquisition.
- The future use of languages.
- The importance of learning a second language.



(Pupils engaging in research activity)

4.0 Results

4.1 Results collected from Principal Questionnaire

This section presents the results for each question from the Principal questionnaire. Results are based on completed questionnaires from 5 respondents. Figures relate to the number of Principals who answered each question, which may be fewer than the total of 5. A number of Principals reiterated comments throughout their questionnaire; as a result some comments are repeated throughout this section of the report.

4.1.1. Linguistic Experience

All Principals (n = 5) have knowledge of a language other than English. Such languages include:

- French (n = 3)
- French and Spanish (n = 1)
- French and German (n = 1)

Four respondents have formal qualifications in this second language, including A Level (n = 2) and GCSE (n = 2). Two Principals also indicated they had informal training in a language other than English. Such informal training includes a summer spent in France (n = 1).

Four respondents indicated their level of fluency with their second language. Three Principals can compose short sentences, while one Principal has knowledge of a couple of words.

4.1.2. Managerial Decisions

Principals were asked to indicate if any managerial decisions had been made to introduce French into their schools. Table 2 summarises the main managerial decisions made by Principals. It should be noted that some Principals indicated that more than one managerial decision was made.

Table 2: Managerial Decisions

Managerial Decision	Responses
Deployment of staff	5
Time tabling	4
Resources	4
Sub Cover	2
Total	15

Table 2 indicates that the main decisions were regarding deployment of staff (n = 5), time tabling (n = 4) and resources (n = 4).

4.1.3. The role of Primary Languages in school

In general, feedback from Principals is very positive. All respondents (n = 5) agreed there is a role and a future for Primary Languages in their school. One such Principal commented:

- *“[Primary Languages] is now a very necessary component of the Curriculum.”*

In addition, four out of five respondents agreed that Languages should be a statutory component of the primary curriculum.

Three Principals have included Primary Languages in their schools' Development Plan. Such Principals provided the following reasons for including Languages in their schools' Development Plan:

- Learning an additional language benefits all primary pupils (1 comment).
- Learning French exposes pupils to different cultures (1 comment).
- It is important to maintain a line of progression in Language learning throughout the school (1 comment).

Principals indicated the number of teachers in their school that are linguistically competent. This information is outlined in table 3:

Table 3: Number of linguistically competent teachers

Number of teachers	Responses
Two	1
Seven	1
Nine	2
Total	4

Four respondents agreed they have explored how the language expertise of their staff can be shared. One Principal felt that teachers within their school had benefited from sharing resources and supporting each other in various areas of learning, including pronunciation.

All respondents agreed there are advantages of a classroom teacher delivering French in school, with one Principal commenting that it benefits both teachers and pupils:

- *“Teacher[s] can benefit from the experience through enhancement of their professional development whilst pupils benefit from the wider variety of experiences they receive from familiar faces.”*

In contrast, four respondents also felt there were advantages of a peripatetic tutor delivering French in school. One Principal commented that it is beneficial for teachers to have the opportunity to consult with a peripatetic tutor. Another respondent felt a peripatetic tutor would be helpful in assisting Key Stage 2 pupils with the formation of longer sentences and short conversation.

Nevertheless, one respondent was concerned that the deliverance of French lessons by a peripatetic tutor could lead to the deskilling of the class teacher in their knowledge and use of French.

4.1.4. Resources and support

Respondents agreed they require further support (n = 5) and resources (n = 2) to enable them to continue and sustain teaching French in their school. In particular, three Principals stressed the need for time to allow for planning. One respondent also felt teachers would benefit from ongoing training.

Two respondents commented on the need for additional resources. However, respondents did not highlight any specific resources they felt were required.

4.1.5. The impact of teaching Languages in school

All respondents agreed that learning Languages has had a positive impact on their pupils. Furthermore, three Principals believed that learning Languages has had a positive impact on their whole school community. One respondent agreed that teaching French has positively influenced parental choice in selecting their school. This respondent felt that parents perceive the learning of a second language to be advantageous for their children.

4.2 Results collected from Teacher Questionnaire and Interviews

This section presents the results for each question from the teacher questionnaire. Results are based on completed questionnaires from 18 respondents. Figures relate to the number of teachers who answered each question, which may be fewer than the total of 18. A number of teachers reiterated comments throughout their questionnaire; as a result some comments are repeated throughout this section of the report.

Interviews were facilitated with five teachers from schools visited by the Project Manager for Primary Languages, an officer from CCEA's Research and Statistics Unit and the SEELB Adviser for Languages. Feedback from teacher interviews is integrated throughout this section of the report.

4.2.1. Experience of teaching French

Teachers were asked to indicate how many years experience they had of teaching French in school. This information is summarised in table 4 below:

Table 4: Number of years teaching French in school

Number of years	Responses
One	7
Two	3
Three	2
Four	1
Six	2
Nineteen	1
Twenty five	1
Total	17

4.2.2 Confidence and competence in teaching Languages

Teachers rated their confidence and competence in teaching Languages highly. Six respondents commented that they felt better equipped to deliver Languages in school having received resources and suggested activities at the teacher training.

Findings from Teacher Interviews

All teachers interviewed (n = 5) felt they were confident in teaching French. Two teachers felt reassured that their colleagues are able to support them if necessary. Another two teachers commented that their confidence increased with exposure to French. One teacher reiterated the findings from the questionnaire, emphasising that the training and resources they have received this year has increased both their confidence and competence in teaching French.

4.2.3. Evaluating training and resources

All Year 3 and 4 teachers involved in delivering French were provided with training by the South Eastern Education and Library Board. 15 respondents agreed the training received was suitable, with three teachers commending the resources provided at the training. Almost all teachers agreed that the training and support increased their confidence (n = 17) and skills (n = 15) to deliver Languages within school:

- *“The training made me aware of how to deliver language appropriately to given age groups.”*
- *“It was difficult to come up with different ideas to help teach topics. The course gave us competent lesson plans and ideas.”*

Seven respondents had taken part in a linguistic competency course in Salignac. All teachers who participated in the course rated it highly.

Seven teachers who had not participated in the course indicated that they would like to do so. One respondent felt that the course would be useful for refreshing their knowledge and understanding of French. Another respondent had shared resources with teachers who had previously attended the course and found these to be extremely useful.

Almost all teachers (n = 17) felt that the resources provided were appropriate for Key Stage 1. Such teachers also agreed that the resources were user friendly and adaptable to their needs. Six respondents praised the resources provided:

- *“Tutors are aware of the curriculum changes and adapt the resources accordingly.”*
- *“[Pupils] enjoy the rhymes and songs. They make [lessons] more fun.”*

Despite this positive feedback, respondents felt that further training (n = 11) and resources (n = 10) were required. In particular, three respondents felt ongoing training was needed as topics constantly evolve and change. Two teachers believed refresher training was needed to update skills. A further two respondents commented on the need for training on the progression of French into Key Stage 2.

Findings from Teacher Interviews

All teachers felt the training they received was invaluable. Two teachers commented that the training had provided them with ideas for lessons. One teacher believed it was especially useful to be introduced to various games and songs.

Four teachers had participated in the linguistic competency course in Salignac. All teachers believed the course was excellent. One such teacher commented that the training had thoroughly increased her linguistic competence and confidence.

Nevertheless, all teachers agreed further training would be useful. Three teachers felt they would benefit from the following:

- Advice on how to integrate French into other curricular areas (n = 1)
- Ongoing training to refresh and update skills (n = 1)
- An introduction to further French games (n = 1)

Reiterating findings from the questionnaire, all teachers rated the resources received highly. Two teachers commented that they had incorporated a variety of resources and teaching methods in their classes.

Four teachers believed further resources for Primary Languages are required. One teacher felt there are less resources tailored to Years 3 and 4 than there are for Years 1 and 2. This teacher felt further resources were required for pupils in Years 3-4. Another teacher felt more resources based on individual topics would be useful.

4.2.4 Experience of teaching Languages

Figure 1: What methods have you used to teach French?

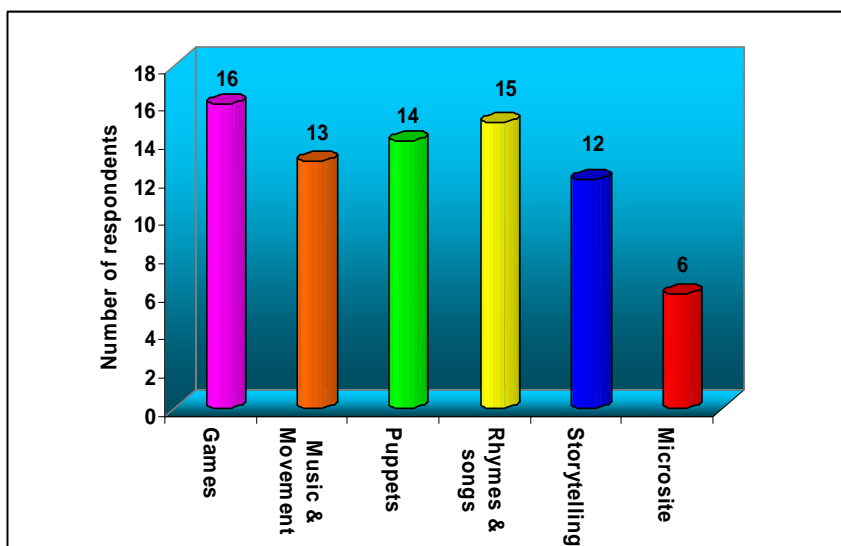


Figure 1 illustrates the methods respondents use to teach French. It is apparent that all respondents use a multi sensory approach to their lessons.

Almost all respondents used games (n = 16), rhymes & songs (n = 15) and puppets (n = 14) in their French lessons. Four respondents indicated that they

used 'other' methods to teach French, including exposure to different Primary Language websites. Such websites include the:

- BBC Primary French website (n = 2)
- LCF Babel Zone website (n = 2)

Seven respondents had also used CCEA's Primary Languages microsite. Almost all teachers who used this site (6 out of 7) rated it highly. One teacher commented that pupils find the site enjoyable. Another respondent believed the microsite enhanced pupils' learning:

- *"It is good for reinforcing knowledge and skills, providing extra resources and allowing pupils to hear French spoken by a native speaker."*

Twelve out of seventeen teachers incorporated French into other areas of learning. Such areas include:

- PE (n = 6);
- Numeracy (n = 5); and
- General classroom instruction (n = 3).

In addition, the majority of respondents believed that teaching Languages has reinforced skills (n = 14) and learning (n = 12) in other areas. Such respondents felt teaching French had improved:

- Pupils' listening skills (n = 6);
- Pupils' self confidence (n = 3); and
- Pupils' knowledge of other cultures (n = 2).

Two respondents commented:

- *“Incorporating [French] into other subjects has helped pupils to link their learning.”*
- *“Teaching pupils another language broadens their knowledge and this effectively challenges them.”*

Findings from Teacher Interviews

All interviewed teachers incorporated French into other areas of learning. Three teachers stated that they use French for everyday use and classroom instruction. One teacher commented that pupils are encouraged to greet each other and say please and thank you in French. Teachers also incorporated French into PE (n = 3) and counting (n = 2).

All teachers agreed that teaching Languages has reinforced learning and skills in other areas, including:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- The World Around Us
- The Arts
- Music and movement
- Talking and listening
- Memory and recall

4.2.5 Pupil Experience and Enjoyment

All respondents (n = 18) rated their pupils' enjoyment of Languages highly. In particular, three teachers commented that their pupils enjoy the variety of games and songs they are introduced to during French lessons. Two teachers highlighted their pupils' eagerness to participate in their lessons.

In addition, all respondents felt that learning Languages has had a positive impact on their pupils. Three teachers commented that learning French has increased their pupils' self confidence.

Figure 2: What level of spoken French do the majority of your pupils have?

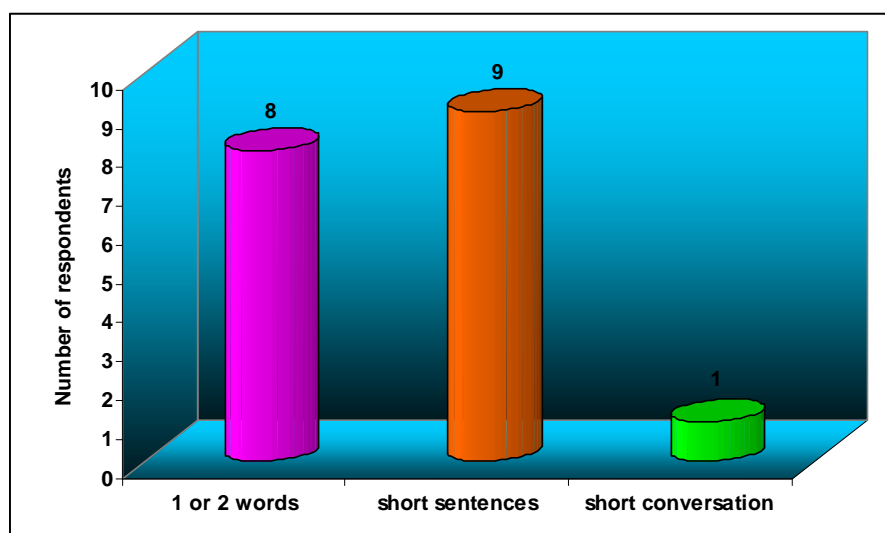


Figure 2 shows that the majority of pupils can speak one or two French words (n=8) or form short sentences (n=9).

Almost all respondents (n = 14) agreed their pupils are confident in using French. These findings are consistent with previous evaluations, in which teachers agreed Year 1 and 2 pupils were confident in speaking one or two French words or forming short sentences.

Findings from Teacher Interviews

Teachers indicated that although their pupils have differing levels of ability, the majority of pupils have a good level of spoken French. One teacher commented that while some pupils lack confidence to speak out in class, all pupils actively engage and listen during language lessons.

All teachers agreed that learning Languages has had a positive impact on their pupils. All teachers rated their pupils' enjoyment of learning French highly. Two teachers felt that learning French has encouraged engagement from pupils who do not participate highly in other lessons. One teacher also believed that learning Languages has had a positive impact on pupils of lower

ability, particularly increasing such pupils' self confidence.

4.2.6 Parent Feedback

Eight teachers had received parents' views regarding their child's language learning experience. Five respondents stated that parents are very positive about their children learning French in school. One such respondent commented:

- *“There have been many positive reports. Parents think it is a great idea!”*

Three respondents also remarked that parents were impressed with their child's use of French at home.

4.2.7 Additional Comments

Teachers were given the opportunity at the end of the questionnaire to present any additional comments they had regarding Primary Languages. Three respondents commented that teaching Languages was a positive experience for both pupils and teachers:

- *“The Primary Language programme has been a very positive, enjoyable and reassuring experience for me. I hope it continues.”*

In addition, two respondents commented on how learning French has broadened their pupils' understanding and awareness of other cultures. One respondent who teaches pupils with English as an additional language commented that learning Languages has increased such pupils' self-confidence.

4.3 Classroom observations

The Project Manager for Primary Languages, an officer from CCEA's Research and Statistics Unit and the SEELB Adviser for Languages visited five schools. During such visits, Year 3 and 4 French lessons were observed. Following the observations, the Research Officer interviewed the teacher and then collected pupil feedback on their French lessons.

The purpose of these visits was to:

- Observe the teaching process;
- Assess pupil engagement in French lessons;
- Ascertain pupils' level of language acquisition;
- Determine pupils' level of confidence in using French; and
- Determine pupils' enjoyment of French lessons.



(Pupils engaging in their French lesson)

4.3.1. Teacher observations

Across all school visits teachers demonstrated enthusiasm and a strong commitment to teaching French.

All teachers were linguistically competent. Although there was slight variation in teachers' linguistic ability, all teachers were confident in using French with their class. Teachers interacted with their pupils using French for all aspects of the teaching process, including greeting, instruction, praise and censure. Pupils were comfortable and fully comprehending of their teacher's use of French during the observed lessons.

A variety of teaching methods were employed across the school visits. Such methods included games, rhymes and songs, puppets, story telling and use of the Primary Languages Microsite. One teacher also used the Rigolo, which allowed pupils to enthusiastically engage in electronic activities and songs. It was apparent that the various teaching methods stimulated pupils and allowed them to participate in lessons individually and as a whole group. Such methods also created an enjoyable, interactive learning environment for pupils to develop their linguistic skills.

There was evidence at all schools visited of a strong whole school commitment to learning French. Two of the schools had incorporated a French corner within their main building, which displayed French artwork, flags, signs and stories. At the other schools there was also evidence of artwork and informative French displays. It was apparent on one visit that pupils had taken part in a 'Taste of French day' at which they were given the opportunity to dress in French attire and taste French foods. We were also given the opportunity to meet the Year 1 class at one of our visits. These pupils demonstrated the ability to follow instructions, engage in rhymes and confidently introduce themselves in French.

4.3.2. Pupil observations

Throughout all school visits pupils demonstrated confidence in using French and a high level of participation in their lessons. Pupils engaged both individually and as a group, displaying eagerness to interact in various classroom activities.

At all observations pupils demonstrated an impressive level of language acquisition. Pupils confidently answered questions and engaged in games on a number of topics. There was evidence that almost all observed pupils had a good knowledge of:

- Colours;
- Counting up to 15;
- The weather;
- Parts of the body;
- Directions;
- Temperature; and
- Clothing.

Pupils confidently engaged in various rhymes and songs. In addition, pupils demonstrated a good memory of lessons taught in Years 1 and 2. In almost all schools, pupils enthusiastically engaged in rhymes and songs they had been taught one or two years previously, with very little or no prompting from the class teacher.

4.3.3. Pupil discussion



(Pupils providing feedback on their French lessons)

Throughout all schools visited, pupils were extremely positive about their French lessons. Almost all pupils indicated that they either love or like learning French in school. Pupils were asked to provide reasons why they enjoy learning French. Common responses include:

- *“Learning another language will help us when we are older.”*
- *“If we go on holiday to France we will be able to meet new people and speak to them in French.”*
- *“It is fun learning French in school.”*

It was evident that pupils enjoyed the variety of teaching methods used in their French lessons. In particular, a large number of pupils commented that they enjoy French games and learning new songs. Such findings suggest pupils particularly enjoy the interactive aspect of their lessons.

At all visits, there was evidence that pupils use their second language outside of school. Several pupils had been to France on holiday, and the majority of such pupils agreed that they spoke French on this holiday, most commonly to

make new friends. One pupil was very eager to point out that she was the only member of her family that was able to speak French while on holiday. In addition, a large number of pupils commented that they use French at home, particularly to greet family members.

Pupils almost unanimously agreed that they wish to continue learning French in school. Several pupils commented that they think learning French at a young age will benefit them in later life and will allow them to communicate with people from other cultures. In addition, almost all pupils agreed that it is important to learn French at primary school.

As previously mentioned, throughout the visits pupils' displayed a high level of competence and linguistic ability. This was further emphasised during discussions, when pupils enthusiastically demonstrated their knowledge of French vocabulary, including colours, numbers and weather.

4.4 Results collected from Parent Questionnaire

This section presents the results for each question from the parent questionnaire. Results are based on completed questionnaires from 116 respondents. Percentages relate to the number of parents who answered each question, which may be fewer than the overall total of 116. A number of parents reiterated comments throughout their questionnaire; as a result some comments are repeated throughout this section of the report.

4.4.1. Language Skills and Qualifications

A large number of parents (69.8%, n = 81) have knowledge of a language other than English. Such languages include:

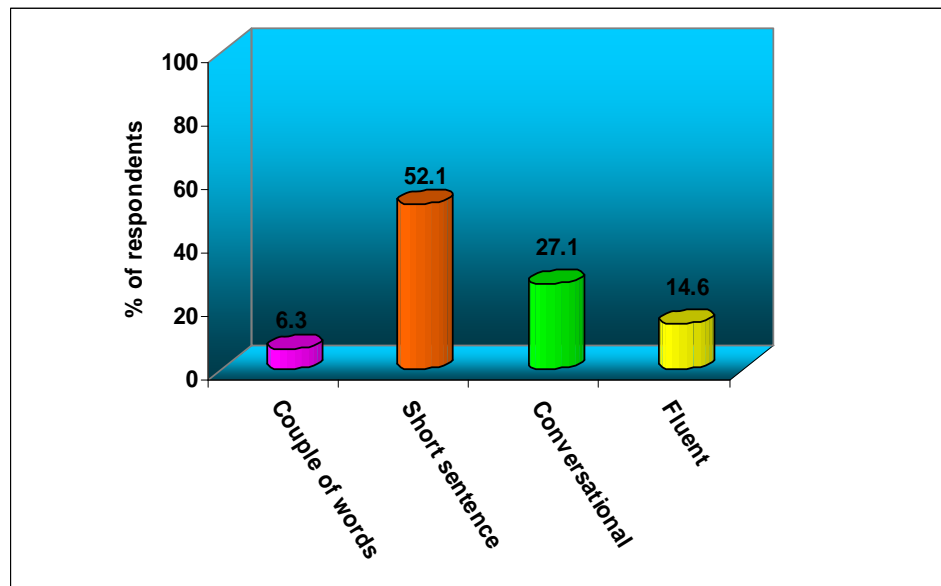
- French (n = 47)
- Spanish (n = 23)
- German (n = 13)
- Irish (n = 10)
- Arabic (n = 2)
- Russian (n = 1)
- Portuguese (n = 1)

70 respondents have formal qualifications in this 2nd language, including:

- GCSE (n = 48)
- A Level (n = 11)
- 3rd level qualification (n = 4)

20 respondents also indicated that they have informal training in a language other than English. Seven parents had experience of living in a different country, while four respondents were self taught.

Figure 3: Level of fluency



Parents were asked to indicate how fluent they were in the second language. Figure 3 illustrates that over half of parents (52.1%, $n = 25$) can construct short sentences in the second language.

4.4.2. Benefits of learning Languages in primary school

All parents ($n = 116$) were in agreement that primary school pupils should have the opportunity to learn a language other than English. Respondents provided the following reasons for their answer:

- It is easier for children to learn a second language from an early age (18 comments)
- Learning a language other than English creates an awareness of other cultures (16 comments)
- Learning a second language opens up opportunities for children in later life (11 comments)
- Children find learning French enjoyable (8 comments)

95.6% of respondents (n = 108) believe their child has benefited from their involvement in learning a second language. Parents felt their children had benefited in the following ways:

- Have an increased awareness and interest in other countries (28 comments)
- Enjoy French lessons (26 comments)
- Are able to use the second language on holiday (14 comments)
- Learning a second language will be useful in later life (8 comments)
- Learning a second language has increased child's confidence (8 comments)

83.2% of parents (n = 94) agreed that learning another language has made their child more aware of other cultures. Specifically, 11 respondents felt that their child had a better awareness and respect of other cultures throughout the world. Eight respondents felt their child had become more inquisitive about other countries since they began learning French in school.

In addition, almost all parents (97.3%, n = 110) believed their child enjoys learning French. Nine respondents believed their child enjoyed speaking a new language, while seven parents commented that their child likes to speak about what they have learned in their lessons.

4.4.3. Children's Linguistic Ability

Figure 4: Child's linguistic ability

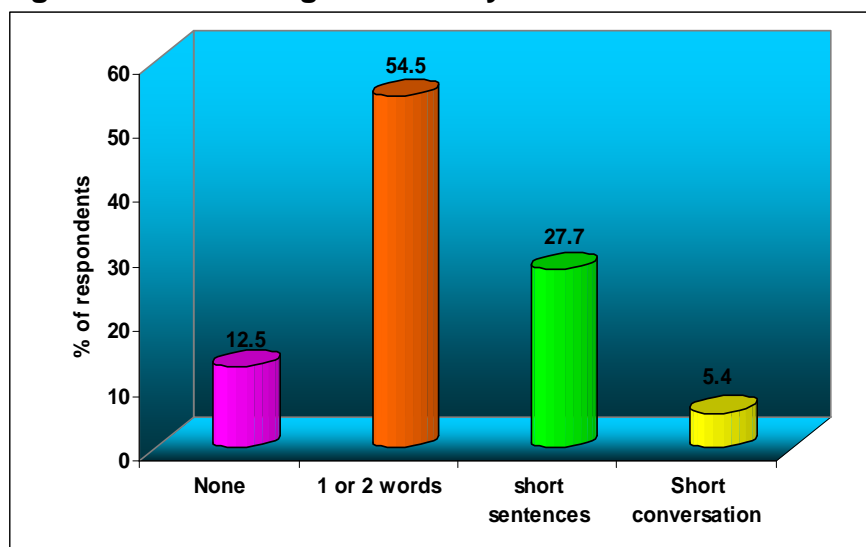


Figure 4 shows that more than half of parents (54.5%, n=61) believe their child can speak 1 or 2 French words.

69.4% of parents (n = 77) rated their child's confidence in using French highly. Eight parents felt their child was confident in using simple French phrases and words. Four respondents commented on their child's enjoyment in communicating in French.

Despite this positive feedback, four respondents felt that their child was not confident using French. These respondents felt the focus on learning French was not as prevalent this year as it had been in Years 1 and 2.

4.4.4. Evidence of Language Learning

Several respondents (71%, n = 76) indicated that their child demonstrates their knowledge of French at home. 22 parents commented that their child uses French words and phrases:

- *"[My child] is keen to share new words and songs. Enjoyment of the subject is obvious."*

Six parents also noted how their child likes to report what they have learned at school. A further 36% of parents (n = 40) agreed their child has had the opportunity to utilize their language skills, for example while on holiday.

4.4.5. Progression of Language Learning

69.3% of parents (n = 70) agreed their child has progressed in their language learning since Year 1, with seven respondents noting a gradual build up of vocabulary. A further seven parents commented that they had seen definite progress in their child's language learning, while four parents felt their child was more confident in their use of French since Year 1.

However, ten respondents were concerned that there had been little progression in their child's language learning. Seven respondents felt there had been less time spent on learning French in Years 3 and 4 than there had been in Year 1, and that this may have limited their child's progression. Nevertheless, respondents were in strong agreement that they would like their child's language learning experience to continue into Key Stage 2 (99.1%, n = 112). Such respondents felt that:

- It is important to maintain language learning to allow for continuity (7 comments);
- Learning French in primary school provides a good basis for studying languages at post-primary level (7 comments); and
- Children enjoy learning French (6 comments).

4.4.6. Additional Comments

Parents were able to present any additional comments they had at the end of the questionnaire. Comments were overwhelmingly positive. Six respondents felt that all primary pupils should be given the opportunity to learn a second language.

- *"I would whole heartily endorse the learning of a second language at primary school."*

Four parents commented on their wish for their child's language learning experience to continue:

- *"I have been amazed at the level of fluency displayed by my son. I wish I had learnt French at this early stage of my education and I may have perhaps enjoyed learning it much more than I did at post-primary level. This is definitely the best age to be introduced to another language. I hope the programme continues."*

In addition, three parents commented that it is very worthwhile to expose children to a second language at a young age, as they acquire language more easily. Three respondents also felt that learning a language at primary school provides pupils with a basis for learning languages at post-primary school.

5.0 Conclusion

Findings from the evaluation are overwhelmingly positive. All stakeholders highly rated the continuation and development of language learning in Years 3 and 4.

Principals, teachers and parents were in agreement that learning Languages has had a positive impact on pupils. In particular, teachers felt that learning languages has increased pupils' self-confidence and encouraged engagement from pupils who do not participate highly in other lessons.

In addition, Principals believed that teaching Languages has had a positive impact on their school community. All Principals were in agreement there is a role and a future for Languages in their school.

It was apparent a large number of teachers (n = 12) incorporated French into other curricular areas, such as PE. Such teachers felt that learning French has developed learning and skills in these areas. In particular, teachers agreed that learning French has heightened pupils' knowledge and awareness of other cultures. Parents were in agreement that their child's interest in other cultures and people has increased as a result of learning French in school.

Findings from this evaluation suggest that the majority of teachers use a multi sensory approach to teaching. Respondents believe this creates an interesting and enjoyable learning experience for pupils. All stakeholders (Principals, teachers, parents and pupils) highly rated pupils' enjoyment of learning Languages. Feedback from pupils illustrates that learning French is enjoyable for a variety of reasons. Pupils believe that learning French will benefit them in the future and will enable them to interact with others while travelling.

Consistent with previous evaluations, there has been strong parental support for the development of language learning at Key Stage One. Parents

unanimously agreed that all primary pupils should have the opportunity to learn Languages. Parents believed that Key Stage One is the best age for pupils to start to learn a second language as children most easily acquire language at this age. Parents also felt that learning Languages at Key Stage One opens up opportunities for the future, both in post-primary education and future employment.

Results demonstrate that parents strongly believe learning French has benefited their children and that they would like their language learning experience to continue. Pupils reiterated this sentiment, unanimously agreeing that they wish to continue learning French at school.

To conclude, results from this evaluation demonstrate the numerous advantages language learning has for pupils, parents and teachers, and emphasises the strong support all stakeholders have for the continuation and development of French at primary level.