Regional analysis of Language Trends Secondary survey, 2010 – West Midlands

This report summarises findings from a survey of secondary schools carried out during the autumn term of 2010 by CILT, the National Centre for Languages, with support from the Association for Language Learning and the Independent Schools' Modern Language Association. It is based on responses to a questionnaire sent to a representative sample of 2000 secondary schools in England (1500 maintained schools and 500 independent schools). The survey has been carried out annually since 2002 to track developments in language provision and take up. Findings are based on responses from 711 schools – an overall response rate of 36%. The survey was carried out online.

This report summarises key findings from the schools in West Midlands which responded to the survey, followed by some key regional comparisons across the 9 government office regions. The survey methodology and response details are provided at the end.

This report focuses on maintained schools in the region only.

Summary of key survey findings for schools: West Midlands

Responses were obtained from 566 maintained schools across the country (out of 1500 selected for the survey), a national response rate of 38%. At the time of the survey there were 337 maintained secondary schools in West Midlands (excluding those deemed middle and special schools). 182 of these schools were randomly selected for the survey. Responses were obtained from 68 schools, a response rate of 37%. (Table 3 and 4)

➢ Language take-up and provision, KS3, KS4 and post-16

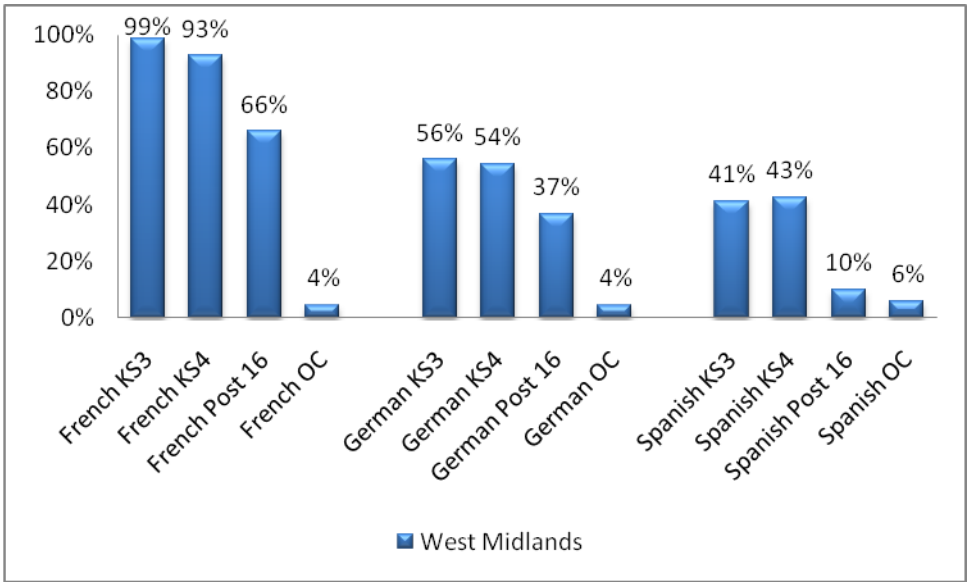
- 85% of the schools in West Midlands reported that languages were optional for their pupils at KS4. This proportion was much higher than in 2009 (75%) and started to appear higher than the England total (80%). (Table 1)
- 71% of the maintained schools in the region reported having less than 50% of their pupils studying languages in Year 10. This was much higher than in 2009 (58%) and started to appear higher than the England total in 2010 (64%). (Table 2)
- Nearly two thirds of the schools (59%) in the region with languages optional for their pupils reported that they had experienced a decrease in pupil take-up of languages at KS4 over the last 3 years whilst nearly another quarter (24%) of the schools reported an increase in take-up and the rest said there had been no change.
- Nearly a quarter of the schools (24%) in the region indicated one or more language was introduced at KS3 over the last few years and 24% of the schools in the region introduced accreditation into KS3. On the other hand, more than a quarter (29%) reported shortened weekly lesson time for KS3 and nearly one in five schools (19%) reported shortened KS3. 18% of the schools reported that one or more language was discontinued.
- Of the 41 schools which have post-16 students and which responded to the survey, 41% reported a decrease in take-up post 16 over the past three years whilst another 20% schools reported an overall increase post 16.

➢ Languages

- We asked schools about the languages they offered within the curriculum at KS3, KS4 and post-16 level, as well as any language provision outside curriculum time. French was provided by almost all the schools (99%) in West Midlands, followed by German and Spanish, provided by 59% and 50% of the schools respectively at any level or outside curriculum time.

Figure 1: Percentage of responding schools providing French, German and Spanish at different stages, West Midlands

*OC: Outside Curriculum



- The most popular other languages provided by schools in the region were Urdu (offered by 22% of all the schools) and Italian (12%), with Urdu provided across stages and Italian outside curriculum.

➢ Motivating language learning

- **Measures to increase take-up**: Like England as a whole, schools in West Midlands were actively involved in various measures to increase take-up, with four in five schools adopting new teaching approaches (81%), 60% of the schools promoting international links or exchanges and nearly half (46%) providing relevant IAG services in the school. More than half of the schools (53%) used the Languages Work materials and two in five schools (44%) joined the Routes into Languages programme.

  Most of the measures were thought to have improved pupil attitude and certain particular measures such as greater support from senior management team improved take-up of languages; however, the impact of various efforts to increase the take-up was prone to be cancelled out by other factors and many of the new measures would need more time to see the impact.

- **Alternative accreditation**: Nearly half of the schools (47%) in the region offered another form of accreditation apart from GCSE at either KS3 or KS4 and nearly another third of the schools (31%) reported considering alternative accreditation. But another 22% of the schools in the region did not offer any alternative accreditation and were not considering this.

➢ CPD

- Among various types of CPD events and training, nearly nine in ten schools in the region (87%) indicated that they were likely to attend one-day courses, if such courses were available. Half of the schools (50%) indicated that that they were likely to attend in-school sessions led by external trainers and 54% were likely to attend in-school CPD run within the department.

Regional comparisons of language take-up at KS4

Across all maintained schools in England, four in five schools (80%) have made languages optional for their pupils at KS4. Table 1 below looks at the optional status of languages in schools by region.

Table 2 shows the regional comparisons of schools reporting less than half of their pupils opting to take languages in Year 10. Across England, more than three in five maintained schools (64%) had less than 50% take-up. By region, using this indicator, the lowest take-up of languages was reported in the North East where more than four in five responding schools (86%) had less than 50% take-up.

Table 1: Compulsory or optional status of languages in schools, by region, 2010 and 2009

Maintained schools only

	% of schools with MFL optional at KS4	Base number	**% of schools with MFL optional at KS4**	Base number
	2009		**2010**	
ALL MAINTAINED SCHOOLS	76%	566	**80%**	**566**
North East	91%	33	97%	29
North West	78%	96	76%	75
Yorkshire & the Humber	82%	56	87%	60
East Midlands	84%	37	75%	53
West Midlands	75%	55	85%	68
East	71%	59	79%	61
London	68%	69	87%	61
South East	70%	91	67%	89
South West	77%	70	81%	70

* There were 8 missing responses to this question in 2009.

Table 2: Proportion of schools with under 50% of pupils studying a language in Year 10, by region of school, 2010 and 2009

Maintained schools only

	% of schools with less than 50% languages take-up	Base number	**% of schools with less than 50% languages take-up**	Base number
	2009		**2010**	
ALL MAINTAINED SCHOOLS	59%	566	**64%**	**566**
North East	76%	33	86%	29
North West	65%	96	60%	75
Yorkshire & the Humber	61%	56	77%	60
East Midlands	62%	37	62%	53
West Midlands	58%	55	71%	68
East	56%	59	62%	61
London	52%	69	67%	61
South East	47%	91	47%	89
South West	64%	70	64%	70

*There were 8 missing responses to this question in 2009.

Survey background and methodology

An online questionnaire was developed in summer 2010. An invitation letter with log-in details of the online questionnaire addressed to Heads of Languages was despatched to 2,000 schools on 20 September 2010. A few reminder letters and emails were sent to Heads of Languages throughout the term. In order to allow schools of more time to complete the survey, the deadline was extended to 17 December 2010, when the term ends for most schools.

Information regarding alternative ways of responding to the survey including faxing, e-mailing or telephoning was also sent to schools.

This year's survey also formed part of a wider exercise with Links into Languages to map the sector and identify priorities for development. This coordinated approach also avoided confusion among schools over various surveys on secondary languages carried out nationally near the time of this survey.

A total of 566 maintained schools and 145 independent schools responded by 17 December 2010, yielding an overall response rate of 36% (38% for maintained schools).

Table 3: Response rates to the survey by region

The highest response was received from schools in South West (47%). The response rates from East Midlands, North East, Yorkshire & the Humber and South East were also above or equal to 38%, the total response rate from maintained schools in England. The lowest response was from schools in London (29%).

Maintained schools only

GOR	**Number of responding schools**	**Number of schools in issued survey sample**	***Response rate (%)***
North East	29	73	40%
North West	75	215	35%
Yorkshire & the Humber	60	150	40%
East Midlands	53	125	42%
West Midlands	68	182	37%
East	61	166	37%
London	61	207	29%
South East	89	234	38%
South West	70	148	47%
Total	**566**	**1500**	38%

Table 4: Regional distribution of responding schools compared to all schools in England

Maintained schools only

GOR	Number of responding schools	%	**Total maintained schools, England 2010***	%
North East	29	5%	136	5%
North West	75	13%	399	14%
Yorkshire & the Humber	60	11%	279	10%
East Midlands	53	9%	233	8%
West Midlands	68	12%	337	12%
East	61	11%	309	11%
London	61	11%	385	14%
South East	89	16%	435	16%
South West	70	12%	276	10%
Total	**566**	**100%**	**2789**	**100%**

* Data source: NFER