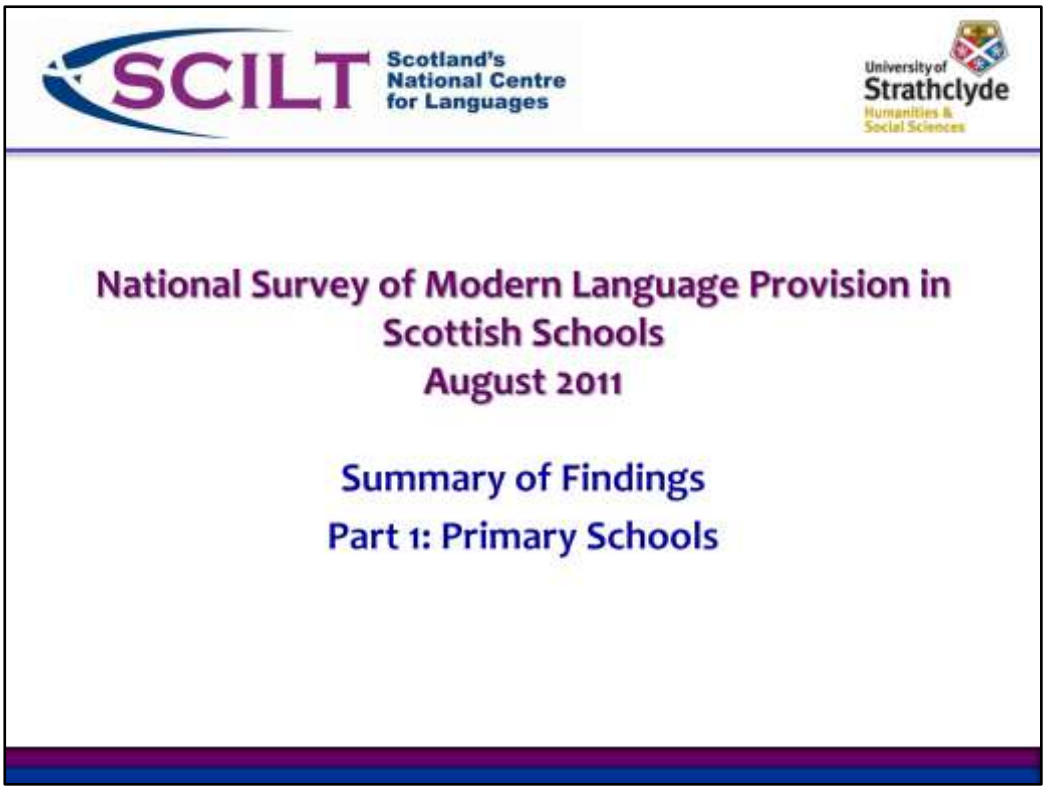
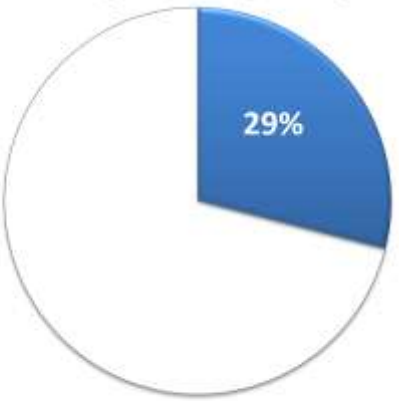
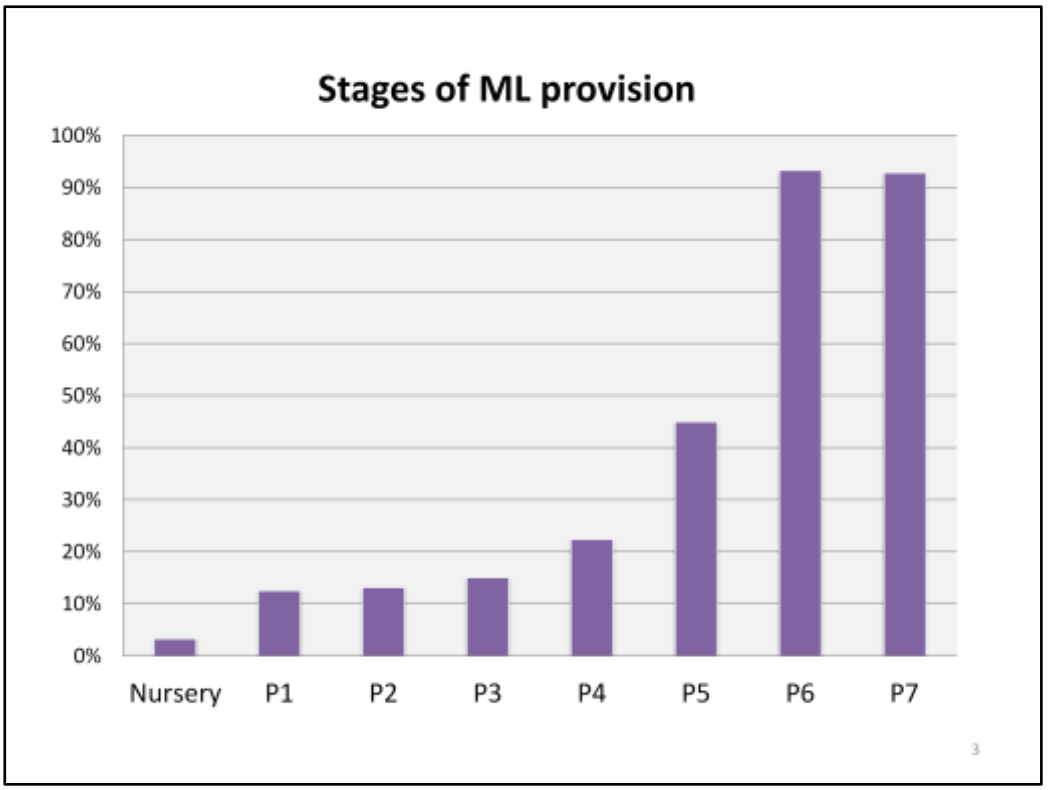

SCILT
Scotland's National Centre for Languages
University of Strathclyde
Humanities & Social Sciences
National Survey of Modern Language Provision in Scottish Schools
August 2011
Summary of Findings
Part 1: Primary Schools

Background Information



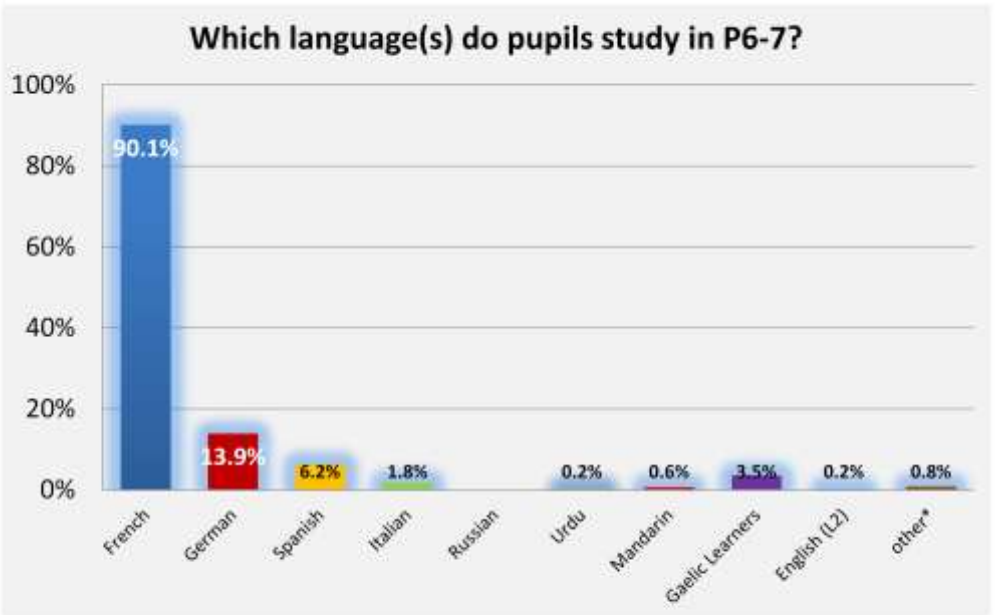
- In August 2011, SCILT carried out a national survey of language provision in Scottish state-funded primary and secondary schools via two online questionnaires.
- The data were analysed using both statistical and qualitative analysis tools (SPSS and NVivo respectively).
- According to Scottish Schools Online, there are 2186 state-funded primary school in Scotland. On that basis, the response rate for the primary school sector is 29%.

SCILT previously conducted a national survey of modern language provision in 2007. Where appropriate, reference is made to findings from this earlier survey.

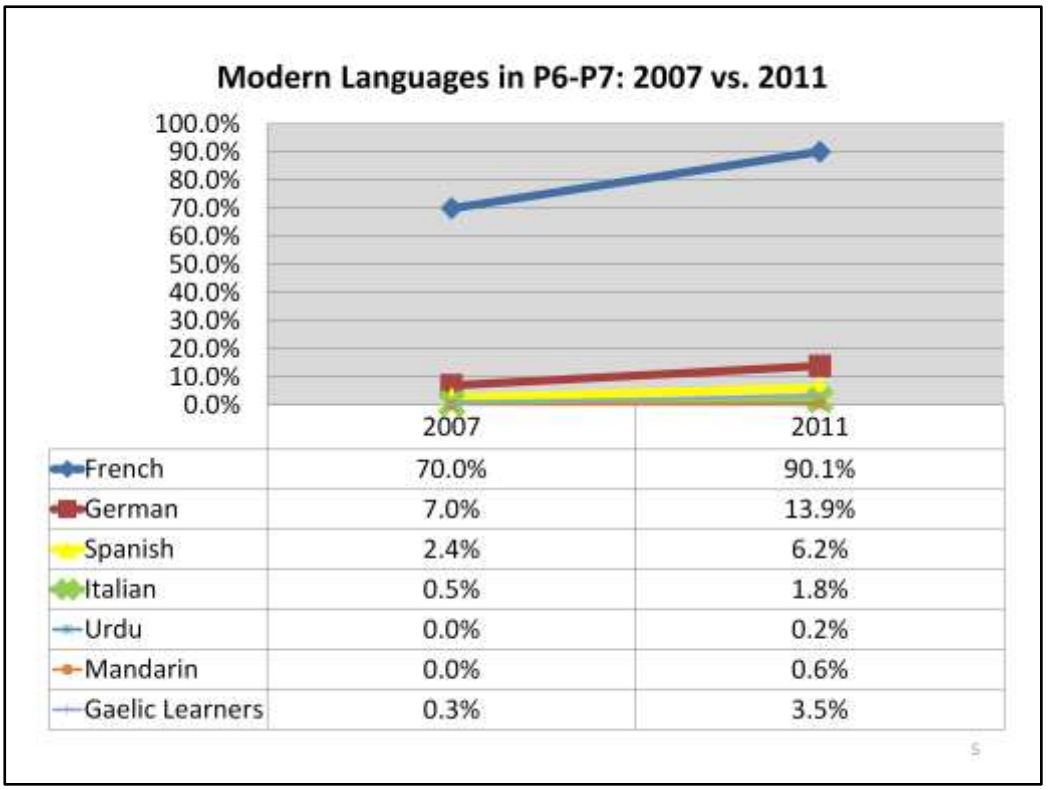


The data suggest that by Primary 5 all responding Local Authorities (LAs) provide language tuition in at least some of their schools and by Primary 6 all LAs provide language tuition in the majority or even all of their schools. By comparison, in SCILT's **2007** survey only half of respondents indicated that they started language tuition in Primary 6.

Currently, only 13% of responding schools offer language tuition from Primary 1.



*Other: Scots; Ivrit (Hebrew); some Spanish starting this year; peripatetic Gaelic teacher in nursery. Arabic, Bengali and Polish mentioned under Q12



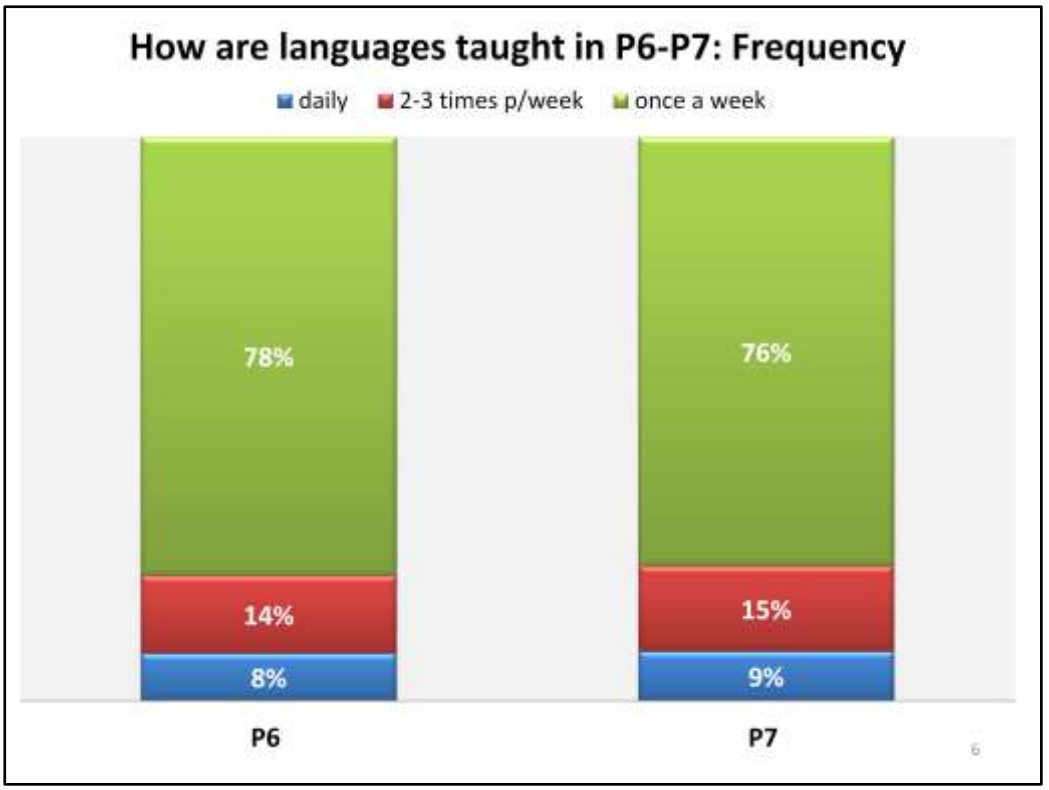
	2007	2011
French	70.0%	90.1%
German	7.0%	13.9%
Spanish	2.4%	6.2%
Italian	0.5%	1.8%
Urdu	0.0%	0.2%
Mandarin	0.0%	0.6%
Gaelic Learners	0.3%	3.5%

Since SCILT's 2007 survey French has become even more dominant as the first foreign language to be taught in primary school, although other language provision appears to have increased too, albeit only slightly.

Through further analysis of the responding schools we extracted the following findings:

French dominates in all authorities. **German** is taught in 87 schools across 16 authorities. Of these, 43 schools (nearly 40%) offer **only** German. The language is more frequently offered in the east and northeast of the country. **Spanish** is taught in 39 schools across 15 authorities. Of these, 24 schools (nearly 62%) offer **only** Spanish and the languages is more frequently offered in the west and southwest of the country. **Italian** is taught in 11 schools across five authorities: Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, Edinburgh, East- and Midlothian. It appears to be mostly taught in combination with French. **Gaelic for Learners** is particularly strong in Argyll & Bute but is also taught in Edinburgh, the Western Isles, Highland, North Lanarkshire, Perth & Kinross, and South Lanarkshire. **Mandarin** is taught in one or two schools in East Ayrshire, Fife, and North Ayrshire. **Urdu** is taught in Edinburgh.

NB: The above findings relate to the response sample only. There may well be additional schools , and in other local authorities than those mentioned, where the above (or other) languages are taught, since our sample only reports on 29% of Scottish primary schools.

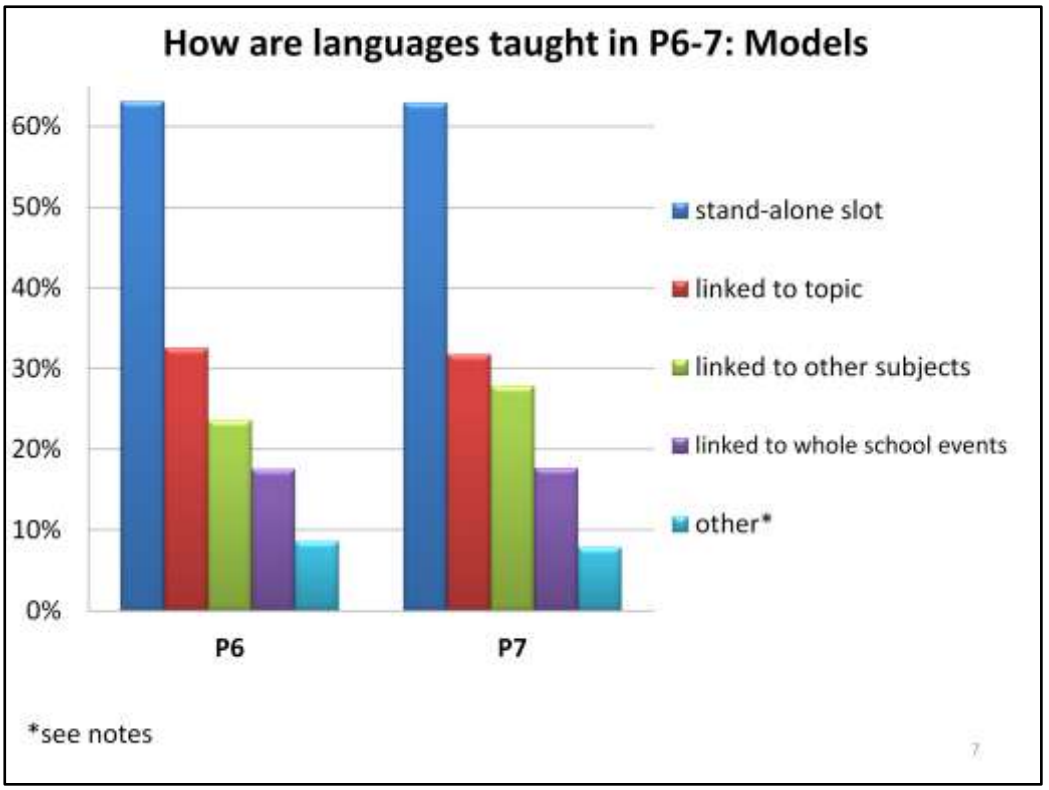


The majority of language lessons in the upper primary school take place once a week.

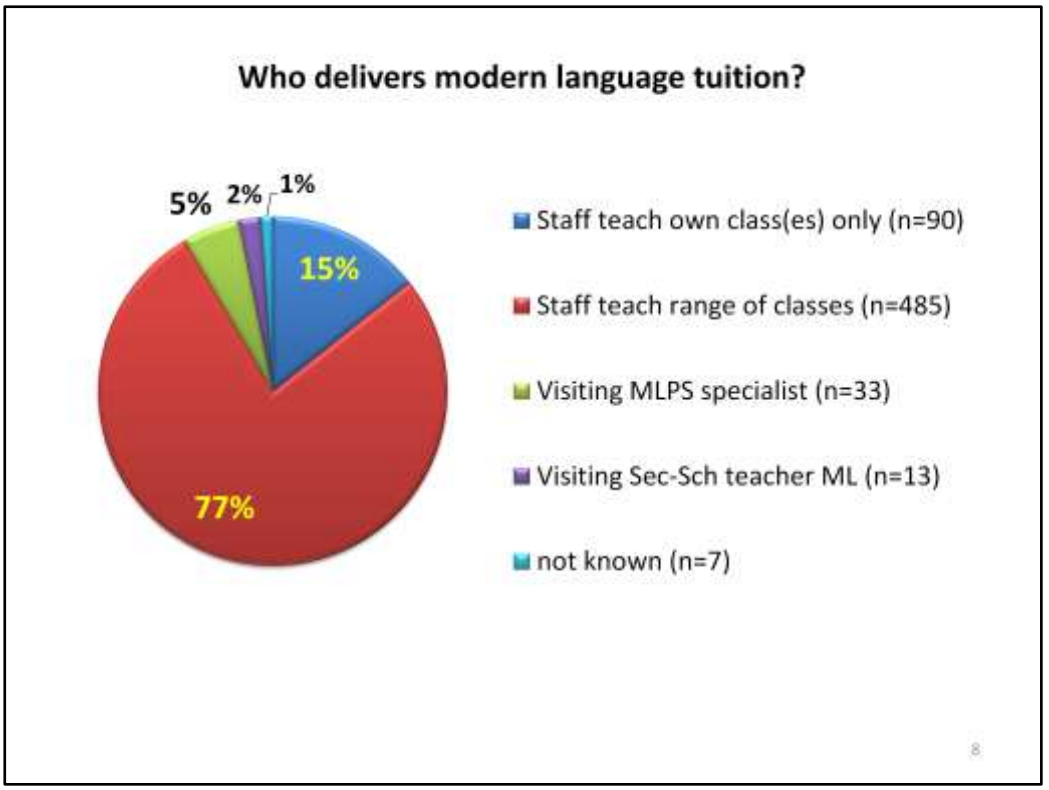
The percentage of schools offering language tuition more than once a week is low but slightly more schools do so in Primary 7 (in P6 14% of schools offer language tuition 2-3 times per week, 8% do so on a daily basis; 15% and 9% do so respectively in P7).

9% in P6 (8% in P7) indicated that their provision differs in frequency or otherwise from the options provided, e.g.

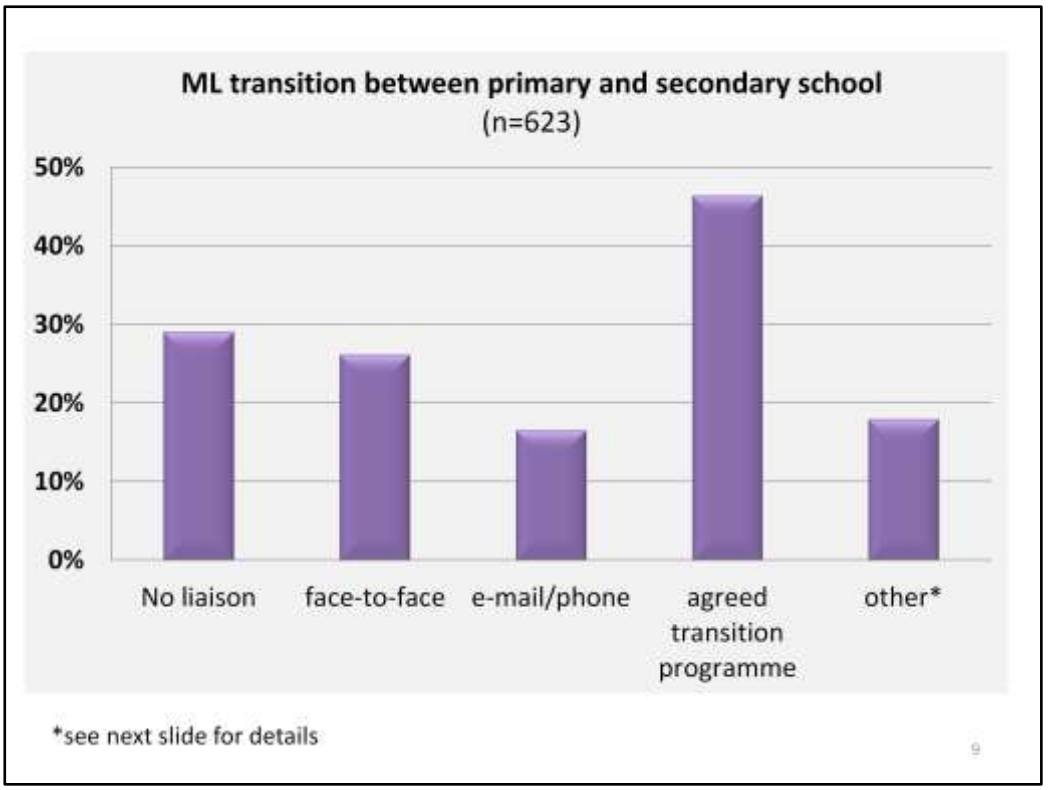
- They teach the language less frequently e.g. fortnightly or once a month
- They teach the language in blocks, e.g. one term only, or change to a different language
- Language teaching is integrated at registration time



- In both P6 and P7 63% of responding schools teach modern languages in a stand-alone slot.
- 33% in P6 (32% in P7) of responding schools stated that they link ML teaching to topics.
- 24% in P6 (28% in P7) of responding schools link ML teaching to other subjects in the curriculum.
- In both P6 and P7 18% of responding schools link ML teaching to whole school events.
- **Other**: Some schools indicated at this point that they were offering tuition in more than one language, - or had no ML provision at all.

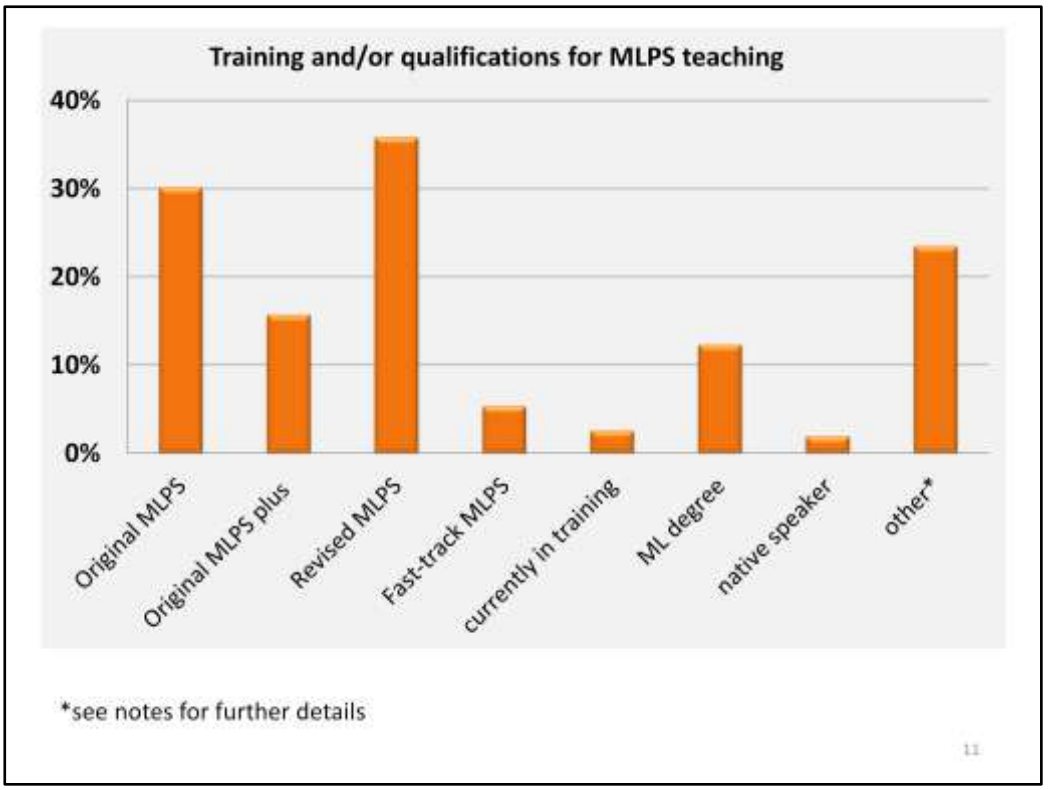


- The responses suggest that the majority of ML tuition in the responding schools is provided 'in-house'.
- The most common model (77%) is that of one or more staff delivering ML tuition to a range of classes, i.e. moving out of their class to deliver ML tuition.
- In 27% of responding schools a promoted member of staff or senior manager is involved in ML delivery. The additional comments provided in the last question suggest that this additional commitment to their already heavy workload may not be sustainable in the long term.
- In only 15% of responding schools do class teachers deliver to their own class (or classes) only but the additional comments suggest that the majority of respondents consider this the preferred model.
- Although we don't know the number of staff who deliver to their own class ***as well as*** to others, we estimate that this is relatively small. In other words, we make the assumption that the majority of pupils in Scottish primary schools are currently **not** taught by their own class teacher.



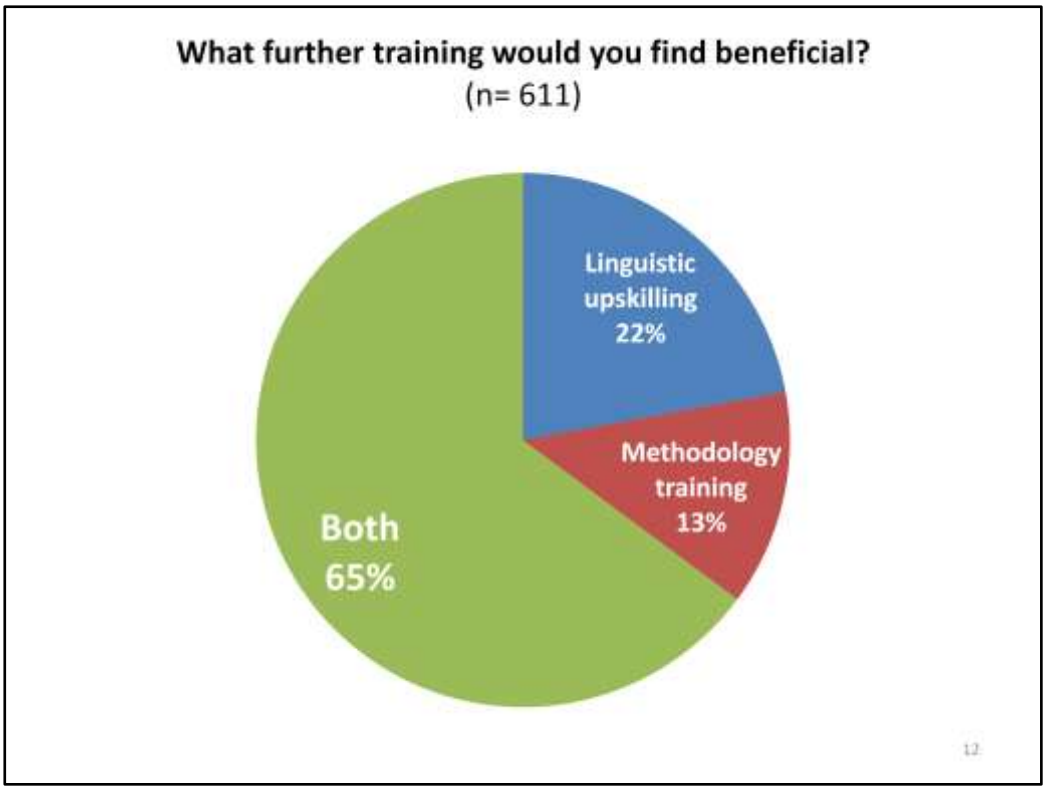
- Less than half of responding schools (46%) indicated that they have an agreed ML transition programme with their secondary school.
- Further analysis showed that transition agreements were only in place in twelve of the responding local authorities.
- Nearly 30% of all responding schools had no contact at all with their secondary school with regard to ML transition.
- In the additional comments section the need for better contact with the secondary school was highlighted as one of the main issues with regard to MLPS.

Some primary teachers were sure whether any transition arrangements were in place, e.g. if they were recently appointed, or they admitted to simply not knowing. In some schools there were no associated secondary schools, e.g. in an 'all-through' school.



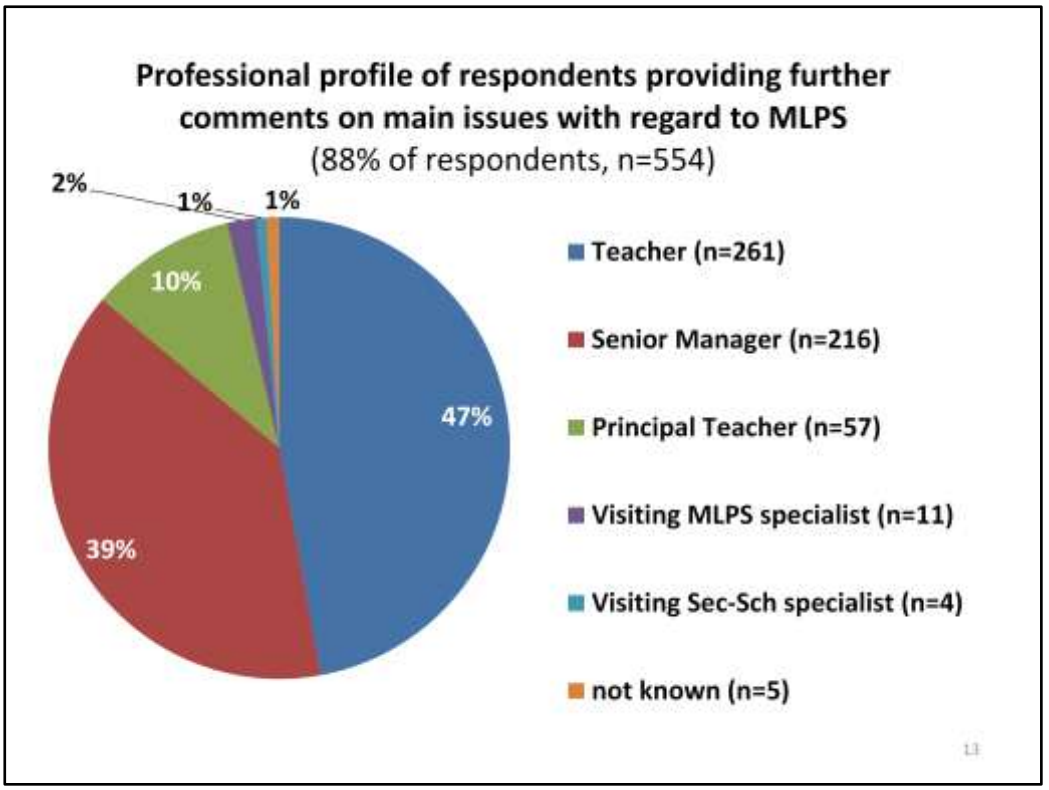
Initial MLPS training of survey respondents is quite diverse. The largest percentage overall (36%) had completed a revised MLPS training course post-1990s. Just under a third (30%) had completed the original MLPS course and a further 16% had completed some additional training course. 5% had completed a fast-track course and 3% were currently still undergoing MLPS training. 12% had a degree in the language, and 2% were native speakers of the language.

142 respondents (24%) ticked the '**other**' option. Of these, 30% indicated that they did not teach the language themselves but qualified staff was in place. A further 21% stated that they had followed some other type of MLPS course, e.g. a Comenius immersion course or a course offered by one of the cultural institutes. 13% had studied the language as part of their degree (e.g. as part of their BEd course) and 11% had a language qualification from school (mostly at Higher level). 6% stated that they had no training - but in at least one case were delivering MLPS nevertheless. Seven respondents indicated that they were self-taught, another five considered themselves to be fluent in the language because of family connections or having lived in the country for some time. Four were registered PCSE teachers with a language qualification and three were former teacher trainers. In one case, a parent who was a native speaker had stepped in after the MLPS teacher had moved away. Another respondent was receiving support from the QIO (Quality Improvement Officer) and one school had seen its support from the MLPS specialist withdrawn due to funding cuts.



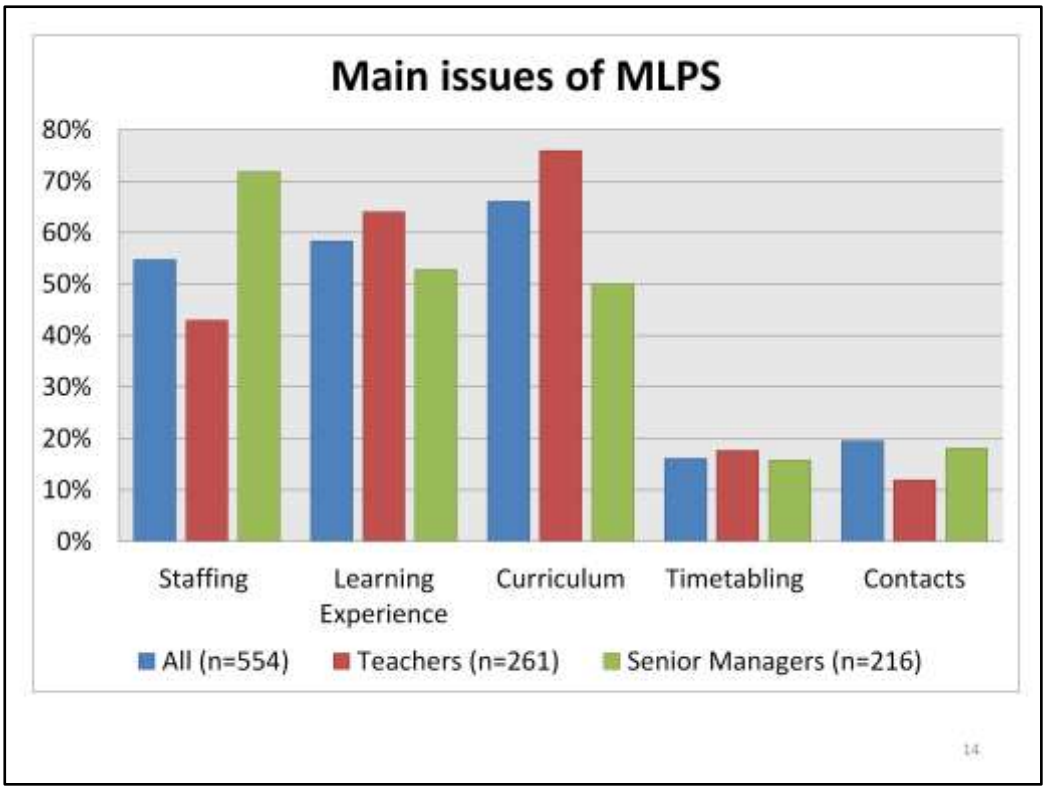
In **2007**, 67% of respondents stated that they would like further training whereas in **2011** nearly all respondents (97%) did so.

Of these, the majority (65%) indicated that they would like both linguistic up-skilling and methodology training.



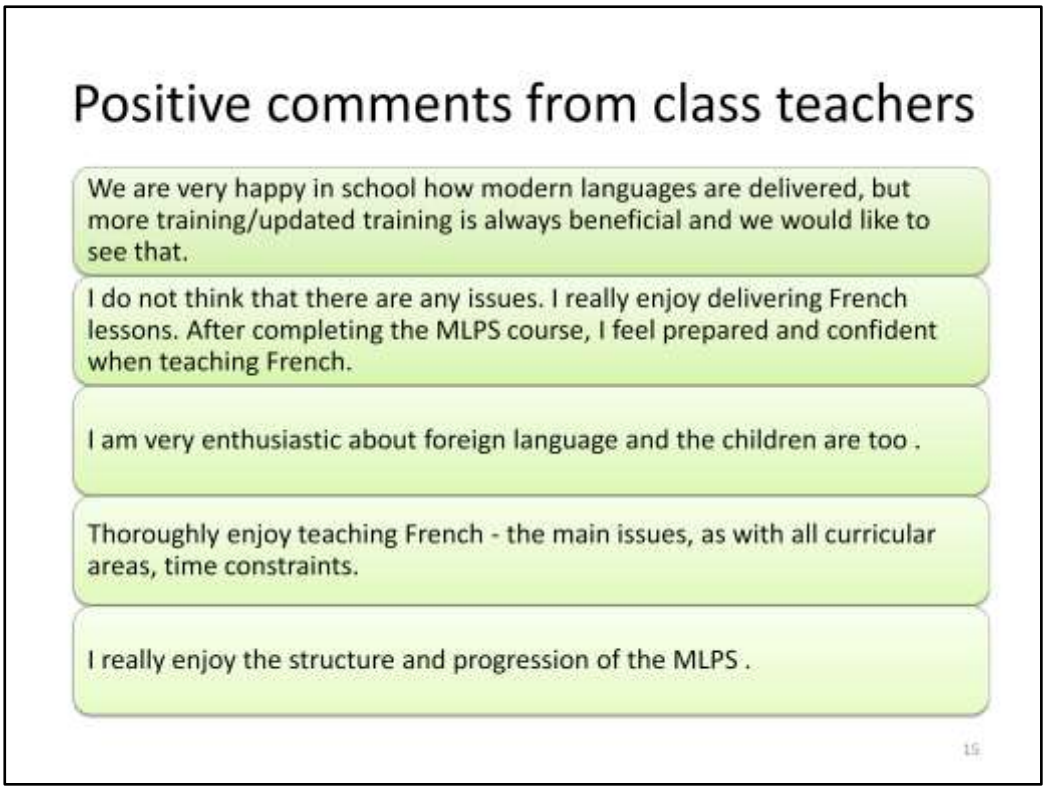
88% of respondents provided further comments on their perception of the main issues with regard to modern language provision in the primary school.

Of these, nearly 77% were either class teachers (42%) or senior managers (35%).



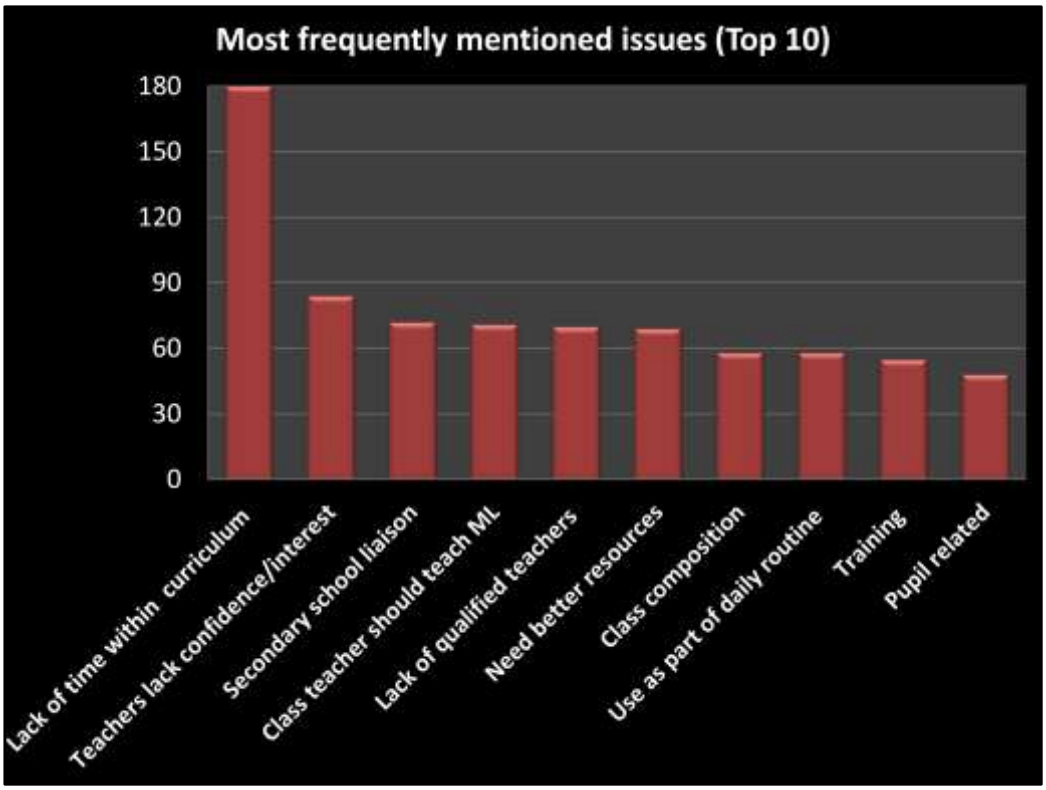
This slides shows the concerns broken down into topics and segregated by class teachers and senior managers. We have concentrated on responses by class teachers and senior managers as they represent the highest number of respondents by category.

- Overall respondents cited curriculum issues most frequently.
- However, class teachers were more likely to cite curriculum and learning experience than staffing issues, whereas senior managers were more likely to cite staffing than learning experience or curriculum issues.
- 18% of class teachers and 16% of senior managers cited specific timetabling issues.
- Contacts with external people or organisations, such as native speakers of the language, links with schools abroad, or exchanges were of slightly higher concern to senior managers than to class teachers (18% and 12% respectively).



A number of staff appear to be happy with MLPS provision or delivery on a personal level, stating that they feel confident about their competence to teach languages, and that their pupils respond well. They also expressed satisfaction with the training programme currently on offer in their authority. Time constraints and further training are raised as minor issues only.

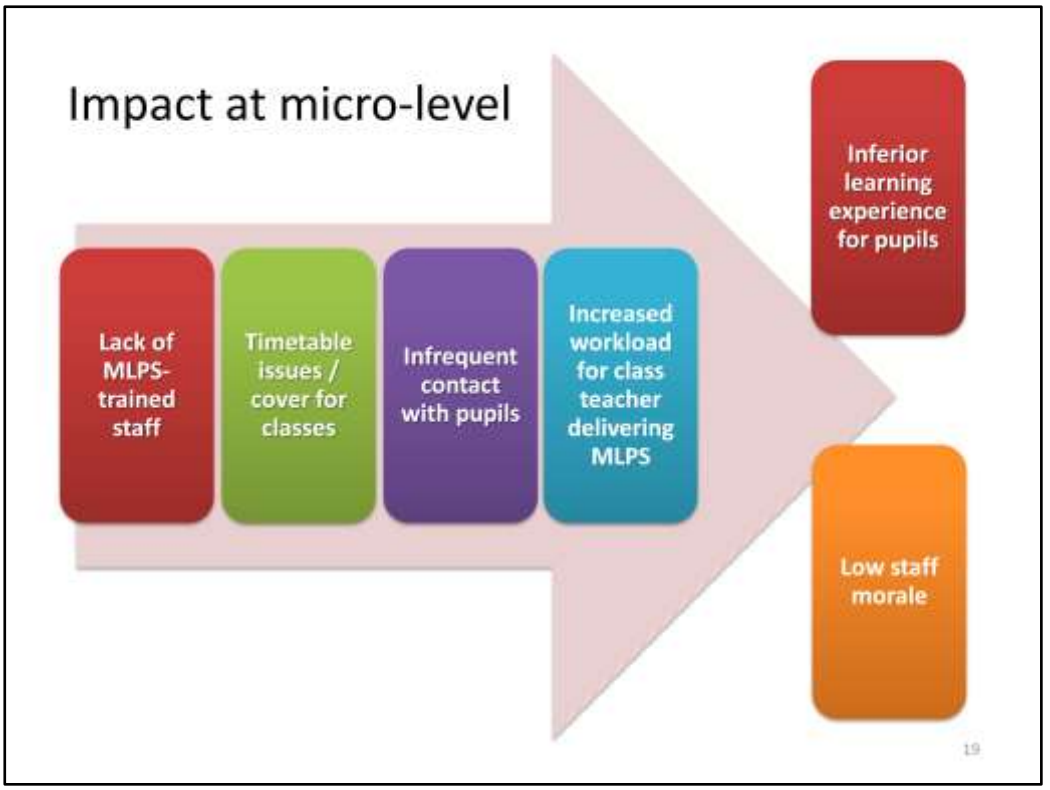
From the senior management perspective, MLPS seems to work well when each class teacher can teach their own class with the senior manager complementing when the need arises. However, some respondents raised questions about which language(s) should be offered to children.



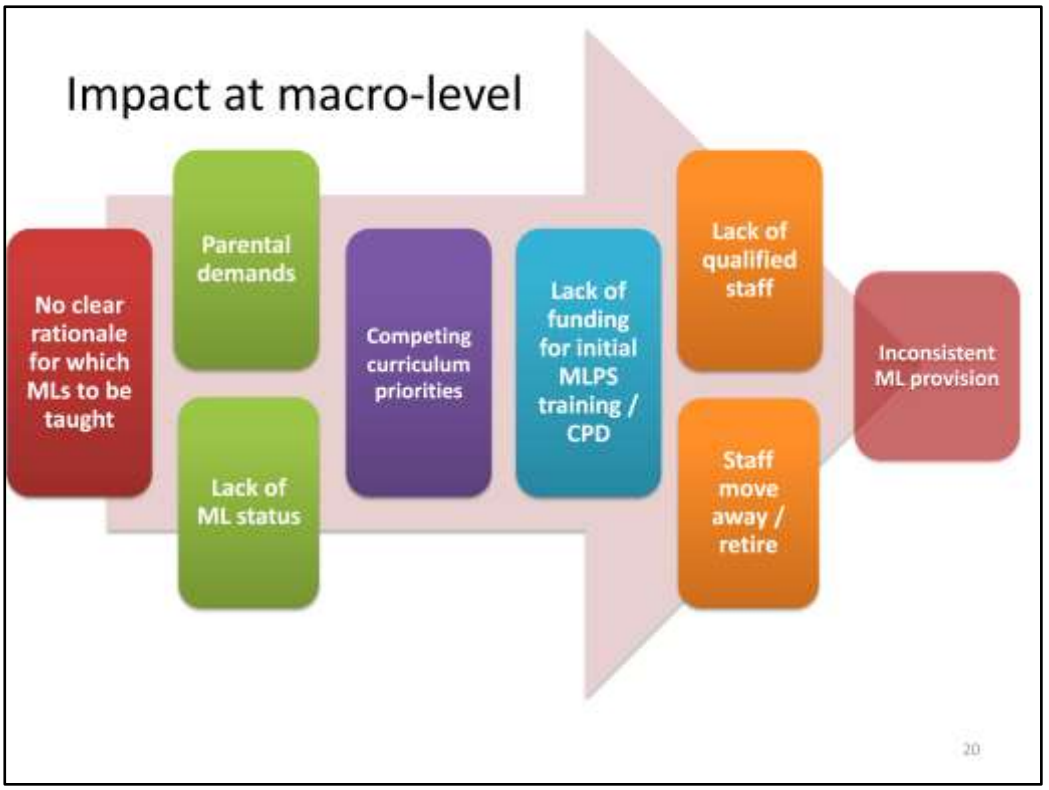
Challenges arise from lack of **time** within a 'crowded' **curriculum**, teachers lacking **confidence** (or **interest**) in teaching the language, hence a frequent request for **further training**. There was a call to make ML a **compulsory component of initial teacher education** or to specify a ML qualification in the job description. From the learning experience perspective, a major challenge was perceived to lie in proper progression when there was no – or limited– **liaison with the secondary school**. This was in some cases linked to **funding cuts**. There was for the most part agreement that the class teacher should be able to deliver the language lesson so that it could be better integrated into the **daily routine** and new vocabulary reinforced throughout the week. However, additional complications arise when the class teacher has to deal with a **composite** class, e.g. in more rural locations. Respondents also wanted to have access to more up-to-date **resources** (and time to adapt these). A number of responding class teachers felt that pupils were becoming **disengaged** with the language by the latter stages as the teaching was becoming more formal and **assessment** driven. The **lack of qualified teachers** able to teach modern languages in the primary school results in timetable difficulties for senior managers but also in an **inferior learning experience for pupils**

As mentioned previously, a number of respondents questioned the relevance of teaching the 'traditional' languages such as French or German

Some staff expressed a regret at the loss of contact with native speakers.



At school level the lack of suitably qualified staff creates timetabling problems for the person in charge of arranging cover for classes. At the classroom interface pupils' contact with the language is less frequent and the teacher delivering language lessons to classes other than their own experiences an increased workload. This can create a situation where the teacher morale is low and the pupils have an inferior learning experience.



Respondents have differing views about the rationale behind the language choices on offer in their respective schools, which may be linked to demand from parents for a different language from the one(s) taught and/or to a lack of ML status within the school. Add to this mix competing curriculum priorities, lack of funding for initial or continuing MLPS training, which results in lack of qualified staff, further compounded when staff move away or retire and you end up with inconsistent ML provision at national level.

Key Quantitative Findings:

- The majority of children in Scottish primary schools are taught a modern language by P6 /7 although in some authorities language learning starts a lot earlier.
- French dominates in all authorities, followed by other main European languages. A very small number of primary schools provide tuition in other languages.
- Language tuition is mostly provided by staff within the school but usually NOT by the pupils' class teacher due to a shortage of qualified staff.
- Tuition in P6/7 is usually provide once a week in stand-alone slots.
- Around 40% of schools had a formal transition agreement in place with their local secondary school but 30% had no links at all and the need for better liaison was raised as key concern by a large number of respondents.
- Most respondents had received some form of MLPS training but the need for further staff development emerged as a key concern.

21

Respondents' Key Concerns

- Lack of time was the most frequently mentioned concern, linked to (a) the difficulty of 'fitting' languages into a crowded curriculum, and (b) the need to create better quality and up-to-date resources.
- The lack of trained staff has a number of repercussions for the ability of schools to deliver MLPS, e.g. not being able to teach (solely) their own class, restricted frequency of ML contact, difficulty to link to other subjects, teaching in a language other than the one qualified . This in turn diminishes pupils' learning experience and can affect their motivation.
- From the senior manager perspective, timetabling issues arise when they have to find cover when teachers deliver language lessons to classes others than their own.
- Whilst the majority of respondents felt that the best delivery model for languages would be a properly qualified class teacher there was also a recognition that many teachers may lack (or lose) confidence in teaching the language because there is a lack of opportunity for further training.

22

Respondents' Key Requests

- Include modern languages as a core component in initial teacher education
- Provide additional training in both language and methodology
- Ensure proper liaison with the secondary school to ensure better transition and progression
- Give a clear rationale for language learning, and the language(s) specified to be taught in the curriculum.
- Enable access to native speakers and up-to-date language resources, as well as time to adapt these for their target groups

23

Some Key Questions for Policy Makers

- How can we develop greater diversity of language provision in our primary schools whilst at the same time improving the consistency and progression of modern language learning experiences from primary to secondary school?
- Which languages should be on offer to pupils in Scottish primary schools, and what is the rationale for including these and excluding others?
- At which stage in the primary school should modern languages be introduced and why? How can we minimise the difficulties arising from the current diversity in provision?
- How can we increase the confidence and motivation of current primary school teachers with regard to language teaching?
- How can we free up the timetable for primary school teachers so that they feel that there is sufficient space for modern language teaching?
- Should a language qualification be made a compulsory element of initial teacher education, and if so, which languages, and what level of competence should be stipulated?

24