

**Languages Strategic Implementation Group**  
**Note of Meeting #20, 12 September 2019**  
**Education Scotland, Endeavour House, Dundee**

**Attendees**

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|                            |    |                             |
|----------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| Laurence Findlay (Chair)   | LF | ADES                        |
| Louise Glen (Chair)        | LG | Education Scotland          |
| Helene Cornu (Secretariat) | HC | Scottish Government         |
| Ross Cumming (Secretariat) | RC | Scottish Government         |
| Bethan Owen                | BO | LANGS                       |
| Eddie Follan               | EF | COSLA                       |
| Fhiona Mackay              | FM | SCILT / CISS                |
| Graham Hutton              | GH | School Leaders Scotland     |
| Inge Birnie                | IB | SCDE Modern Languages Group |
| Jim McDonald               | JM | SQA                         |
| Joe Carson                 | JC | UCMLS                       |
| Louise Tate-Graham         | LT | SALT                        |
| Robert Quinn               | RQ | SQA                         |
| Sarah Stevenson            | SS | GTCS                        |
| Sonia Kordiak              | SK | EIS                         |

**1 Welcome and apologies**

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LG acted as lead Chair on this occasion and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Francisco Valdera-Gil, Louise Whyte and Suzanne Marshall.

SS advised she would be representing GTCS in the interim following Ellen Docherty's retirement.

It was noted that Clare Mouat would no longer represent NPFS at meetings.

**2 Approval of minutes from previous meeting**

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SK requested a change to the last bullet on page 3, so that their query on whether languages could be taught by non GTCS registered teachers and its answer was properly noted.

The Chair agreed that this change would be made and the minutes were approved by the group, subject to the aforementioned amendment.

### **3 Matters arising from minutes and actions outstanding**

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#### Member updates

- COSLA: EF reported that COSLA had held an initial discussion regarding a leadership role with the Regional Improvement Collaboratives, which would require further consideration.
- Education Scotland: LG reported that Education Scotland had now moved to a regional structure across all curricular areas. While it was a different management system, this would not impact on national policy work.
- EIS: SK advised she was no longer the Vice Convener of the EIS Education Committee, but was still a member of the committee.
- SCDE: IB advised that an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) framework to support student teachers to teach languages had been created. It had been well received, and was seen as a positive shift to have ITE providers working together. The framework is to be reviewed in October.

#### Record of Actions

The Chair wished to discuss the poor uptake in members providing updates to the Record of Actions, and what could be done to encourage updates or make it easier for members to do so.

The Chair highlighted the importance of having a full record of how the SIG is steering policy, as this formed part of the end of year report for the Culture, Tourism, Europe & External Affairs (CTEEA) Committee.

Members agreed that additional reminders would be welcome, and that a 'shared' document that the entire group could update directly (e.g. using Sharepoint) could be useful.

#### **Action/s**

- Secretariat to investigate how to improve on the current Record of Actions.

#### Review of survey preliminary results

The group discussed a paper covering the preliminary L2 findings from the 2019 local authority survey. HC noted that not all results from the 2019 survey were fully comparable to those from the 2018 survey, which was due to changes in the way the data was collected.

The main points the group considered were:

- Whether the survey results were now in the public domain. HC clarified that the preliminary L2 findings had gone to the CTEEA Committee, but that the full survey results would not be published until after the final report had been sent to the Committee.
- It was confirmed that visiting specialists to classes, such as language assistants, would be expected to work alongside GTCS registered teachers, providing added value to both pupils and teachers.
- That one of the reasons provided by primary schools for not providing the full L2 entitlement – ‘lack of strategic direction’ – required further analysis to identify where this issue lies – at school, local authority or national level – so that it can be addressed.
- That issues of ‘competing priorities’ and ‘teacher confidence’ remained high among primary schools not delivering the full L2 entitlement, and these needed to be clarified further in order to identify what steps to take to resolve them.
- That ‘misinterpretation of ‘entitlement’ as a reason among secondary schools not providing the full L2 entitlement required clarification. Possible causes considered included whether there was confusion between the 1+2 and wider BGE policies, or if the entitlement was being considered as being optional and not a right of the child.

#### Update on the languages 1+2 research being carried out by the South-East RIC

BO reported that coding of the responses was on-going, with preliminary findings being presented at the Scottish Learning Festival later in the month. It was hoped that the full findings would be published by the end of the academic year.

BO also advised of progress on a self-evaluation tool being created to allow schools to measure progress in language learning. A sample of primary and secondary schools from five local authorities had trialled it, and the next step would be the creation of a working group to develop the tool further. It is hoped the tool can be launched for the start of the next academic year.

#### University and school engagement on languages

JC asked to defer this update to the next meeting.

#### **Action/s**

- JC to give update on university and school engagement on languages at January 2020 meeting.

#### **4 Discussion on next steps for supporting language learning**

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The group discussed a paper tabled by the Secretariat on the priorities for continuing support for language learning up to 2021 and beyond. These priorities were identified at the January 2019 meeting, and the group was asked to consider:

- In light of the results of the 2019 local authority survey and SQA examinations, are these still the priorities for continuing support for language learning; and, if not, what needs to be added?
- How, in practice, should these priorities be taken forward; who needs to be involved; and what are the outcomes and benefits for learners that we want to see as a result?

Among the points considered by members were:

##### Promotion and recognition of language learning

- Whether the profile of languages can be increased by involving key people to engage with young people, e.g. MSPs with language skills, foreign football players, and others. Teacher confidence in languages also needs to be increased to help them make it an attractive subject to pupils, particularly at secondary schools. Also a recognition that Brexit could reduce the incentive to learn a language.

##### Engagement with schools:

- Whether pupils going into the senior phase can take up ambassadorial roles to promote language learning at primary level, which can improve their confidence and develop leadership skills. Universities may be also able to provide outreach to local schools.

##### Support for teaching and learning:

- Can the success of the Languages for Life and Work award be built upon, for example by including it as a component of foundational apprenticeships, or packaging with business baccalaureate.
- The OU/SCILT language pedagogy course is 30 weeks long, which is a big commitment for teachers. A lighter 10-week course may be viewed as being more acceptable for local authorities and schools.

## 5 2019 SQA results

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JM provided an update to the group on the 2019 SQA examination results. His general observations that the group discussed in further detail included:

- Candidate performance in 2019 was generally strong at National 5 to Advanced Higher, with performance broadly in line with 2018.
- At National 3 and 4, the vast majority of candidates entered for the course obtained the course award.
- The overall picture in terms of uptake was again decline, with Spanish continuing to buck the trend at every SCQF level 3-7. However, there were levels where decline was less pronounced in comparison to 2018.
- The Languages for Life and Work award at SCQF 3 and 4 continues to be popular, with 2,661 candidates certificated in 2019. The award is still the second most popular SQA Award, after Employability.

JM advised that Modern Languages Course Reports are published annually every autumn, and are available at <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45775.html>. The Reports contain information on all aspects of candidate performance, including practical advice on improvement and next steps.

## 6 Any other business

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SK reported that a motion had been passed at the EIS AGM, instructing the EIS Council to lobby for a comprehensive government review of the National 1+2 Languages strategy. The EIS General Secretary would be raising this with the Deputy First Minister at their next meeting.

## 7 Date and location of next meeting

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It was confirmed that the January 2020 meeting would take place at The Ramshorn, Glasgow. The date is still to be confirmed; HC reminded the group that Doodle polls had been issued to confirm dates for the January, May and September 2020 meetings.

The group agreed that Tuesdays and Wednesdays were the preferred days to hold meetings.

### Action/s

- Members to confirm their availability for 2020 meetings.

## Summary of Actions

| No.            | Action  | Responsible  | Due Date | Progress Status  |
|----------------|---|--|----------|--|
| <b>New</b>     |   |  |          |  |
| 1              | Secretariat to investigate how to improve on the current Record of Actions.   | Secretariat  | Jan 2020 |  |
| 2              | Members to confirm their availability for 2020 meetings.  | All  | Ongoing  |  |
| <b>Ongoing</b> |   |  |          |  |
| 1              | All to update the Record of Actions in advance of the next SIG meeting.   | All  | Dec 2019 | Members to provide updates to inform 2019 annual report.   |
| 2              | UCMLS to look into what engagement and outreach there is currently between schools, local authorities and universities and to share this at future SIG meeting. | Joe Carson   | Jan 2020 | Postponed from Sep 2019 meeting.   |
| 3              | Relevant SIG members to keep the group updated on progress with the Regional Improvement Collaboratives.  | Chairs<br>Eddie Follan<br>Helene Cornu<br>Barbara Morton | Ongoing  | It was noted that the RICs were at varying stages of development and that not all the RICs seemed to have a single languages contact.  |
| 4              | Co-chairs to write to Directors on the policy intention on language learning in the BGE and senior phase.   | Chairs   | Ongoing  |  |
| 5              | SIG members to agree a new programme of engagement with secondary schools, which will include amongst other things a focus on entitlement to end S3.            | All  | Ongoing  | SIG Chairs are planning a series of secondary BGE events to discuss the position in local authorities as provided in the survey, respond to local and regional needs and ensure the aim of the policy are well-communicated. |

| No.              | Action  | Responsible           | Due Date  | Progress Status   |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------|---|
| 6                | Edinburgh City Council and Moray House to share their research into learning and teaching in the classroom with SIG.              | Bethan Owen           | Ongoing   | Update provided at 12 Sep 2019 meeting. Preliminary findings to be presented at Scottish Learning Festival. Full findings expected to be published by end of academic year. |
| 7                | Bethan Owen to provide information to the Scottish Government about the tasks involved in co-ordinating Scotland Loves Languages. | Bethan Owen           | Ongoing   |   |
| 8                | Francisco Valdera-Gil to share papers from meetings with local authorities and SCILT about the languages framework with SIG.      | Francisco Valdera-Gil | Ongoing   |   |
| <b>Completed</b> |   |                       |           |   |
| 1                | Secretariat to share their short paper on the survey results with SIG.  | Secretariat           | Completed | Provided at Sep 2019 meeting.   |
| 2                | Education Scotland to work with LANGS and SALT to communicate the new guidance on L3 provision.                                   | Louise Glen           | Completed |   |