

Supporting Students with Home, Heritage and Community Languages:

Information on supporting students entering for home, heritage and community language qualifications

This paper is suitable for school leaders in the secondary phase, and all members of the senior leadership team (SLT) who are involved in pupils' pastoral care, community links, and developing the curriculum.

What are heritage languages and where do pupils study them?

“The teaching of foreign languages in schools should be more reflective of “modern Britain”, with greater numbers of pupils learning languages such as Arabic and Polish” **announced** Robin Walker MP, Minister for School Standards, in October 2021.

Approximately 30,000 students take a qualification in their ‘community’ language every year. A majority of students entering community language exams through their mainstream school do not study the subject in there, but in a community-led supplementary school setting. However, the impact of the pandemic has meant that far fewer pupils have been able to sit these qualifications in their mainstream school in the last two years and there is a danger that this downturn in examination entries will continue. Increasingly, pupils are entering school as bilinguals but leaving school as monolingual.

This information paper is aimed at supporting school communities to realise the importance of bilingualism and to support mainstream schools in facilitating heritage language exam entries for their pupils.

The value of community language examinations is recognised as strategically important to the country in terms of economic growth and exports; security, defence, and international relations; social mobility, and educational achievement of EAL pupils.

What is supplementary education?

Supplementary education can be defined as all out-of-school learning. The aim of supplementary schools is to provide a structured and safe environment for children to learn more about their culture, faith, and/or heritage while at the same time supporting their educational attainment and realising their potential. This learning is often focused on the provision of additional support for curriculum subjects including languages, history and cultural enrichment activities such as faith, arts and sports. Provision takes place within a range of contexts including:

- tuition groups
- after-school clubs
- supplementary schools
- mother-tongue classes
- Saturday schools
- faith tuition (temple, synagogue, mosque, church, or home-based)

Supplementary schools offer this range of educational support (language, core curriculum, faith, and culture), outside the school day (therefore sometimes referred to as out-of-school settings), and within the context of a specific ethnic, national, faith, or physical community. They are established and managed by community members, generally on a voluntary basis. As community-based organisations, they act as crucial information and advocacy points for adults as well as children. There are 3,000 to 5,000 supplementary schools in England.

Some supplementary schools are able to employ professionally qualified teachers by raising money from parents. Other supplementary schools serve communities experiencing economic disadvantage and must raise money from charitable trusts to run their activities. In some cases they are able to access local authority funding to support the integration of minority and newly-arrived migrant communities. The difficulties in raising funds can make it impossible for them to pay professional fees and they rely on teachers accepting much smaller payment or working on an entirely voluntary basis. It is worth considering that training and continuous professional development (CPD) are vital to all teachers learning about mainstream curriculum development, acquiring new skills, and sharing best practice and innovation, and this applies to teachers based in supplementary schools as well as those based in 'in-school' settings.

Practical tips to support students entering for external examinations in heritage languages

- 1 Do a survey of language skills, including any languages other than English spoken at home, when pupils start in Year 7. Track the progress of the students from that point, checking on who is carrying on with their language learning.
- 2 At each stage of surveying pupils' language skills, include questions to ascertain whether pupils are attending community settings for instruction.
- 3 Do an audit of your staff to ensure you know the language skills of your staff so they can support heritage language speakers.
- 4 As part of your recruitment process, include language skills in 'Desirable skills', especially the languages of your school community.
- 5 Ensure support for pupils studying heritage languages is included as part of your school's inclusion policy.
- 6 Emphasise the importance to pupils and their families about studying for heritage language qualifications.
- 7 Include reference to the progress of pupils studying heritage languages in the school's reporting systems as much as possible.
- 8 Celebrate pupils' success as much as possible.

Practical activities to support local supplementary schools and your students

- 1 Identify and engage with community-led supplementary schools or other out-of-school setting your pupils attend (these schools might be using your premises, or you could ask your pupils for information on the schools they attend).
- 2 If pupils have a non-English heritage language, find out which supplementary schools operate in your area and encourage pupils to continue with improving their own language skills.
- 3 If your pupils are being taught a heritage language at a supplementary school or other out-of-school setting, ask for the details so you can contact the school and offer support/arrange to meet.
- 4 Meet the headteacher and listen to their successes and challenges. Make a visit to see the school in action.
- 5 Allow supplementary school teachers to join CPD sessions at your school to provide opportunities for their training and development.

- 6 Let teachers watch your language lessons and talk to your MFL teachers. Make opportunities for sharing ideas and good practice.
- 7 Seek opportunities for links to be made across the curriculum, including in relation to literacy, global citizenship/international dimension and PSHE.
- 8 Share curriculum resources.
- 9 Support supplementary schools in safeguarding.
- 10 Offer facilities at subsidised rates.
- 11 Act as an Educational Expert at a quality recognition meeting. This takes two to three hours of your time at most, including reading papers prior to the meeting. If you have a supplementary school using your school premises out-of-school hours, contact the Quality Assurance Manager at the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRCSE) for further information on how they can be quality assured.

Benefits to you and your students

Supplementary schools contribute to the attainment of your pupils, enhance links to the community, and help your pupils to achieve a qualification in their home or community language. All community language GCSEs contribute to the EBacc pillar.

Partnering with supplementary schools where your pupils are involved can support the teaching and learning of community languages, help you to engage with pupils' parents, especially from 'hard-to-reach' migrant families, as well as boosting cultural enrichment and extracurricular activities.

Partnering with supplementary schools can support the school's intercultural work and contribute to a school ethos that celebrates the linguistic footprint of its community.

Nuriye Mertcan, Assistant Principal at Duke's Aldridge Academy who supports the delivery of heritage languages at supplementary schools across the UK on a voluntary basis says: *"It is vital to recognise and value all the hard work which is taking place at supplementary schools and congratulating the students and their families for the additional time they have dedicated to their education. Through forming meaningful links with colleagues involved in supplementary education, we can better support our pupils to reach their potential."*

Bernadette Clinton, MFL Consultant at Hackney Education, has a long track record in this domain. She says: *"Schools are keen to serve their local communities and to meet their needs. As part of recognising the skills that pupils bring with them to school, it is vital for schools to celebrate the heritage languages that children speak. This demonstrates that the school values these skills and encourages the pupils to succeed and feel proud of their own talents. Local authorities and multi academy trusts can support schools in discovering and making contact with the supplementary schools – a good starting point is to look at the NRCSE website. Pupils themselves, of course, can furnish the names of the schools they attend. It is vital to provide a joined-up approach so that pupils do not fall between two stools and are disenfranchised from gaining the accreditation they deserve and the country needs."*

Further information

National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education www.supplementaryeducation.org.uk/

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