

**An investigation into primary school MFL teaching looking
at the perspectives of staff, parents and pupils,
in the context of Government policy and practice**

Martina Maria Cottam

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Abstract

Recent years have seen various UK Government initiatives and policies for MFL (Modern Foreign Language) teaching in primary schools. This thesis is a case study on two independent primary schools in respect of their MFL provision, its effectiveness and perception by the three stakeholders of staff, parents and pupils. Specifically, its purpose is to present stakeholders' views in six research areas, namely: 1) the commencement of MFL teaching, 2) the number of MFLs, 3) choosing the most suitable MFL(s) to implement, 4) teaching time allocation for MFL(s), 5) possible strategies to create a positive MFL learning environment, and 6) potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1 (Key Stage 1). Research was conducted by means of questionnaires and interviews. The data was treated in a qualitative manner and discussed in the context of existing research, national and international literature, and Government policy and practice.

It was found that all stakeholders expected MFL teaching to commence in at least KS2 (Key Stage 2) or an even earlier start. There was unanimous agreement for one MFL to be taught, yet pupils presented the highest request for learning multiple MFLs. Staff and parents wanted French and Spanish whereas pupils preferred Spanish, Chinese, French and Italian. For KS2, staff and parents opted for more than 60 minutes of MFL per week but the majority of pupils were satisfied with 30-45 minutes. The greatest enthusiasm for MFL learning was in the youngest age group (Year 1). Both schools had been unsuccessful in their pursuit of MFL delivery outside of school hours. The overwhelming result of this research was a basic demand to see an increase in the level of MFL teaching and support. Most stakeholders communicated in various ways that current Government policies, strategies, and funding did not go far enough to accommodate their vision for primary MFL.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

This thesis is about MFL learning and teaching in the context of British primary schools. The issue of foreign language learning has come to prominence in recent years in the United Kingdom and in Anglophone countries more generally. Back in 2008 the MFL debate gained momentum in the media and, even in America, the then Senator Barack Obama (2008) made the following point:

We should have every child speaking more than one language. It's embarrassing when Europeans come over here [America]; they all speak English, they speak French, they speak German, and then we go over to Europe...[*a pause*] and all I can say is 'merci beaucoup'. (online video)

During this time I conceived the ideas for this dissertation. I took a keen interest in the debate on MFL learning and started the journey of research to discover what other people thought about this topic.

This first chapter introduces my chosen research topic to investigate MFL teaching in the primary school, with the following aims:

- to provide a general description of this research (see section 1.1)
- to summarise the origin of this research (see section 1.2)
- to state the research questions and their purposes (see section 1.3)
- to refer to strategies and techniques used (see section 1.4)
- to explain the nature and purpose of the subsequent chapters (see section 1.5).

Readers should refer to the note below for some key terminology used in this thesis.¹

¹ In the UK, pupils start primary school aged 4, known as Foundation Stage or Reception (FS/R). This is followed by year groups 1 to 2 (Y1 – Y2) classed as Key Stage 1 (KS1), and year groups 3 to 6 (Y3 – Y6) classed as Key Stage 2 (KS2). Once this primary school age has passed, pupils attend secondary school for year groups 7 to 9 (Y7 – Y9) classed as Key Stage 3 (KS3). Moving from KS2 to KS3 is sometimes called 'transition'.

1.1 A general description of this research

To begin with, I want to highlight some crucial facts about Britons' knowledge of MFL skills. Coleman (2009) presents a bleak picture when unveiling the "linguistic incompetence" (pp.115-116) of the UK compared within Europe which is portrayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Present linguistic incompetence, past educational failure: percentage of adults unable to hold a conversation except in their mother tongue (%). (Coleman, 2009, p.116)

Ireland	66
United Kingdom	62
Italy	59
Portugal	58
Hungary	58
Spain	56
France	49
Poland	43
Greece	43
Czech Republic	39
Austria	38
Germany	33
Finland	31
Belgium	26
Cyprus	22
Denmark	12
Estonia	11
Sweden	10
Slovenia	9
Netherlands	9
Malta	8
Lithuania	8
Latvia	5
Slovakia	3
Luxembourg	1

Source: Eurobarometer (2006).

Furthermore, in the Daily Mail newspaper, Clark (2007) wrote about a 2007 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) survey of 3,210 participants. She summarised the findings that in the UK "Adults remember an average of only seven words from the languages they studied at school", they could not recall words such as "sorry and goodnight", or "ask the way to the lavatory" (Clark, 2007, para. 1-2; Figure 1). The study revealed that many Britons are embarrassed over their poor MFL skills.

Figure 1: **The few foreign words remembered by Britons**
(Clark, 2007, August 03)



WHAT WE DO REMEMBER			
ENGLISH	FRENCH	GERMAN	SPANISH
Hello	Bonjour	Guten Tag	Hola
Goodbye	Au revoir	Auf Wiedersehen	Adiós
Please	S'il vous plaît	Bitte	Por favor
Thank you	Merci	Danke	Gracias
Beer	Bière	Bier	Cerveza
One, two, three	Un, deux, trois	Eins, zwei, drei	Uno, dos, tres
Do you speak English?	Parlez-vous anglais?	Sprechen Sie Englisch?	Habla inglés

However, Coleman (2009) is frustrated at the often negative attitude from politicians, the media and even language professionals when talking about the MFL competence of the British and argues:

The tired clichéd myths of a British public who are 'no good at languages', and the 'English-is-enough' monolingualism which are consistently reinforced and validated by the British media are false and must be challenged. Public opinion is shaped, not static. (p.123)

Initiatives can boost excitement about languages. For example, in 2001 the Council of Europe initiated a European Day of Languages. Although the National Centre for Languages (CILT) promotes this event every year, it actually receives little media coverage in Britain. Also, it is hoped that the London Olympics in 2012 could encourage language learning as Baker (2005) questions: "...perhaps it could also provide a desperately needed boost to improve our dreadful international record in learning foreign languages?" (para. 1). However, it is unknown how effective both these enterprises will be to improve language learning in the UK.

In 2005/06 Coleman, Galaczi and Astruc (2007) conducted a survey of 10,000 UK KS3 pupils about their motivation of towards foreign languages. The negative verdict was that "overall motivation and its components fall between Year 7 and Year 8, and

decline further, though less steeply, between Year 8 and Year 9" (Coleman et al., 2007, p.270). Compared with all other countries in Europe, the UK has the least number of secondary pupils who learn a MFL (Coleman, 2009, p.115). Also, over recent years the take-up of GCSE and A-level MFL entries has declined (Coleman et al., 2007, p.249). It is understood that for some people MFL learning has become less relevant, since English has become the dominant lingua franca across the modern world.

To encourage MFL learning in the UK, the Government set up the *National Languages Strategy* (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2002, p.15) which described the KS2 MFL entitlement it wanted implementing by 2010. Another recommendation was added later saying that schools should have at least an hour per week for MFL (Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency [QCA], 2007, p.2). Macaro (2008) is pessimistic and considers:

Do we really believe that an hour a week in primary school (for how many years?) is going to ratchet up proficiency in KS3? Or will it lead to more repetition, lack of progress and boredom? (p.106)

According to Coleman (2009), children are influenced by their school-based MFL experience, but the bigger issue is that "beyond the school gates, the public attitude which the media both construct and reflect is hostile to language learning" (p.116).

The lack of MFL proficiency in Britain identified this area as having a broad range of questions to be researched. First, I will give a brief summary on the origin of this research in section 1.2.

1.2 The origin of this research

Being a primary school teacher and speaking German as a first language provided me with a keen interest to research the current trend of MFL provision in primary schools. I still remember the Government's advertising campaign a few years ago promoting the teacher training course particularly to those who can teach another language. This prompted me to pursue this kind of career. After my training as a primary school teacher, my personal experience of looking for work whilst promoting my German language skills revealed rather the opposite to the Government's positive advertising. Schools showed little interest in German language skills. Therefore, this thesis provides an opportunity to research the nature of the current practice of MFL in primary schools and compare the findings with national and international literature, especially in the context of Government policy and practice.

1.3 The main research questions and their purpose

First, I simply jotted down any areas of interest which I believed were valuable points for discussion. As a primary school teacher who likes to integrate MFL teaching in the classroom, I found this process rather straight forward. I set out themes such as:

- What is the current practice of MFL teaching in primary schools?
- What is the demand for primary MFL teaching from staff, parents and pupils?
- How do UK Government policies relate to demand and provision in primary schools?
- What can be learned from existing research, and international and national literature?

Once these themes emerged, it became clear how to carry out the research. At the time I was employed in two separate primary schools, a situation which lent itself to a comparative study across both schools. Since I wanted to consider the perspectives of staff, parents and pupils from both primary schools, I chose research questions which would be applicable for all three stakeholders. Tierney & Gallastegi (2005) support

such an approach because they believe that “We are entering a crucial phase in MLPS [Modern Languages in the Primary School] within these islands, and there is a need for a national debate involving all stakeholders so that a clear strategy can be mapped out” (p.53).

Therefore, I wanted to investigate the opinions of the three stakeholders of staff, parents and pupils concerning MFL learning, with the specific intention to answer the following six research questions:

- 1. When should MFL teaching commence?*
- 2. How many modern foreign languages should be taught in primary school?*
- 3. Which modern foreign language(s) should be taught in primary school?*
- 4. How much time should be given to MFL teaching?*
- 5. What possible strategies could be implemented to create a positive MFL learning environment for the child?*
- 6. What are the potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1?*

All these questions concern MFL learning and teaching in a primary school setting, which is implied throughout this thesis. To give further insight into each of the chosen research questions, I will describe the background of each question and its purpose.

Question one considers when primary MFL teaching should start. This ongoing debate has not reached a conclusion but my research could shed some new light on this matter and could even reflect Obama’s view (2008) that

We should be emphasising foreign languages in our schools from an early age, because children will actually learn a foreign language easier when they are five, or six or seven. (online video)

By posing this question, I hope to identify a trend from the opinions of staff, parents and pupils as to what they believe is the ideal time to commence primary MFL teaching.

Research questions 2 to 4 consider the more practical issues of how to implement MFL teaching in a primary school and the key decisions that need to be made. Although these three research questions focus on different aspects, the overall purpose is to find an effective MFL teaching strategy in primary schools which is modelled around stakeholder opinion.

When thinking about how to create a positive MFL learning environment in primary schools, I wanted to consider which initiatives staff, parents and pupils thought should be high on the priority list. Therefore, I call my fifth research question a 'discovery' question because existing research scarcely addresses this issue.

Finally, my last research question (6) addresses a topic that has again come to the fore in the MFL field, namely of a very early start to language learning i.e. prior to KS2. As a Y1 primary school teacher, I seized the opportunity to implement short daily German sessions in one primary school taking part in this research. Hence, I could research this school in particular and find out stakeholder opinion on potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1. These are novel findings which add relevant insight into the current debate on commencing MFL in FS/KS1.

The findings of each research question will be discussed in light of existing research, national and international literature, and Government policy and practice.

1.4 Strategies and techniques used

To produce a thesis of valid and reliable research, I first sought the consent of both Headteachers to conduct a research project in their respective primary school. To ensure anonymity, I will use the pseudonyms of Topos Primary School (TPS) and Wapa Primary School (WPS) to refer to each primary school; however, the names will be shortened to 'Topos' and 'Wapa' for brevity. In the process of gathering data for my research questions, I chose to involve three groups from both schools: staff (i.e. Headteachers, class teachers and MFL specialist teachers), parents from all year groups (FS – Y6) and KS2 pupils. Y1 pupils and Y1 parents from Topos would get a questionnaire about the Topos Y1 German MFL provision at that time. The work was convenient since I was teaching in both schools at the time. When deciding upon the most suitable approach to carry out the research, a selection of parent/pupil questionnaires and interviews seemed to be the most useful. This methodology is fundamentally a qualitative study but also contains quantitative elements.

To ensure a smooth running of the questionnaires, I piloted the questionnaires which is recommended for this style of research. Furthermore, I asked parents to give their own consent to participate in a questionnaire, and the consent for whether their child was allowed to participate in a questionnaire (when applicable). I soon received completed questionnaires from all parents and pupils involved. Meanwhile, I interviewed Headteachers, class teachers teaching MFL and MFL specialist teachers who were all employed at either Topos or Wapa at the time of this research. They all gave their consent and I could conduct six individual interviews. All interviewees' names are pseudonyms in this thesis. Later, I analysed all questionnaire data using the software package SPSS 16.0. Responses from interviews were grouped into similar categories and entered into an Excel spreadsheet.

As a researcher, I spent time on familiarising myself with existing research, national and international literature, and Government policy. This strategy was essential since it influenced the choice of my research questions. Also, I believe that an investigation into primary school MFL teaching requires a debate which is influenced from as many viewpoints as possible; such as scholars, Government policy, and participants of my research (i.e. staff, parents and pupils). By bringing together all these components throughout this thesis, I hope that the chosen strategy will reveal current trends in the opinions and practices of primary MFL teaching.

1.5 The nature and purpose of the chapters

Chapter 2 focuses on a context/literature review where key issues surrounding MFL teaching in primary schools (e.g., age and time factors or various MFL teaching programmes) will be highlighted. Further, it presents Britain's MFL development by examining the last ten years and the current state of MFL education in Britain in terms of Government policy and future plans. This review identifies gaps in the literature and Government policy which influenced the process of choosing my research questions. Finally, the last section explains the context of my chosen primary schools (Topos and Wapa) used for the research analysis.

The third chapter (Methodology) will endeavour to establish a link between the posed research questions of this thesis and how the research information was gathered. This chapter will address my research questions, explain chosen research methods and procedures, present how the research was conducted in action and its outcome, and clarify how the data was analysed. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate to the reader that the research was carried out in a valid and reliable way.

Chapters 4 to 6 present and analyse the research results of staff, parent and pupil opinion on primary MFL teaching. All three chapters have the same layout, namely of my chosen research questions. This framework enables the main findings of all three chapters to be easily compared with each other, and ultimately in an overall summary in Chapter 7, the Conclusion. Also, Chapter 7 gives a critique of the study and its methods, an identification of implications for practice, and finally a discussion of further research possibilities.

Summarising this first chapter, as a primary school teacher with language skills I was attracted to the debate surrounding primary MFL teaching. Having highlighted some of the main issues such as the general poor performance and reputation of the British in MFLs I was keen to carry out research in this area to provide answers to my chosen research questions. As explained, I designed and implemented an investigation into primary school MFL teaching by evaluating the opinions of staff, parents and pupils from two different primary schools in the context of Government policy and practice. With this in mind, the next chapter will focus on a context/literature review of MFL teaching.

Chapter 2:

Literature review and context

My posed research questions aim to analyse the issue of primary school MFL teaching in more depth by creating themes. To make this debate fair, it is crucial to take into consideration other research findings and viewpoints from scholars. A historical analysis of what happened throughout the last ten years in British Government policy can shed some new light on this issue and contribute to the area of discussion. Furthermore, it is equally important to perform a contextual analysis of the schools in which the research was conducted. Therefore, all these components will be discussed separately in three sections as explained below.

Firstly, I will be reviewing a range of previous studies and scholars' opinions, and presenting the findings in themes which debate key issues surrounding MFL teaching in primary schools. The three chosen themes are as follows: the age factor, the time factor and the type of teaching programme. When looking into each theme, I will aim to discuss its issues and provide a critical analysis of the advantages and disadvantages.

In the second section (2.2), I will show what happened during the last ten years in terms of Government policy and then highlight the current state of MFL education in Britain. In the light of Government policy and plans I will identify the positive and negative aspects as well as future strategies.

Thirdly, I will reflect on the above literature findings and highlight the gaps in existing research which in turn influenced the choice of my research questions (see section 2.3).

The final section 2.4 examines the context of my research, namely the schools and their characteristics. A better understanding of both schools and what they are like will enable a fair discussion throughout my thesis. Hence, the aim is to give a true contextual presentation which in turn will play a key factor in the following chapters when analysing and debating my research findings.

2.1 Key issues surrounding MFL teaching in primary schools

In this section I will examine three factors such as age, time and type of language provision which surround the debate about when foreign language learning should start. Thus, I will highlight unresolved questions and disagreements between researchers and attempt to draw conclusions.

2.1.1 The age factor

In September 1964 the first major UK Pilot Scheme for the teaching of French in primary schools was conducted with around 17,000 children from the age of eight to eleven. The purpose of this study was to find out if early language teaching would be feasible and beneficial if introduced into primary schools.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) had the responsibility to evaluate the scheme, and its first report, *French from Eight*, was published by Burstall in 1968. Burstall (1968) believed that the Pilot Scheme needed a long-term evaluation and she regarded the data from this scheme's report as incomplete at that point in time because the study was still in progress (p. xi).

In 1970, Burstall published the second NFER report, *French in the Primary School: Attitudes and Achievements*. However, the evidence from both NFER reports contradicted the idea that early language teaching would lead to better attainment when starting at primary school age eight instead of secondary school age eleven plus.

The opposite became apparent – older children were more efficient learners than younger ones. Burstall, Jamieson, Cohen and Hargreaves (1974) commented that those who started in secondary school “reached a higher level of achievement in all other aspects of proficiency in French”, apart from pronunciation (p. 34). Fourteen years earlier, the same argument had been noted by Carroll (1960) who stated:

In fact, except possibly with regard to the learning of pronunciation, there is considerable doubt that young children learn FL's [Foreign Languages] any better and faster, given the same opportunities and amount of time. (p.2)

However, Vilke (1979) challenged the overall “negative verdict” (p.15) of the NFER reviews saying that it had turned some public opinion against the idea of introducing MFL in primary schools. She was concerned people would only become preoccupied with the fact that since older children (age above eleven) can learn a MFL faster, it would only be worth pursuing it in secondary education. She expressed her disappointment by saying: “This turns out to be true if language learning is reduced to the counting of structures and words memorised per hour” (p.14). Clearly, this evokes the debate of “At what age should MFL teaching begin?”

In evaluation, this UK Pilot Scheme showed that primary school children did not learn any faster than pupils in secondary schools. Older children (age eleven onwards) were more efficient learners. One may argue though, that older learners are more efficient learners of most other curriculum subjects since they have more strategies, knowledge of the world, and better working memory etc. However, there was one apparent advantage of early MFL teaching in primary schools that pupils could assimilate sounds

better. Martin (2000) considered the evidence of reduced efficiency (years five to eleven) but still argued for an early start because **“there is definitely evidence that ‘younger’ is ‘better’ as far as the development of the phonological system goes... [original emphasis]”** (p.15).

Next, I address a point which influences the time factor debate. In his report on national and international research about primary MFL provision, Martin (2000) made the point to compare “like with like” (p. 3) explaining:

Firstly, we must make a distinction between studies which have considered a child’s ability to learn a mother tongue (L1), a second language (L2), (typically as an immigrant in a naturalistic situation) and early foreign language learning (FL). (p.3)

40 years earlier, in 1960 Andersson already mentioned a similar concept of being either a conditional learner (in a natural setting) or a conceptual learner (a school environment), but those two learning styles are not the same (p.302). Andersson reasoned that “conditional learning seems to be at its peak at birth and to decline with age, conceptual learning at its low point at birth and to increase with age” (p.302). Perhaps in the early years of FS and KS1, children still have a strong propensity for conditional learning and there is a gradual switch to more conceptual learning by late KS2. Andersson considered this saying: “...tentatively, we believe that age ten approximately is the dividing line” (p.303). He highlighted the observation that foreigners who came to the United States before the age of ten, developed English without an accent; whereas those who came later, had an accent which was more pronounced the older they were. It must be noted however, that Andersson’s study was done in a ‘second language’ immersion context which typically has greater time allocation and resources dedicated to the language when compared with teaching of a ‘foreign language.’ The outcome of Andersson’s “Optimum Age” investigations led him to concur with the previous findings of a conference in 1956, as follows.

Ilg et al. (1956) were invited to a conference sponsored by the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) to discuss the topic of children learning a second language. Their conclusions from this conference were later reported in the Foreign Language Bulletin No.49 (1961):

The optimum age for beginning the continuous learning of a second language seems to fall within the span of ages 4 through 8, with superior performance to be anticipated at ages 8, 9, 10. In this early period the brain seems to have the greatest plasticity and specialized capacity needed for acquiring speech [original emphasis]. (p.6)

This 'critical period' where the brain's greatest plasticity supports the language acquisition is known as the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), first conceived by Lenneberg (as cited in Muñoz, 2006, p1). Also, Penfield (1953) argued for the right conditions and said that "particularly if they are learned at the right age, multiple languages may be learned perfectly, with little effort and without physiological confusion" (p.209). However, the views of adherents to the CPH are not homogenous in terms of precisely what the span of this critical period is; and the CPH itself does not have unanimous support as a language acquisition hypothesis (Muñoz, 2006, pp.2-3).

Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle conducted research in Holland with 80 English speakers who learned Dutch as a second language in 1978 (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 1999, pp.64-67). Although my research considers learning of a 'foreign' rather than a 'second' language, this study provides useful findings. They split up the participants into several groups (three year old children, older ones, adolescents and adults) but Lightbown and Spada collated the groups into three alternative groups as shown in the table below. Each group was tested in several tasks three times with intervals of four to five months. The best performance was measured at the beginning of the year (indicated as 'X') and at the end of the year (indicated as 'Y').

Table 2: Comparison of language learning at different ages

(Taken from Lightbown and Spada, 1999, p.66.)

Task	Child [aged 3 to 10]	Adolescent [12 to 15 years]	Adult [18 to 60 years]
Pronunciation	Y	Y	X
Auditory discrimination		XY	
Morphology		XY	
Sentence repetition	*	XY	
Sentence translation	*	XY	
Sentence judgement		XY	
Story comprehension	Y	X	
Storytelling	Y	X	

* These tests were too difficult for child learners.

Overall the highest level of performance was attained by the adolescent group who initially had the best test results in all tasks apart from pronunciation, and maintained such results to their final test. Only after a few months were children able to show equal attainment or exceed some of the tasks. This outcome led Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle to conclude that “their results provide evidence that there is no critical period for language acquisition” (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 1999, p.67). However, critics of Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle’s research raised the following points: some tests might have been too challenging for younger ones; adolescents and adults may have had an advantage by learning a second language which is rather similar to their mother language; and adolescents and adults could possibly have had greater opportunity to exercise their new language in everyday situations (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 1999, p.67).

In conclusion, both the UK Pilot Scheme for the teaching of French in primary schools and the research conducted by Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle for 80 English speakers to learn Dutch as a MFL in Holland showed clearly that older children (11+) achieved a high level of language competence except for pronunciation. Younger learners were

out-performed by older children. There are abilities that older learners are more likely to possess such as better language acquisition strategies, greater cultural awareness and conceptual development. Although these findings are compelling, it is also worth considering the views of critics for an early language start if only for the possible benefits of fostering other aspects such as motivation and an increased chance for a native-like pronunciation. For those who champion an 'early start' for MFL learning, we may question whether such proponents would apply the same approach to other subjects.

2.1.2 The time factor

The amount of time spent in learning a MFL is a relevant factor to be considered. Burstall et al. (1974) commented on the issue of timing "that one of the most important variables in the learning process is the total amount of time spent actively in the learning of a given task" (p. 34). Vilke (1988) estimated that in order to become proficient in one MFL, the learner spends approximately a contact time of over 1000 hours (as cited in Driscoll, 1999, p.11). By applying Vilke's estimation, Driscoll calculated that under half of the 1000 hours are spent in Secondary School and pupils cannot achieve this level of language mastery unless the teaching of MFL is implemented at the primary school level (Driscoll, 1999, p.11).

The Burstall study and other evidence reviewed above (see section 2.1.1) suggested that there was no advantage for an early start since it was observed that older learners caught up or learned faster. This raises the question about how much curriculum time should be allocated to MFL in primary schools. However, an early start in primary school may have a benefit according to Driscoll's reasoning simply because it gives a head-start to acquire the optimum number of contact hours. This basic 'early'

language acquisition may also be a foundation for the pupil which will influence his/her future decisions regarding MFL(s) as they grow up.

2.1.3 Various MFL teaching programmes and their aims

This sub-section considers the aims of particular primary MFL teaching programmes.

In schools, pupils can be taught 'sensitisation programmes' where they learn simple words and phrases in one or more MFL. Its goal is to make the learner aware of the language and develop some competence. Driscoll (1999) likes these sensitisation programmes for British children who are not exposed to European languages and cultures because she believes that "they help to ameliorate the limitations of the mono-cultural and mono-lingual environment within which many people live" (p.16). Incidentally, she did not refer to areas such as Wales and Scotland who speak Welsh and Gaelic. Martin (2000) also recommends the sensitisation programme, especially for KS1 (p.68).

The 'language acquisition programmes' encourage progressive and structured learning with its aim to acquire MFL competence. If such a level of proficiency is expected, then this is the necessary programme according to Martin (2000, p.68). The 'communicative competence' approach has increased in popularity during the last few years. Although the goal is to communicate effectively with some competence and accuracy, the real emphasis is on communicating the basic meaning (Driscoll, 1999, p.16).

In 1997, Planet (as cited in Driscoll, 1999) viewed the sensitisation programme as insufficient for primary schools arguing that "'real' foreign language learning should be the aim although the approach should not be modelled upon teaching in secondary

school" (p.15). Planet encourages "intercultural competence" where other cultures are being respected and a positive attitude for language learning is being instilled (as cited in Tierney & Gallastegi, 2005, p.50). This factor of cultural understanding is a component which varies in importance depending on the teaching programme.

In the 1960s the inhabitants of Quebec (Canada) were driven by economic pressures to become more conversant with French. Although French was the official language, significant parts of society were only proficient in English. To tackle this, a group of parents in St. Lambert succeeded in getting their school board to adopt an 'immersion programme' where only French was taught when entering Kindergarten (similar to a Nursery in the UK). Basic literacy skills of English were introduced in grade 2, and by grade 6 the curriculum was taught in English and French - both languages sharing half. The success of this immersion programme influenced other regions of Canada where the program was adapted to be termed as partial, mid-, or late immersion programmes (Swain & Johnson, 1997, pp.2-3). Howatt (1991) believes that this Canadian approach is the most successful because the new language is used "for normal communication purposes and acquisition is incidental to the pursuit of some other activity" (p.298).

Hawkins (2005) suggests a 'language learning apprenticeship' by embracing two stages (p.15). The first stage is 'educational' (age 5-14) by training the ear. During KS1 and KS2 Hawkins prefers the implication of several MFLs in primary education. At KS3, the pupil would learn one MFL, usually chosen by the school. The purpose of the second stage (from age 14-19) is 'instrumental' where "after careful diagnostic guidance" the learner chooses a specific language and undergoes an immersion programme (Hawkins, 2005, p.16).

In conclusion, the sensitisation, language acquisition, and communicative competence programmes aim to reach different outcomes. In this thesis, I will mostly consider the sensitisation programme (for R and KS1) and the language acquisition programme (for KS2) which I consider are most suitable in the UK primary school setting. Fostering intercultural competence is vital from an early age, and my research will consider how primary schools support cultural understanding. Although I regard the immersion approach as an excellent way to teach a foreign language, I doubt this approach would succeed in the UK because the current framework is not at an advanced level to support this. This situation may have resulted due to the use of English as a global language leading to lack of public interest and motivation since the need is not pressing (Chapter 1, 1.1). Also, I like Hawkins' vision of a 'language learning apprenticeship', but question why only serious immersion happens from age 14 which seems rather late. Having the age, time and programme factors in mind, the next section will highlight some key historical MFL developments in the UK.

2.2 Britain's MFL development

2.2.1 Examining the last ten years

In 2000, the QCA commissioned a report to evaluate the current KS2 MFL provision in England. The most commonly occurring taught language was French, followed by German, Spanish and Italian; and teaching was timetabled up to 45 minutes in state-maintained schools and some schools even provided MFL in FS (QCA, 2000, Part 1 section, para. ii-iii). One observation was that schools offering MFL may be perceived by parents to have higher standards (QCA, 2000, Part 4 section, para. v). The report showed that the Government's MFL scheme of work for KS2 and QCA guidelines were welcomed as help to tidy up what is presently a 'rather piecemeal provision'.

Just one year later, in 2001, the QCA undertook a project to study the feasibility of introducing the teaching of a MFL into the statutory curriculum at KS2. Again, this project reported a "supportive attitude" (QCA, 2001, p.3), but the barriers to implementing a national entitlement for all pupils were due to the lack of resources and infrastructure rather than linguistic development. The outcome of this project was: "We therefore advise against the extension of statutory requirements for modern foreign languages into key stage 2 at the present time" (QCA, 2001, p.3).

In 2002, the DfES published the *National Languages Strategy* and introduced "The Primary Entitlement for Language Learning":

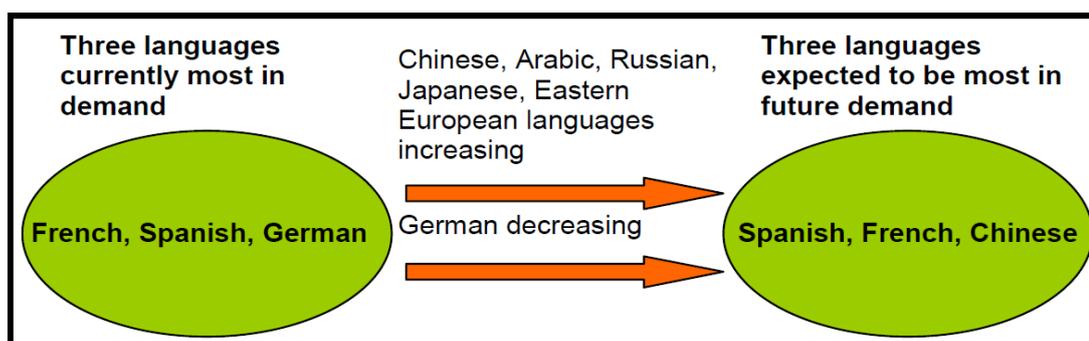
Every child should have the opportunity throughout Key Stage 2 to study a foreign language and develop their interest in the culture of other nations [by the end of the decade]. The Key Stage 2 language learning programme must include at least one of the working languages of the European Union and be delivered at least in part in class time. (p.15)

In view of the above, the DfES commissioned a research investigation of the current primary MFL provision in England during 2002-2003. Driscoll, Jones and Macrory, (2004) found that 44% of primary schools provided some KS2 MFL teaching, mainly French. Although this percentage sounded positive, they dissected this data further to reveal that in practice only 3% of all KS2 pupils received a MFL session of 20 minutes per week (Driscoll et al., 2004, p.1). In a study two years later, Muijs et al. (2005a) recommended that a minimum teaching time of 40 minutes and 20 minutes incidental time per week should be implemented (Muijs et al., 2005b, p.127). However, in a subsequent journal, Hunt, Barnes, Powell, Lindsay and Muijs (2005) stated that research to date in primary MFL...

...has not as yet yielded conclusive evidence about the benefits of such provision. This is, in part, due to the plethora of teaching models and the countless variables that impact on children's experience of language learning. (p.386)

In October 2005, CILT published the results of their survey called *Language Trends 2005*. The respondents were language and cultural service providers who were registered on CILT's BLIS Professionals database (see Glossary), and Figure 2 below presents their findings of the current and future demand for languages.

Figure 2: The result of a 2005 Language Trend Survey (CILT, 2005, p.7)



As the survey showed, there will be a shift of languages but clearly the skill of knowing a foreign language will not diminish in the near future. In the *Languages Review*, Dearing and King (2006) considered the importance of trading with companies overseas and applying linguistic skills to foster a positive working relationship, emphasising the need to know more than English (p.2). Also, they proposed languages to become "a standard part of the National Curriculum in the next review of the primary curriculum" (Dearing & King, 2006, p.3). This proposal became a recommendation (Dearing & King, 2007, p.9). The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2007) noted in the *Children's Plan* that, starting in Spring 2008, the primary curriculum would be reviewed (p.71). In the *Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum: Interim Report*, Rose (2008) recommended that, for the primary curriculum, languages should become part of a subject area designated as "English, communication and languages" (p.61) which was largely supported by those who responded to his recommendation (Rose, 2009, p.102).

On behalf of the DCSF, the NFER carried out three separate surveys in 2006, 2007 and 2008. I gathered these findings of KS2 language provision in England and tabulated

the data to show the progression throughout those years. The three surveys in Table 3 loosely defined adequate language provision as 30 to 60 minutes of class teaching per week.

Table 3: A data collection of the language learning provision at Key Stage 2 from 2006 to 2008

	Language provision in KS2	Language provision for <u>all</u> year groups in KS2	Current language provision is sustainable	Languages taught
Findings from the 2006 Survey (<i>Lines, Easton, Pullen, & Schagen, 2007</i>)	70%	34%	more than three quarters	91% French 25% Spanish 12% German
Findings from the 2007 Survey (<i>Whitby, Wade, & Schagen, 2008</i>)	84%	54%	86%	89% French 23% Spanish 9% German 3% or under: Italian, Chinese, Japanese or Urdu
Findings from the 2008 Survey (<i>Wade, Marshall, & O'Donnell, 2009a & 2009b</i>)	92%	69%	almost 90%	89% French 25% Spanish 10% German 3% or under: Italian, Chinese, Japanese or Urdu

Also, the DCSF commissioned research into the current language provision at KS2 in 40 schools from 2006 to 2009. Keen interest and enthusiasm was observed from KS2 children for MFL as well as from headteachers, languages co-ordinators and most teachers (Cable et al., 2008, Key findings section, para. 1; Cable et al., 2010, Key findings section, para. 1). However, staffing was a difficulty for headteachers which in turn affected the provision of MFL teaching programmes in schools (Cable et al., 2010, Key findings section, para. 4).

In conclusion, the UK Government has developed policies, strategies and recommendations for MFL teaching in primary schools during the last ten years. However, the Government's record outlined in sub-section 2.2.1 shows that these policies have not been consistent and, despite a succession of reviews, there appears to have been little concerted action.

2.2.2 The current state of MFL education in Britain: Government policy and future plans

In this section I will summarise the current UK Government policy and future plans on MFL education. I arranged the findings by applying my posed research questions accordingly (a – f).

2.2.2a The commencement of MFL teaching

As mentioned earlier (2.2.1), the entitlement for pupils to learn a MFL in KS2 by 2010 was introduced as the *National Languages Strategy* by the DfES (2002); although estimations were made that nearly a fifth of primary schools may not be able to offer the full provision by 2010 (Wade et al., 2009b, p.1).

Following the review of the primary curriculum, Rose (2009) stated that “Languages will become a statutory requirement of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 from 2011” (p.106). This new move by the then Labour Government was not only for it to be a statutory entitlement but compulsory legislation that all KS2 children be required to learn a MFL.

After the 2010 May Election, the Labour Party lost power and Prime Minister David Cameron formed a Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government. Not surprisingly, the new Government vowed to bring ‘change’ to the country. Very recently, on 7th June 2010, the newly named Department for Education (DfE, formerly DCSF) issued a press release stating the following:

...ministers also confirmed that they will not proceed with the last [Labour] Government’s proposed new primary curriculum [from 2011], which was based on a review led by Sir Jim Rose. (para. 8)

Instead the DfE (2010) has made it clear to schools that “the existing primary curriculum will continue to be in force in 2011/12 and primary schools should plan on

that basis" (final para.). This means that until further notification, MFL as a subject remains an 'entitlement' in the primary curriculum and will not become statutory (mandatory) in September 2011.

2.2.2b The number of MFLs

When reflecting on Britain's MFL development during the last ten years (2.2.1), there did not seem to be a great deal of emphasis on how many languages should be taught. Its focus was on the opportunity of providing MFL entitlement for all KS2 pupils rather than making a clear decision of how many MFLs this should be.

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (2007) summed up the entitlement as: "to study a foreign language and to reach a recognised level of competence on the common European framework" (p.4). The statement implies that one MFL should be taught well. This meant that primary schools had to decide for themselves. Different models occurred such as teaching one language only, two languages or launching a variety of languages to provide 'language tasters'. Rose (2009) recommended that there should be sustained focus on not more than two languages but some respondents argued that children should 'astonishingly' have an experience of up to seven languages (pp.102-103). Rose (2009) considered that his recommendation to teach one or two MFLs during KS2 would be of greater benefit for the transition to secondary school (p.103). The recommendations of the Rose Review were scrapped in June 2010.

The new Government has allowed the current entitlement for KS2 primary pupils from the existing *National Languages Strategy* (DfES, 2002) to remain for now. These aims are: to "study a foreign language", and the language learning programme "must

include at least one of the working languages of the European Union” (DfES, 2002, p.15).

2.2.2c Choosing the most suitable MFL(s) to implement

The UK is in a position where English is not only the national language, but is used extensively as a second language the world over. Unlike other European countries that usually choose English as a MFL to teach in their schools, the UK has the dilemma of choosing the most suitable MFL(s) to implement in its schools.

Since the *National Languages Strategy* (DfES, 2002), primary schools have been encouraged to provide the MFL entitlement by 2010; but this strategy has not provided a definite language choice. Therefore, primary schools had to make up their minds based on the preference of their Local Education Authority (LEA), secondary school, or the availability of an appropriate staff member.

Currently French is the most popular MFL choice in primary schools (Table 3). The popularity of French in the British education system is likely due to the geographical proximity of France, historical ties, and the large number of Francophone countries across the world. Also, the situation of French as the dominant MFL is difficult to change since it is a cycle where more learn French at school, more go on to study it in Further and Higher Education producing more teachers in the subject. This could be changed by significant investment for the training of teachers in other MFLs and prioritising alternative languages in our education system.

Finally, the Government did not define a particular MFL to be offered in primary schools. So far, the decision making was carried out by primary schools themselves.

2.2.2d Teaching time allocation for MFL(s)

The *National Languages Strategy* (DfES, 2002) endorsed the KS2 MFL entitlement by 2010 but failed to promote a minimum teaching time allocation for MFL. Therefore, since this strategy lacked clear timetabling direction, primary schools were left to make their own decision.

Up-to-date guidelines from the *Teacher's guide: Languages, A scheme of work for key stage 2* (QCA, 2007) explained the scheme's assumption for KS2 MFL teaching:

Schools will plan for no less than 60 minutes per week of dedicated language teaching and make the most of planned or incidental opportunities throughout the day and week to reinforce language work. (p.2)

The earlier *scheme of work* document from 2000 contained words to the same effect (as cited in QCA, 2001, p.12). Rose (2009) provided no mandate for any specific MFL teaching time allocation but said rather, "How schools choose to organise their curriculum and timetable will remain a matter for them" (p.18).

Having in mind this ideal time of at least 60 minutes per week, current research revealed that primary schools invest less MFL time than what is expected. Wade et al. (2009b) stated: "The median time spent in class per week on languages in 2008 was 40 or 45 minutes depending on the age group of the pupils" (p.36). A final report in 2010 explained that schools taught mainly French, followed by Spanish and German; and this was carried out by a discrete MFL lesson of 30 to 40 minutes per week for nearly all KS2 year groups (Cable et al., 2010, Key findings section, para. 3).

Some of the reasons for a shorter period than 60 minutes per week arose from some of the challenges facing primary schools such as finding time in an overcrowded curriculum, lack of staff knowledge, and financial constraints (Wade et al., 2009b, p.55, Table 5.6).

Finally, in light of the open-ended Government strategy for MFL time allocation, current research shows that the desired 60 minutes per week has not materialised in many schools.

2.2.2e Possible strategies to create a positive MFL learning environment

Firstly, parental enthusiasm to support their child's learning is a key element to foster a positive MFL learning environment. Regarding this, parents expressed their views in a survey in March 2009 that "...they were best placed to teach their children about much of it [the primary curriculum] (Rose, 2009, p. 129)." Also, the Government has started to encourage closer relationships between LEA's, schools and parents with the aim to give parents more opportunities to get involved in the learning of their child (DCSF, 2009a, p.14).

Secondly, the Government might consider asking schools to set up a written policy for its language provision since current research showed that schools with such a policy were "more confident of the sustainability of their current arrangements for teaching languages... [and] were more likely to monitor and assess pupil progress in languages" (Wade et al., 2009b, p.22). Although 58% of schools had a school policy in place in 2008, Wade et al (2009b) explained that "there is still a substantial proportion of schools that do not have formal guidelines on language provision" (p.21).

Thirdly, over the years the Government has, through state education, supported ways to understand other peoples and cultures around the world and particularly the increasing diversity within the UK. To this end, the recommendations by Rose (2009) included the following:

By the end of Key Stage 2, children should be taught to:

- empathise with other cultures and imagine how others may see their own way of life; and
- compare attitudes to different languages and reflect on the importance of respect for others. (p.102)

Finally, the *National Languages Strategy* defined that the language learning should “be delivered at least in part in class time” (DfES, 2002, p.15). Rose (2009) observed that “Languages were often available to pupils through after-school clubs” (p.100); and, previously, the 2006 survey had reported the common occurrence of MFL delivery through “breakfast activities, assemblies or during registration” (Wade et al., 2009b, p.38).

Therefore, these observations and surveys showed that schools integrated languages in other ways outside of typical classroom teaching time which created a positive MFL learning environment.

2.2.2f Potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1

As indicated throughout this chapter, Britain’s MFL development during the last ten years (2.2.1) centred around the commencement of MFL teaching in KS2 (age seven to eleven). Till now, Government studies have not focused on the commencement of MFL teaching in KS1 and/or FS. However, Dearing and King (2007) highlighted that “The success of languages in Key Stage 2 raises the question of whether it should extend to Key Stage 1” (p.10). They noted that the MFL learning age has been lowered year by year in mainland Europe with the Netherlands having a starting age of five (Dearing & King 2007, p.10). Rose found that there were UK schools already delivering MFL in FS and/or KS1 (Rose, 2009, p.100).

There is no information from the new Government whether a start earlier than KS2 would become an entitlement in the future.

2.3 Filling the gaps in existing research

In review of the literature (see sections 2.1-2.2), I observed the following two areas that had not been adequately addressed.

Firstly, the outcome measure in previous research has tended to be that of language competence. There is a lack of research that uses alternative methods to measure the outcomes of motivation, cultural literacy, general language learning strategies and attitude.

Secondly, existing research focussed on more technical considerations such as what the optimal age for acquiring a foreign language is rather than addressing key gaps in our current understanding of MFL learning. This is a weakness because the findings lacked investigation into the *motivations* and *opinions* from pupils, parents and staff in respect of foreign language learning in British schools.

Since some of this information is missing in previous studies, my research will aim to close the gaps by conducting research in those areas. My stakeholders are from a primary school environment and their first-hand MFL experience provides a good research opportunity. This dissertation links and compares the perspectives of those participants with my literature findings and in the context of Government policy and practice. Overall, I anticipate that this thesis will make a valuable contribution and bring more balance to the existing MFL debate.

Therefore, in my research I considered the above two 'gaps' when setting up research questions as I explain: firstly, my research questions considered alternative angles (e.g., motivation and cultural understanding). Secondly, staff, parents and pupils were

asked for their opinions in order to provide answers to my chosen research questions below:

- 1. When should MFL teaching commence?*
- 2. How many modern foreign languages should be taught in primary school?*
- 3. Which modern foreign language(s) should be taught in primary school?*
- 4. How much time should be given to MFL teaching?*
- 5. What possible strategies could be implemented to create a positive MFL learning environment for the child?*
- 6. What are the potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1?*

I now present contextual information about my two chosen primary schools in section 2.4.

2.4 Context of two primary schools used for the research analysis

Topos and Wapa each belong to a different LEA and are located in well-presented and advantaged village areas, surrounded by the countryside. They are both Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools.

Topos has an age range of 4-11, mixed gender and 138 pupils on roll. Wapa, including a Nursery, has an age range of 3-11, mixed gender and 182 pupils on roll. For a fair comparison with Topos, I omitted pupils from the Wapa Nursery to cover the same age range of 4-11 years with 163 pupils on roll. Both schools are rather small and spoken of highly by their local residents. Also, in both schools, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by the end of Year 6.

The evaluation from the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted, 2008) described Topos as “a good school with outstanding features. The first-rate care provided for pupils is as effective as it was when the school was last inspected in 2006” (p.5). A very similar evaluation was given to Wapa by an Ofsted report in 2009, saying: “This is a good school. It has many outstanding features. It gives its pupils a good standard of education and helps them to achieve well and reach above average standards” (p.5).

In both schools, almost all pupils are of White British origin, and from middle- and upper-middle-class families. Also, the proportion of free school meals, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below national average figures. Parents’ questionnaires indicated that only three children had grown up with a different mother tongue than English.

As described, both schools have a similar contextual background. Since this research was conducted in both schools during Spring term 2009, I would like to present the language provision for each school at that time.

Table 4: Current practice of MFL provision in both schools.

Year group		Topos	Wapa
R		<i>No MFL provision</i>	<i>No MFL provision</i>
KS1	Y1	German (four sessions of five minutes per week)	<i>No MFL provision</i>
	Y2	<i>No MFL provision</i>	Spanish (one lesson of 45 minutes per week)
KS2	Y3	French (one lesson of 45 minutes per week)	French (one lesson of 30 minutes per week)
	Y4	French (one lesson of 45 minutes per week)	French (one lesson of 30 minutes per week)
	Y5	French (one lesson of 45 minutes per week)	Spanish (one lesson of 45 minutes per week)
	Y6	French (one lesson of 45 minutes per week)	Spanish (one lesson of 30 minutes per week)

Table 4 shows that in the school year 2008/09, both schools provided the entitlement of the *National Languages Strategy* (DfES, 2002) by teaching MFL to all KS2 year groups. In comparison, Wapa pupils learn two languages whereas Topos learn only one language. Overall, pupils from Topos have more MFL teaching during KS2 than Wapa pupils.

When considering possible strategies to create a positive MFL learning environment, I observed the following: Topos did not have a MFL policy in place or a MFL co-ordinator at the time. Wapa had a school policy in place, written by the subject leader. There is an ethos in both Topos and Wapa to deliver a cultural understanding to children in MFL lessons. Finally, both schools deliver MFL teaching in other ways such as:

- Occasional MFL influence during assemblies which is not formalised.
- MFL teachers from both schools sometimes give homework.
- Wapa allowed a parent-led MFL club to run outside school hours in the school building but membership declined from nine to zero within half a term. At the time of this research the Headteacher was unsure whether the club was still running.
- Both schools offered an after-school club in the past which had ceased.

To bring this chapter to a close, a detailed study of the Government's policy and future planning has only provided the most basic information to answer my first research question, namely that pupils should be entitled (i.e. not as mandatory) to learn a MFL in KS2 by 2010 (DfES, 2002). Apart from recommendations, there are no further consensuses on my other research questions. In terms of my literature research (see section 2.1), independent scholars have not come to an agreement on the appropriate

age to commence MFL learning in primary education. In summary, my investigation into primary school MFL teaching aims to fill the gaps of previous studies by conducting research specifically into the *motivations* and *opinions* from pupils, parents and staff. In order to drive the MFL debate forward, I will revisit the findings of this chapter which includes the contextual background of the two primary schools in the light of my own research.

The following chapter explains the methods and procedures used to gather data, as well as making references to the methodological literature.

Chapter 3:

Methodology

After having considered a literature review and a contextual analysis of two schools, this chapter will endeavour to establish a link between the posed research questions of this thesis and how data was gathered. Although the main research methods cover a selection of interviews, observations and questionnaires, it is the researcher who has to make an appropriate choice of opting for the most suitable research method. This choice can involve a mixture of methods.

This process entails a further distinction: the type of research can be a quantitative or a qualitative approach. In the quantitative approach, the researcher considers all areas of the study with care before gathering the data in the form of surveys or questionnaires. Afterwards the data can be presented objectively in the form of numbers, statistics, figures and tables. In contrast, using a qualitative approach, the researcher only has vague ideas in advance and the research unfolds throughout the study. The research is being collected subjectively by means of an interview/observation where more in depth evidence can be gathered. I have chosen a qualitative approach with quantitative elements using questionnaires and interviews.

In this chapter, I want to explain my methodological considerations of how I collected relevant data, which in turn enabled an analysis of the set research questions. Therefore, in section 3.1. I will address my posed research questions, followed by justifying my choice of research method(s) in section 3.2. Consequently, section 3.3. describes the research in action and its outcome, which leads finally to section 3.4, where the data is analysed.

3.1 Addressing the research questions

Having in mind my posed research questions (Chapter 1, 1.3), I would like to discuss the reasons behind 'how' I addressed them in this section:

Firstly, I wanted to find out what people thought about MFL teaching in school. At school, staff, parents and pupils are the three main sets of stakeholders creating a 'triangulation' group. In order to offer a fair research result at the end of this thesis, I found it crucial to research all three groups independently – especially pupils. As Brownlie, Anderson and Ormston (2006) explain:

In recent years, an increased focus on children's rights (UNICEF 1995) and a related concern to involve children in decision-making affecting their lives has led to the participation of children – whether in relation to policy, research or practice – being accepted as a 'good thing'. (p.5)

All six research questions were presented to staff, parents and pupils to enable data to be gathered from these three independent research perspectives. Collecting data from say, only staff, would significantly limit the scope of the research.

Secondly, the same methods and procedures were carried out in Topos and Wapa. Hence, the data can be considered separately or comprehensively when producing figures and tables to analyse the findings. The large number of respondents from both schools combined strengthened the case for a plausible analysis.

Thirdly, as a teacher I knew that pupils had the potential to respond to all research questions provided that the research instruments were appropriate for children. I carried out a literature research with the purpose of understanding how to set up effective questionnaires for children. For example, the publication *Individual pupil*

questionnaires: Teachers' Notes (Qualifications and Curriculum Group, 2007) advised on practical issues, confidentiality and tips to follow.

Finally, I identified additional considerations which will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.

In summary, I considered two things: who will give me their opinion; and how can I carry out this research? Consequently, the next section will discuss the choice of research method in more depth.

3.2 Choosing a research method and its procedures

It was essential to ask myself: "What information does the chosen research method provide and what are the advantages and disadvantages of this being a qualitative study?" As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) commented: "Research design is governed by the notion of 'fitness for purpose' " (p.78). Thus, I discuss these questions (see sections 3.2.1 & 3.2.2) with the aim to justify my choice of research method.

3.2.1 What information does the chosen research method provide?

By considering all areas of MFL teaching in primary schools, as a researcher I decided that questionnaires with specific questions would be the right approach to obtain answers channelled to the research questions. Since some interesting viewpoints of the participant might be excluded, I counteracted this likelihood by providing open-ended questions as well as closed questions in the questionnaires. Cohen et al. (2007) view a semi-structured questionnaire as a powerful tool, saying: "There is a clear structure, sequence and focus, but the format is open-ended, enabling respondents to

reply in their own terms" (p.321). The findings could reveal other MFL issues which concerned the participants. However, Cohen et al. admit that this can become a collection of irrelevant information and the researcher can spend a lot of time analysing the text (Cohen et al., 2007, p.322). Yet they generally agreed that "an open-ended question can catch the authenticity, richness, depth of response, honesty and candour which, are the hallmarks of qualitative data" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.330). Also, I planned to broaden the variety of questions by implementing dichotomous, multiple choice, rank order, rating scale, and matrix questions.

My procedure was to design questionnaires for all parents and child-friendly KS2 questionnaires for pupils – both of these questionnaires, known as 'Census Surveys', would be applicable for Topos and Wapa. The sample for the parents' questionnaire comprised all parents from both schools. The sample for the KS2 pupils' questionnaire comprised all KS2 pupils from both schools who had been given consent by their parents/guardians. Since teaching Y1 children five minute sessions of German before lunch every day at Topos, I chose to set up questionnaires for 'Y1 parents' and child-friendly questionnaires for 'Y1 pupils' at Topos.

The data collected from the questionnaires was transformed into figures, tables and descriptive statements. Denscombe (2007) explains: "A questionnaire, for example, can be used to produce either quantitative *data* (numbers) or qualitative *data* (words)" (p.248). The nature of social research is such that the findings cannot always fit precisely into these two categories. Denscombe (2007) clarifies that "the distinction between 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' *relates to the treatment of data*, rather than the research methods as such" (p.247).

Since staff were familiar with the delivery of MFL teaching in their respective schools, I was convinced that semi-structured interviews of selected staff members would reveal more viewpoints. Therefore, I arranged interviews with both Headteachers from Topos and Wapa, one French and one Spanish speaking specialist MFL teacher, and two class teachers who were able to teach French in their class. A semi-structured interview approach enables the researcher to ask a pre-determined set of questions but supplementary questions can reveal the interviewee's real concerns. Since the information of an interview remains anonymous, the interviewee can be honest and express their opinion. This qualitative approach contributed useful answers to my posed research questions. King (2004) comments: "The goal of any qualitative research interview is therefore to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee, and to understand how and why they come to have this particular perspective" (p.11).

The Table below provides a brief summary about the distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research.

Table 5: The distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research
(Adapted from Denscombe, 2007, pp.248-250.)

	Quantitative research tends to be associated with:	Qualitative research tends to be associated with:
<i>Words or numbers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numbers as the unit of analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words or images as the unit of analysis.
<i>Analysis or description</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description.
<i>Large-scale or small-scale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large-scale studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small-scale studies.
<i>Holistic or specific focus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a specific focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holistic perspective.
<i>Researcher involvement or detachment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • researcher detachment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • researcher involvement.
<i>Emergent or predetermined research design</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a predetermined research design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an emergent research design.

With reference to Table 5, the reader will find that this study predominantly follows the main features of qualitative research. The questionnaires and interviews mainly focussed on finding out participants' opinions and views about MFL teaching in primary schools. These qualitative data sets were used to identify themes, raise issues, discover patterns and explore opinions. Although data from the questionnaires is often presented in a numerical manner (by means of percentages), measurements were not made on a large scale for the purpose of statistical analysis. Therefore, the study is framed as a qualitative piece of research. Connolly (2007) responds to the argument of which method is the more important one by saying:

We have all heard it at one time or another...; that qualitative methods are subjective and anecdotal or that quantitative methods are crude and simplistic and thus unable to capture the realities of social life. (p.4)

Connolly believes that one research method is not superior to the other but regards both quantitative and qualitative methods as different tools.

3.2.2 What are the advantages and disadvantages of choosing a qualitative study?

This qualitative study presents the findings of individuals' views of primary school MFL teaching. According to Bell, a clear advantage is that the approach enables the researcher to "seek insights rather than statistical perceptions of the world" (Bell, 2005, p.7). Bryman (1988) explains that an important characteristic of a qualitative study is to exercise empathy in "terms of seeing through the eyes of the people you are studying" (p.61). On the other hand, Bell argues that qualitative research lacks the technique to "collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another" (Bell, 2005, p.7).

This research is classed as a small-scale study. Cohen et al. (2007) explains: "Qualitative data often focus on smaller numbers of people than quantitative data, yet

the data tend to be detailed and rich" (p.461). Such was the case in this research – a high rate of response to my questionnaires and interviews (see sections 3.3.4 & 3.3.5) provided data that had significant 'depth'.

In a qualitative study the researcher is seen to be involved in the research, whereas researcher detachment is typical in a quantitative study. I was aware that my own personal views in relation to this research could influence the interpretation of the data. Therefore, I have, throughout this thesis, endeavoured to present data objectively and to avoid advocacy. Also, whilst conducting qualitative research, I kept relationships with participants at a neutral and professional level to avoid social relationships which could have influenced the outcome of the research (see Newby, 2010, p.122).

Connolly (2007) argues that "It is only when you have full range of research tools that you are likely to be able to do the job properly" (p.4). In my research I believed that using 'tools' such as 'questionnaires' and 'interviews' were good choices to undertake qualitative research. For example, it made sense to ask pupils and parents from two different schools to fill in a questionnaire because this method was 1) reaching out to a higher number of participants (cf. with an interview); 2) a simple response task to standardised answers (e.g. tick or circle your choice of answer); and 3) eliminating effects of personal interactions between the researcher and participants. The practical benefits to me as a researcher were that the method was economical, easy to be arranged, and the data could be quickly collated by employing pre-coded answers. Being aware of the limitations of closed questions, I offered several open-ended questions where appropriate to gain extra insight into participants' perspectives as discussed in section 3.2.1.

It was feasible to conduct face-to-face interviews with a selection of staff members from both Topos and Wapa. On this matter, Newby (2010) summarises:

The flexibility of interviews and their ability to expose issues creates an understanding of processes, events and emotions, all of which makes them particularly suitable in qualitative research. (p.338)

When using this method to gather qualitative data, I found several advantages: 1) the interviewee actively shaped the interview according to priorities; 2) a high response rate due to a prearranged appointment; 3) a simple set up and in need of little equipment; and 4) the opportunity to verify responses with the interviewee during the interview. Although I sought each interviewee's permission to audio-record the interview (see 3.3.5), Wellington (2000) notes that it "may be seen as obtrusive in some situations" (p.85). The disadvantage that this could present was counteracted by assuring the interviewees that their views would be completely anonymous and that the recordings were only used to type up transcripts (Appendices 1 & 2).

To return again to the framing of this study, I choose to use both questionnaires and interviews as 'tools' that would complement each other. For example, Bell (2005) says: "Questionnaire responses have to be taken at face value, but a response in an interview can be developed and clarified" (p.157). It may be argued at face value that this research is a mixed methods approach, however, as Matthews and Ross (2010) explain:

While a mixed-methods approach often means gathering both quantitative and qualitative data, this is not necessarily the case. ...you may decide to gather qualitative data using both semi-structured interviews and participant observation. (p.145)

In the case of this research, I decided that the *treatment* of my data would specifically be of a qualitative nature (see Denscombe above, 2007, p.247) although the methods or 'tools' employed might be viewed as 'mixed'.

In conclusion, I believe that this qualitative research with quantitative elements was a suitable approach for this study. The use of both questionnaires and interviews helped to offset some of the disadvantages of relying exclusively on one or the other. The following section will look at how this research was carried out in action and its outcome.

3.3 The research in action and its outcome

In this section I will discuss the following matters such as: consent forms, sampling of questionnaires, day-to-day conducting of the research, the final outcome of the questionnaires, organising interviews, and problems encountered. In addition, I will argue that I have conducted a valid and reliable research study.

3.3.1 Consent forms

Firstly, I asked for the consent of both Headteachers to conduct a research project in their school. Then, I provided the opportunity for all other participants, such as parents and interviewees, to give their consent prior to any research activity. This was organised by handing out my own designed 'Informed Consent Forms' (Appendices 1-5) in which participants were informed about my research, and their option to take part in it. Only people who gave their consent took part in the research as Cohen et al. (2007) explained: "The principle of informed consent arises from the subject's right to freedom and self-determination" (p.52). Also, I completed the 'Ethical Issues Audit Form' from the University of York before conducting any data collection and kept checking the process of my research by filling in an 'Ethical Issues Implementation Form'.

Furthermore, since young children played a vital role in my research study, I found it vital to seek the consent from parents or guardians as to whether their child was allowed to participate in a questionnaire. Cohen et al. (2007) recognised the researcher's challenge in this task but fervently argued:

Obtaining approval from relevant adults may be more difficult than in the case of the children, but, being sensitive to children's welfare, it is vital that researchers secure such approval. (p.54)

Once I received the approval of signed consent forms, I set up a list of those children who could take part in the questionnaire for 'KS2 pupils' or 'Y1 Topos pupils' (Appendices 4 & 5). Children required help from Teachers and Teaching Assistants to complete the questionnaires at each school. This was acceptable since they were Criminal Records Bureau checked (CRB) by their school.

In respect of all participants, I implemented their right to anonymity in this study. Where necessary I created pseudonyms for people and the two schools.

3.3.2 Piloting of questionnaires

Once I had constructed all necessary questionnaires (Appendices 6-9) I was able to pilot them and simply find out if the questions made sense and worked. I used volunteers who were not participants in the main questionnaires; this is known as convenience sampling. Volunteers were selected as follows: for the 'parents' questionnaire' I asked several other adults from school to trial the questionnaire. I arranged a group of high achieving Y2 pupils to volunteer in filling in the KS2 questionnaire. In the case of the Y1 Topos pupils' questionnaire, the most similar individuals, matching this age group, were Y1 Wapa pupils who volunteered (a small group of children). Since no consent was sought from parents, after the trial I shredded all questionnaires to comply with ethical regulations.

It is a common occurrence for participants to hurry when filling in a questionnaire and this in turn can undermine the validity and reliability. With this in mind, questions have to be easy to understand from their first reading. Connolly (2007) argued that “one of the most common ways in which reliability is undermined is through poorly worded questions that, for example, are difficult to understand or ask two questions in one” (p.5; cf. Bell, 2005, pp.147-148).

I considered this advice and was keen to find out volunteer opinion after piloting the questionnaires. To ensure that the questionnaires were valid and reliable, I carried out this verbal check which showed that the length was just right, the layout helped to progress swiftly and none of the questions were confusing, offensive or distressing. This was important to establish since Bell (2005) states: “The check for reliability will come at the stage of question wording and piloting of the instrument” (p.117). After taking into account all these issues, I only had to make minor refinements in the questionnaires such as small changes to the layout and phrases.

3.3.3 Day-to-day conducting of the research

I put each parent questionnaire into a separate envelope. A personally addressed covering letter informed the parents about my research and asked for their consent to participate in this questionnaire which was attached on the outside of the envelope with staples (Appendix 3). Furthermore, KS2 parents and Y1 parents from Topos had to fill in a second tick-box option on the covering letter, giving parental consent as to whether their child could fill in a pupil questionnaire (Appendices 4 & 5).

In both schools I arranged that all questionnaires for parents would be handed out. In order to provide anonymity, parents could fill in the questionnaire and put it back into the envelope. Once the envelope with the covering letter was returned to school, I

immediately removed the covering letter from the envelope, thus leaving the anonymous questionnaire inside the envelope. To ensure smooth running of this process, I used a parent name list, ticking the parent's name after receiving their returned questionnaire (Bell, 2005, p.149-150). This check list helped me in the second phase when sending out reminder letters to encourage questionnaire completion (Appendices 10 & 11). The outcome of this 'parents' questionnaire' can be found in section 3.3.4 (below).

I then set up a list of all children who had received their parental consent to participate in a 'KS2 questionnaire' or a 'Y1 Topos questionnaire'. Although I arranged these questionnaires, it was essential that I as the researcher was not present at the time when children filled in the questionnaires. This helped to prevent children from associating MFL with myself as they made their evaluations since I teach MFL in school. In the understanding of Cohen et al. (2007), self-administered questionnaires without the presence of the researcher provide a more anonymous environment, but on the other hand, the researcher cannot answer any queries (p.344). Therefore, I arranged that Teachers and Teaching Assistants in each school assumed this job and carried out the research for me. This allowed this research method to be valid and reliable. Children were not influenced by my presence but were still able to ask the Teacher or Teaching Assistant for help when necessary. This worked well because I instructed all Teachers and Teaching Assistants with the help of a guidance sheet beforehand (Appendices 12 & 13). Also, this sheet listed all children's names who were not allowed to participate since no consent was given from their parents. I emphasised that any KS2 child struggling with reading would get help from the Teacher or Teaching Assistant. This ensured that lower ability children could fill in the questionnaire like all the other children. For the 'Y1 Topos questionnaire', the Teaching Assistant spent as much time as needed with each child. She read out loud

each question at a time, then waited for the response of the child and filled in the questionnaire on behalf of the child. Again, this whole process enabled this method to be valid and reliable.

This day-to-day conducting of the research took one full school term in Spring 2009. Through good organisation, I was able to successfully implement the chosen research methods. The procedure ran smoothly and according to plan.

3.3.4 The final outcome of the questionnaires

Firstly, Cohen et al. (2007) consider the validity and reliability of questionnaires by saying that they are “more reliable; because it is anonymous, it encourages greater honesty (though, of course, dishonesty and falsification might not be able to be discovered in a questionnaire)...” (p.158). However, the disadvantage of questionnaires is the low percentage of returns (Cohen et al., 2007, p.158). In contrast, I had a very high return of questionnaires which increased the level of validity and reliability. A total of 74 percent of parents participated in this questionnaire as presented in the following Table 6. This high percentage of returns was achieved by sending a reminder letter to complete the questionnaire.

Table 6: Response rate for 'Questionnaire for Parents'

	Total sent out	Returned from 1 st round	% from 1 st round	Returned from 2 nd round	% from 2 nd round	TOTAL %	Percentage increase from 1 st to 2 nd round
Topos	138	79	57%	107	78%	78%	21%
Wapa	163	75	46%	116	71%	71%	25%
TOTAL	301	154	51%	223	74%	74%	23%

In the covering letter of the 'Questionnaire for Parents', I also asked parents/carers of all the KS2 children for their consent to allow their child to fill in a 'KS2 Questionnaire

for Pupils'. Powell and Smith (2009) consider: "Likewise, children are powerless in this process and reliant on significant adults to decide what information they should be given and whether they can participate" (p.125). I am pleased to say that the parental cooperation was strong and from the Consent Forms which were returned, 90% of these parents gave their consent (Table 7). Without this parental goodwill, the children could have not been able to give their opinion and provide a vital 'voice' as active participants in this research.

Table 7: A response rate of parental consent for 'Questionnaire for KS2 Pupils'

	Total KS2 'Consent Forms' sent out	Returned 'Consent Forms'	% of returned 'Consent Forms'	Returned forms which gave consent	% of returned 'Consent Forms' which gave consent
Topos	73	56	77%	51	91%
Wapa	92	65	71%	58	89%
TOTAL	165	121	73%	109	90%

For the Y1 Topos questionnaire, 20 out of 21 parents gave consent for their child to participate in the 'Questionnaire for Y1 Pupils'. For the 'Questionnaire for Y1 Parents' at Topos, 20 parents participated.

3.3.5 Organising interviews

Meanwhile, I organised and interviewed six people using a list of questions which allowed me to have a structured and open-ended interviewing style (Appendix 15). Since the interviewer can be biased when asking questions, the research could become invalid. To minimise this possibility I avoided using leading questions as Cohen et al. (2007) explain: "A leading question is one which makes assumptions about interviewees or 'puts words into their mouths', where the question influences the answer, perhaps illegitimately" (p.151). With the permission of each participant I made an audio recording of every interview. I typed up full transcripts and sent them

by e-mail to the participants for approval and comments (Appendices 1 & 2). The respondents checked the factual accuracy of the transcript. This confirmed that the research was valid and credible (Denscombe, 2007, p.297).

3.3.6 Problems encountered

This research did not encounter any significant problems but some minor points were identified. Firstly, since consent forms were stapled to an envelope, occasionally the paper got torn. I could have used more staples to prevent this from happening. Secondly, a small number of parents wrote their own name on the questionnaire. Once spotted, I blocked out their name with black ink to ensure anonymity. Thirdly, some parents did not read the full consent form to the end and forgot to sign or tick the relevant part. Therefore, I organised a reminder letter in order to obtain the information needed (Appendix 14). A shorter worded consent form may have encouraged the parents to read it in full. As a teacher I regularly observe that some parents do not read 'home letters' in detail.

3.4 Data analysis

For the data analysis I considered the advice of Cohen et al. (2007) that "...the form of data analysis must be appropriate for the kinds of data gathered" (p.86). Thus, I will discuss the analysis of my quantitative and qualitative data separately in sub-sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.

3.4.1 Quantitative data analysis

All questionnaire data was analysed using the software package called SPSS 16.0. Once this task was completed for each separate questionnaire, I could run univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses where one, two, three or more variable(s) at a time

could be considered. I also generated a 'split layered file by school' and a 'split separated file by school'. Afterwards, I made colour figures (e.g., bar charts, column charts, 100% column charts, and pie charts) and tables to show the findings visually.

3.4.2 Qualitative data analysis

In the understanding of Denscombe (2007), the principle of qualitative analysis is mainly "based on a logic of discovering things from the data, of generating theories on the basis of what the data contains, and of moving from the particular features of the data towards more generalized conclusions or theories" (p.288).

Therefore, in the case of the six interviews, I created my own Excel spreadsheet where I used columns to refer to each participant. Each row recorded a topic or theme from the interview. Using the interview transcripts in such a data arrangement allowed me to familiarise myself with participant opinion. With this clear overview of the data to hand, I was able to start the process of interpretation with the aim to identify themes, concepts and trends.

In addition, my semi-structured questionnaires provided open-ended questions for people to express their opinion freely. I analysed the answers qualitatively as Denscombe (2007) comments: "...the use of open-ended questions as part of a survey questionnaire can produce answers in the form of text – written words that can be treated as qualitative data" (286).

In summary, I endeavour to some extent to use my qualitative data analysis and transfer its findings to other instances, such as the results of my quantitative data analysis. In reflection, the SPSS analysis (for questionnaire data) and the Excel

spreadsheet analysis (for interview data) were valid means to analyse the research appropriately.

Finally, in concluding this chapter, I chose a qualitative approach with quantitative elements to carry out sub-structured questionnaires and sub-structured interviews in two schools. I had three groups participating – staff, parents and pupils could raise their opinions which provided data for the quantitative and qualitative research analysis. In the pursuit of validity and reliability, I carefully considered methodological literature advice, respected consent forms and piloted the questionnaires.

With this in mind, the next three chapters (4-6) will discuss and debate the findings of the data, starting with 'Staff opinion on primary MFL teaching' in chapter 4.

Chapter 4:

Staff opinion on primary MFL teaching

As explained in the Methodology chapter, within a school there are three main stakeholders: staff, parents and pupils. Staff are at the front line in delivering the educational policies set up by the Government. For example, the "21st Century Schools Pupil Guarantee" ensures that "from September 2011, every primary pupil receives the support they need to ...learn another language..." (DCSF, 2009b, p.98) However, many policies require staff to put new changes into effect. McLachlan (2009) summarises:

There was consensus among teachers that too many initiatives are being introduced in too short a space of time, with each new one detracting resources, staff and curriculum time, and the sense of priority from the current one in place. (p.199)

Therefore, I considered it crucial to get an idea of what staff thought of the MFL provision in their school. In 2009 I conducted qualitative research by interviewing two Headteachers, two classroom teachers teaching MFL, and two visiting specialist MFL teachers (Appendices 1, 2 & 15). Interviewee's opinions² are presented within the debate around each research question in sections 4.1 to 4.6.

Overall, this chapter aims to generate key research findings from interviewees' opinions and identify themes which can be generalised and compared with my MFL research as a whole (Appendices 16 to 23; Tables 12 to 19).

² Interviewees' names are pseudonyms.

4.1 The commencement of MFL teaching

Since all KS2 pupils are entitled to learn a MFL from 2010 (Chapter 2, 2.2.2a), I wanted to find out what staff thought of this Government policy.

Paul taught French as a MFL non-specialist in his Y3 classroom in Wapa. He supported the implementation of MFL in all schools arguing: "Like many other things, if you leave it to choice, in some places it will happen, in some places it won't" (Paul, personal communication, March 13, 2009). As revealed in the literature review (Chapter 2, 2.2.1), one of the MFL problems ten years ago (QCA, 2000) was a 'piecemeal provision' and a lack of consistency. Paul was satisfied that the Government had started to bring some order into this matter.

Sophia (Wapa's Headteacher) was very keen for an early MFL start in FS (personal communication, March 6, 2009); whereas Alice, the Headteacher from Topos, said that this MFL strategy should start earlier than KS2, but perhaps not in FS (personal communication, February 26, 2009). She considered that learning a MFL in FS would be too much of a challenge for that year group. On the other hand, two MFL specialist teachers did not see this as an issue, and reflected on their teaching experiences. For example, Amy, a Spanish MFL specialist said: "The youngest child I've taught is like 2 or 3, and from my personal experience I think the sooner you start the better" (personal communication, March 19, 2009). Also Ruth, a French MFL specialist expressed her support of a FS start (personal communication, March 19, 2009). She found it important that children acquire the correct accent of the MFL saying: "I also think the younger they start, the more chance they've got to actually simulate the accent." Ruth's experience confirms what Martin (2000) concluded:

It is vitally important to set up early FL programmes, which promote a young learner's strengths and which focus on the **development of good FL intonation, pronunciation and speaking skills** [original emphasis]. (p.15)

Furthermore, Sandra, a Y4 classroom teacher in Wapa and teaching French in her class liked the idea of starting MFL in FS and explained: "They [children] seem to love learning about other countries and things and different cultures" (personal communication, March 6, 2009). An interim report from 2008 showed similar findings that MFL teaching "is perceived as beneficial by headteachers and teachers in terms of developing children's cultural understanding..." (Cable et al., 2008, Key findings section, para. 2).

In summary, staff believed the subject should be introduced earlier at the age of 4 to 7 (Appendix 16; Table 12). On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that both schools were from a similar contextual background (Chapter 2, 2.4) and staff from inner city schools may have argued differently. These findings suggest that MFL teaching in primary schools should start from FS/KS1 which tends towards Martin's view (2000) that 'younger is better' (p.15; Chapter 2, 2.1.1).

4.2 The number of MFLs

Currently, the teaching of up to two foreign languages is recommended (Chapter 2, 2.2.2b) and Penfield (1953) argued that "he [sic] who learns more than one language as a little child has greater facility for the acquisition of additional languages in adult life" (p.212). However, he makes no substantial reference to evidence in support of this view.

Similarly, Headteacher Sophia believed: "The more opportunities children have to access languages, the better." Two MFLs (French and Spanish) were delivered in her

school (Wapa). Amy believed Wapa School's arrangement gave children sufficient exposure to MFLs and valued this approach as a huge benefit. She stated that

...children can make their own mind up whether they prefer Spanish or French, or neither. I think if they just studied one, it would be easier for them from a continuity point of view.

Sandra was very confident and enthusiastic to see her Year 4 class learn two languages at the same time because she believed that "they would cope with it because they really enjoy it. They love it!"

On the other hand, Topos only provided one language (French) throughout KS2. Headteacher Alice considered the acquisition of English crucial and voiced her opinion firmly: "No, just the one [French] – I'd rather they learnt to speak English properly." Interestingly, McLachlan (2009) mentions the belief held by some teaching staff that "time spent on learning a foreign language is time wasted, and would be much better spent on improving literacy and oracy skills in English" (p.193). Ruth, employed at Topos, disagreed with her Headteacher's view stating that more languages are better. She believed that "you can learn about the same kind of a thing [educational topics] from another country." I asked Ruth if there was a chance for children to get confused when learning more than one language: an issue she straight away dismissed:

I think it will just help them [the pupils] because they would see similarities in words. It would help them also learn more about their own language and to recognise the origins of the words.

In conclusion, although the interviewees expressed clear opinions in this matter, the question of the number of MFLs must be considered differently. All interviewees failed to link this debate with the question of what they believe the fundamental aim of MFL should be. For example, a 'Discovering Language' project (2005-07) enabled nine primary schools to experience six languages (e.g., Western European languages, Latin,

Japanese and Punjabi). They learned how to convey the same meaning of basic phrases into all six languages. Hawkins (2005) described the project's aim as follows:

It is hoped that the pupils will acquire an interest in the phenomenon of language through experiencing a number of different languages, rather than having a longer exposure to one language which may or may not be continued in the secondary phase. (p.12)

The specific aim of the project was to raise awareness about languages, and consequently several languages were chosen. Therefore, the research question must consider the point I made in Chapter 2, 2.1.3 that various MFL teaching programmes have different aims. My literature review in Chapter 2, 2.2.2b discovered that different MFL programmes have developed in Britain's primary schools. Woodgate-Jones (2009) concludes:

The educational aims of introducing MFLs into primary schools are multiple, ... there has been no consensus on the exact content of a primary MFL (PMFL) curriculum. (pp.255-256)

Hence, it seems that this issue should be decisively tackled by defining clear aims and the most suitable programme to deliver them. In conclusion, five out of the six interviewees were very supportive of the teaching of two MFLs in primary schools (Appendix 17; Table 13).

4.3 Choosing the most suitable MFL(s) to implement

Since MFL choice is not defined by the Government (Chapter 2, 2.2.2c), primary schools must decide for themselves. Current research is able to reveal the range and prevalence of MFLs that schools chose to implement, as documented:

French..., available in around nine out of ten schools... Spanish was also popular, offered by a quarter of schools teaching languages, while German was offered by 10 per cent of schools teaching languages. A much smaller proportion of schools offered Italian, Chinese, Japanese and Urdu. (Wade et al., 2009b, p.17)

Amy was pleased to see French and Spanish being taught at Wapa because she believed that they are “complementary languages.” Similarly, Paul agreed that “French and Spanish are probably the most useful.” However, he questioned why British people should learn a European language since Europeans learn English as their first MFL. He suggested it might be better to learn a non-European language such as Mandarin, Russian or Arabic but had concerns that only people who leave the UK to work in those countries would make use of the language. Ruth chose French and Spanish as the most suitable MFLs to implement. She explained the benefit of children using their French when going on a holiday to France. However, we must consider that this language and holiday destination may reflect the social class and ethnicity of Topos.

Sandra liked the idea of teaching French and German since she was competent in both languages. She expressed: “I’m glad it’s not Mandarin because I would feel completely lost and I would not know where to start.” Wang and Higgins (2008, p.91) recognise a shortage of qualified teachers who are able to teach Mandarin, and CILT (2007) noted that the teaching of Mandarin in UK primary schools “is at a relatively early stage” (p.3). As a consequence, Song (as cited in Wang & Higgins, 2008) proposed that “Chinese was more likely to be taught in weekend schools and independent schools than in mainstream schools” (p.91).

When asking Alice (Topos Headteacher), she was happy with her French language provision, although some Governors preferred Spanish. In stark contrast Sophia, Headteacher from Wapa, concluded: “I am happier now that we’ve got Spanish because I think Spanish is such a widely spoken language; far more so than French.” Although she emphasised her preference for Spanish, her decision to offer both French and Spanish was guided by the local secondary school language provision which offers

both. She predicted: "I think a lot of what we do in the future is going to be influenced by how the secondary school continues with their language teaching."

Overall, all six staff members were happy with French, whereas some recognised Spanish as more beneficial (Appendix 18; Table 14). This research (staff interviews) and my literature survey (Chapter 2, 2.2.2c) showed that French has become the dominant primary MFL. Coleman (2009) recognised this as a trend throughout the UK asking: "But why is it nearly always French?" (p.124). However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, 2.1.3 if a school's aim is to follow a language programme which focuses on more general linguistic and cultural awareness, then perhaps the specific language taught is not necessarily the main issue.

4.4 Teaching time allocation for MFL(s)

Although the Government currently recommends a teaching time allocation for MFL(s) in all KS2 year groups of 60 minutes per week (Chapter 2, 2.2.2d), this is non-mandatory. Satchwell (2006) argues:

They [children] will need every minute of the recommended 60 minutes' teaching time if they are to acquire the skills and knowledge laid out as their entitlement in the [KS2] Framework document. (pp.51-52)

The following table shows the data I gathered from all MFL teachers and their aspirations in this matter.

Table 8: Suggested MFL time allocation for FS, KS1 and KS2 by MFL teachers from both schools

	FS	KS1	KS2
Amy	three sessions of 20 minutes per week (=60min/week) and integrated teaching	two sessions of 30 minutes per week (=60min/week) and integrated teaching	two sessions of 60 minutes per week (=120min/week) and integrated teaching
Paul	one session of 30 minutes per week (=30min/week)	one session of 30 minutes per week (=30min/week)	one session of 40 minutes per week (=40min/week)
Sandra	four sessions of 10 minutes per week (=40min/week)	five sessions of 10 minutes per week (=50min/week)	five sessions of 20 minutes per week (=100min/week) and integrated teaching
Ruth	four sessions of 10 minutes per week (=40min/week)	one session of 30 minutes per week (=30min/week) and integrated teaching	one session of 60 minutes per week (=60min/week) and integrated teaching
Mean (average)	43 minutes per week	43 minutes per week	80 minutes per week

In more detail, Paul explained his idea of building up slowly in MFL, starting with FS. Amy complained because her teaching time was limited to 30 minutes per week in a Y6 class at Wapa (Table 4). For Alice and Sandra, an overcrowded curriculum was the cause of the problem. Sandra gave her solution by suggesting:

If they [the Government] got rid of some Physical Education (PE) because we're very focussed on PE, or get rid of Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic (PSHCE) lessons because the children have to do Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) anyway. So, it's kind of that they get a double whammy on that sort of thing.

McLachlan (2009) summarises the dilemma which primary schools face at the moment:

In a curriculum already bursting at the seams, with a seemingly endless line of new government initiatives and with national league tables of achievement creating pressures to be seen to be 'succeeding', primary schools are clearly facing an enormous challenge. (p.199)

Despite the criticisms of Amy and Sandra (both from Wapa) concerning limitations on MFL teaching time, the Headteacher Sophia was optimistic about the current set up saying, "I'm quite happy with the way it is planned into the curriculum. If anything, I probably like eventually to see it as a much more cross-curricular thing."

In summary, the views of the four MFL teachers interviewed from both schools differed in their choice of MFL time allocation (Table 8 and Appendix 19; Table 15). However, taken as an average the result of 80 minutes per week for KS2 exceeds what is typically practiced in primary schools (cf. Chapter 2, 2.2.2d). Interestingly, in 2002 the DfES announced its *National Languages Strategy*, yet this document makes no mention of time allocation within its 45 pages. It is clear that in the study of any subject time allocation correlates to the amount learnt, not least for the learning of a MFL. Current research already shows a decline of MFL teaching time allocation when comparing two recent reports: instead of 40 or 45 minutes per week (Wade et al., 2009b, p.36), schools now provide 30 to 40 minutes per week (Cable et al., 2010, Key findings section, para. 3). Within this issue, Coleman (2009) raises the further question of: "How much class time will the majority get, and from which teachers?" (p.124).

4.5 Possible strategies to create a positive MFL learning environment

This fifth research question will consider: school liaison with parents, MFL policy provision and co-ordinator set-up, delivery of cultural understanding, and provision of homework and after-school club.

Firstly, in both schools parents are being informed about their child's MFL progress through the end of year report. At Wapa, MFL curriculum information was provided on their school website but Headteacher Sophia was not satisfied saying, "possibly we need to think about giving parents more information." Headteacher Alice seemed to be satisfied since she expressed: "I've never had any complaints and with our parents you'll know very quickly if there's something wrong."

Secondly, as mentioned in Chapter 2, 2.2.2e, a written policy helps to support the sustainability of MFL in school as well as pupil monitoring and assessment (Wade et al., 2009b, p.22). Wapa had a school policy in place written by MFL co-ordinator Sophia. Interestingly, none of her MFL teaching staff knew that she was the MFL co-ordinator. Topos did not have a written MFL school policy or a MFL co-ordinator in place. Clearly, both Headteachers did not inform their staff well enough about their school's MFL provision. This situation indicates that MFL is lower down on the subject priority list of the Headteachers.

Thirdly, children should learn "to realise both the similarities and the differences between their lives and those of their peers abroad," explains Satchwell (2006, p.52). Although there was an ethos to deliver a cultural understanding to children in MFL lessons, the teaching of other people, cultures and languages was not formalised in both schools. Sophia stated frankly: "Well, I guess at the moment it's probably a bit 'hit and miss'. But if something fits in [school assemblies], then that's fine."

Furthermore, all interviewees liked the idea of giving occasional homework, but not consistently as Alice stressed: "No, they've [the children] got enough on their plate."

Also, Farrow, Tymms and Henderson (1999) were not overly concerned about homework provision for primary children saying: "...the value of homework (largely derived from secondary school practice and experience) should not be automatically 'grafted on' to primary practice" (p.323). However, MacBeath and Turner's study (as cited in Hunt, Barnes, & Redford, 2009) found that pupils from 13 Scottish primary and secondary schools approved of homework when it was enjoyable (pp.37-38).

Finally, I researched the MFL club provision outside school hours. In Wapa the Headteacher Sophia was unsure whether or not a club was still running. Sandra was

able to sum up the situation that the club was organised by a parent who had no control over the children and struggled to employ a good behaviour strategy to keep children on track. For Sandra it was obvious that “They [children] don’t get as much out from the lesson as they could because they’re too busy being silly.” Sophia expressed her desire by saying: “In the future, it would be really nice to think that we had a good MFL club but I just think the opportunities we’ve had so far have been a bit tenuous really... not too good.” Alice was not very keen to offer a new MFL club in her school because the previous one had failed. The only positive opinion was given by Ruth who runs five after-school French clubs. She was full of enthusiasm arguing:

Schools run sports club, don’t they? That’s extra to PE, and they run drama clubs. I think, I say, ‘Why not?’ If they enjoy it, why not? Do a bit extra.

In conclusion, the outcome of this fifth research question reveals that the implementation of MFL in primary schools is rather complex (Appendices 20 to 22; Tables 16 to 18). Although some progress has been made (e.g., giving MFL feedback on an end of year school report), more has to be done to make it a success in view of the current deficiencies (i.e. neglecting to inform parents about MFL provision, failing after-school clubs and confusion over who is MFL co-ordinator). I would encourage setting up a strong team that can shape all aspects of MFL in school e.g., school policy, timetabling, assemblies, homework, and after-school clubs. However, given the level of curricular commitments and initiatives already in place for other subjects, I doubt there would be the time and resources to achieve such an ambitious target. This should not be the Headteacher’s responsibility alone, as was the case in both schools, but additional stakeholders such as MFL co-ordinator, parents and pupils from the school council would contribute when planning for strategies to create a positive MFL learning environment in their school.

4.6 Potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1

So far the Government has made no recommendation on the matter of teaching MFL in KS1 (Chapter 2, 2.2.2f). At KS1 the child “awakens to language” when educating the ear to listen, according to Hawkins’s language apprenticeship (Chapter 2, 2.1.3). He believes that “a sympathetic and imaginative music teacher is a crucially important ally” (Hawkins, 2005, p.10). Amy wanted to introduce songs and games in FS and KS1 because she quoted the argument that children learn the most in their first five years. Sophia reasoned similarly that “at the FS they are like little sponges. They absorb so much and I feel it’s almost not capitalising on children’s prime learning time.” For Ruth, the potential benefit of teaching MFL in FS and KS1 was to get children used to the sounds of the language. Alice did not want FS children to learn MFL because she believes that “they need to settle into school and not be landed with another language.”

However, the real crunch came when asking Sophia about ‘funding’. She explained:

No, there is no definite funding coming in – I mean... because the budget is healthy, we are able to employ Amy and hopefully sustain it into the future but it’s like everything else, if you wait for the Government money, it wouldn’t probably get done.

In more detail, Sophia clarified further: “Yeah, there is some money and also, to be fair, CPD (Continuing Professional Development) for teachers at the moment is funded. So there is a bit of money coming in but it’s not sort of directly into the school for employing people. It never does.” Topos received £300 per school year for MFL teaching. I asked Alice if this money helped to employ MFL staff and she responded amusingly:

Uh-uh. You see, that’s what I’m here for, to create these wonderful opportunities with no money! That’s what we [headteachers] do all the time and that’s what the Government expects us to do.

McLachlan (2009) concluded that funding is an issue and schools struggle to achieve their aims (p.201). Although Alice was pleased to see French teaching throughout all KS2 year groups, financial constraints meant her vision for KS1 could not be implemented, as she articulated: "The fact is, it's costing me [too much] money."

In light of the above, I believe the interviewees have made valuable comments concerning the use of songs and games to educate the youngest children of FS and KS1 (Appendix 23; Table 19). Although Alice wanted MFL no earlier than KS1, I consider that the process of exposing children to sounds to 'train the ear' (using Hawkins' terminology) would be good to start at FS. Also, small doses of language learning can build up the enthusiasm and motivation from a very young age. On the other hand, why should financial constraints to be the only factor that prevents an exciting MFL programme?

I would like to conclude this chapter by emphasising that all six participants agreed unanimously that the MFL entitlement should commence at least in KS2. In more detail, five out of six interviewees considered FS as the best time to commence MFL teaching and wanted to see at least two languages taught. Only the Headteacher from Topos wanted just one MFL which influenced the MFL provision in her school. French and Spanish were the most preferred MFLs by participants, except for Headteacher Alice who was most keen on French, taught as a single MFL. Headteacher Sophia copied her local secondary school to implement the same MFLs in her primary school, namely French and Spanish. On average, the four MFL teachers interviewed expected 80 minutes per week teaching time for KS2 and 43 minutes per week for FS and KS1 individually. Some staff raised concerns over issues such as an overcrowded curriculum and too much time for the subjects of PE and PSHCE. Both Headteachers

were disappointed about the lack of funding which has an impact on MFL staffing provision and spoils MFL ambitions. Wapa had a school policy in place but nobody knew that Headteacher Sophia was actually the MFL co-ordinator. Topos had neither a MFL policy nor MFL co-ordinator in place. Both schools did not plan for the delivery of cultural understanding. Everybody liked the idea of giving occasional homework. MFL after-school club endeavours seem to have been unsuccessful by both schools. Staff opinion is summarised in Appendices 16 to 23 (Tables 12 to 19).

Remembering the themes from this 'Staff Chapter', I will move on to the next chapter which debates the same research questions but this time considers parent opinion.

Chapter 5:

Parent opinion on primary MFL teaching

To start, I would like draw attention to this year's general election. Conservative leader David Cameron recently announced his election manifesto with its pledge to improve school standards by giving parents more power (BBC, 2010). He is keen for parents to play a vital role in their local school, and I also believe parents are important stakeholders for what takes place in schools. Driscoll (1999) explained that in recent years the influence of parents in schools has become greater because they are part of the school's governing bodies which influence the school's ongoing development. Also, parents can opt for their choice of school (p.10). He explains further that due to this increased parental involvement and expectation "...headteachers may be encouraged to include MFL to 'add value' to their schools" (Driscoll, 1999, p.10).

Therefore, I was curious to find out what parents thought of their school's MFL provision. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter (3), I have chosen to conduct a qualitative research study using questionnaires and interviews. This chapter will analyse key research findings from the questionnaires alone which will mainly be presented in figures. The data is qualitative with some elements of quantitative data

To avoid confusion, I would like to remind the reader that a 'Questionnaire for Parents' (Appendices 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 & 11) was sent out to each school. Out of 301 parents, 223 participated in this questionnaire, making this a very high response rate of 74% (Table 6). The research gathered from this questionnaire will be discussed in my posed research questions (see sections 5.1–5.5). In section 5.6, the debate surrounding my

sixth research question will come from an additional questionnaire for Y1 Topos parents which was added at the end of the 'Questionnaire for Parents' (Appendix 7).

Like the previous chapter, I aim to identify themes which can be compared with later points in the thesis.

5.1 The commencement of MFL teaching

In 1979 Fröhlich-Ward summarised parents' view on MFL learning, saying:

In a modern society, foreign-language learning is frequently considered a good thing but parents sometimes doubt whether learning it at an early age – say, 4 to 6 years – is good or even advisable for their children. (Fröhlich-Ward, 1979a, p.21)

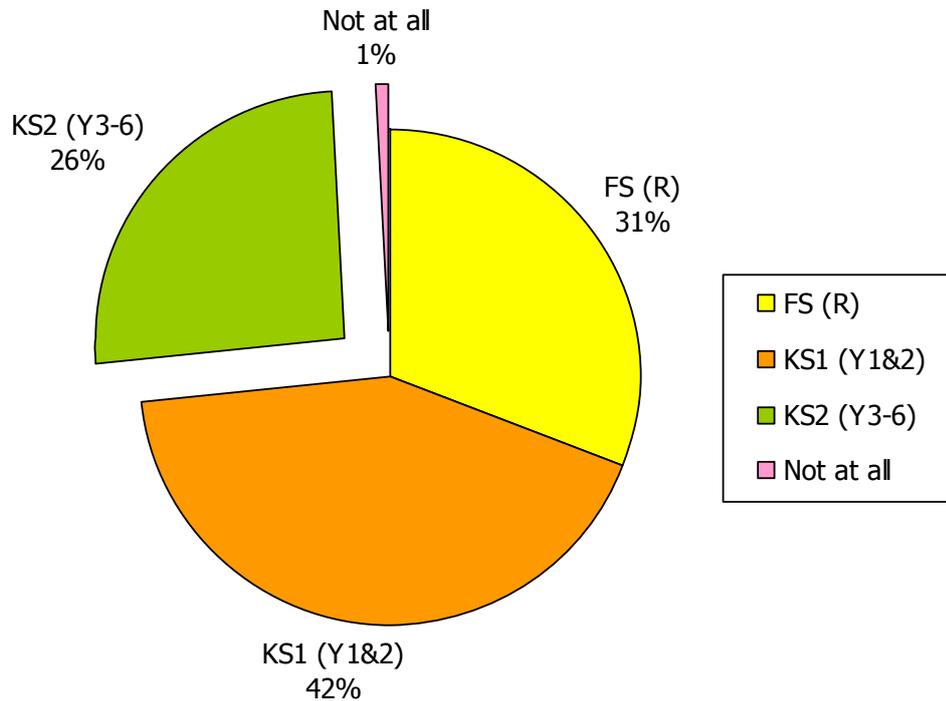
But has this opinion changed since 1979? I intend to answer the first research question by splitting the findings into three sub-sections (see 5.1.1–5.1.3) followed by a conclusion.

5.1.1 Parents demand MFL learning in primary schools

Parents expressed a strong demand for MFL learning in both of the primary schools since an overwhelming majority of parents (219 out of 231) wanted their child to learn another language in primary school.

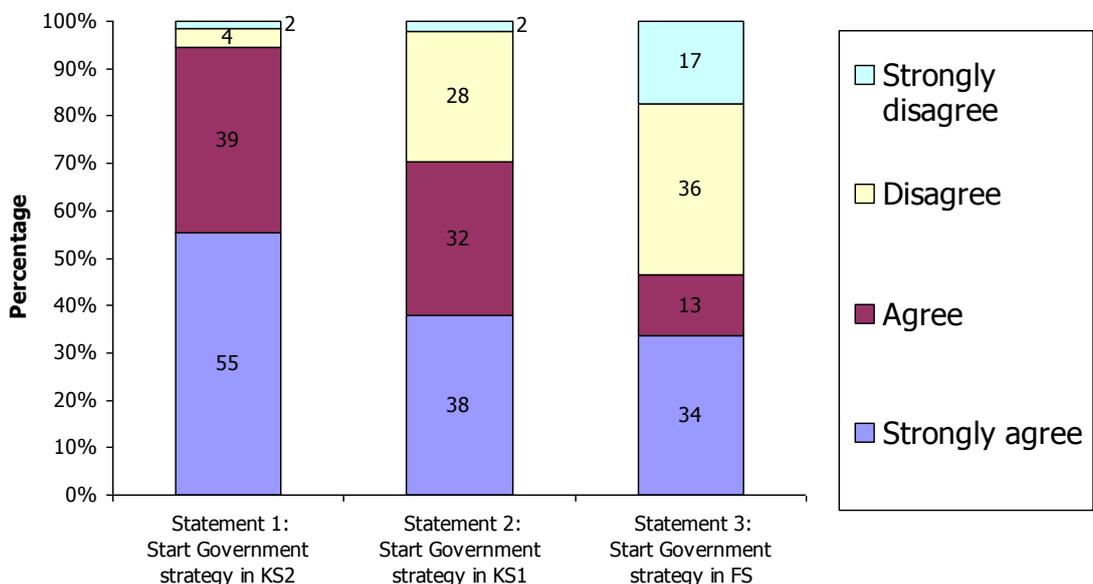
Figures 3 and 4 are two different questions to parents regarding when MFL should start.

Figure 3: The response of parents from both schools to the question of when they would like the primary school to start teaching their child another language.



KS1 was the most popular time for MFL commencement (Figure 3). Also, when particularly asked about the Government MFL strategy, 94% wanted it to commence at least in KS2 (Figure below).

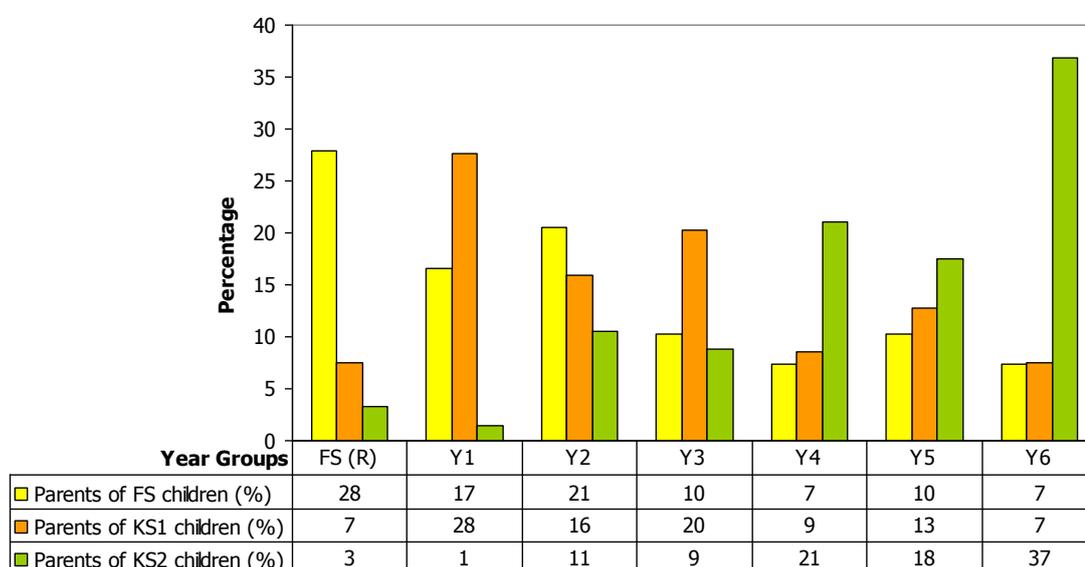
Figure 4: The response of parents from both schools to the question of when they would like the Government MFL strategy to start. The participants answered three individual statements.



5.1.2 Parents were biased by the immediate year group their child occupied

Further analysis of the data from Figures 3 and 4 showed there was a strong correlation between the year group a child occupies and the opinion of the parent concerning when MFL should start. By analysing Figure 3 (illustrated in Figure 5 below) parents of FS children wanted MFL teaching to start in FS. However, parents of KS2 children preferred MFL teaching to start in KS2 and did not see the need in FS or KS1.

Figure 5: The correlation of parents' request for when MFL should start, with the year group their child occupies.



Whilst analysing the data from Figure 4 in two different ways (Figure 6 and 7), it appears that parents' opinion was influenced by the year group their child occupies revealing the same trend. Figure 6 shows that parents of FS children had the highest interest for the Government strategy to start in FS. When questioning parents of children who had already progressed beyond FS, it is clear that these parents no longer had the same interest.

Figure 6: The correlation of parents' opinion of when the Government MFL programme should start in FS, with the year group their child occupies.

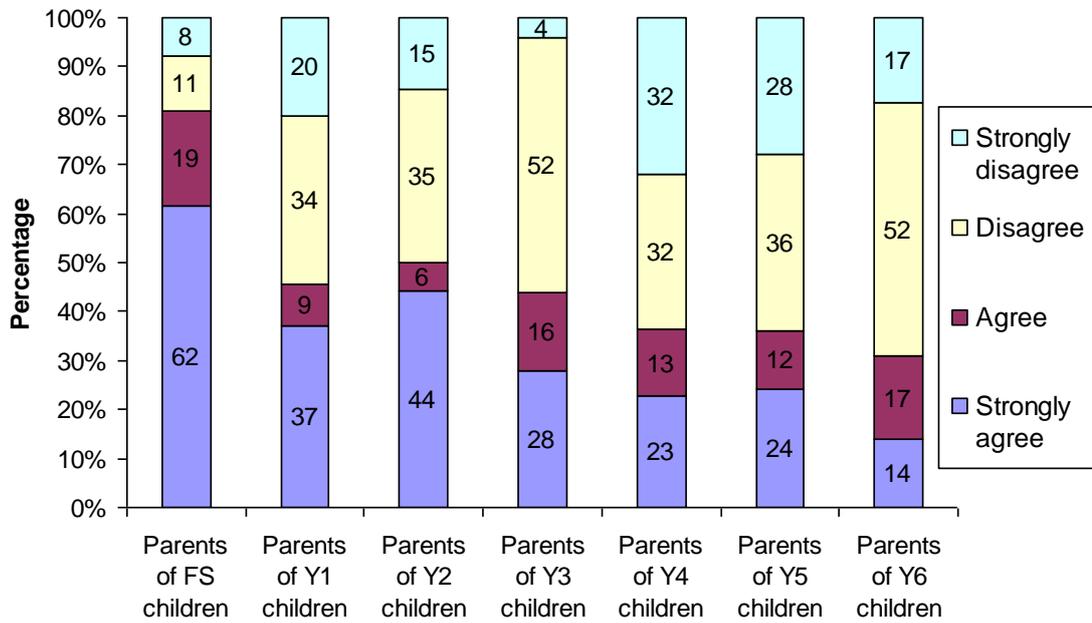
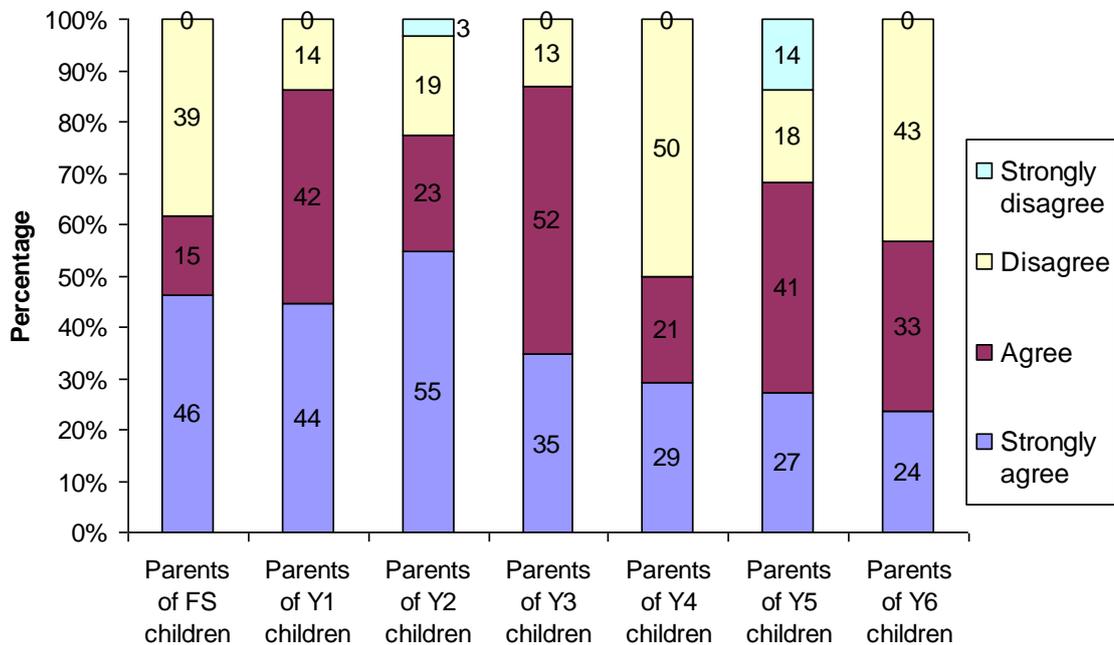


Figure 7: The correlation of parents' opinion of when the Government MFL programme should start in KS1, with the year group their child occupies.



In Figure 7, parents from Y1, Y2 and Y3 had the highest interest for this strategy to start in KS1 giving further evidence that parents were biased by the immediate year group their child occupies. This trend is clear in all three Figures (5 to 7).

5.1.3 Parents' enthusiasm for MFL learning

At the end of the questionnaire, I gathered qualitative data where parents gave their own written opinion on MFL advantages summarised as follows:

It gives a child a wider understanding and variety of different cultures. Also, it prepares for secondary school, and is useful for holidays and possible future jobs. (32 parents out of 75 responses)

Starting it at any stage in Primary is better than not at all. (20 parents out of 75 responses)

Extending the opportunity for foreign language learning to Reception or KS1 should be part of the timetable. (31 parents out of 85 responses)

Increase time and have more sessions. (10 parents out of 85 responses)

Teach languages! Not enough focus on this area. (7 parents out of 85 responses)

Parents considered several aspects of 'why' it is good to learn a foreign language and expressed the need for early MFL learning. Overall, this would involve more sessions, more time allocation and teaching languages systematically.

In conclusion, this data (Figures 3 and 4) shows that many parents want an earlier MFL intervention than KS2 (5.1.1). This opinion may be influenced by the characteristics of the schools' intakes (i.e. quite middle-class). My findings in sub-section 5.1.2 presented evidence that parents were biased by the immediate year group their child occupied. Considering sub-section 5.1.3, parents were very enthusiastic for MFL teaching to be implemented earlier than KS2. They gave reasons such as: smoother transition to secondary school, useful on holidays, and better job prospects. Parent opinion is summarised in Appendix 16 (Table 12).

In response to Fröhlich-Ward (see introduction of section 5.1), I am confident to say that parent opinion has changed since 1979. This shift might be due to present-day parents having a greater international understanding as Byram and Doyé (1999) explain:

In the UK and Germany, the pressure from parents to introduce language teaching in the primary school is a reflection of their awareness of how society is changing, how the position of these countries in Europe is developing, how their children's future is likely to have an international context quite different from their own adult lives. (p.139)

Similarly, Dearing and King (2006) emphasised the need to know more than English when trading with companies overseas since this language skill builds up positive working relationships (p.2; Chapter 2, 2.2.1).

Therefore, the Government is under pressure to deliver; but this pressure comes not only from parents. The European Union (1995) also expects its Member States to take up their responsibility to "develop proficiency in three European languages" (p.I). Byram and Doyé (1999) state:

The effect of such pressures from below and above on the policies national governments will make, and the British government in particular, remains to be seen, but will be impossible to resist. (p.139)

According to the European Union's *White Paper on Education and Training*, the desired starting age is at pre-school level (European Union, 1995, p.47). In my research, staff recommended the commencement of MFL teaching in FS or KS1 (Chapter 4, 4.1). These findings question whether the Government has pitched this strategy at the most suitable age range. Parents who expected a provision earlier than KS2 are likely to be disappointed.

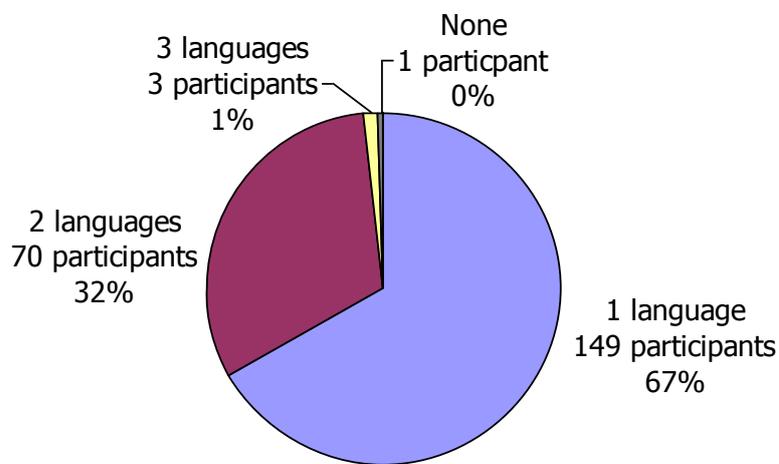
5.2 The number of MFLs

In schools there are various models such as teaching one language only, two languages or launching a variety of languages to provide 'language tasters' (Chapter 2, 2.2.2b). The current entitlement for KS2 primary pupils is to "study a foreign

language” and the language learning programme “must include at least one of the working languages of the European Union” (DfES, 2002, p.15).

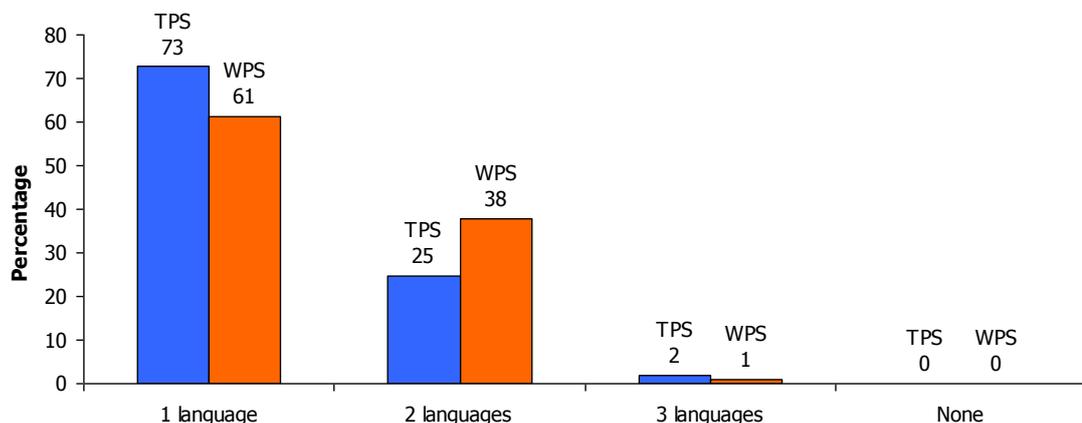
The data from my research shows that two thirds of parents wanted their child to learn one MFL whereas the remaining third opted for learning two languages (Figure 8).

Figure 8: The response of parents from both schools to the question of how many languages they would like their child to learn at primary school. (Parents did not count English but included any other language their child was currently learning.)



Analysing this data in terms of the contribution from each primary school showed that both schools were in favour of one MFL (Figure 9).

Figure 9: The response of parents from each individual school to the question of how many languages they would like their child to learn at their primary school. (Parents did not count English but included any other language their child was currently learning.)



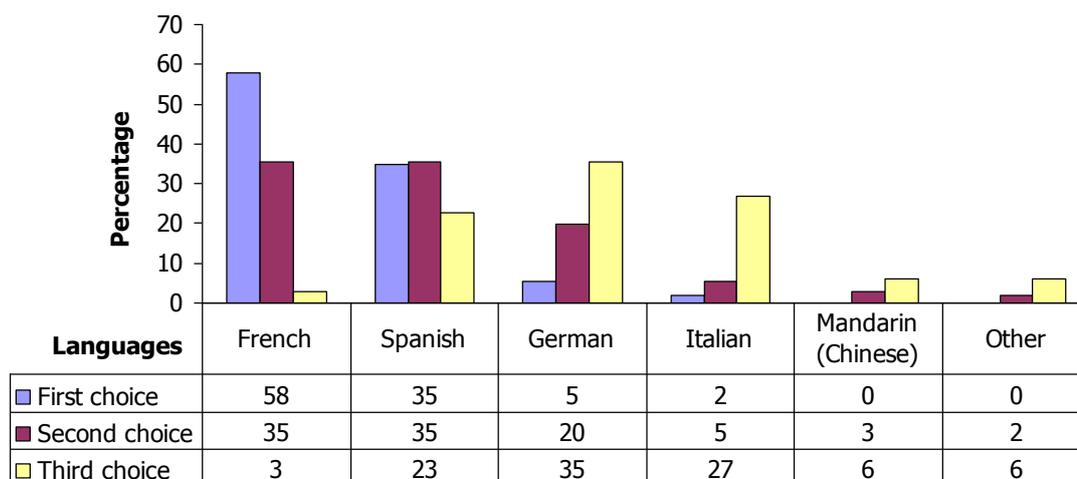
The response of parents may have been influenced by the current language provision of each school as illustrated: Wapa offers two languages, and the percentage of respondents opting for two languages was 13% higher in Wapa. Conversely, Topos parents opted mainly for one language (73%). Topos provided only one language throughout KS2 apart from some 5 minute sessions of German in Y1.

In summary, 67% of parents prefer one language to be implemented and fewer parents (32%) prefer two languages (Appendix 17; Table 13). Staff favoured two languages (Chapter 3, 3.2). Nevertheless, this research shows that parents and staff did not want their child to experience up to seven languages as suggested by respondents from the *Rose Interim Report* (Rose, 2009, p.102). The European Union (1995) encourages the teaching of one MFL starting at pre-school level followed by a second MFL in secondary school with its aims stated as follows: "Upon completing initial training [primary and secondary school education] everyone should be proficient in two Community foreign languages" (p.47). As I argued previously, the UK Government would also do well to launch a decisive programme with clear aims (Chapter 4, 4.2).

5.3 Choosing the most suitable MFL(s) to implement

In the questionnaire, parents could state their preference by giving their first, second and third choice about which primary MFL(s) they would like to see taught as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Parents from both schools responding to the question of which language they would most like to see taught in their child's primary school by selecting three choices.



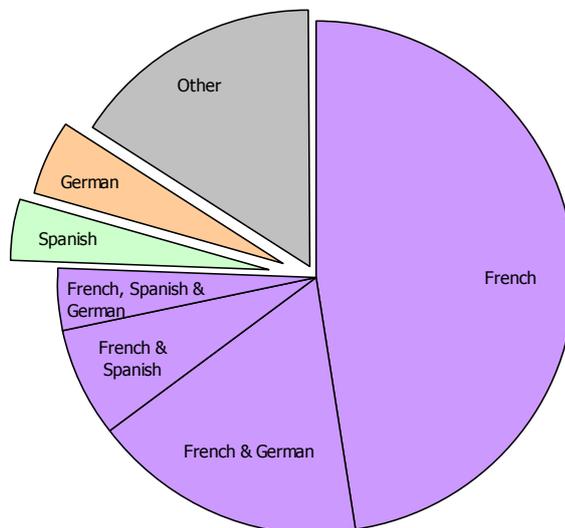
Parents gave priority to the three languages of French, Spanish and German. However, they may have been conservative in their outlook and did not consider the advantages of the other languages. The traditional focus on these three European languages may have limited their choices. Therefore, I investigated parents' reasoning behind their language choices.

This research showed that 81% of parents wanted their child to 'have a go' at foreign language learning during primary school and continue at secondary level. These parents felt it was important for their child not only to continue MFL learning in secondary school, but to continue with the *same* language. With this in mind, currently, the most taught MFL in the local secondary schools is French. It is of no surprise that French was the most wanted MFL by primary school parents since they knew their child would be able to continue learning French in secondary school. They chose French as a long term language investment. In their report, Evans and Fisher (2009) make particular note that parents are keen to see language continuity from KS2 to KS3 (p.61). Satchwell (2006) explains the action that the secondary institution can take:

Secondary languages teachers will need to examine how pupils learn in the final two years of primary school and adjust their methods to build on what has gone before. (p.52)

Investigating the language background of parents gave further insight into the popularity of French, Spanish and German. The questionnaire revealed that 60% of participants could speak another language. This seems like a high percentage and it would be interesting to compare this with language ability in the general population. The following pie chart presents the type of languages spoken by these parents.

Figure 11: The response of the 60% of parents from both schools who had language skills, to the question of which language(s) they can speak at a basic level.



Three quarters of parents were familiar with the French language. Perhaps when parents filled in the questionnaire, they were influenced by their childhood experience of learning French in school and felt that their child should continue this tradition. For example, Low (1999) mentioned that Scottish parents prefer French by explaining: "They themselves probably learnt it at school and therefore associate foreign language learning with French" (p.59).

Furthermore, French and German were the leading languages during parents' school time. As shown in Figure 10, second to French parents wanted Spanish rather than German. Hypothesising why parents now prefer Spanish as a second option might be due to the increase in understanding that Spanish has greater global dominance than German. This was the reason given by Headteacher Sophia to offer Spanish in her school (Chapter 4, 4.3). My research also showed that France followed by Spain was the most popular holiday destination, however, one respondent from the questionnaire argued:

Can we please attempt to learn another language apart from Spanish. We visit a lot of northern Europe where German is the main language. Please can we have a change.

Finally, the majority of parents wanted French but two parents raised concerns by saying: "Often French is only offered. Why?" (cf. Chapter 4, 4.3). Parents also see the benefit of French because it can be continued in secondary school (known as transition). However, Barton, Bragg and Serratrice (2009) observe: "Currently, transition is not generally well developed between primary and secondary schools" (p.160). Also, I believe that some parents want French because they learned French in school (Figure 11) or enjoy going on holiday to France. In addition, my research shows the trend of parents opting for French followed by Spanish and German. The same preference for French and Spanish was voiced by staff in Chapter 4, 4.3 (Appendix 18; Table 14).

5.4 Teaching time allocation for MFL(s)

To remind the reader, Topos and Wapa did not attain the Government's recommendation of 60 minutes MFL per week in KS2.

Table 9: Parents from both schools responding to the question of how much time they would like their primary school to allocate for foreign language teaching.

	FS	KS1	KS2
Mean (average)	22 minutes per week	46 minutes per week	72 minutes per week
Median (middle value)	10 minutes per week	50 minutes per week	60 minutes per week
Mode (most occurring)	30 minutes per week	60 minutes per week	60 minutes per week
None at all	66 respondents	23 respondents	1 respondent
No extra time but integrated	23 respondents	9 respondents	6 respondents

The median and mode value for KS2 coincided with the Government’s strategy of 60 minutes per week; however, parents expected more teaching time of 72 minutes on average. Parents clearly wanted MFL teaching across all year groups. Also, the frequency of “none” and “integrated” teaching time selections decreased as year groups increased.

The four MFL teachers interviewed expected an average of 80 minutes per week which means an increased teaching time allocation for KS2 (cf. Table 9 and 4.3). Although these opinions exist, in reality neither Topos, Wapa or most other schools (Cable et al., 2010, Key findings section, para. 3) implement the current recommendation of 60 minutes per week. Cable et al. (2010) summarises: “While languages typically had a settled place in the school week, provision of 60 minutes per week teaching time was still largely an unmet challenge” (Ensuring provision is sustainable section, para. 2). Also, parents and staff responded strongly when opting for the allocation of MFL teaching time in FS and KS1. As mentioned in Chapter 2, 2.2.2f Dearing and King (2007) discuss extending MFL teaching to KS1 (p.10). However, no decisive action has been taken by the Government in the matter of allocating teaching time for FS and KS1.

In summary, there is a large discrepancy between the current practice in schools and the aspirations of parents and staff. Comments from parents revealed that space in the timetable was an important issue as noted below:

Possible adverse effect on learning in other subjects (needs careful balancing).
(9 respondents)

Something else has to go from the Curriculum to allow time for languages. Who decides what else is cut short? The Government put in these new initiatives without recognising this. (4 respondents)

The findings of this section (5.4) and the response of staff (Chapter 4, 4.4) emphasise the perception of an overcrowded curriculum by several participants (Appendix 19; Table 15). The findings of the latest DCSF report highlight: "However, there was still a degree of uncertainty about the place of languages in the curriculum and on the timetable" (Cable et al., 2010, Ensuring provision is sustainable section, para. 2). Therefore, I believe the Government needs to find ways of easing the pressure on the current curriculum if it expects MFL to succeed.

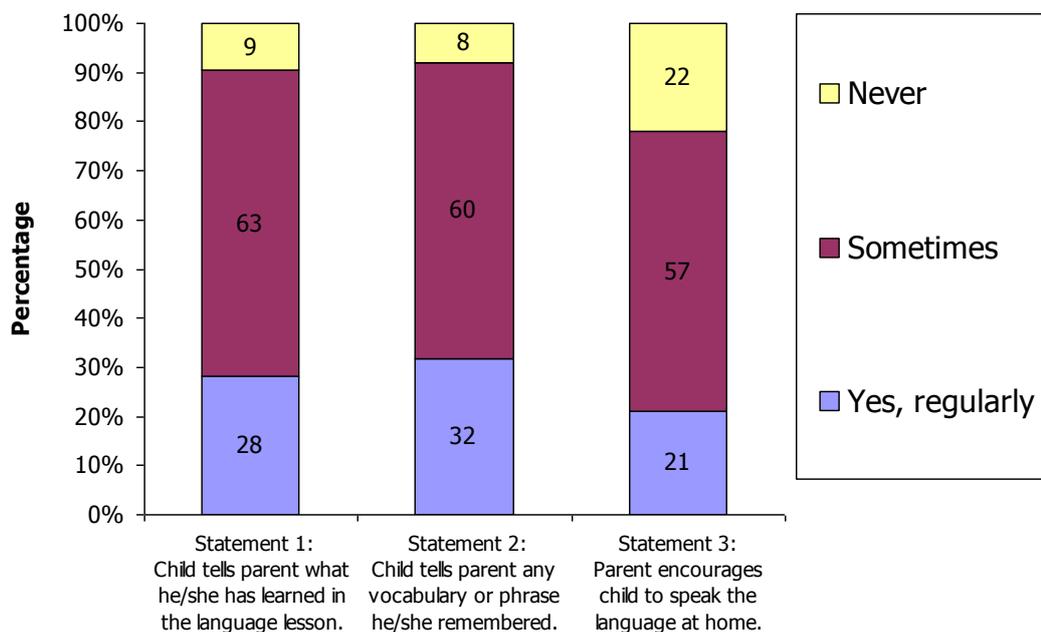
5.5 Possible strategies to create a positive MFL learning environment

This fifth research question will, in particular, consider: parental support for MFL (see 5.5.1), promoting MFL through parent awareness, school assemblies and homework (see 5.5.2), and an after-school club strategy (see 5.5.3).

5.5.1 Pupils' use of MFL at home

In this research parents were very enthusiastic to see their child learn a MFL. Figure 12 gives insight of what happens at home.

Figure 12: Parents from both schools responding to three separate statements, regarding the child's initiative at home and the encouragement given by parents.

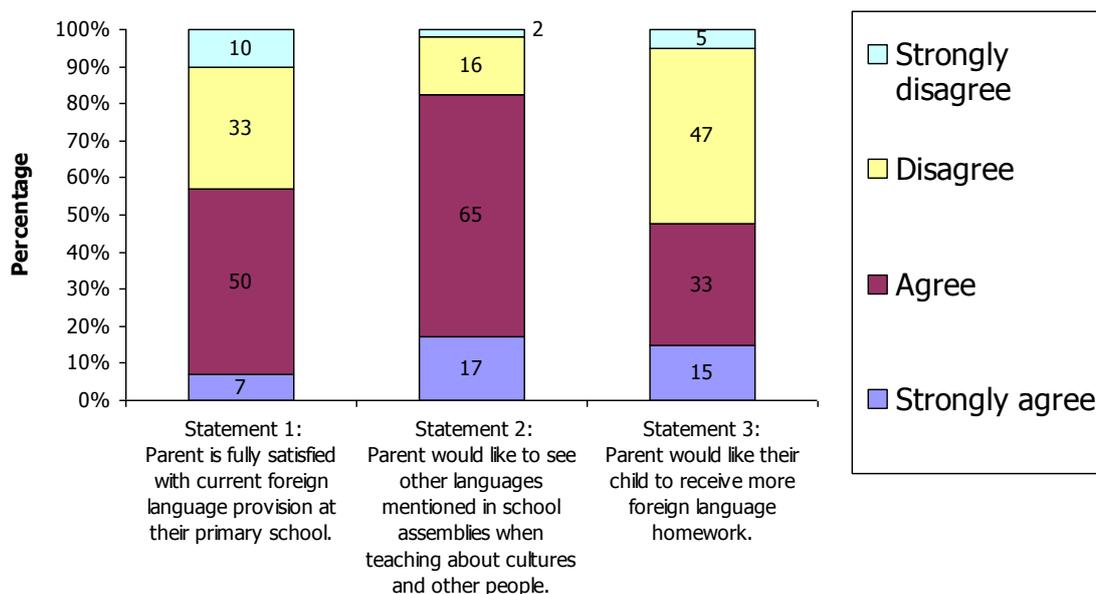


Parents said that their child was keen to refer to the language at home but clearly 22% of parents showed little enthusiasm to reinforce MFL language skills such as speaking the language at home (Figure 12). The outcome from a separate question revealed that only 5% of parents spoke in a different language at home other than English, although 60% of parents had MFL skills at a basic level (Figure 11). When travelling, 13% of participants visited other countries with their child for the purpose of using a different language but the remaining 87% did not consider this matter. There seems to be a trend where on the one hand parents wanted MFL success for their child but the effort to support this at home was not forthcoming by parents themselves (Appendix 20; Table 16).

5.5.2 Promoting MFL through parent awareness, school assemblies and homework

The next Figure summarises the responses towards three MFL statements on parental satisfaction, school assemblies and homework.

Figure 13: Parents from both schools responding to three separate statements about useful strategies to support the child’s MFL learning environment.



In Statement 1 (Figure 13), more than half of the parents were satisfied with the current foreign language provision at their primary school. However, there was criticism. 17 parents (out of 74 respondents) made the following point: “I am not aware of what the current foreign language provision is.” The same statement was given by 10 parents (out of 85 responses) in the questionnaire section about MFL improvements. A single respondent from Topos said: “I am amazed that it [MFL teaching] is not offered throughout the school. We almost selected a different primary school because of their language provision.” Hence, there was certainly a demand from parents to be informed about the schools’ strategy for MFL learning. Headteacher Sophia admitted that more information about the school’s MFL provision could be given to parents whereas Headteacher Alice was satisfied that parents were informed through the school’s website about the MFL provision in school (Chapter 4, 4.5). Evans and Fisher (2009) referred to their research on MFL learning at KS3, saying:

As far as parents’ views about language learning in their schools [chosen schools for Evans & Fisher’s research] were concerned, over half the headteachers admitted honestly that they did not really know: *‘That’s an interesting one. I don’t know is the short answer.’* (p.78)

It appears that headteachers do not always know parent opinion but they have started to implement another strategy to inform parents. A 2006 and 2008 survey shows schools increasingly send reports home to parents on pupil language attainment, typically 19% to 35% (Wade et al., 2009b, pp.44,46). This strategy of informing parents is already put in place by Wapa and Topos. Coleman (2009) said that "Many of those involved in implementing the [Government MFL] policy are striving to involve parents from the start..." (p.124). However, Enever (2009) believes there is a general issue to be challenged:

...a substantial shift in societal perceptions is necessary if we are to ensure that motivation at primary level actually leads to real progress being made throughout the school system, by every child. (p.15)

Clearly, my research showed that parents wanted to be informed and they expected more from their local school. Informing parents about the school's implementation of MFL teaching and gathering parent feedback is a good basic step to begin to address Enever's concern above.

In Statement 2 (Figure 13), over 80% of parents supported the idea of fostering cultural understanding during assembly times in school. This strategy would enable children to understand people from other cultures and hopefully this enthusiasm would aid in the motivation to learn a MFL. Throughout the last few years, the Labour Government has strived to promote an awareness of other cultures and their customs in schools (Chapter 2, 2.2.2e). Chapter 4, 4.5 summarises that Topos and Wapa did not plan for the delivery of cultural understanding (e.g., utilising school assemblies). One parent suggested: "Increase MFL profile within school." This is a recurring trend of parent expectation being higher than what was delivered in both schools.

However, when it came to the idea of sending home some MFL homework, only 48% of parents were in favour (Figure 13, Statement 3). We could speculate that parents

may have felt that they needed to know the language themselves in order to support their child with MFL homework and were therefore not keen. Also, some parents may have thought that the current amount of homework is already enough work for their child. However, some positive feedback came from 10 parents (out of 85 respondents) who suggested the following improvement: "Hand out a small amount of homework to consolidate learning." Staff opinion was similar saying that occasional homework is beneficial (Chapter 4, 4.5).

These findings are summarised in Appendix 21 (Table 17).

5.5.3 MFL outside of school hours

A further strategy is to attend a language club after school hours. Eleven years ago, Driscoll (1999) summarised:

Where schools are not meeting the needs of parents or where the provision is perceived as inadequate, parents who can afford to pay are turning towards commercial 'clubs', which offer MFL tuition privately to small groups of young children. (p.10)

Therefore, I wanted to find out if the demand for MFL after-school clubs was still present in Topos and Wapa in 2009. One respondent from the parent questionnaire criticised the necessity of primary MFL teaching in school hours saying:

I would like no time spent on languages in class. This should be done out of school time in an after-school club.

Actually, only 7 participants (3%) said that their child attended a language club which was not during school hours. Out of those 7 participants, only 1 response was from Topos. The other six children from Wapa were taught French in school by a parent from Wapa after school hours. All parents said that their child enjoyed the club.

When considering all other parents whose children did not attend an after school club, in separate yes/no statements, 85% of parents said that their child was not interested and they themselves (98%) of parents were not interested either. However, it was clear in later questions that the reason for the apparent parent disinterest was due to restrictions of time, transport and language club availability. Some of the most relevant points are listed in the Table 10 below:

Table 10: Children’s experience of MFL outside of school hours as reported by parents from both schools

Cost for after-school club	After-school club stopped	Alternative strategies instead of an after-school club
Six parents could not afford the cost.	One parent explained: “Through Community Education my child could attend a Spanish club free of charge. This was cancelled because there was a lack of people being interested.”	Two parents explained their strategy: “At home my child has watched DVDs in French since she was 2.”
One respondent highlighted the fact that there was no cost involved during school hours and said: “My child stopped going to a club as French is being taught in Y3 in this school. So this is more convenient and you don't have to pay.”	Also, ten parents were unhappy that their child’s after-school club was stopped. One parent explained further: “My child really enjoyed the French Club but is losing interest as he feels 'bored' in current MFL lessons during school hours.”	Another respondent stated: “At home my child watches the programme 'Dora' on TV in Spanish. My child can count to ten and uses common words in Spanish.”
	Eight parents expressed uncertainty whether there was a language club.	

As shown above, some parents could not afford the cost for an after-school club, others were disappointed that their club ceased to exist due to falling attendance. However, some parents had started to take up alternative strategies such as MFL programmes on TV or DVDs.

A 2008 survey gave some enumeration of the variety of MFL strategies (e.g., culture/language weeks or days) other than those directly used in MFL lessons. However, the highest uptake (49%) was for after-school club attendance which takes place outside school hours (Wade et al., 2009b, p.38). My research shows that only 3% of children attended an after-school club. As summarised in Chapter 4, 4.5, MFL after-school club endeavours seem to have been unsuccessful by both schools (Topos and Wapa). In Wapa the Headteacher Sophia was unsure whether or not a club was still running (Chapter 4, 4.5).

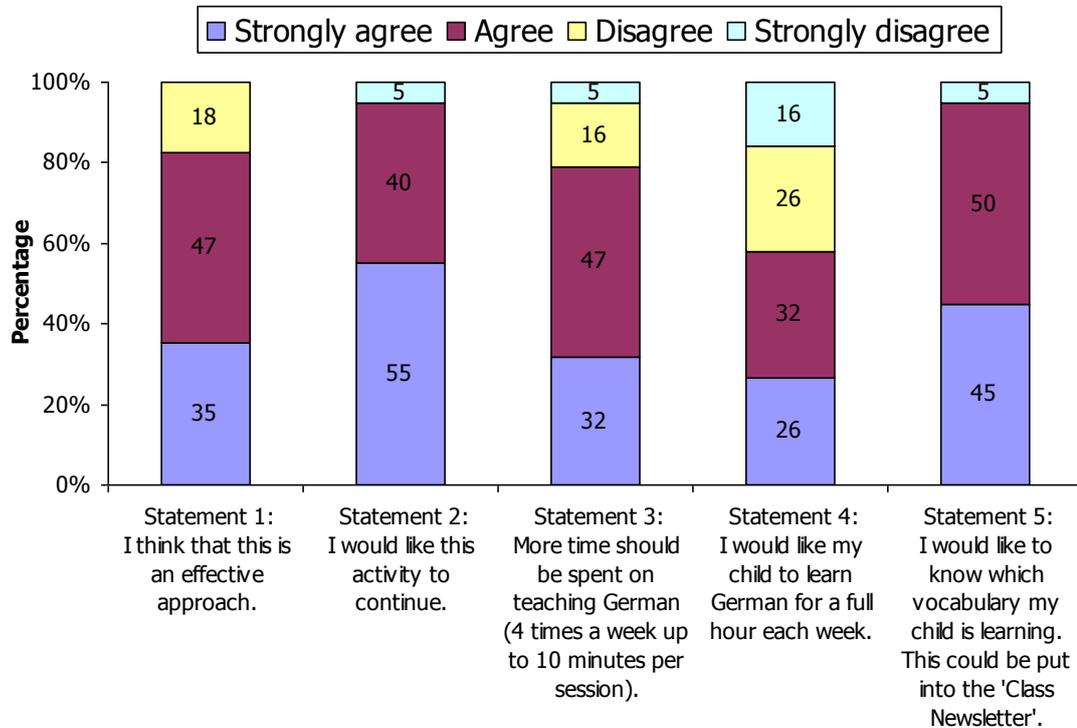
Finally, making KS2 MFL teaching an entitlement in primary schools by 2010 may give all children a fair chance to learn a MFL. Since after-school clubs run according to demand and parents cannot always afford the cost, implementing MFL in the curriculum on a regular basis seems a more consistent approach. Also, the data demonstrates that 85% of parents said their child was not interested in a MFL club and 98% of the parents were not interested either (Appendix 22; Table 18).

5.6 Potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1

As explained in Chapter 3, 3.2.1, I chose to set up questionnaires for Y1 parents at Topos since the children were taught German in five minute sessions before lunch every day (Table 4 and Appendices 5 & 7). As their class teacher (myself), I am keen to pass on my German skills to the children. In the questionnaire, one parent

commented: "It's good to have a native speaker." 21 parents from this Y1 class (Topos) participated in this questionnaire.

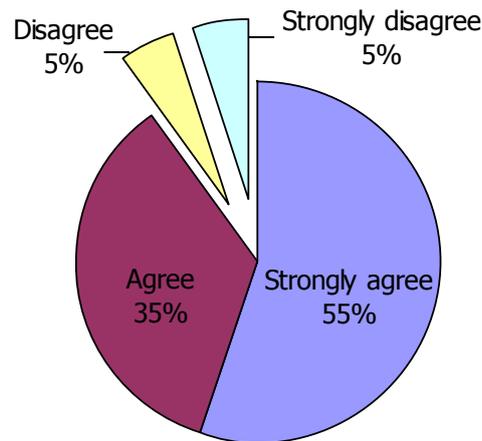
Figure 14: Y1 parents from Topos giving their opinion about the current Y1 MFL provision of 4 times a week for five minutes per session.



In Statement 1 (Figure 14), over 80% of parents liked this strategy and 95% wanted it to be continued because of its success (Statement 2). In Statement 3, nearly 80% would have preferred 10 minutes instead of 5 minutes per session. However, more than half of parents would have liked a full hour instead (Statement 4). The Y1 parents found the idea of using the newsletter as a tool to communicate the taught target language desirable (Statement 5).

Only 14% of parents had seen the German language display in class; however, when informed, 83% of parents wanted the display to continue in Y1 and the remaining 17% did not mind.

Figure 15: Y1 parents from Topos responding to whether they would like their child to continue learning German the following year.



Ninety percent of parents wanted the German language teaching to continue in Year 2 as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 16: Y1 parents from Topos responding to three separate statements about useful strategies to support their child’s German learning.

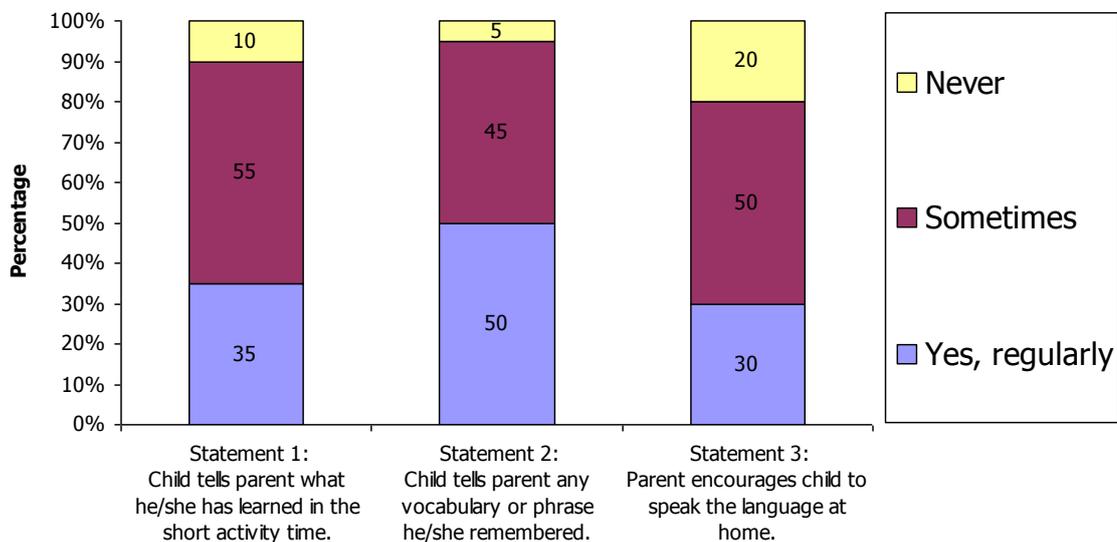


Figure 16 gives insight into what happens at home, and the data from Y1 parents (Topos) is similar compared to the data of all parents from both schools (Figure 12). Once again, there seems to be a trend where Y1 parents wanted MFL success for their child but the effort to support this at home was lacking (5.5.1).

Also, parents wrote their own statements concerning German. This qualitative information is presented in the following table.

Table 11: Parent opinion about implementing German in a Y1 class.

Child remembers German vocabulary	Parents want German to be integrated/continued
<p>My child very much enjoys his German lessons and is keen to show off his talent. (7 parents)</p>	<p>I am very pleased that my son has learnt some German this year. However, I think this is only because his teacher speaks German and he would not otherwise have learnt it with a different teacher. Probably unable to continue learning German after Y1. Continue one session a week of German next year. (4 respondents)</p>
<p>I think it must be very effective because my son has remembered lots of it! He likes to go on the German section on Education City and impresses me with his knowledge of the language!! (1 parent)</p>	<p>I am fully clear about what is provided. I know that my child has learnt some German – numbers etc, which he seems to enjoy but this seems to be adhoc rather than built in as a formal part of the Curriculum. (1 respondent)</p>
<p>My child appears confident in counting from 1 - 10 and saying basic words. E.g., hello, goodbye, good morning and good afternoon. I would like to see his vocabulary expand. (1 parent)</p>	<p>I think more than a 5 minute session would be much more beneficial. (1 parent)</p>

To summarise, data from Figures 14, 15, and Table 11 present a strong opinion that Y1 parents were pleased with German language sessions in Y1 and wanted this to be continued into Y2 (Appendix 23; Table 19). Enever (2009) explains:

It is proposed that this major shift in start age reflects the increasing trend of lower start ages throughout Europe and beyond, and may be viewed as a political recognition of the sociocultural value of being identified as 'in line with the rest of Europe'. (p15)

I believe this was a natural response from parents, and not arising from a particular pressure to follow a European trend or from knowledge of the CPH (Chapter 2, 2.1.1).

To conclude this parent chapter, I have presented the clear trend of parents wanting their child to learn at least one MFL, most preferably French. However, evidence showed that parents were biased by the immediate year group their child occupies. On average, parents expected teaching time to be increased for KS2, and teaching a MFL should also take place in KS1 and FS. Some parents recognised the need to re-balance the curriculum to embrace languages. They want their child to continue MFL learning in secondary school with the desire to continue with the same language. Although over half of parents are satisfied with their school's language provision, they criticise the lack of information from school about such a provision. Parents were in favour of fostering cultural understanding during assembly times in school but were less supportive of MFL homework being sent home. Interestingly, only 3% said their child attended a MFL club. Eighty-five percent of parents said their child was not interested in a MFL club and 98% of parents were not interested either. Furthermore, teaching German in a Y1 class was popular since those Y1 parents wanted the strategy to be continued and also continued into the next year group (Y2). A high number of parents wanted the teaching time allocation for Y1 German to be increased. Parent opinion is summarised in Appendices 16 to 23 (Tables 12 to 19). As mentioned in Chapter 2, 2.3, parent opinion has been under-researched and the above comments have helped to provide new insights.

I would like to remind the reader that the UK Government is under pressure to be in line with the European Union (1995) which expects the MFL starting age to be at pre-school level (p.47). However, to ensure lasting success, Enever (2009) believes that societal perceptions have to change (p.15).

The next chapter will present pupil opinion to be discussed in the light of staff and parent opinion, and literature.

Chapter 6:

Pupil opinion on primary MFL teaching

After having considered staff and parent opinion on primary MFL teaching, this chapter will give an account of what pupils from two different primary schools thought about this matter. As mentioned before in Chapter 2, 2.3, existing literature focussed rather on more technical considerations (i.e. what the optimal age for acquiring a foreign language is) and pupil opinion was not taken into account. However, in this research I wanted to fill this gap by giving pupils the chance to think and give their view. Powell and Smith (2009) stated:

Children have long been the subjects of research, but the nature of their involvement is changing according to how childhood is viewed in society. As a result of theoretical developments in the study of childhood, children are less likely to be viewed merely as the objects of enquiry, but instead as active participants in the research process. (p.124)

For Topos and Wapa pupils to become active participants in my research, I followed the ethical procedure of seeking the consent of parents first (Chapter 3, 3.3.1). Once I received signed consent forms, 109 pupils (51 from Topos and 58 from Wapa) participated in a KS2 questionnaire for pupils (Appendices 4, 8 & 11). Also, 20 pupils from Topos participated in a questionnaire for Y1 pupils (Appendices 5 & 9). Teachers and Teaching Assistants at each school administered the questionnaires without my presence as the researcher. Thus, pupils had the confidence to take part in an anonymous way. Any queries were answered by Teachers or Teaching Assistants who were instructed beforehand (Appendices 12 & 13). This approach made the research become more valid and reliable (Chapter 3, 3.3.3).

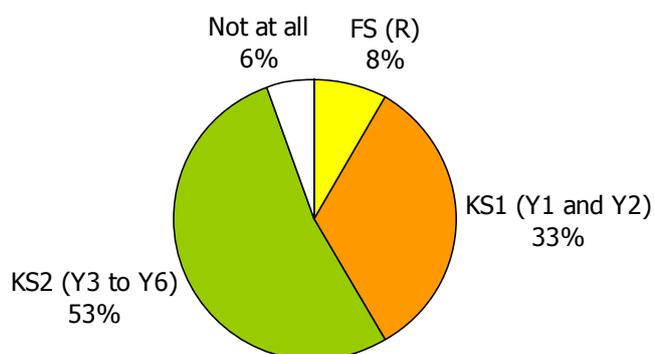
The research findings from the questionnaire for KS2 pupils will be discussed under the first five research questions (see sections 6.1 to 6.5). In section 6.6 the outcome of

the questionnaire for Y1 pupils from Topos will be analysed under the sixth research question. Like the previous chapters, I aim to identify themes which can be compared with later points in the thesis.

6.1 The commencement of MFL teaching

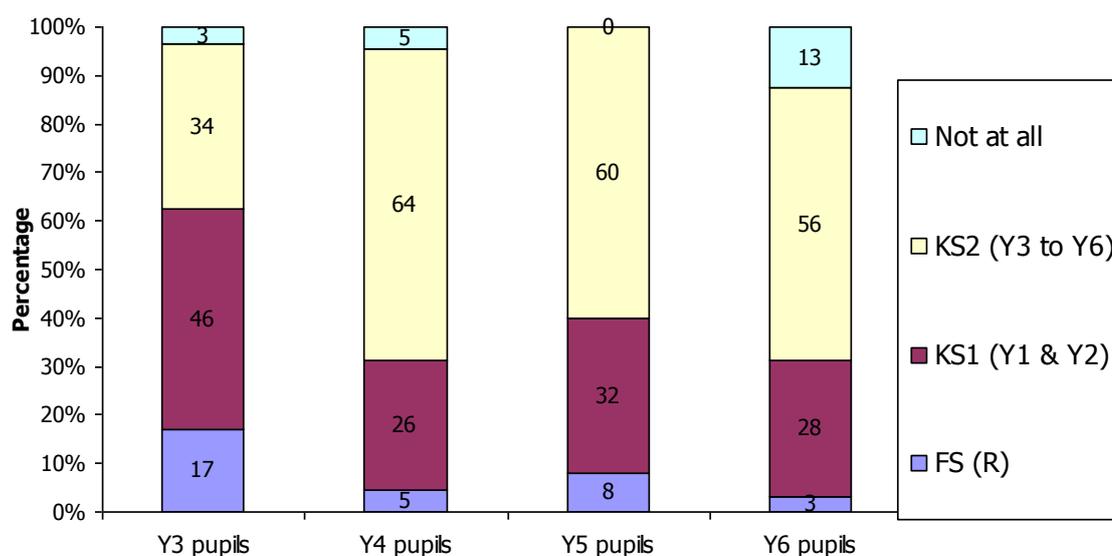
Overall, 94% of pupils found MFL learning relevant to primary school (Figure 17). A slim majority believed that KS2 was the most suitable time for MFL commencement. However, two fifths of pupils expected an earlier start than KS2. Compared with this pupil opinion, almost three quarters of parents opted for a starting point earlier than KS2 (Figure 3). Also, all interviewed staff thought the subject should be introduced earlier than KS2 (Chapter 4, 4.1).

Figure 17: **The response of pupils from both schools to the question of when they would like their primary school to start teaching them a MFL.**



In the previous chapter, the data showed that parents were biased by the immediate year group their child occupied (Chapter 5, 5.1.2). Therefore, I checked whether pupils were biased by the immediate year group they occupied and I carried out the same analysis on pupil opinion as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18: The correlation of pupils' request for when MFL should start, with the year group that the pupil occupies.



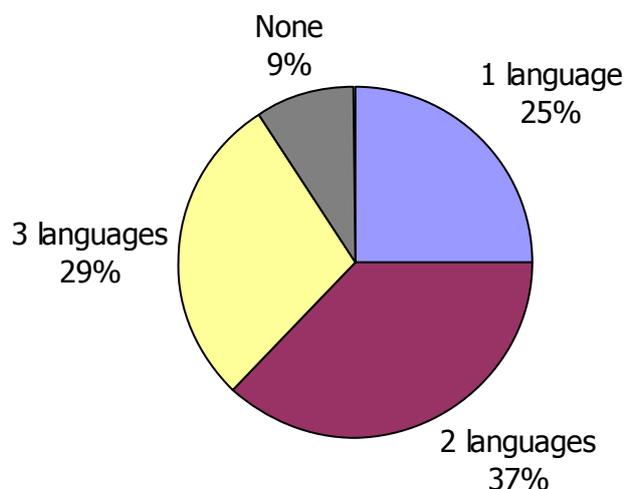
Y3 pupils were most enthusiastic to see MFL start in KS1 and FS which might be due to them being the year group nearest to this age range. However, this was not a trend with increased age since Y5 had more interest than Y4 for a start in KS1/FS. Except for Y3, Y4 to Y6 had a majority vote for MFL to start in KS2, although Y6 had the highest proportion that were least interested in starting any MFL. There is the question of why motivation was lowest in Y6. Regarding the transition from KS2 to KS3 Bolster (2009) noted that there can be difficulties to maintain motivation in MFL over the longer term (p.233).

In summary, the majority of pupils were keen for the commencement of MFL teaching in KS2 with the exception of Y3 pupils who preferred a start in KS1/FS. Y6 had a higher proportion of pupils who were disinterested in any MFL in primary school (Appendix 16; Table 12).

6.2 The number of MFLs

As shown in Figure 19, 91% of pupils were keen to learn at least one language with an even higher interest being in two or three languages.

Figure 19: The response of pupils from both schools to the question of how many languages they would like to have learned at primary school by the end of Year 6. (Pupils did not count the English language.)



In Chapter 2, 2.1.3 I referred to Hawkins (2005) who suggests a “language learning apprenticeship” that embraces two stages (p.15). The first stage is ‘educational’ (age 5-14,) by training the ear. During KS1 and KS2 Hawkins prefers the introduction of several MFLs in primary education. A programme was explored in 2004 by seven primary schools who took part in teaching five languages to Y5 and Y6 children. Barton et al. (2009) evaluated the findings from this project (pp.155-156). Participating pupils were asked whether learning only one language would have been better. There was a mixed response as some pupils would have preferred the benefits of gaining in-depth knowledge of one language whilst others stated that “learning a range of languages equipped them with the basics to survive in other countries and was preferable for pupils who might struggle with one particular language” (Barton et al., 2009, p.156).

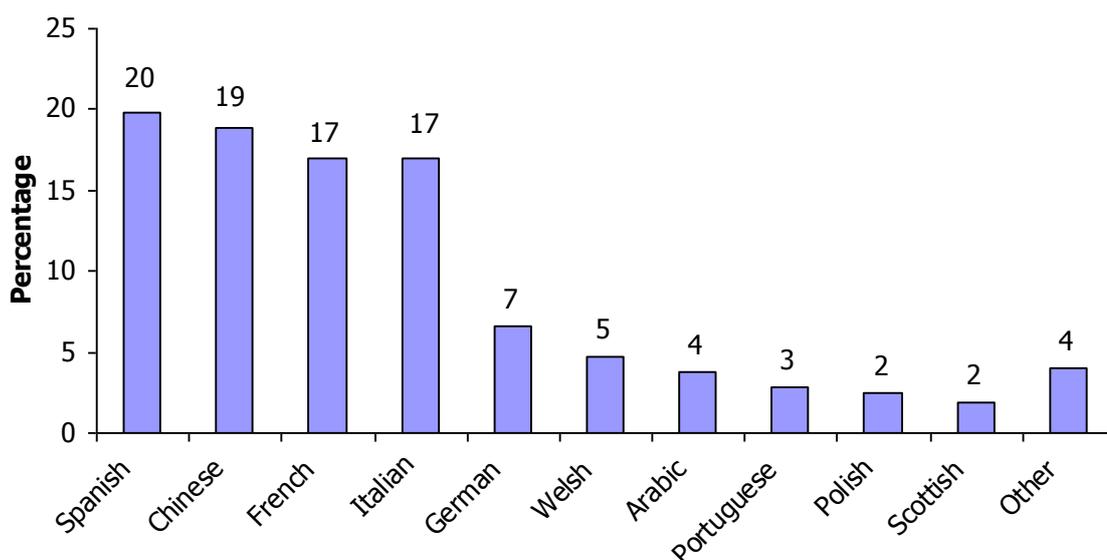
The above project illustrates the ongoing dilemma of which is the most useful strategy: one, two or several MFL(s). My research findings showed that pupils had a positive attitude towards MFL learning. Figure 19 presents pupils with a keen interest to learn

at least one MFL but more opted to learn two or even three MFLs (Appendix 17; Table 13).

6.3 Choosing the most suitable MFL(s) to implement

Forty five pupils gave their own suggestions for what they would like to learn in their foreign language lessons. Interestingly, the most occurring ideas focused on learning additional languages such as: Spanish (5 pupils), Italian (4 pupils) and German (3 pupils). Figure 20 shows pupil opinion in their responses to language selection questions.

Figure 20: The response of pupils from both schools to the question of which language they would most like to see taught in their school.



Pupils voted Spanish and Chinese as their most popular, closely followed by French and Italian. Reasons for Spanish ranking highest with pupils might be due to Spain being their second most visited holiday destination although France was the first, as noted in the parents' questionnaire. Spain is a popular holiday destination for families, and children may naturally become inquisitive about the language. Chinese has an exciting attraction – it is very different to European languages and has unusual written characters. This could excite children to get to know this language. Pupils ranked

French as their joint third choice along with Italian (cf. parent opinion, Figure 10). Burstall (1970) believes: "Children's attitudes towards learning French appear also to be influenced by those of their parents" (p.45).

Considering Y5 and Y6 pupils (56 participants) who are moving towards secondary school age, I assessed their attitude towards MFL in secondary school using three separate yes/no questions. Seventy-five percent said that they would like to learn a foreign language at secondary school. However, only 32% of pupils expressed their desire to continue learning the same foreign language at secondary school. This was a stark contrast compared with parents' wishes where 81% wanted their child to continue with the same language (Chapter 5, 5.3). When asked to learn a MFL but a different one at secondary school, 74% pupils were happy with this idea.

Bolster (2009) raised the question of whether motivation for MFL learning declines when moving from primary to secondary school and noted the findings of her own research:

... particularly by Year 8, interest in other FLs had largely replaced enthusiasm for the FL they had all studied since primary school. In fact, a number of the interviewees seemed bored and disillusioned with French, seeing what they had done at primary school as 'kid's stuff'. (p.235)

It might be that a well managed MFL transition from primary to secondary school could help maintain motivation and progress by providing continuity and taking prior learning into account as Satchwell (2006) explains:

Considerable headway could be made if there were more cross-phase team-teaching/class-sharing in Y5 and Y6, so that pupils can get to know one or two teachers from the secondary school, even if they teach them only once a week. (p.52)

My research showed that there was a keen interest of pupils (77%) to meet the new secondary language teacher before moving up to KS3.

In this third research question, pupils found Spanish and Chinese most desirable, followed by French and Italian. Although Y5 and Y6 pupils were keen to continue MFL learning at KS3, their enthusiasm declined when asked to continue with the same language (Appendix 18; Table 14). It is suspected that if resources were allocated to produce a good transition for MFL from KS2 to KS3, pupil motivation and success would be maintained.

6.4 Teaching time allocation for MFL(s)

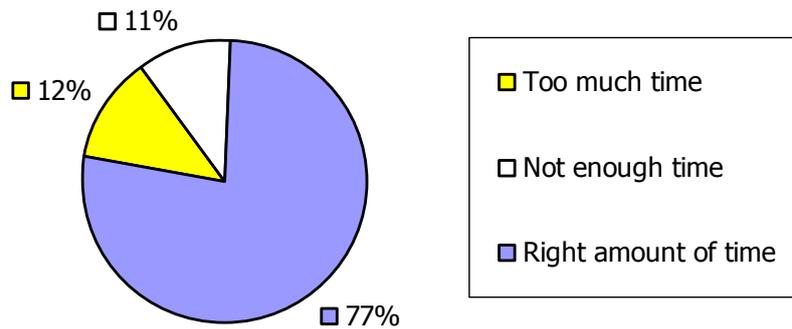
The current practice of MFL provision in both schools (Topos and Wapa) is summarised in Table 4. Overall, pupils from Topos have more MFL teaching during KS2 (each year group has 45 minutes per week) than Wapa pupils (each year group has either 30 or 45 minutes per week). Both schools offer less teaching time than what the KS2 MFL Framework recommends, namely 60 minutes per week teaching time (Chapter 2, 2.2.2d). Satchwell (2006) argues:

... children will achieve nothing really worthwhile on such a parsimonious time allocation; they will need every minute of the recommended 60 minutes' teaching time if they are to acquire the skills and knowledge laid out as their entitlement in the [KS2 MFL] Framework document. (pp.51-52)

However, Rose (2009) provides no mandate for any specific MFL teaching time allocation and schools can decide for themselves (p.18). Therefore, Coleman (2009) questions the current language provision in primary schools by saying: "How much class time will the majority [of UK primary schools] get, and from which teachers?" (p.124).

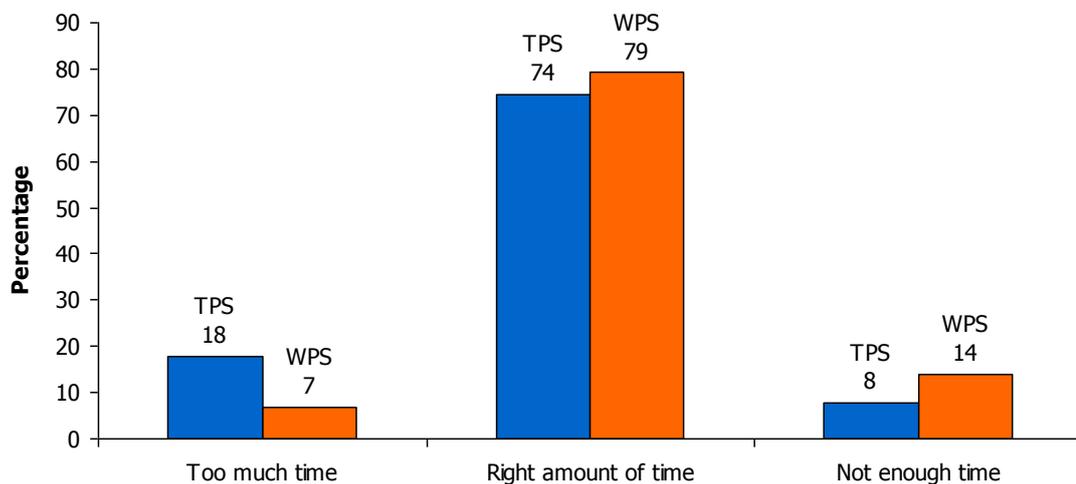
My research showed that 77% of pupils were satisfied with their MFL time slot each week (Figure 21). The response for "too much" or "not enough" time was 12% and 11% respectively.

Figure 21: Pupils from both schools giving their opinion about the current amount of time spent on each foreign language lesson.



Analysing each school separately (Figure 22), pupils from Wapa were more satisfied with their current MFL time allocation than Topos. Considering only those who disagreed in Wapa, the majority (14%) wanted more teaching time. Conversely, considering only those who disagreed in Topos, the majority (18%) wanted to reduce the teaching time.

Figure 22: The response of pupils from each individual school giving their opinion about the current amount of time spent on each foreign language lesson.



Furthermore, it is interesting to quote comments which two individual pupils made:

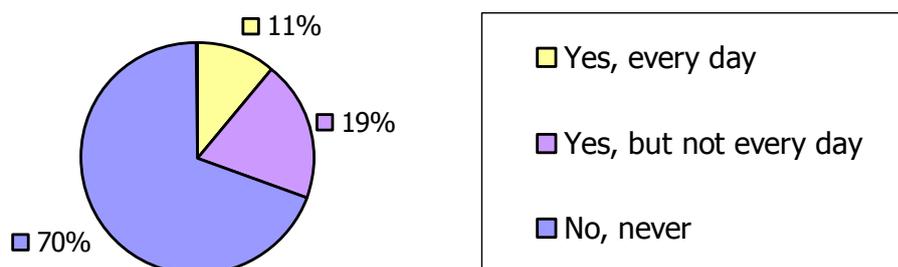
“The lesson might not be that long [short lesson viewed as positive].”
 “It can get boring because the lesson takes a bit too long.”

As these responses show, it is a careful balance when providing MFL teaching to young children. The key elements are to provide stimulating lessons which are just the right time span for pupils to learn and continue feeling excited about their language studies. Some class teachers integrate the use of the foreign language with pupils during the day. This strategy supports on-going learning as Satchwell (2006) explains:

If the FL is taught by the class teacher, this also creates opportunities for five or ten minutes of spontaneous revision and reinforcement in the target language during the school day. (p.52)

In my research, 70% of pupils said that their class teacher never uses the MFL target language outside a language lesson (e.g., when saying 'hello', taking the register, or saying numbers).

Figure 23: Pupils from both schools answering the question of how often their class teacher uses the foreign language during the day.



In summary, 77% of pupils were satisfied with their MFL time slot each week (Figure 21), although these sessions were less than the recommended length of 60 minutes per week. However, Wapa pupils were more satisfied than Topos pupils (Figure 22). Also, 70% of pupils said that their class teacher never reinforces the target language during the day (Appendix 19; Table 15). Although most pupils are satisfied with their current MFL experience, the question is whether these time allocations are sufficient for them to make real progress in their MFL learning according to the KS2 MFL Framework.

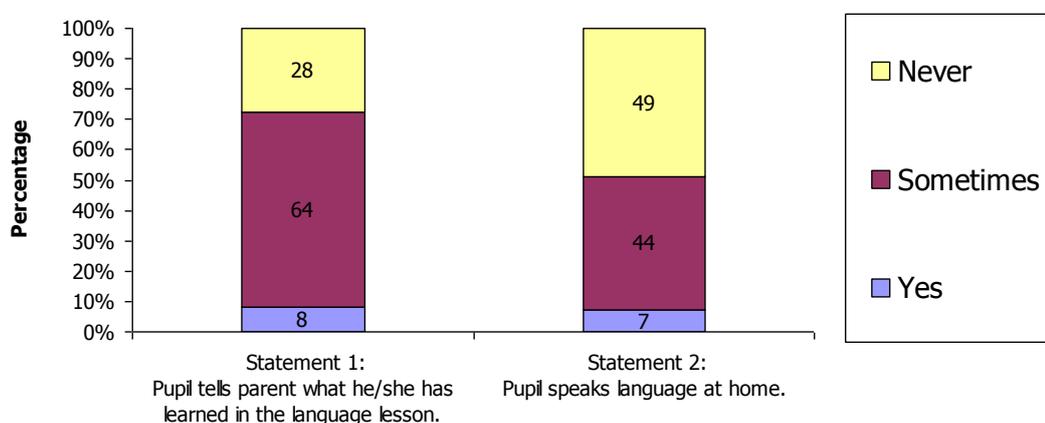
6.5 Possible strategies to create a positive MFL learning environment

This fifth research question obtained pupil opinion in the following areas: pupils' use of MFL skills at home (6.5.1), promoting MFL through a good MFL provision, school assemblies and homework (6.5.2), and MFL outside of school hours (6.5.3).

6.5.1 Pupils' use of MFL at home

Pupils had more enthusiasm to tell their parents what they had learned during a MFL lesson rather than using the language at home (Figure 24). The 'never' response was significantly greater for the statement of speaking the language at home. The same trend emerged when parents were asked about their initiative at home (Figure 12).

Figure 24: Pupils from both schools responding to two separate statements about using their own MFL skills at home.

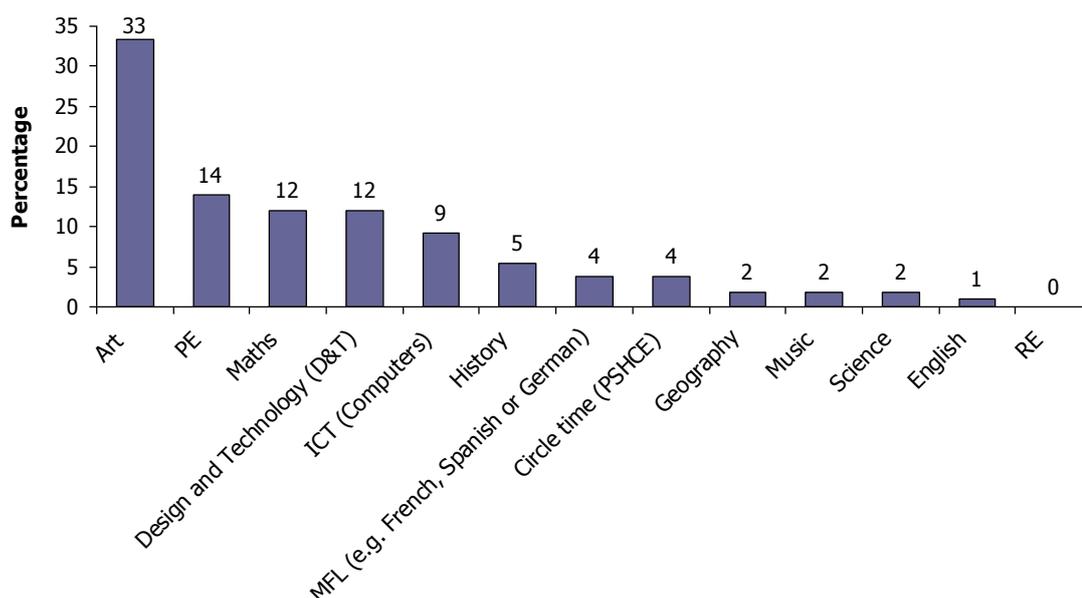


Also, 35% of pupils said that they could speak another language (mostly Spanish, French or German) – not the one they were learning presently in school; however, their level of competency was not examined (Appendix 20; Table 16). Class teachers and MFL specialist teachers have the opportunity to encourage pupils to use their language skills when at home. The school can also encourage parents to support their child's MFL use outside of the classroom.

6.5.2 Promoting MFL through a good MFL provision, school assemblies and homework

It may be argued that pupils are the best indicator of whether something works, therefore, I deemed it useful to assess pupils' enjoyment level of MFL compared with every other subject.

Figure 25: Pupils from both schools responding to which subject they like most in school.



Although the most popular subject was Art with 33%, children were more in favour of MFL than English. Analysing the data from Figure 25 according to gender (57 were male and 52 female), boys had less interest in Art than girls; on the other hand, boys were keener on MFL (5%) than girls (2%).

A separate question asked pupils to choose whether they liked English (Literacy) or MFL most. There was equal interest for both subjects (50%) when only these two subjects were queried for their preference side by side. This was a real surprise. Pupils enjoyed Literacy as much as MFL lessons in both primary schools. This leads to the question why pupil interest for MFL learning decreases in secondary and high

schools. Some blame the Government for making MFL an optional subject in KS4, such as Coleman et al. (2007) who state:

Even before it [optional MFL in KS4] became officially authorized in 2004, increasing numbers of pupils were thus opting out of language study, but making the subject optional damaged the perceived status of languages, and the introduction of choice has led to a dramatic decline in the take-up of languages post-14. (p.349)

Three years later in 2009, Coleman observed that "Sceptics may still see the introduction of primary languages itself as the Government's quid-pro-quo, albeit a delayed one, for removing statutory provision at Key Stage 4" (p.124). In contrary, Macaro (2008) argues that "The decline in motivation to study an MFL has not resulted from making it optional" (p.107). He claims that in the early 1990s Government agencies began to build MFL policy on flimsy concepts that sounded catchy e.g., 'Languages for All' rather than devising well thought out programmes based on solid research and reasoning (Macaro, 2008, p.107).

Logic suggests there is often a correlation between 'doing well' and 'liking' a subject as demonstrated by the following data: in Figure 26, 90% of pupils thought that their own MFL skills were at least 'OK'. This perceived good performance could influence pupils' opinion of why they like MFL lessons as much as English (Literacy). Also, pupils felt that the challenge level of MFL lessons was manageable. Again, only 11% said that the lesson was hard (Figure 27).

Figure 26: Pupils from both schools describing their own language skills.

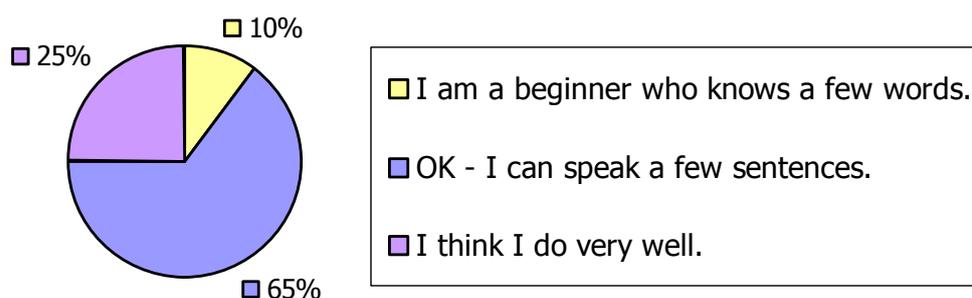
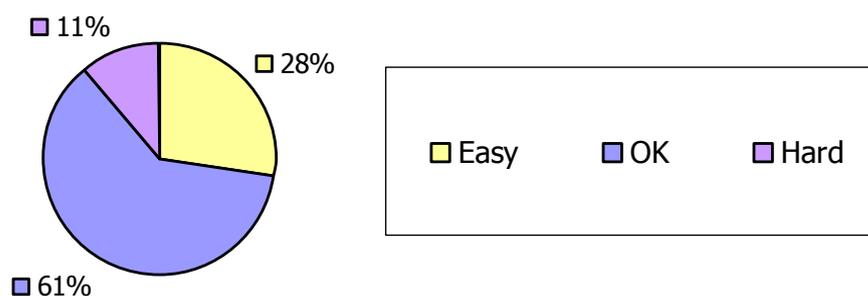


Figure 27: Pupils from both schools rating the challenge of their language lesson in class.



Furthermore, in Figure 28, 60% of pupils expressed that their MFL lessons were positive with the three selections of 'fun', 'interesting' and 'good games' having equal rating. Tierney and Gallastegi (2005) say that "There is considerable agreement about an interactive approach and much is made of the 'fun' element, as can be seen in the context of developing positive attitudes" (p.53). This can be seen from some of the pupils' comments they wrote in the questionnaires:

- "I like learning languages and it is fun." (10 pupils)
- "We play fun games." (11 pupils)
- "It is fun to learn and the teacher is great." (8 pupils)
- "It is fun, exciting, educational, enjoyable and cool." (2 pupils)
- "We can use a Pen Pal on the computer which is fun!" (1 pupil)
- "I learn more because it is different." (1 pupil)
- "It is kinaesthetic learning." (1 pupil)

On the other hand, Coleman (2009) is not overly impressed by this apparently 'early' pupil enthusiasm and he warns that "There is even a danger that primary languages might squander the initial thrill which learners typically experience when starting foreign language study, making things even harder for secondary teachers" (p.124).

Also in Figure 28, 15% of pupils viewed their MFL lessons as boring which was the most frequent response (highest percentage). In light of this, written comments of pupils highlight some of their concerns as follows:

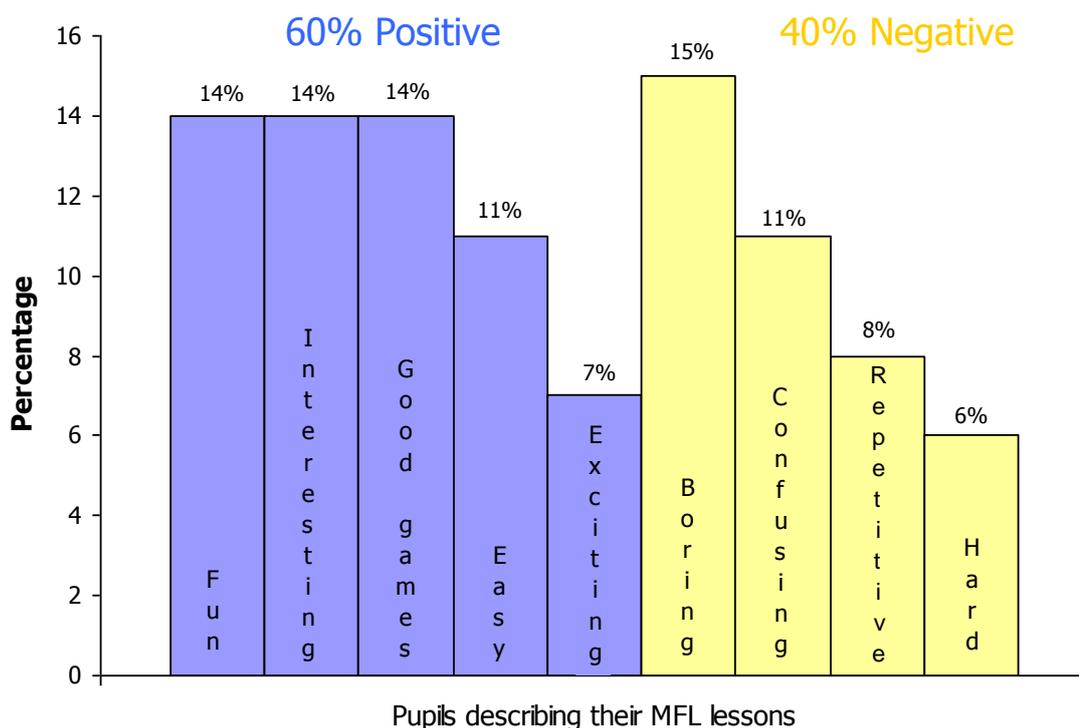
- "It is sort of boring." (12 pupils)
- "Languages are confusing and can be hard." (5 pupils)
- "We learn the same things." (4 pupils)
- "It is boring and you don't learn much." (3 pupils)
- "It's boring. You just have to do it all at high school." (1 pupil)

Fröhlich-Ward (1979b) recognised the need for teachers to keep learners interested.

Concerning young children learning a language she articulates:

Indeed, it may be stated that unless young children are “occupied” by such activities [games, songs, rhymes, role play etc.] which appear to distract from the chief aim – the learning of a foreign language – they will find foreign-language learning a burden rather than a pleasure. (p.61)

Figure 28: Pupils from both schools describing their MFL lessons.



Pupils’ overall enthusiasm to learn a MFL may arise from the fact that lessons were enjoyable, manageable, confidence building, as well as purposeful. Eighty-seven percent thought that their language training in primary school would help them in secondary school. More than three quarters of pupils noted that their lessons usually continued on from the previous one. In the view of pupils it would appear that the MFL provision of both Topos and Wapa schools was mainly positive in respect of the above discussion. However, there are improvements to be considered. Therefore, we shall look at what pupils wanted to learn in their MFL lessons. There were 45

comments out of 109 participants. Very similar comments were summarised into the following main points:

Learn about topics such as football, sport activities, food, shapes, fashion and clothes, dance, different countries (e.g., India, France etc.), French schools, animals, plants and trees, and houses.

Continue a topic and learn more new words each week.

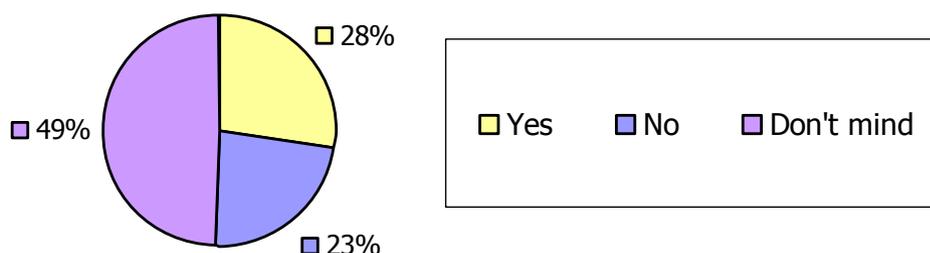
Learn a specific phrase and know how to say "Happy Birthday" or "Can I have a cup of tea?"

Learn songs but not just for Christmas.

These findings could easily be implemented to foster a more positive MFL environment.

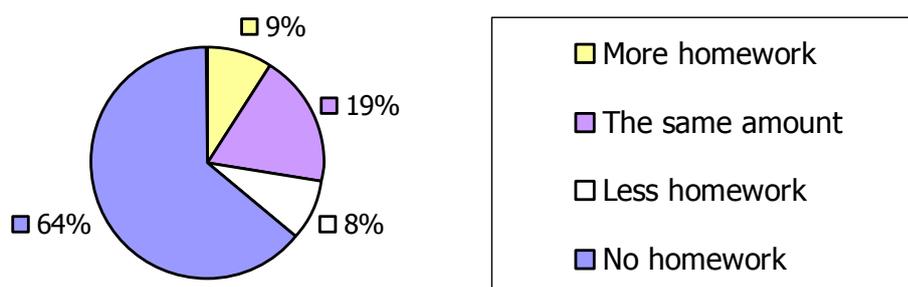
80% of parents (Figure 13) really liked the idea of using assembly times to encourage cultural understanding, whereas pupils did not seem to embrace this idea as much as parents (Figure 29). This could simply be due to the fact that pupils did not know what this entails.

Figure 29: Pupils from both schools responding to the idea of learning about people from other countries and their foreign language in school assemblies.



When asking about homework, 70% of pupils said that they did not get any MFL homework. Twenty-seven percent sometimes got homework, but only 3% on a regular basis. All language teachers confirmed to me during their interview that they sometimes gave homework but nothing on a regular basis. Therefore, Figure 30 provides insight into pupils' wishes regarding homework.

Figure 30: Pupils from both schools responding to the question of how much MFL homework they would like to get.



Almost two thirds of pupils did not want any MFL homework. In general, parents were a little more enthusiastic about homework than pupils (Figure 13). The current strategy of sometimes giving homework might already be the right approach when considering parents' and pupils' wishes.

A summary for this section can be found in Appendix 21 (Table 17).

6.5.3 MFL outside of school hours

Staff opinion gave the MFL club provision outside of school hours a negative verdict due to lack of success (Chapter 4, 4.5). Also, parents were disinterested in MFL clubs (Chapter 5, 5.5.3). When evaluating pupil opinion, only 4 out of 109 pupils from KS2 attended a language club which was not during school hours. One of them said that the club was boring, but the other three gave positive feedback. However, a quarter of the remaining 105 pupils would have been interested to attend a language club. In response to three separate statements, 38% of pupils said they would have time to attend a language club; 57% of pupils knew that their parents or family would have been able to provide transport, but only 11% of pupils thought that there would be a language club running close to their home (Appendix 22; Table 18).

Summarising this section 6.5 (Appendices 20 to 22; Tables 16 to 18), pupils had more enthusiasm to tell their parents what they had learned during a MFL lesson rather than

using the language at home (Figure 24). Their enthusiasm for MFL learning in primary school was higher than I had anticipated. In Figure 25, although the most popular subject was Art, children were more in favour of MFL than English. In another question pupils ranked the subjects of English and MFL equally when asked to compare these two subjects alone. Consequently, there could be a correlation between 'doing well' and 'liking' a subject since pupils were confident in their MFL skills (Figure 26) and viewed MFL as manageable (Figure 27). In Figure 28, 60% of children were positive about MFL lessons; however, 40% of pupils selected negative responses (e.g., boring, confusing, repetitive, or hard). Seventy percent of pupils supported the idea of learning about people from other countries and their foreign language in school assemblies. Almost two thirds of pupils did not want any MFL homework. Pupils' attitude was mainly positive towards MFL learning which may indicate that the MFL provision in Topos and Wapa was good. However, by considering pupil's comments (e.g., "Learn about specific topics."), further initiatives could increase this positive learning environment even more in their primary school. Only four KS2 pupils attended a MFL club outside of school hours although a quarter of pupils would have been interested to attend.

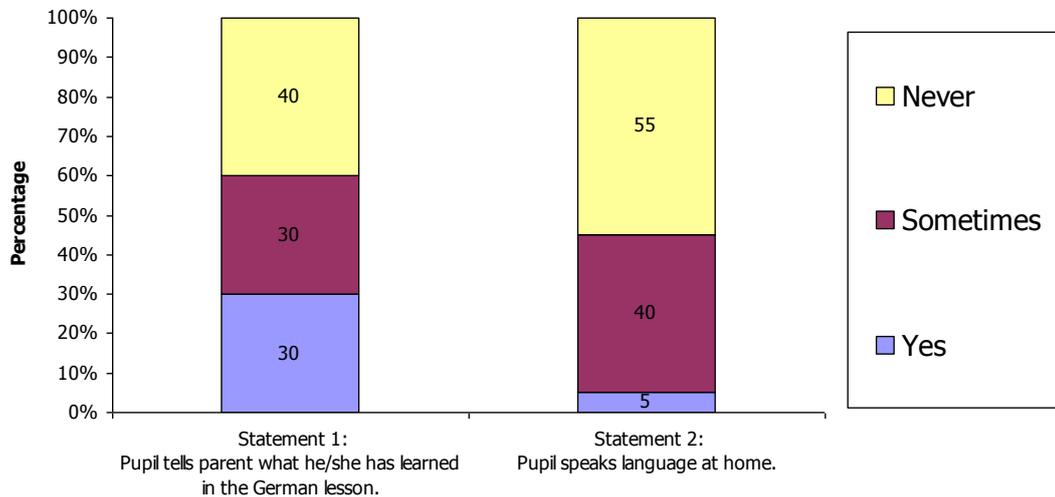
6.6 Potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1

As explained in Chapter 3, 3.2.1, I chose to set up questionnaires for Y1 pupils at Topos (Appendices 5 & 9) since the children were taught German in five minute sessions before lunch every day (Table 4). 20 pupils from this Y1 class (Topos) participated in this questionnaire, 16 were male and four were female.

Pupils were more interested to tell what they had learned, rather than speaking the language at home (Figure 31). Speculating, these young children (5 and 6 year olds)

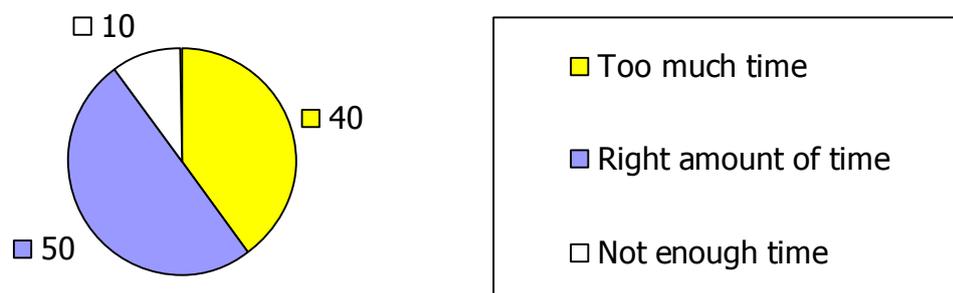
might find it easier to share the ideas about what they had learned instead of remembering the target language. KS2 pupils, however, were keener both to share what they had learned and speak the language at home (Figure 24).

Figure 31: Y1 pupils from Topos responding to two separate statements about using their own MFL skills at home.



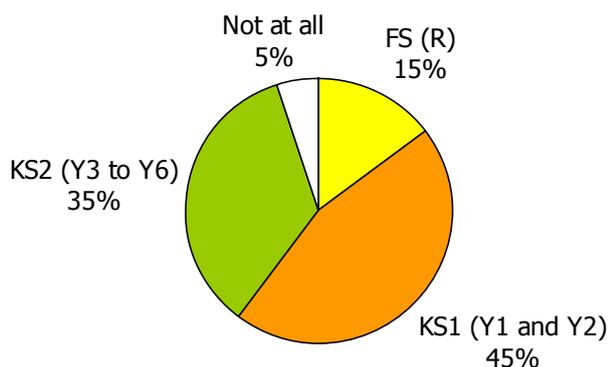
As shown in Figure 32, half of the Y1 children were satisfied with the current time provision. When asked if they would have liked to have a full hour German lesson, there was an equal vote of 35% for both 'yes' and 'no' responses. The rest did not mind. In comparison, 58% of Y1 parents favoured having one hour (Figure 14).

Figure 32: Y1 pupils from Topos giving their opinion about the current amount of time spent on each foreign language lesson.



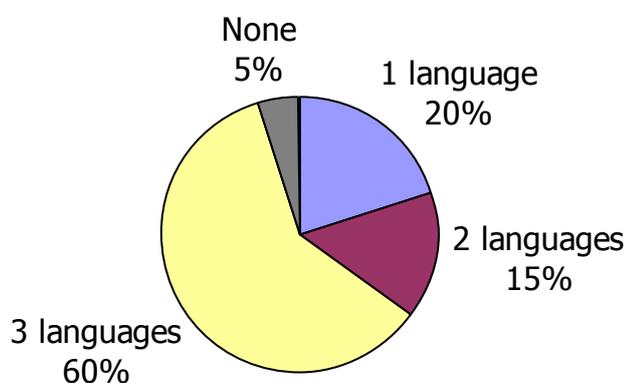
Sixty-five percent of pupils were keen to continue learning German in Y2; however, 90% of Y1 parents wanted this to be the case (Figure 15). Furthermore, in Figure 33, 60% of Y1 pupils supported the idea to start MFL teaching before KS2. This response was 19% higher than that of KS2 pupils when asked the same question (Figure 17).

Figure 33: The response of Y1 pupils from Topos to the question of when they would like their primary school to start teaching them a MFL.



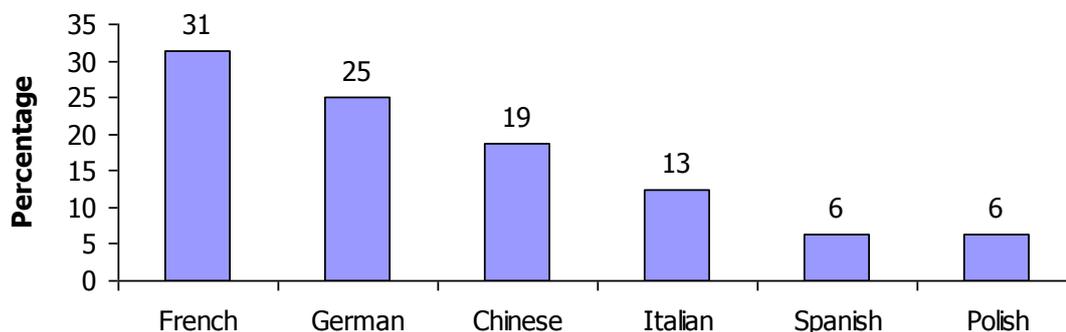
An interesting finding in Figure 34 is that Y1 pupils were most enthusiastic to learn three languages. The 'none' response (5%) was lower compared with the KS2 pupil response (9%, Figure 19) but there was a more equal spread between one, two or three languages for KS2. The choice for three languages by older pupils halved and may possibly be due to older children having a more realistic outlook.

Figure 34: Y1 pupils from Topos responding to the question of how many languages they would like to have learned by the end of Y6. (Pupils did not count the English language.)



The Y1 pupils ranked their MFL languages choices differently than KS2 pupils (Figure 35; cf. Figure 20). Only 7% of KS2 pupils voted for teaching German in their primary school (Figure 20). Therefore, it was striking to see German in second place voted by Y1 pupils in Figure 35. Tentatively speaking, Y1 German lessons must have created a positive impression. Twenty-five percent described their German language skills as 'beginner', but the rest thought that they were doing 'OK' or even 'well'.

Figure 35: Y1 pupils from Topos responding to the question of which language they would most like to see taught in their primary school.



As with KS2 (Figure 30), Y1 pupils were also asked about the level of MFL homework they would like. Forty-five percent of pupils were keen to get some homework each week, although 20% were not sure and 35% wanted none. Forty-five percent requested to learn about people from other countries and their language in school assemblies compared with 28% in KS2 (Figure 29).

When Y1 pupils were asked: "Which subject do you like most: English or German?", 85% chose English and 15% chose German. KS2 pupils however, gave MFL and English equal preference (Chapter 6, 6.5.2) although it must be noted that they were learning French and/or Spanish at the time of research. Eighty-five percent of Y1 pupils said that the German lessons were either 'easy' or 'OK'. When asked what they would like to learn, four pupils suggested "counting up to 20" in German, and one child wanted to write in German. Y1 pupils were also given the same selection of words to describe their German lessons as KS2 pupils were in Figure 28. Starting with the most occurring choice in descending order, this is what they thought: The lessons were 'fun', 'interesting', 'exciting', 'hard', 'easy' and 'boring'. Some other comments given by Year 1 pupils are listed below:

- "I like learning German." (7 pupils)
- "It is exciting learning German." (2 pupils)
- "It is fun learning German." (1 pupil)

None of the Y1 children attended a language club. In response to three separate statements, 40% wanted to be part of a language club but there was no club provision, 25% were busy because of other club commitments, and 10% of pupils' parents were not able to provide transport.

In evaluation, the Y1 pupil questionnaire gave insight into how these children aged five and six perceived their short sessions of German (Appendix 23; Table 19). Overall, they enjoyed this input and expressed enthusiasm to continue learning MFL. In this research, Y1 pupil opinion gave evidence that small doses of language learning can build up the enthusiasm and motivation for MFL at a very young age. Also, as their teacher I observed that Y1 pupils had no difficulty in learning the correct pronunciation (see debate in Chapter 2, 2.1.1).

Concluding this chapter on pupil opinion, 53% of KS2 pupils believed that KS2 was the most suitable time for MFL commencement. However, two fifths of pupils expected an earlier start than KS2 (Figure 17). In Figure 19, 91% of pupils were keen to learn at least one language with a higher interest for two or three languages. When it came to choosing the most suitable MFL(s) to implement, pupil opinion ranked Spanish and Chinese as their most popular, closely followed by French and Italian. Although Y5 and Y6 pupils were keen to continue MFL learning at KS3, their enthusiasm was greater for switching to a different language. Figure 21 shows that 77% of pupils were satisfied with their MFL time slot each week, although this is below the recommendation of 60 minutes per week. A high percentage of pupils (70%) said that their class teacher never reinforces the target language during the day. Pupil opinion is summarised in Appendices 16 to 23 (Tables 12 to 19).

Considering possible strategies to create a positive MFL learning environment, class teachers, MFL specialist teachers and parents have the chance to encourage pupils to use their language skills at home since pupils say this is not widely practised (Figure 24). My research findings suggest that based on pupil opinions, both Topos and Wapa have a good MFL provision in place. KS2 pupils were more in favour of MFL than English when asked in the context of all subjects (Figure 25). However, they gave the subjects of English and MFL equal ranking in a question that asked them to evaluate them side by side. There could be a correlation between 'doing well' and 'liking' the subject of MFL since pupils were confident in their MFL skills (Figure 26), viewed MFL as manageable (Figure 27), and 60% perceived MFL lessons positively (Figure 28). They were supportive of the idea of learning about people from other countries and their language in school assemblies. Opinions were divided about MFL homework although in general, Y1 pupils were keener to receive homework than KS2 pupils. Although some pupils seemed interested to attend a MFL club outside of school hours, only four KS2 pupils actually attended one. In general, the Y1 pupil questionnaire showed that pupils enjoyed their MFL sessions of five minutes of German every day. However, I am aware that being a native speaker with enthusiasm for the subject may contribute to this result. Their motivation to learn and continue learning was strongly expressed. Also, as discussed in Chapter 2, 2.1.1, research indicates that young learners have the ability to easily adopt native-like pronunciation. This was something I observed with these Y1 pupils as their class teacher whilst teaching them German.

There have been accusations by sceptics that primary MFL teaching was simply introduced as a trade-off so the Government could make KS4 MFL learning optional. Nevertheless, my research has shown that overall, pupils were supportive of being taught MFL in their primary school and that they wanted it to be continued.

The findings of all chapters which comprise a literature review, methodology, and the opinions of staff, parents and pupils will be brought together in the following final chapter. This will enable a balanced evaluation of the various trends and themes that have emerged during the research process.

Chapter 7:

Conclusion

This concluding chapter summarises the outcome of the research, namely an investigation into primary school MFL teaching looking at the perspectives of staff, parents and pupils, in the context of Government policy and practice. I aim to present the findings by showing trends in consideration of my literature research.

Section 7.1 presents a summary of the research in the context of my chosen research questions. A critique of the study and its methods will be stated in section 7.2 followed by an identification of implications for practice (see section 7.3) and finally a discussion of further research possibilities (see section 7.4).

7.1 A summary of the main findings of this study

I will discuss the findings of each research question in turn and summarise them at the end of this section 7.1. Also, as an overview of my research findings, I will evaluate the subject matter of each research question by means of

- 1) a table which compares staff, parent and pupil opinion which can be found in Appendices 16 to 23 (entitled as Tables 12 to 19)
- 2) a summary of trends, and
- 3) a brief discussion which links my research findings with existing research, national and international literature, and Government policy and practice.

It should be borne in mind that both schools were from a similar contextual background (Chapter 2, 2.4) and stakeholders from inner city schools may have differing opinions.

7.1.1 The commencement of MFL teaching

All stakeholders could express their views on the first research question as to when MFL teaching should commence (Appendix 16; Table 12). In evaluation, I observed two clear trends in response to the question of when the stakeholders would like MFL teaching to commence:

- Firstly, all three groups expressed a very strong demand for MFL teaching to commence in primary school and demonstrated a lot of enthusiasm for language learning.
- Secondly, the data shows that 41% of pupils wanted an earlier MFL intervention than KS2, but parent opinion (73%) was even more supportive of an early start. Also, all six interviewed staff believed the subject should be introduced earlier than KS2. Furthermore, parents were biased by the immediate year group their child occupied. Nevertheless, I observed a general view that the Government's aim to commence MFL teaching in KS2 is not being introduced early enough.

In the light of examining the last ten years of MFL education in Britain (Chapter 2, 2.2.1), the Government carried out a variety of research into the MFL provision of UK primary schools to assist in the development of new policies, strategies and recommendations. Although the then Labour Government intended MFL in primary schools to become statutory (i.e. mandatory) in the National Curriculum for all KS2 children by 2011 (Rose, 2009, p.106), the new Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government recently scrapped this implementation on 7th June 2010 (Chapter 2,

2.2.2a). Hence, the current entitlement for KS2 pupils to learn a MFL by 2010 remains as originally announced as the *National Languages Strategy* by the DfES (2002).

Stakeholders from my research were not satisfied by current Government policy – they expected more. My research findings support a definite MFL commencement in KS2 and a strong demand to start teaching MFL earlier, e.g., in FS and KS1. The previous Government had at least a plan for an eventual mandatory MFL provision. Stakeholders may therefore feel even more disillusioned that MFL has dropped further down the Government priority list unless new initiatives are soon set out.

7.1.2 The number of MFLs

Research question two considered the practical issue of how many modern foreign languages should be taught in primary school (Appendix 17; Table 13). The outcome was as follows:

- Firstly, there was mutual agreement of all three stakeholders who expected the teaching of at least one MFL.
- Secondly, within this broad consensus, people's opinion differed as follows: pupils had greater enthusiasm for learning two or more MFLs than parents. Five out of six staff members preferred the teaching of two languages.

Although the current Government policy is for all KS2 pupils to have MFL entitlement (Chapter 2, 2.2.2b), the Government has made no mention of how many MFLs should be taught. Thus primary schools have been left to their own devices to implement different teaching models.

Chapter 2, 2.1.1 describes how various MFL teaching programmes have different aims e.g., the sensitisation, language acquisition, and communicative competence

programmes. As I suggested, it may be possible to combine all stakeholders' wishes by offering a sensitisation programme for FS and KS1 (awareness of one MFL or more MFLs) followed by a language acquisition programme for KS2 (to acquire MFL competence) in UK primary schools. However, the debate surrounding this research question will remain. Although KS2 pupils are entitled to learn a MFL by 2010, further clear Government direction is needed. Until then, primary schools will have to continue deciding for themselves.

7.1.3 Choosing the most suitable MFL(s) to implement

My third research question gave staff, parents and pupils the opportunity to suggest which modern foreign language(s) should be taught in primary school (Appendix 18; Table 14), as summarised:

- In response to this research question, no clear trend was found.
- Staff and parents liked French and Spanish most. Parent opinion could have been influenced by their own childhood experience of learning French in school. Headteacher Sophia selected the same MFLs for her school that were taught in the local secondary school to promote continuity.
- Pupil preference ranked Spanish first, Chinese second, and French and Italian as joint third.
- Parents and pupils were keen to pursue MFL learning in KS3. Pupil enthusiasm declined when asked to continue with the same language in KS3. In contrast, parents wanted the continuity of learning the same language in primary and secondary school education.

Ten years ago the most taught KS2 MFL in British primary schools was French, followed by German, Spanish and Italian (QCA, 2000, Part 1 section, para. ii; Chapter 2, 2.2.1). In the most current research brief (Cable et al., 2010, Key findings section,

para. 3), French has increased even more so in popularity, followed by Spanish which overtook German as predicted by CILT (2005, p.7; Figure 2). Chinese is being taught in some schools but has not reached significant uptake yet (Table 3; CILT, 2007, p.3; Chapter 4, 4.3).

Clearly, staff and parent opinion mirrored the current language trend of learning French and Spanish. Pupil opinion differed in that their wish was to learn Spanish first, Chinese second and French and Italian third. Also, pupils preferred not to continue with the same language in KS3 and they did not want French as the dominant MFL in their school. The UK's current economic crisis may result in funding cuts which reduce the number of teachers trained in alternative languages. Hence, French may continue to dominate as described in the cycle of Chapter 2, 2.2.2c.

There will not be consensus on 'the' language to teach across primary schools unless the Government regulates this matter. However, I question whether the leadership in UK primary schools (including MFL co-ordinators) will turn to pupil opinion when choosing the most suitable MFL(s) to implement. I believe there is still progress to be made where pupil opinion can be considered as an important viewpoint (as discussed in Chapter 2, 2.3; Filling the gaps in existing research).

7.1.4 Teaching time allocation for MFL(s)

Three important points emerged when asking how much time should be given to MFL teaching in primary school (Appendix 19; Table 15):

- Firstly, staff and parent opinion presented a strong request for more than 60 minutes per week teaching time for KS2. In contrast, 77% of KS2 pupils were satisfied with their teaching time amount of 30 or 45 minutes per week.

- Secondly, although staff and parents acknowledged an overcrowded timetable, they strongly requested MFL teaching time for KS1 and FS.
- Thirdly, 70% of pupils said that their class teacher never uses the MFL target language outside of a language lesson.

As explained in Chapter 2, 2.2.2d, the *National Languages Strategy* (DfES, 2002) failed to promote a minimum MFL teaching time for KS2. The *scheme of work for key stage 2* recommends “no less than 60 minutes per week” (QCA, 2007, p.2). Current research revealed that a discrete MFL lesson for nearly all KS2 year groups was taught for 30 to 40 minutes per week (Cable et al., 2010, Key findings section, para. 3).

I consider that pupil opinion is valuable in this research question since it links to the area of motivation (as discussed in Chapter 2, 2.3). Clearly, they do not like MFL lessons that are too long. Hence, I suggest maintaining the session length that pupils are already happy with (30 to 45 minutes) but increase it to twice a week to satisfy staff and parent wishes.

If MFL teaching is to have successful outcomes in primary schools, a clear strategy with enough teaching time allocation is essential. The open-ended Government strategy for MFL time allocation would need to be re-evaluated.

7.1.5 Possible strategies to create a positive MFL learning environment

A possible MFL strategy is to encourage pupils’ use of MFL at home (Appendix 20; Table 16). My research made the following observation:

- Twenty-two percent of parents never encouraged their child to speak the target language at home, 57% sometimes did this, and 21% regularly encouraged their child. This might suggest that on the one hand parents wanted MFL

success for their child but the effort to support this at home was not always forthcoming by parents themselves.

- Forty-nine percent of pupils acknowledged that they never spoke the language at home yet the vast majority of pupils had enthusiasm to talk about what they had learned in MFL lessons in the home.

Therefore, this research shows that language use at home could be utilised further. Teaching staff could help foster a more positive MFL environment in the home by promoting MFL to parents and encouraging them to support their child in definite target language usage (speaking, writing, or even listening to suitable broadcast material via the TV or internet).

Stakeholders had the following to say about their current MFL provision and its relation to school assemblies and homework (Appendix 21; Table 17):

- Although over half of parents were satisfied with their primary school's MFL provision, they wanted to be more informed about MFL learning. This was recognised by Headteacher Sophia.
- Only Wapa had a school policy and MFL co-ordinator, but nobody knew that Headteacher Sophia was actually the MFL co-ordinator. Topos had nothing in place.
- All stakeholders supported the idea to foster a cultural understanding during assembly times in school. However both schools did not plan for this delivery.
- The idea of giving occasional homework was favoured by all interviewed staff, by half of all parents, but the least by pupils.
- Finally, the majority of KS2 pupils liked their MFL lessons, viewed them as manageable, and felt confident in their MFL skills. It is likely that there is a correlation between 'doing well' and 'liking' the subject of MFL.

The above findings suggest that there are needs of improvement for both schools which in turn would create a better/positive MFL learning environment. However, the mainly positive attitude towards MFL learning by pupils may be a good indicator that the MFL provision of Topos and Wapa is good.

All three groups had the opportunity to give their opinion on MFL outside of school hours (Appendix 22; Table 18):

- Firstly, MFL after-school club endeavours seemed to have been unsuccessful by both schools.
- Secondly, 98% of parents were not interested in sending their child to a MFL club.
- Thirdly, only four out of 109 KS2 pupils did attend a language club. The main reasons for non-attendance are that some parents cannot afford the cost or the MFL club ceased to exist due to failing attendance. Also, 75% of pupils not currently attending a club were not interested to do so.

My research shows that the attempt to provide MFL outside of school hours failed in both primary schools. I believe that the demand for such clubs has declined since MFL teaching is now provided in most primary schools. Also, the viability of a club depends on: 1) sufficient subscription, 2) whether parents can afford it, 3) the location of the club, and 4) the ability of the teacher.

7.1.6 Potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1

The final research question focussed on potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1. Y1 parents and Y1 pupils were specifically asked about learning German in Y1 (Appendix 23; Table 19). The findings are summarised below:

- Firstly, all stakeholders were supportive of teaching MFL in KS1. Some staff believed that children absorb a lot at this age and they can start learning a MFL through games and songs. The lack of funding was an obstacle for both Headteachers.
- Secondly, parents and pupils liked the strategy of learning German in Y1 and wanted this activity to continue. However, parents expressed more enthusiasm than pupils, and their requests included increasing teaching time to 10 minutes per day, teaching a full hour per week instead, and continuing German in Y2.
- Thirdly, comparing KS2 with Y1 pupil opinion, the findings were that a higher percentage of Y1 pupils made the following selections: 1) to commence MFL in KS1 and FS; 2) to learn three MFLs; 3) to learn German; 4) to get some homework; and 5) to be part of a MFL club outside of school hours.

The majority of stakeholders wanted MFL teaching to commence in KS1. Y1 parents and Y1 pupils had the greatest enthusiasm for learning German (Chapter 5, 5.6; Chapter 6, 6.6). Since my research aimed to measure the outcome of motivation (Chapter 2, 2.3; the gaps), Y1 pupils expressed greater interest in several aspects of MFL compared with KS2 pupil opinion. Overall, enthusiasm for MFL learning was highest in the younger age group (Y1).

In summary, in my research all three stakeholders expected MFL teaching to commence at least in KS2 but there was significant interest for an even earlier start especially by Y1 parents. Although all participants agreed that at least one MFL should be taught in primary school, pupils showed more enthusiasm for learning additional MFLs compared with parents. When choosing suitable languages to teach, staff and parents voted for French and Spanish but pupils preferred Spanish, Chinese, French

and Italian. However, Y1 pupils gave German the second highest score which was probably influenced by their experience of German language lessons in school. Staff and parents opted for more than 60 minutes per week of KS2 teaching time allocation but recognised that the overcrowded curriculum was a constraint. On the other hand, KS2 pupils were satisfied with their current teaching time amount of 30 or 45 minutes per week. Although parents wanted MFL success for their child, there was apparently weak support for MFL in the home. Both schools could improve their MFL provision by informing parents more, planning for the delivery of cultural understanding during school assembly times, and having a MFL policy and/or MFL co-ordinator in place. The majority of pupils expressed a positive attitude towards MFL learning which may indicate a good MFL provision in Topos and Wapa – Y1 pupils were particularly enthusiastic. Both schools had been unsuccessful in their MFL pursuits outside of school hours.

With these findings in mind, the literature review highlighted key issues surrounding MFL teaching in primary schools. When discussing the age factor in Chapter 2, 2.1.1, the CPH emphasised a critical age where a child's mental development was ideally pitched to predispose the child for effortless language learning. The CPH is not endorsed by all academics, and amongst those who support it there is no consensus of when or for how long the critical period is. Again, the CPH implies the classic 'younger is better' approach to language learning. However a research study (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 1999, pp.64-67) showed that older learners were more efficient learners apart from pronunciation. The same trend was observed in an earlier study, *French from Eight*, by Burstall (1968). Both studies emphasised 'when' MFL teaching should commence, but we must consider the duration of teaching time allocation as discussed in Chapter 2. 2.1.2. Although older learners are more efficient, younger learners can have increased exposure to the language by starting years earlier.

However, to question this, Macaro (2008) states: "There are no studies, internationally, that show that a drip-feed of language learning in primary [education] results in faster progress or better eventual attainment" (p.106).

In general, the Government's strategy for MFL learning in primary school has made some progress by introducing an entitlement for KS2 pupils to learn MFL by 2010, but stakeholders from my research believed that these measures did not go far enough. Also, the European Union (1995) would like to see a starting age at pre-school level (p.47). Therefore, the new Government should consider providing a coherent and well thought-through MFL provision for primary schools as Coleman (2009) considers: "...inconsistencies and disparate models of provision may begin to undermine the undoubted enthusiasm of pupils and teachers for primary languages" (p.124).

Although current research reveals the lack of consensus about the technical language acquisition capabilities of younger children, my data certainly reflects enthusiasm for a MFL start at least as early as KS1. Yet the enthusiasm on the part of parents and educationalists may be driven primarily by the questionable assumption that 'younger is better'. It must not be overlooked that, from a child's perspective, motivation and enjoyment are also important aspects in learning languages as is generally recognised in the learning of other subjects. Therefore, in this respect, perhaps the view of MFL learning needs to be rebalanced in terms of what is considered a successful outcome. Perhaps language competency should not be the only measure of success since enjoyment, motivation and confidence predispose a child to excel in learning which is of course true for MFL.

Finally, my thesis investigated MFL teaching in two UK primary schools and considered the perspectives of staff, parents and pupils in the context of Government policy. The

overwhelming result was a basic demand to see an increase in the level of MFL teaching and support. Most stakeholders communicated in various ways that current Government policies, strategies, and funding did not accommodate these ambitions.

7.2 Critique of the study and its methods

In this section I will highlight some points which, in retrospect, may have brought improvements to the research study.

All six interviewees had some involvement with the subject of MFL. Therefore, by also interviewing 'neutral' staff (i.e. no connection with MFL) a more diverse range of views may have emerged. In addition, I now realise that it would have been valuable to involve members of the board of Governors for both Topos and Wapa. As indicated in Table 16 (Appendix 20), I did not ask staff during interviews whether they: 1) were aware that a child uses the target language at home; or 2) whether the staff member actively encouraged pupils to use the MFL at home.

To reflect upon my own position in relation to this research, there are two aspects that may have had some effect on the research: 1) I was employed as a teacher in both schools, and 2) I choose a research topic of particular interest to myself. Therefore, I used my relationship to stakeholders as an advantage; staff were especially supportive when collecting data in the form of questionnaires and interviews enabling the data collection to run smoothly. My close-knit involvement with both schools may have influenced participants when responding to my research questions – I enthusiastically promote MFL in each school and particularly German within my class at Topos. Although I tried to prevent children from associating MFL with myself as they made their evaluations (Chapter 3, 3.3.3), it is likely that some pupils would have related

their experience of MFL to myself and my style of teaching (especially Y1 pupils in Topos).

Any research conducted by someone who has vested interest in the area must be wary as to whether personal views have influenced the interpretation of the data. Since this situation applies to myself, I have, throughout this thesis, endeavoured to present data objectively and to avoid advocacy. From this research it is tempting to make general assumptions about MFL in schools that at least have a similar contextual background to Topos and Wapa. I would hesitate to do so since every school has its individual setup and may vary in a whole range of factors. In addition, even in Topos and Wapa I recognise possible limitations to any such research by taking into account non-respondents and those who were not surveyed in both schools.

7.3 Identification of implications for practice

In view of the main findings of this research (7.1), overall, the implications for Topos and Wapa are to continue with their current MFL provision. However, when further funding is made available, both schools could plan for a coherent and sustained MFL provision in KS1. Both schools might do well to pursue a particular type of teaching programme after consultation with all three stakeholders and board of Governors. The schools could re-evaluate (in the case of Wapa) or create (in the case of Topos) an effective MFL policy with clear objectives and appoint a MFL co-ordinator.

In general, to administer a well-structured and purposeful MFL environment in primary schools, more curriculum time would be needed for MFL lessons of 30 - 45 minutes twice a week to take place throughout all year groups. This is problematic due to the time already allocated to all other subjects. Also, the current UK debt crisis will

inevitably affect primary schools' budget and in turn MFL provision if it is low on the priority list of the school leadership. The scrapping of the *Rose Review* (Rose, 2009) to make MFL teaching statutory by 2011 has not helped to raise the urgency for more MFL investment.

In practice, schools are most likely to continue with their current MFL provision unless there is a clear and decisive drive from the Government to instruct all primary schools in a suitable strategy supported by adequate funding and resources. Hopefully, the new coalition Government will set up an effective policy for MFL teaching in primary schools soon.

7.4 Further research possibilities

There are many unexplored areas in which to continue the research of MFL teaching in primary schools. I will note some of the possibilities below.

It would be very interesting to conduct the same research in an inner city primary school for a comparison. Since both schools are Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools, conducting research in primary schools of other/no faiths would be useful e.g., a Jewish school may promote Hebrew. An investigation into MFL models and practices in other countries worldwide may yield valuable new insights.

Presently in 2010, the UK's largest national debt since the 1930s dominates the media. The concern of both Headteachers was the lack of funding for MFL (Chapter 4, 4.6). A further study could examine how the UK's debt crisis might impact MFL provision in primary schools; or, a more general study could investigate how Government decisions affect the way MFL is administered.

Finally, it would be exciting to contact participants of the KS2 pupil questionnaire in two to three years time. New research could investigate their experience of MFL transition to KS3 and their level of motivation for MFL throughout KS3. This could reveal whether primary MFL teaching gave these pupils an advantage for subsequent MFL learning.

Appendices

See following pages

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

For Alice

Headteacher at Topos

As you know, I am making progress with my MA in Education and my draft dissertation title is something along the lines of:

"What are the current practices, trends and issues of 'MFL teaching' in two different primary schools (in comparison with theory, research, and national and international practice)?" This is called a case study.

The research would involve the following:*questionnaires to **all parents***questionnaires to **KS2 pupils***interview with **MFL teacher***interview with you as the **headteacher**

* separate small case study for year 1 class which includes questionnaires to
Y1 parents and pupils

- Names of participants and the schools will all be replaced with pseudonyms for anonymity.
- Each questionnaire will have a consent form as the first page and I will also ask permission from parents before involving their child in the study.
- All data WILL be destroyed after passing my dissertation.

The benefits for you are that I can let you know what the final data shows so you could consider it for your school improvement plans, if you are interested.

	Please tick your response:	
	agree	disagree
I give my consent for Martina Cottam to carry out the above research, on the condition that I approve every Questionnaire before use.		
I am willing to be interviewed as part of the research.		
I allow all interviews between myself and Martina Cottam to be recorded.*		
I allow Martina Cottam to use the photocopier as long as she covers the cost.		

*The transcript will be sent to you for your approval and comments.

Date

Signature

Alice

Headteacher at Topos

Please contact my supervisor at the University of York for any further information or queries:
Mr Paul Wakeling; pbjw1@york.ac.uk; 01904 434329; Office: Langwith/126

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

For Sophia

Headteacher at Wapa

As you know, I am making progress with my MA in Education and my draft dissertation title is something along the lines of:

"What are the current practices, trends and issues of 'MFL teaching' in two different primary schools (in comparison with theory, research, and national and international practice)?" This is called a case study.

The research would involve the following:

- *questionnaires to **all parents**
- *questionnaires to **KS2 pupils**
- *interview with **MFL teacher**
- *interview with you as the **headteacher**

- Names of participants and the schools will all be replaced with pseudonyms for anonymity.
- Each questionnaire will have a consent form as the first page and I will also ask permission from parents before involving their child in the study.
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	Please tick your response:	
	agree	disagree
I give my consent for Martina Cottam to carry out the above research, on the condition that I approve every Questionnaire before use.		
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I allow all interviews between myself and Martina Cottam to be recorded.*		
I allow Martina Cottam to use the photocopier as long as she covers the cost.		

*The transcript will be sent to you for your approval and comments.

Date

Signature

Sophia

Headteacher at Wapa

Please contact my supervisor at the University of York for any further information or queries:
Mr Paul Wakeling; pbjw1@york.ac.uk; 01904 434329; Office: Langwith/126

<p>INFORMED CONSENT FORM</p> <p>For Modern Foreign Language Teacher</p> <p>At Topos</p>

As you know, I am making progress with my MA in Education and my draft dissertation title is something along the lines of:

"What are the current practices, trends and issues of 'MFL teaching' in two different primary schools (in comparison with theory, research, and national and international practice)?" This is called a case study.

The research would involve the following:

- interview with **MFL teacher**

- I have received consent from Alice (Headteacher at Topos) for this research project.
- Names of participants and the schools will all be replaced with pseudonyms for anonymity.
- All data WILL be destroyed after passing my dissertation.

	Please tick your response:	
	agree	disagree
I am willing to be interviewed as part of the research.		
I allow all interviews between myself and Martina Cottam to be recorded.*		

*The transcript will be sent to you for your approval and comments.

Date

Signature

Printed Name: _____

Modern Foreign Language
Teacher at Topos

E-mail:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

For Modern Foreign Language Teacher

At Wapa

As you know, I am making progress with my MA in Education and my draft dissertation title is something along the lines of:

"What are the current practices, trends and issues of 'MFL teaching' in two different primary schools (in comparison with theory, research, and national and international practice)?" This is called a case study.

The research would involve the following:

- interview with **MFL teacher**

- I have received consent from Sophia (Headteacher at Wapa) for this research project.
- Names of participants and the schools will all be replaced with pseudonyms for anonymity.
- All data WILL be destroyed after passing my dissertation.

	Please tick your response:	
	agree	disagree
I am willing to be interviewed as part of the research.		
I allow all interviews between myself and Martina Cottam to be recorded.*		

*The transcript will be sent to you for your approval and comments.

Date

Signature

Printed Name: _____

Modern Foreign Language
Teacher at Wapa

E-mail:

February 2009

Dear _____,

I am Mrs Cottam who is the main teacher for Year 1. At present I am undertaking a part-time Masters Degree in Education at the University of York. This is a study about foreign language teaching in primary schools.

As part of my research, I would be very grateful if you could complete a questionnaire about **'Teaching Foreign Languages at Topos'**.

Your opinion is very valuable and you can be assured that your completed questionnaire will be totally anonymous. Alice (Headteacher at Topos) is very keen to support me in this area and I will inform her about the outcome of this survey for the benefit of Topos.

Please tick one of the boxes:

Yes, I am happy to fill in the questionnaire.

No, I do not want to fill in the questionnaire.

If yes, ...

1. ...complete the questionnaire which is in the attached envelope.
2. ...put the questionnaire back into the envelope. (When I receive your questionnaire, I will immediately remove this covering letter – **I promise your responses will remain anonymous!**)
3. ...do not remove this covering letter which is stapled to the envelope so things don't get lost.
4. ...put it back into your child's Bulletin bag.

If no, please put it back into your child's Bulletin bag.

If you have more than one child, please fill in this covering letter and questionnaire for each child since your opinions may be different for language teaching in a different year group. You will find them in your child's Bulletin bag.

I really appreciate your effort and support. Thank you!

Regards,

Mrs M Cottam
(Year 1 Teacher)

February 2009

Dear _____,

I am Mrs Cottam who is the Year 1 teacher on Fridays. At present I am undertaking a part-time Masters Degree in Education at the University of York. This is a study about foreign language teaching in primary schools.

As part of my research, I would be very grateful if you could complete a questionnaire about '**Teaching Foreign Languages at Wapa**'.

Your opinion is very valuable and you can be assured that your completed questionnaire will be totally anonymous. Sophia (Headteacher at Wapa) is very keen to support me in this area and I will inform her about the outcome of this survey for the benefit of Wapa.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p>Yes, I am happy to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, I do not want to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. ...complete the questionnaire which is in the attached envelope.2. ...put the questionnaire <u>back</u> into the envelope. (When I receive your questionnaire, I will immediately remove this covering letter – I promise your responses will remain anonymous!)3. ...<u>do not remove</u> this covering letter which is stapled to the envelope so things don't get lost.4. ...put it back into your child's book bag who will hand it to the main class teacher.
<p>If no, please put it back into your child's book bag who will hand it to the main class teacher.</p>

If you have more than one child, please fill in this covering letter and questionnaire for each child since your opinions may be different for language teaching in a different year group. You will find them in your child's book bag.

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Mrs M Cottam
(Year 1 Teacher on Fridays)

February 2009

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<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, I am happy to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No, I do not want to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ...complete the questionnaire which is in the attached envelope. 2. ...put the questionnaire <u>back</u> into the envelope. (When I receive your questionnaire, I will immediately remove this covering letter – I promise your responses will remain anonymous!) 3. ...<u>do not remove</u> this covering letter which is stapled to the envelope so things don't get lost. 4. ...put it back into your child's Bulletin bag.
<p>If no, please put it back into your child's Bulletin bag.</p>

Also, I am setting up a **questionnaire for all Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to 6) children**. I would really like to find out children's opinions about Teaching Foreign Languages at Topos. Because your child is under the age of sixteen, it is good research practice to ask the child's parent or carer for their consent (below).

If you have more than one child, please fill in this covering letter and questionnaire for each child since your opinions may be different for language teaching in a different year group. You will find them in your child's Bulletin bag.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, I allow my child to fill in the 'Key Stage 2 questionnaire'. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No, I do not allow my child to fill in the 'Key Stage 2 questionnaire'. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Child's name: _____</p> <p>Parent/Carer's signature: _____</p>

I really appreciate your effort and support. Thank you!

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(Year 1 Teacher)

February 2009

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Your opinion is very valuable and you can be assured that your completed questionnaire will be totally anonymous. Sophia (Headteacher at Wapa) is very keen to support me in this area and I will inform her about the outcome of this survey for the benefit of Wapa.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p>Yes, I am happy to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, I do not want to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. ...complete the questionnaire which is in the attached envelope.2. ...put the questionnaire <u>back</u> into the envelope. (When I receive your questionnaire, I will immediately remove this covering letter – I promise your responses will remain anonymous!)3. ...<u>do not remove</u> this covering letter which is stapled to the envelope so things don't get lost.4. ...put it back into your child's book bag who will hand it to the main class teacher.
<p>If no, please put it back into your child's book bag who will hand it to the main class teacher.</p>

Also, I am setting up a **questionnaire for all Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to 6) children**. I would really like to find out children's opinions about Teaching Foreign Languages at Wapa. Because your child is under the age of sixteen, it is good research practice to ask the child's parent or carer for their consent (below).

If you have more than one child, please fill in this covering letter and questionnaire for each child since your opinions may be different for language teaching in a different year group. You will find them in your child's book bag.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p>Yes, I allow my child to fill in the 'Key Stage 2 questionnaire'. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, I do not allow my child to fill in the 'Key Stage 2 questionnaire'. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Child's name: _____</p> <p>Parent/Carer's signature: _____</p>

I really appreciate your effort and support. Thank you!

Regards,

Mrs M Cottam
(Year 1 Teacher on Fridays)

February 2009

Dear _____,

I am Mrs Cottam who is the main teacher for Year 1. At present I am undertaking a part-time Masters Degree in Education at the University of York. This is a study about foreign language teaching in primary schools.

As part of my research, I would be very grateful if you could complete a questionnaire about '**Teaching Foreign Languages at Topos**'.

Your opinion is very valuable and you can be assured that your completed questionnaire will be totally anonymous. Alice (Headteacher at Topos) is very keen to support me in this area and I will inform her about the outcome of this survey for the benefit of Topos.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, I am happy to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No, I do not want to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ...complete the questionnaire which is in the attached envelope. 2. ...put the questionnaire <u>back</u> into the envelope. (When I receive your questionnaire, I will immediately remove this covering letter – I promise your responses will remain anonymous!) 3. ... <u>do not remove</u> this covering letter which is stapled to the envelope so things don't get lost. 4. ... put it back into your child's Bulletin bag.
<p>If no, please put it back into your child's Bulletin bag.</p>

Also, I am setting up a **questionnaire for all Year 1 children**. I would really like to find out children's opinions about Teaching Foreign Languages at Topos. Because your child is under the age of sixteen, it is good research practice to ask the child's parent or carer for their consent (below).

If you have more than one child, please fill in this covering letter and questionnaire for each child since your opinions may be different for language teaching in a different year group. You will find them in your child's Bulletin bag.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, I allow my child to fill in the 'Year 1 questionnaire'. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No, I do not allow my child to fill in the 'Year 1 questionnaire'. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Child's name: _____</p> <p>Parent/Carer's signature: _____</p>

I really appreciate your effort and support. Thank you!

Regards,

Mrs M Cottam
(Year 1 Teacher)

Appendix 6

Questionnaire for parents

(Layout and font are smaller to accommodate margins in this thesis)

How many languages would you like your child to learn at Topos/Wapa? (DO NOT count English but please INCLUDE any other language your child is currently learning at Topos/Wapa.) Please circle **only one appropriate response.**

None

1 language

2 languages

3 languages

Which language would you MOST like to see taught at Topos/Wapa? (Other choices can take less priority.)

Your options are: 1 = first choice (highest priority)
2 = second choice (less priority)
3 = third choice (lesser priority)

Please write numbers 1, 2 and 3 into a box of your choice only once.

- French German Spanish Italian
- Mandarin (Chinese) Polish Welsh Arabic
- Any other language: _____

Is your child currently taught another language at Topos/Wapa during school hours (not in an after-school club)?

(Please circle the appropriate response.)

Yes

No

Don't know

If yes, which language(s): _____

(If yes, please tick.)

	Yes, regularly	Sometimes	Never
Does your child tell you what he/she has learned in the language lesson?			
Does your child tell you any vocabulary or phrases he/she remembered?			
Do you encourage your child to speak the language at home?			

	<i>(Please tick the appropriate response.)</i>			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I chose Topos/Wapa because of the current foreign language provision.				
2. I am fully satisfied with current foreign language provision at Topos/Wapa.				
3. By 2010 the Government wants all primary schools to give Key Stage 2 pupils the opportunity to learn another language.				
a) I support this Government strategy.				
b) This Government strategy should start in Key Stage 1 (Y1 & Y2).				
c) This Government strategy should start in Foundation Stage (R).				
4. I would like my child to receive MORE foreign language homework.				
5. I could see my child using a foreign language in a future career.				
6. I would like to see other languages mentioned in school assemblies when teaching about cultures and other people.				
7. I believe that learning another language in addition to English is important for my child.				

Please fill in each table below concerning the time allocated to language teaching.

Foundation Stage (Reception Year)		
How much curriculum <u>time</u> would you like Topos/Wapa to allocate for foreign language teaching in Foundation Stage? <i>(Please tick one box only.)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> none at all
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 20 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 20 minutes per week	
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 30 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 30 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> no extra time allocated; INSTEAD teaching a foreign language is <u>integrated</u> with other subjects already being taught.
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 60 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 60 minutes per week	
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> four sessions of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> Your suggestion, please write: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 20 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> four sessions of 20 minutes per week	
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 30 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> five sessions of 10 minutes per week	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 60 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> five sessions of 20 minutes per week	_____

Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and 2)		
How much curriculum <u>time</u> would you like Topos/Wapa to allocate for foreign language teaching in Key Stage 1? <i>(Please tick one box only.)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> none at all
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 20 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 20 minutes per week	
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 30 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 30 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> no extra time allocated; INSTEAD teaching a foreign language is <u>integrated</u> with other subjects already being taught.
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 60 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 60 minutes per week	
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> four sessions of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> Your suggestion, please write: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 20 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> four sessions of 20 minutes per week	
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 30 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> five sessions of 10 minutes per week	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 60 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> five sessions of 20 minutes per week	_____

Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to 6)		
How much curriculum <u>time</u> would you like Topos/Wapa to allocate for foreign language teaching in Key Stage 2? <i>(Please tick one box only.)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> none at all
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 20 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 20 minutes per week	
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 30 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 30 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> no extra time allocated; INSTEAD teaching a foreign language is <u>integrated</u> with other subjects already being taught.
<input type="checkbox"/> one session of 60 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> three sessions of 60 minutes per week	
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> four sessions of 10 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> Your suggestion, please write: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 20 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> four sessions of 20 minutes per week	
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 30 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> five sessions of 10 minutes per week	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> two sessions of 60 minutes per week	<input type="checkbox"/> five sessions of 20 minutes per week	_____

Does your child attend a language club at the moment which is not during school hours?
(Please circle the appropriate response.)

Yes

No

If yes, where is the club held and who is the organiser? *Please explain here:* _____

If 'YES', please tick any reasons which may apply to you:
My child enjoys the club. <input type="checkbox"/>
At home, my child tells me about what he/she has learnt in the club. <input type="checkbox"/>
At home, my child tries to use some of the phrases or vocabulary that he/she has been learning. <input type="checkbox"/>
I encourage my child to speak some of the foreign language at home. <input type="checkbox"/>
Your own explanation: _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/>

If 'NO', please tick any reasons which may apply to you:
My child is not interested. <input type="checkbox"/>
We as parents/carers are not interested. <input type="checkbox"/>
My child is involved in other activities or clubs and cannot attend but would otherwise do so. <input type="checkbox"/>
There is no language club available but I would like my child to attend one. <input type="checkbox"/>
I would like my child to attend but there are issues with transport. <input type="checkbox"/>
I would like my child to attend but there are issues with my personal time schedule. <input type="checkbox"/>
Your own explanation: _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/>

What are your views about the current foreign language provision at Topos/Wapa?

(Please explain in your own words.)

Advantages	Disadvantages	Suggestions for improvement

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

Questionnaire only for **YEAR 1** Parents/Carers

Since September 2008 children have been taught German after lining up for lunch.			
	<i>(Please tick.)</i>		
	Yes, regularly	Sometimes	Never
Does your child tell you what he/she has learned in this short activity time?			
Does your child tell you any vocabulary or phrases he/she has remembered?			
Do you encourage your child to speak the language at home?			

Your child is being taught German 4 times a week for 5 minutes per session before lunch.				
	<i>(Please indicate your level of agreement by ticking.)</i>			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I think that this is an effective approach.				
I would like this activity to continue.				
More time should be spent on teaching German (4 times a week up to 10 minutes per session).				
I would like my child to learn German for a full hour each week (a creative interactive lesson with teaching and games).				
I would like to know which vocabulary and phrases my child is learning. This could be put into the 'Class Newsletter'.				
I would like my child to continue learning German the following year.				

Have you seen the German language display in Beech Class? <i>(Please circle..)</i>		
Yes	No	
Would you like to see this German language display in Beech Class continuing as a teaching resource? <i>(Please circle..)</i>		
Yes	No	Don't mind

Are there any other comments you would like to make about how German is taught in Year 1? <i>Please write them below.</i>
<hr/>
<hr/>
<hr/>

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KEY STAGE 2 PUPILS

What do you think about foreign language teaching at Topos/Wapa?

INSTRUCTIONS: *A questionnaire is not a test.

*There are no right and wrong answers. We want to know your own opinion.

*Don't discuss your answer with your friend next to you - your opinion counts!

*Your answers won't be shown to anyone else. They will be kept confidential.

*Answer the questions honestly - it's your chance to say what you think!

*Don't worry about spelling. Read through one question at a time.

*Put your hand up if you get stuck and you will get help from the teacher.

*You can use a pencil or pen.

1 Please **circle one** answer:

I am a boy	I am a girl
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2 Please **circle one** answer. My Year group is:

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
--------	--------	--------	--------

3 a) Which **subject** do you like **most** in school? Please **circle one** answer:

English (Literacy)	Maths (Numeracy)	Science	PE	History
Foreign Language (For example: French, Spanish or German)	Geography	Art	Music	
Design and Technology (D&T) (‘making things’)	Circle time (PSHCE)	RE	ICT (Computers)	

b) Which of these two subjects do you like **most**? Please **circle one** answer:

English (Literacy)	Foreign Language (For example: French, Spanish or German)
------------------------------	---

4 What are you good at in school? Draw a mouth on each face:



I am doing well



I am doing OK



I am not doing so well

English (Literacy) 	Foreign Language (For example: French, Spanish or German) 	Geography 	
Maths (Numeracy) 	Design and Technology D&T ('making things') 	Music 	
Science 	Circle Time (PSHCE) 	History 	
PE 	RE 	ICT (Computers) 	Art 

5 a) Which foreign language do you learn at school (not in a club)?
Please circle:

French	German	Spanish	Italian
--------	--------	---------	---------

b) How would you describe your language skills?
Please circle one answer:

I am a beginner who knows a few words.	OK - I can speak a few sentences.	I think I do very well.
--	-----------------------------------	-------------------------

c) Can you speak **another** language - not the one you learn at school at the moment but an extra one? Please circle one answer:

Yes	No
-----	----

If **YES**, which one? Please write here the language: _____

6 How **difficult** is the foreign language lesson in class?
What do you think? Please **circle one** answer:

Easy	OK	Hard
------	----	------

7 Read **EACH** question and circle 'YES' or 'NO'.

a) Does work in your language lesson usually continue from your last lesson?	YES	NO
b) Do you think that the language you are learning now will help you in secondary school?	YES	NO

8 a) Do you know how many foreign language lessons you have each week? Please fill in the correct time for **YOUR** lesson:

1 lesson of _____ minutes each week
2 lessons of _____ minutes each week
3 lessons of _____ minutes each week

b) How much **time** do you spend on each foreign language lesson in class? What do you think? Please **circle one** answer:

Too much time	Right amount of time	Not enough time
---------------	----------------------	-----------------

9 a) Does your foreign language teacher give you **homework**? Please circle one:

Yes - homework <u>every week</u>	Sometimes	No, none at all
----------------------------------	-----------	-----------------

b) What would you like? Please **circle one** answer:

More homework	The same amount
Less homework	No homework

10 Is there anything special you would like to learn in your foreign language lesson? Please **circle one** answer:

Yes	No
If YES , what would this be? Please write here: _____	

11 Circle two words from the list below that describe your foreign language lessons.

Easy	Hard	Fun
Exciting	Confusing	Interesting
Repetitive	Boring	Good games

12 Do you tell your parents or family what you have learned in the language lesson? Please circle one answer:

Yes	Sometimes	Never
-----	-----------	-------

13 Do you speak the language at home? Please circle one answer:

Yes	Sometimes	Never
-----	-----------	-------

14 Does your main class teacher use the foreign language with you during the day? For example, when saying 'hello', 'taking the register' or 'saying numbers'. Please circle one answer:

Yes, every day	Yes, but not every day	No, never
----------------	------------------------	-----------

15 When do you think children should start learning a foreign language at Topos/Wapa? Please circle one answer:

Foundation Stage (Reception Year)	Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and 2)	Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to 6)	Not at all
--------------------------------------	-------------------------------	------------------------------	------------

16 By the end of Year 6, how many foreign languages would you like to have learned at Topos/Wapa.
DO NOT count the English language.
Please circle one answer:

1 language	2 languages	3 languages	None
------------	-------------	-------------	------

17 Which language would you **MOST** like to learn at Topos/Wapa?
Please **circle one** answer:

French	German	Spanish	Italian
Chinese	Polish	Welsh	Arabic
Any other language, please write here: _____			

18 a) Do you go to a **Language Club** which is not during school hours?
Please **circle one** answer:

Yes	No
-----	----

➔ If **YES**, circle **TWO** words from the list below that **describe** your Language Club.

Easy	Hard	Fun
Exciting	Confusing	Interesting
Repetitive	Boring	Good games

➔ If **NO**, read **EACH** question and **circle** 'YES' or 'NO'.

Would you be interested to go to a Language Club (not during school hours)?	YES	NO
Is there a Language Club for you to go to in Topos/Wapa (not during school hours)?	YES	NO
Would you have time to go to a Language Club (not during school hours)?	YES	NO
Would your parents or family be able to take you to a Language Club (not during school hours) and pick you up afterwards?	YES	NO

19 Would you like to learn about people from other countries and their foreign language in school assemblies? Please circle one answer:

Yes	Don't mind	No
-----	------------	----

20 Are there any other things you would like to say about languages? Please write in the box:

Good things	OK things	Not good things

21 If you are a Year 5 or 6 pupil, please tick your answer.

YEAR 5 AND 6 PUPILS ONLY	Please tick ✓	
	Yes	No
Would you like to learn a foreign language at secondary school ?		
Would you like to keep learning the <u>same</u> foreign language at secondary school?		
Would you like to learn a foreign language at secondary school BUT want to choose a <u>different</u> one?		
Would you like to learn two foreign languages at secondary school?		
Would you like to <u>meet</u> your new language teacher from secondary school here at Topos? He or she could visit the class.		
Would you like to use your foreign language skills when you are older in a job .		

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YEAR 1 TOPOS PUPILS

What do you think about **learning German** at Topos?

INSTRUCTIONS: *A questionnaire is not a test.

*There are no right and wrong answers. We want to know your own opinion.

*Your answers won't be shown to anyone else.

*Answer the questions honestly - it's your chance to say what you think!

*Read through one question at a time.

1 Please circle one answer:

I am a **boy**

I am a **girl**

2 How would you describe your German language skills?

Please circle one answer:

I am a beginner who
knows a few words.

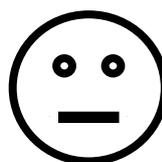
OK - I can speak a few
sentences.

I think I do quite well.

3 Are you **good** at learning German in school? Draw a mouth on the face:



I am doing well

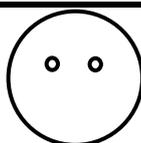


I am doing OK



I am not doing so well

German (Foreign Language)



4 How **difficult** is the German lesson in class? What do you think?

Please circle one answer:

Easy

OK

Hard

5 a) How much **time** do you spend on each *German* lesson in class?
What do you think?
Please circle one answer:

Too much time	Right amount of time	Not enough time
---------------	----------------------	-----------------

b) Would you like to learn *German* for a full hour every week?
Please circle one answer:

Yes	No	Don't mind
-----	----	------------

6 Would you like to do some *German* homework each week?
Please circle one:

Yes	No	Don't mind
-----	----	------------

7 Is there anything special you would like to learn in your *German* lessons?
Please circle one answer:

Yes	No
If YES , what would this be? Please write here: _____	

8 **Circle two words** from the list below that describe your *German* lessons.

Easy	Hard	Fun
Exciting	Interesting	Boring

9 Do you tell your parents or family what you have learned in your *German* lessons? Please circle one answer:

Yes	Sometimes	Never
-----	-----------	-------

10 Do you speak *German* at home? Please **circle one** answer:

Yes	Sometimes	Never
-----	-----------	-------

11 Would you like to keep learning German next year in Year 2?
Please circle one answer.

Yes	No
------------	-----------

12 You have seen the German language display in class.
Do you think this helps you learn the language?
Please circle one answer.

Yes	No	Don't mind
------------	-----------	-------------------

13 **When** do you think children should **start** learning a foreign language at Topos?
Please **circle one** answer:

Foundation Stage (Reception Year)	Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and 2)	Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to 6)	Not at all
---	--------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------

14 **How many** languages would you like to learn at Topos?
Do not count the English language!
Please **circle one** answer:

1 language	2 languages	3 languages	None
-------------------	--------------------	--------------------	-------------

15 **Which** language would you **MOST** like to learn at Topos?
Please **circle one** answer:

French	German	Spanish	Italian
Chinese	Polish	Welsh	Arabic

Any other language, please write here: _____

16 Would you like to learn about people from other countries and their foreign language in school assemblies?
Please circle one answer:

Yes	No	Don't mind
------------	-----------	-------------------

17 Which of these two subjects do you like most?

Please circle one answer:

English	German (Foreign Language)
----------------	----------------------------------

18 a) Do you go to a Language Club which is not during school hours?

Please circle one answer:

Yes	No
------------	-----------

➔ If YES, circle TWO words from the list below that describe your Language Club.

Easy	Hard	Fun
Exciting	Interesting	Boring

➔ If NO, read EACH sentence and tick if you agree or disagree.

	YES	NO
Are you interested in a Language Club?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you interested but there is no Language Club here at Topos?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you already part of a <i>different</i> club but do not have time for a Language Club?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you interested but your parents or family are not able to take you to a club?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19 Are there any other things you would like to say?

Please write in the box:

Good things	OK things	Not good things

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

February 2009

Dear Parent,

I know that only a short while ago I wrote a letter to you. Please would you be so helpful and spare just a short moment to complete this form. **I would be even more grateful if you would fill in the attached questionnaire since I rely upon the opinions of parents and children as essential data for my research project.**

I am Mrs Cottam who is the main teacher for Year 1. At present I am undertaking a part-time Masters Degree in Education at the University of York. This is a study about foreign language teaching in primary schools.

As part of my research, I would be very grateful if you could complete a questionnaire about **'Teaching Foreign Languages at Topos'**.

Your opinion is very valuable and you can be assured that your completed questionnaire will be totally anonymous. Alice (Headteacher at Topos) is very keen to support me in this area and I will inform her about the outcome of this survey for the benefit of Topos.

Please tick one of the boxes:

Yes, I am happy to fill in the questionnaire.

No, I do not want to fill in the questionnaire.

If yes, ...

1. ...complete the questionnaire which is in the attached envelope.
2. ...put the questionnaire back into the envelope. (When I receive your questionnaire, I will immediately remove this covering letter – **I promise your responses will remain anonymous!**)
3. ...do not remove this covering letter which is stapled to the envelope so things don't get lost.
4. ...put it back into your child's Bulletin bag.

If no, please put it back into your child's Bulletin bag.

If you have more than one child, please fill in this covering letter and questionnaire for each child since your opinions may be different for language teaching in a different year group. You will find them in your child's Bulletin bag.

I really appreciate your effort and support. Thank you!

Regards,

Mrs M Cottam
(Year 1 Teacher)

February 2009

Dear Parent,

I know that only last week I wrote a letter to you. Please would you be so helpful and spare just a short moment to complete this form. **I would be even more grateful if you would fill in the attached questionnaire since I rely upon the opinions of parents and children as essential data for my research project.**

As part of my research, I would be very grateful if you could complete a questionnaire about **'Teaching Foreign Languages at Wapa.**

You can be assured that your completed questionnaire will be totally anonymous. Sophia (Headteacher at Wapa) is very keen to support me in this area and I will inform her about the outcome of this survey for the benefit of Wapa.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p>Yes, I am happy to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, I do not want to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. ...complete the questionnaire which is in the attached envelope.2. ...put the questionnaire <u>back</u> into the envelope. (When I receive your questionnaire, I will immediately remove this covering letter – I promise your responses will remain anonymous!)3. ...<u>do not remove</u> this covering letter which is stapled to the envelope so things don't get lost.4. ... put it back into your child's book bag who will hand it to the main class teacher.
<p>If no, please put it back into your child's book bag who will hand it to the main class teacher.</p>

If you have more than one child, please fill in this covering letter and questionnaire for each child since your opinions may be different for language teaching in a different year group. You will find them in your child's book bag.

I really appreciate your effort and support. Thank you!

Regards,

Mrs M Cottam
(Year 1 Teacher on Fridays)

February 2009

Dear Parent,

I know that only a short while ago I wrote a letter to you. Please would you be so helpful and spare just a short moment to complete this form. **I would be even more grateful if you would fill in the attached questionnaire since I rely upon the opinions of parents and children as essential data for my research project.**

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You can be assured that your completed questionnaire will be totally anonymous. Alice (Headteacher of Topos) is very keen to support me in this area and I will inform her about the outcome of this survey for the benefit of Topos.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, I am happy to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No, I do not want to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ...complete the questionnaire which is in the attached envelope. 2. ...put the questionnaire <u>back</u> into the envelope. (When I receive your questionnaire, I will immediately remove this covering letter – I promise your responses will remain anonymous!) 3. ...<u>do not remove</u> this covering letter which is stapled to the envelope so things don't get lost. 4. ...put it back into your child's Bulletin bag.
<p>If no, please put it back into your child's Bulletin bag.</p>

Also, I am setting up a **questionnaire for all Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to 6) children**. I would really like to find out children's opinions about Teaching Foreign Languages at Topos. Because your child is under the age of sixteen, it is good research practice to ask the child's parent or carer for their consent (below).

If you have more than one child, please fill in this covering letter and questionnaire for each child since your opinions may be different for language teaching in a different year group. You will find them in your child's Bulletin bag.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, I allow my child to fill in the 'Key Stage 2 questionnaire'. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No, I do not allow my child to fill in the 'Key Stage 2 questionnaire'. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Child's name: _____</p> <p>Parent/Carer's signature: _____</p>

I really appreciate your effort and support. Thank you!

Regards,

Mrs M Cottam
(Year 1 Teacher)

February 2009

Dear Parent,

I know that only last week I wrote a letter to you. Please would you be so helpful and spare just a short moment to complete this form. **I would be even more grateful if you would fill in the attached questionnaire since I rely upon the opinions of parents and children as essential data for my research project.**

I am Mrs Cottam who is the Year 1 teacher on Fridays. At present I am undertaking a part-time Masters Degree in Education at the University of York. This is a study about foreign language teaching in primary schools. As part of my research, I would be very grateful if you could complete a questionnaire about '**Teaching Foreign Languages at Wapa**'.

You can be assured that your completed questionnaire will be totally anonymous. Sophia (Headteacher of Wapa) is very keen to support me in this area and I will inform her about the outcome of this survey for the benefit of Wapa.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p>Yes, I am happy to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, I do not want to fill in the questionnaire. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. ...complete the questionnaire which is in the attached envelope.2. ...put the questionnaire <u>back</u> into the envelope. (When I receive your questionnaire, I will immediately remove this covering letter – I promise your responses will remain anonymous!)3. ... <u>do not remove</u> this covering letter which is stapled to the envelope so things don't get lost.4. ... put it back into your child's book bag who will hand it to the main class teacher.
<p>If no, please put it back into your child's book bag who will hand it to the main class teacher.</p>

Also, I am setting up a **questionnaire for all Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to 6) children**. I would really like to find out children's opinions about Teaching Foreign Languages at Wapa. Because your child is under the age of sixteen, it is good research practice to ask the child's parent or carer for their consent (below).

If you have more than one child, please fill in this covering letter and questionnaire for each child since your opinions may be different for language teaching in a different year group. You will find them in your child's book bag.

<p>Please tick one of the boxes:</p> <p>Yes, I allow my child to fill in the 'Key Stage 2 questionnaire'. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, I do not allow my child to fill in the 'Key Stage 2 questionnaire'. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Child's name: _____</p> <p>Parent/Carer's signature: _____</p>

I really appreciate your effort and support. Thank you!

Regards,

Mrs M Cottam
(Year 1 Teacher on Fridays)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Before completing the questionnaire with the KS2 children, please:

- 1) Make all children participate, except for those named below (no consent from parents): _____

- 2) Make sure that children do not write their names on the questionnaire.
- 3) Read the instructions and explain when necessary some of the words.

INSTRUCTIONS

- *A questionnaire is not a test.
- *There are no right and wrong answers.
- *We want to know your own opinion.
- *Don't discuss your answer with your friend next to you - your opinion counts!
- *Your answers won't be shown to anyone else. They will be kept confidential.
- *Answer the questions honestly - it's your chance to say what you think!
- *Don't worry about spelling.
- *Read through one question at a time.
- *Put your hand up if you get stuck and you will get help from the teacher.
- *You can use a pencil or pen.

- 4) Read out loud the title of the questionnaire and explain the phrase: 'foreign language teaching' and what this means in school.
- 5) Complete questions 1 and 2 together as an introduction to the questionnaire.
- 6) Help individual children who struggle to read certain questions.
- 7) Children who need more support: Let the Teaching Assistant fill in the questionnaire according to the child's wishes. This Teaching Assistant must keep the child's answers confidential!

AFTERWARDS:

- 8) Please check that the child has filled in **ALL** the boxes before putting it onto a pile of all the questionnaires. Pass them to Mrs Cottam.
- 10) Please give the children a sticker/reward.

Thank you for all your effort and help!

INSTRUCTIONS FOR Teaching Assistant in Year 1

Class Teacher: The class teacher explains the word 'questionnaire' and that the answers won't be shown to anyone else.

Teaching Assistant: Before completing the questionnaire with Year 1 children, please:

- 9) Make all children participate, except for those named below (no consent from parents): _____

- 10) Do not write the children's names on the questionnaire.

- 11) Read the instructions and explain when necessary some of the words.

INSTRUCTIONS

*A questionnaire is not a test.

*There are no right and wrong answers. We want to know your own opinion.

*Your answers won't be shown to anyone else.

*Answer the questions honestly - it's your chance to say what you think!

*Read through one question at a time.

- 12) Read out loud the title of the questionnaire and what this means in school.

- 13) Read through one question at a time and fill in the child's wishes.

- 14) Help individual children who struggle to read certain questions.

AFTERWARDS:

- 15) Please check that the child has filled in **ALL** the boxes before putting it onto a pile of all the questionnaires.

- 16) Please give the children a sticker/reward.

February 2009

Dear Parent,

Thank you very much for filling in the questionnaire!

Please could you do me one small favour.

In my letter to you I asked for your consent to allow your child to fill in a **questionnaire for all Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to 6) children.**

I have attached this letter - please, could you fill in that part and send it back to school.

Many thanks,

Martina Cottam

P.S. I have kept your filled-in questionnaire.

Interview with Alice (Headteacher at Topos)	Date:
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HISTORY Since when did the school offer MFL teaching?
What were its original aims?

CURRENT PRACTICE What is the current practice?
Does current practice meet the original aims?
Are there any issues now?

LANGUAGE CHOICE What is the current target language?
Are there any factors that influence the choice of target language?
When would you like Topos to start teaching another language?
How many other languages would you like to provide at Topos?
Which language would you MOST like to see taught at Topos?

By 2010 the Government wants all primary schools to give Key Stage 2 pupils the opportunity to learn another language. At which age group should the strategy start?
Does the government provide enough funding?

PLANNING Who decides on the content of early MFL programmes? Assessment?
Are there any issues when deciding on the content of early MFL programmes?
Do you think about parents' and pupils' wishes?

RESOURCES Do you have enough resources in school?
Do you give any financial support to the MFL teacher to buy more resources?

STAFFING Which staffing provision do you provide (specialist and non-specialist linguists)?
Are you satisfied with the current staffing provision? What is your vision?

PARENTS / CHILDREN Do you inform parents/children of the merits of languages?

HOMEWORK Would you like foreign language **homework** for pupils once a week?

ASSEMBLY – CULTURE Would you like to see other languages mentioned in **school assemblies** when teaching about cultures and other people?

Since Sep 2008 Mrs Cottam has been teaching Year1 pupils German after lining up for lunch. Therefore, pupils are being taught German 4 times a week for 5 minutes per session before lunch.

Is the amount of time appropriate? Could you see that teaching German for ½ hour or a full hour would benefit Y1 children? Is this an effective approach?

Would you like Y1 pupils to continue learning German next year?

Would you like to see the German language display in class continuing as a teaching resource?

SECONDARY SCHOOLS Is there a partnership with a secondary school?
Do secondary schools approach you about planning issues to ensure continuity, coherence and progression for MFLs?
Is there a 'bridging topic' which will be taught in KS2 (final term) and continued in KS3 (secondary school) to ensure a smooth transition?

MFL CLUB Do you want pupils to attend a language club?
If a club is running at the moment, how would you rate the success?

VISION Do you believe that learning another language in addition to English is important for children?
What is your vision for the school?
Does the school have open days to raise the profile of and promote MFL learning amongst the wider community?
If yes, are primary MFL initiatives co-ordinated? Who is planning them?

HISTORY Since when did the school offer MFL teaching?
What were its original aims?

CURRENT PRACTICE What is the current practice?
Does current practice meet the original aims?
Are there any issues now?

LANGUAGE CHOICE What is the current target language?
Are there any factors that influence the choice of target language?
When would you like Topos to start teaching another language?
How many other languages would you like to provide at Topos?
Which language would you MOST like to see taught at Topos?

By 2010 the Government wants all primary schools to give Key Stage 2 pupils the opportunity to learn another language. At which age group should the strategy start?
Does the government provide enough funding?

PLANNING Who decides on the content of early MFL programmes? Assessment?
Are there any issues when deciding on the content of early MFL programmes?
Do you think about parents' and pupils' wishes?

RESOURCES Do you have enough resources in school?
Do you give any financial support to the MFL teacher to buy more resources?

STAFFING Which staffing provision do you provide (specialist and non-specialist linguists)?
Are you satisfied with the current staffing provision? What is your vision?

PARENTS / CHILDREN Do you inform parents/children of the merits of languages?

HOMEWORK Would you like foreign language **homework** for pupils once a week?

ASSEMBLY – CULTURE Would you like to see other languages mentioned in **school assemblies** when teaching about cultures and other people?

SECONDARY SCHOOLS Is there a partnership with a secondary school?
Do secondary schools approach you about planning issues to ensure continuity, coherence and progression for MFLs?
Is there a 'bridging topic' which will be taught in KS2 (final term) and continued in KS3 (secondary school) to ensure a smooth transition?

MFL CLUB Do you want pupils to attend a language club?
If a club is running at the moment, how would you rate the success?

VISION Do you believe that learning another language in addition to English is important for children? What is your vision for the school?
Does the school have open days to raise the profile of and promote MFL learning amongst the wider community?
If yes, are primary MFL initiatives co-ordinated? Who is planning them?

OWN LANGUAGE SKILLS Can you share a bit about your own background in MFL learning?

CURRENT PRACTICE What is the current practice? Are there any issues now?

LANGUAGE CHOICE What is the current target language?
 Are there any factors that influence the choice of target language?
 When would you like Topos/Wapa to start teaching another language?
 How many other languages would you like to provide at Topos?
 Which language would you MOST like to see taught at Topos?

By 2010 the Government wants all primary schools to give Key Stage 2 pupils the opportunity to learn another language. At which age group should the strategy start?

PLANNING Who decides on the content of early MFL programmes? Assessment?
 Are there any issues when deciding on the content of early MFL programmes?
 What do you think about your progress as a school?
 Do you think about parents' and pupils' wishes?

RESOURCES Do you have enough resources in school?
 Is there enough financial support for you to buy more resources?

STAFFING Are you satisfied with the current staffing situation? What is your vision?

PARENTS / CHILDREN Do you inform parents/children of the merits of languages?

HOMEWORK Would you like foreign language **homework** for pupils once a week?

ASSEMBLY – CULTURE Would you like to see other languages mentioned in school assemblies when teaching about cultures and other people?

SECONDARY SCHOOLS Is there a partnership with a secondary school?
 Do you organise visiting secondary teachers to come to school and build up links, and vice versa?
 Do secondary schools approach you about planning issues to ensure continuity, coherence and progression for MFLs?
 Is there a 'bridging topic' which will be taught in KS2 (final term) and continued in KS3 (secondary school) to ensure a smooth transition?

MFL CLUB Do you want pupils to attend a language club? Do you run a MFL club?
 If a club is running at the moment, how would you rate the success?

OTHER SUPPORT Do you get advice from any kind of support group or on training days?

VISION Do you believe that learning another language in addition to English is important for children? What is your vision for the school?
 Does the school have open days to raise the profile of and promote MFL learning amongst the wider community?
 If yes, are primary MFL initiatives co-ordinated? Who is planning them?

Table 12: A comparison of staff, parent and pupil opinion about the commencement of MFL teaching

Staff opinion (Chapter 4, 4.1)	Parent opinion (Chapter 5, 5.1)	Pupil opinion (Chapter 6, 6.1)
All six participants agreed unanimously that the MFL entitlement should commence at least in KS2.	99% agreed that MFL teaching should start in primary school (Figure 3).	94% agreed that MFL teaching should start in primary school (Figure 17).
Everybody wanted an earlier start than KS2.	31% wanted a FS start, 42% preferred KS1 and 26% believed KS2 is best (Figure 3).	8% wanted a FS start, 33% preferred KS1 and 53% believed KS2 is best (Figure 17).
In more detail, five out of six interviewees considered FS as the best time to commence MFL teaching.	Three separate statements asked specifically about when the Government should start its MFL strategy. Although 96% agreed with <i>at least</i> a KS2 start, 70% favoured KS1 or earlier and 47% wanted a FS start (Figure 4).	Y3 pupils preferred a start in KS1/FS. Y6 had a higher proportion of pupils who were disinterested towards any MFL in primary school (Figure 18).
Both MFL specialist teachers emphasised their success of teaching very young children a MFL. This was especially felt when children simulated the correct pronunciation.	Parents were biased by the immediate year group their child occupied (Figures 5-7).	
A teacher observed a strong interest from pupils to get to know other countries and cultures.	Qualitative data illustrated that parents were full of enthusiasm for MFL in primary school.	

Table 13: A comparison of staff, parent and pupil opinion about the number of MFLs

Staff opinion (Chapter 4, 4.2)	Parent opinion (Chapter 5, 5.2)	Pupil opinion (Chapter 6, 6.2)
Five out of six participants were satisfied to offer at least two languages.	67% were expecting one language to be implemented although fewer parents preferred two languages (32%). 1% were keen to see three languages being taught (Figure 8).	25% were expecting one language to be implemented although most pupils preferred two languages (37%). 29% were keen to see three languages being taught (Figure 19).
Only the Headteacher from Topos held the opinion of providing only one MFL which influenced the MFL provision in her school.	Wapa offers two languages in KS2, and the respondents opting for two languages was 13% higher in Wapa. Conversely, Topos offers one language in KS2 and 73% of parents opted mainly for one language (Figure 9).	Figure 19 presented pupils with a keen interest to learn at least one MFL but more opted to learn two or even three MFLs.
A MFL specialist teacher confirmed that children would not get confused when learning two languages.		

Table 14: A comparison of staff, parent and pupil opinion about choosing the most suitable MFL(s) to implement

Staff opinion (Chapter 4, 4.3)	Parent opinion (Chapter 5, 5.3)	Pupil opinion (Chapter 6, 6.3)
French and Spanish were the most chosen MFLs by participants, except for Headteacher Alice who was most keen on French, taught as a single MFL.	58% wanted French, 35% opted for Spanish and 5% chose German as their preferred MFL (Figure 10).	20% wanted Spanish, 19% opted for Chinese and 17% chose either French or Italian (equally ranked) as their preferred MFL (Figure 20).
Headteacher Sophia copied her local secondary school to implement the same MFLs in her primary school, namely French and Spanish. She expressed her joy by offering Spanish now because in her view this language is more widely spoken than French.	French and German were the leading languages at parents' school time. Except from French, Spanish is more popular now than German as it is being regarded as a world language.	7% voted for German as their preferred MFL (Figure 20).
One class teacher expressed confidence to teach French and German but she was certainly worried about teaching Mandarin.	81% wanted their child to continue MFL learning in secondary school with the desire to continue with the same language.	Although Y5 and Y6 pupils were keen to continue MFL learning at KS3, their enthusiasm declined when continuing with the same language.
	60% could speak another language and of those, three quarters were familiar with the French language (Figure 11).	

Table 15: A comparison of staff, parent and pupil opinion about teaching time allocation for MFL(s)

Staff opinion (Chapter 4, 4.4)	Parent opinion (Chapter 5, 5.4)	Pupil opinion (Chapter 6, 6.4)
On average, the four MFL teachers interviewed expected 80 minutes per week teaching time for KS2.	On average, participants expected 72 minutes per week teaching time for KS2 (Table 9).	NOTE: Pupils from Topos have more MFL teaching during KS2 (each year group has 45 minutes per week) than Wapa pupils (each year group has either 30 or 45 minutes per week).
On average, the four MFL teachers interviewed expected 43 minutes per week teaching time for FS and KS1 individually.	On average, participants expected 22 minutes per week teaching time for FS and 46 minutes per week for KS1 (Table 9).	77% believed that they spend the right amount of time on MFL lessons. The response for "too much" or "not enough" time was 12% and 11% respectively (Figure 21).
Some raised concerns over issues such as an overcrowded curriculum and too much time for subjects such as PE or PSHCE.	Some raised concerns over an overcrowded curriculum. Teaching MFL in primary schools adds another timetabling constraint.	Pupils from Wapa were more satisfied with their current MFL time allocation than Topos (Figure 22).
A MFL specialist teacher complained that her 30 minutes per week of Spanish in a Y6 class was too little.	Parents clearly expressed their opinion to see MFL teaching implemented in all age groups.	70% of pupils said that their class teacher never uses the MFL target language outside a language lesson (Figure 23).
Finally, Sophia's aim is to make her school's MFL provision become more cross-curricular teaching.		

Table 16: A comparison of staff, parent and pupil opinion about pupils' use of MFL skills at home

Staff opinion (Chapter 4, 4.5)	Parent opinion (Chapter 5, 5.5.1)	Pupil opinion (Chapter 6, 6.5.1)
<i>Staff were not asked this question.</i>	22% never encouraged their child to speak the target language at home, 57% sometimes did this, and 21% regularly encouraged their child (Figure 12).	Pupils had more enthusiasm to tell their parents about what they had learned during a MFL lesson rather than speaking the language at home. 49% never spoke the language at home (Figure 24).
	13% visited other countries with their child for the purpose of using a different language.	

Table 17: A comparison of staff, parent and pupil opinion pupil about MFL provision, school assemblies and homework

Staff opinion (Chapter 4, 4.5)	Parent opinion (Chapter 5, 5.5.2)	Pupil opinion (Chapter 6, 6.5.2)
In both schools parents are being informed about their child's MFL progress through the end of year report, however Sophia saw the need to inform parents more about MFL.	57% were satisfied with the current foreign language provision at their primary school but they wanted to be more informed about MFL learning (Figure 13).	Although Art was the most popular subject, pupils were more in favour of MFL than English (Figure 25). There was equal interest for both subjects (50%) when only these two subjects were queried for their preference side by side.
Wapa had a school policy in place but nobody knew that Headteacher Sophia was actually the MFL co-ordinator. Topos had nothing in place – no MFL policy or MFL co-ordinator.	82% supported the idea to foster a cultural understanding during assembly times in school (Figure 13).	There could be a correlation between 'doing well' and 'liking' a subject. Pupils were confident in their MFL skills (Figure 26) and viewed MFL lessons as manageable (Figure 27). In Figure 28, 60% expressed that their MFL lessons were positive.
Both schools did not plan for the delivery of cultural understanding. For example, school assemblies were not utilised for this delivery.	48% were in favour of some MFL homework being given (Figure 13).	77% supported the idea to foster a cultural understanding during assembly times in school (Figure 29).
Everybody liked the idea of giving occasional homework.		64% did not want any MFL homework (Figure 30).
		Tentatively speaking, the mainly positive attitudes towards MFL learning may reflect a good MFL provision in Topos and Wapa.

Table 18: A comparison of staff, parent and pupil opinion pupil about MFL outside of school hours

Staff opinion (Chapter 4, 4.5)	Parent opinion (Chapter 5, 5.5.3)	Pupil opinion (Chapter 6, 6.5.3)
MFL after-school club endeavours seemed to have been unsuccessful by both schools.	3% said that their child attended a MFL club. Some cannot afford the cost and others were disappointed that their club ceased to exist due to falling attendance.	Only 4 out of 109 pupils from KS2 attended a language club. One of them said that the club was boring, but the others gave positive feedback.
	85% of parents said that their child was not interested in a MFL club and they (98%) were not interested either.	A quarter of the remaining 105 pupils would have been interested to attend a language club.
		In response to three separate statements, 38% said they would have time to attend a language club; 57% knew that their parents or family would be able to provide transport but only 11% thought that there would be a language club running close to their home.

Table 19: A comparison of staff, Y1 parent and Y1 pupil opinion about the potential benefits of teaching MFL in KS1

Staff opinion (Chapter 4, 4.6)	Parent opinion (Chapter 5, 5.6)	Pupil opinion (Chapter 6, 6.6)
Some respondents wanted to use songs and games in FS and KS1 due to the belief that children absorb a lot at this age.	<p><i>1-4 from Figure 14:</i></p> <p>1) 82% liked the Y1 strategy of learning some German at Topos.</p> <p>2) 95% wanted this activity to continue.</p> <p>3) Nearly 80% would have preferred 10 minutes instead of 5 minutes per session.</p> <p>4) More than half of parents would have liked a full hour instead.</p>	The majority of pupils told their parents about what they had learned during a German lesson, but 55% never spoke the language at home (Figure 31).
In FS and KS1 children get used to the sounds of the language (opinion of MFL specialist Ruth). Headteacher Alice believed that FS children are occupied enough whilst settling into school and wanted MFL teaching to start in KS1.	90% wanted German teaching to continue in Y2 (Figure 15).	50% believed that they spend the right amount of time on German lessons. The response for 'too much' or 'not enough' time was 40% and 10% respectively (Figure 32).
Both Headteachers were disappointed about the lack of funding which had an impact on MFL staffing provision and spoilt MFL ambitions.	Y1 parents wanted MFL success for their child but the effort to support this at home was not as forthcoming by parents themselves (Figure 16).	65% of pupils were keen to continue learning German in Y2. When asked if they would like to have a full hour German lesson, there was an equal vote of 35% for both 'yes' and 'no' responses. The rest did not mind.
		95% agreed that MFL teaching should start in primary school. 15% wanted a FS start, 45% preferred KS1 and 35% believed KS2 was best. (Figure 33).
		20% expected one language to be implemented, 15% preferred two languages, and 60% were keen to see three languages being taught (Figure 34).
		31% wanted French, 25% German, 19% Chinese, and 13% wanted Italian as their preferred MFL (Figure 35).
		85% said that German lessons were either 'easy' or 'OK'. Starting with the most occurring choice in descending order, Y1 pupils thought German lessons were: fun, interesting, exciting, hard, easy and boring. (Y1 pupils had the same selection of words as in Figure 28).

		45% supported the idea to foster a cultural understanding during assembly times in school. 45% were keen to get some homework, although 20% were not sure and 35% wanted none.
		None attended a language club. From three separate statements, 40% wanted to be part of a language club but there was no club provision, 25% were busy because of other club commitments, and 10% of pupils' parents were not able to provide transport.

Glossary

BLIS Professionals	BLIS Professionals is a database of international communication experts, comprising providers of translation, interpreting, language training and cultural briefing services. The database is part of CILT's BLIS Services suite located at www.blis.org.uk .
FS/R	In the UK, pupils start primary school aged 4, known as Foundation Stage or Reception (FS/R).
KS1	Year groups 1 to 2 (Y1 to Y2) are classed as Key Stage 1 (KS1).
KS2	Year groups 3 to 6 (Y3 to Y6) are classed as Key Stage 2 (KS2).
KS3	Once primary school age has passed, pupils attend secondary school, classed as Key Stage 3 (KS3) with year groups 7 to 9 (Y7 to Y9).
Transition	Moving from KS2 to KS3 is sometimes called 'transition'.

List of abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CILT	The National Centre for Languages
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPH	Critical Period Hypothesis
DCSF	The Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	The Department for Education and Skills
FL	Foreign Language(s)
FS	Foundation Stage (also known as Reception)
KS1	Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and Year 2)
KS2	Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to Year 6)
LEA	Local Education Authority
MFL	Modern Foreign Language
MFLs	Modern Foreign Languages
MLA	The Modern Language Association of America
NFER	The National Foundation for Educational Research
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PE	Physical Education
PMFL	Primary Modern Foreign Languages
PSHCE	Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic education
QCA	The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
R	Reception (also known as Foundation Stage)
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
Topos	Topos Primary School
TPS	Topos Primary School

TV	Television
UK	United Kingdom
Wapa	Wapa Primary School
WPS	Wapa Primary School
Y1	Year 1 (KS1)
Y2	Year 2 (KS1)
Y3	Year 3 (KS2)
Y4	Year 4 (KS2)
Y5	Year 5 (KS2)
Y6	Year 6 (KS2)
Y7	Year 7 (KS3)
Y8	Year 8 (KS3)
Y9	Year 9 (KS3)

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