

**Minutes of LANGS Meeting:
held via Teams on Thursday, 10 June 2021**

Present: (see Annexe)

Apologies: (see Annexe)

LANGUAGES NETWORK GROUP SCOTLAND (LANGS)



**LANGS Meeting
Thursday 10 June 2021, 10.00
Microsoft Teams**

AGENDA

1.	Registration	10.00
2.	Introduction and welcome from Chair: Sylvia Georgin, Aberdeenshire Council	
3.	Farewells and welcomes	
4.	Keynote: Language education in Scotland and in Europe: divergences, synergies and why shared understandings matter - Dr Sarah Breslin, Executive Director, European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe	
5.	Breakout rooms and discussion – timings tbc	
6.	Comments to be submitted in Padlet	11.30
7.	Comfort Break	
8.	Update from Education Scotland – Louise Glen, Senior Education Officer and Shona Hugh, Development Officer Modern Languages	
9.	Update from SCILT/CISS – Fiona Mackay, Director, SCILT/CISS	
10.	Update from Scottish Government – Helene Cornu, Languages 1+ 2 Policy Manager	
11.	Local authority networking	12.30-13.00

1. Registration

2. Introduction and welcome from the Chair

- Sylvia Georgin welcomed everyone on behalf of the group and Gwen McCrossan (Argyll and Bute Council), the new Vice Chair.

3. Farewells and welcomes

- *Salvete:*
 - Gordon Laidlaw, 1+2 EO, Dundee City Council
 - Jacqui Ferguson, PT Braehead Primary with responsibility for 1+2, South Ayrshire Council
 - Caroline Cordier, Curriculum Leader for ML, Edinburgh College
 - Fiona Normansell, 1+2 DO and EAL, South Ayrshire (a welcome return)
- *Valete:*
 - Marie-Claire Lyon, Aberdeenshire Council (retiring)
 - Angela White, Education Officer, Dundee City Council (retiring)
- There are also 10 new subscribers, all welcome

4. **Keynote:** *Language Education in Scotland and in Europe: divergences, synergies and why shared understandings matter - Dr Sarah Breslin, Executive Director, European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe.*

- (Sarah's presentation shared separately)
- Nice to see so many familiar faces and some new ones. This is a look at what's happening with MFL education across Europe looking at:
 - Covid challenges
 - Vision
 - Innovative practices across Europe
 - Resources
- The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) belongs to the Council of Europe and was set up by the Council of Europe in 1949. Despite Brexit, the UK is still part of the Council of Europe but, no longer has the 'ECML module'.
- The ECML Survey results of 2019 (considered to have a good response rate across a wide sweep of European countries) set out the organisation's priorities.
 - Teacher competences for pluralistic approaches
 - Language learning pathways for young children
 - CLIL across educational stages in languages other than English
 - Digital citizenship through language education

- Assessing young migrants' family languages
- Linguistic mediation in the foreign language classroom
- The CEFR companion volume - an implementation toolkit
- Neighbouring languages in vocational education
- Transversal competences through languages at secondary level
- Issues identified as:
 - Dominance of English (ie that it's the only L2 offered in many countries)
 - Compulsion vs Encouragement Languages in Vocational Education: the poor cousin?
 - Some countries in Europe have particularly poor provision for children whose L1 is not the language of that country
 - Unclear national policies; competition between languages
 - HTs, parents, influencers not appreciating the value of MFL
 - Teacher training establishments and language acquisition; not seen as a priority for future teachers of other subjects
- Covid issues:
 - Public exams – how to stage them
 - Use of algorithms to award grades
 - Distance learning (eg IT provision, or the lack of it, for many pupils)
 - Autonomy/self-management/monitoring progress – a steep learning curve for learners and teachers
 - In much of this, Scotland was shown to be slightly ahead of the game, CfE having already established systems of Es and Os, self-evaluation, project work etc.
 - As to the post-Covid future, much of value has been learned and challenges identified and this information will be fed into an online tool, which should become available in the autumn.
 - Key messages:
 - Significant impact on timings, methods and techniques
 - Increasing gaps between those doing well and those falling behind
 - Equilibrium between positives gained from the experience and the challenges to be faced
 - Not all doom and gloom: greatest single focus was on lessons learned by adapting to change.
- From the floor:

- Noted that the ‘dominance of English’ issue likewise affects the use of Gaelic in Scotland
- Noted that Edinburgh College’s experience has been that there has long been an online MFL offer, but that demand for classroom contact had dropped. The past 18 months have seen a large uptick in online demand, forcing EC to up its game. It now reaches all parts of Scotland.
- Marie-Claire Lyon notes that France will now be asking for UK export paperwork in French, not in English!
- Vision: (see slides for detail...highlights include):
 - Austria: addressing issues with initial teacher education
 - Norway: offering certification in 44 languages
 - Italy: all schools have to offer at least one subject via CLIL
 - Slovenia: equivalent of Higher now aligned to CEFR levels
 - Greece: concentrating on mediation
- Resources: (again, see slides for details, including embedded video on thematic areas)
- Sarah concluded by remarking that Scotland had always been European and always would be.
- Sylvia offered the meeting’s vote of thanks.

5. Breakouts and Discussion

- See [Padlet](#) for full coverage. Main topic for consideration was, ‘*A vision for quality MFL teaching was presented. Do you sign up to this? If not, why not? Is this the right vision for Scotland?*’ In summary, the answer seemed to be, ‘Why wouldn’t you?’
- Some headlines:
 - A pity Scotland is not part of the ECML: there would be so much to benefit from
 - Scotland is nonetheless pretty advanced in a number of ways. Some countries are still relying on one final exam
 - A positive aspect of Scotland’s approach is teachers’ (albeit relatively new) willingness to share resources.
 - Likewise positive is the respect accorded to teachers’ professional judgement
 - There is a need for the GTCS to be more flexible; eg allowing Physics teachers to obtain an ATQ in a language; perhaps particularly with regard to EAL.
 - Noted good practice of St Roque’s Glasgow’s Deaf Unit, who are adopting this approach, albeit with BSL.

- Some perception that the SG has ‘taken its foot off the gas’ re 1+2 implementation; at least as far as its communications are concerned.
- Council of Europe: (UK) Department for Education has a seat at this, but there is a feeling that the UK rep does not very readily pass information back to Scotland, or feed Scottish information into the C of E. This is to be looked into.

6. (Comments submitted via [Padlet](#))

7. Comfort Break

8. Updates from Education Scotland: Louise Glen and Shona Hugh

- *Louise Glen:*

- As has been reported widely, there is to be a government review both of Education Scotland and the SQA: initial results of this will be forthcoming in October, 2021.
- Partial Es and Os and Early Level benchmarks have been published: please circulate these to primary colleagues
- Annual 1+2 Survey: some results already in: this is a key means of gathering information on the likely future needs for MFL – including funding – so as accurate as possible, please. Please also quantify barriers – confidentially, if necessary – which will provide a means of funnelling support to places, especially where there is no dedicated MFL DO. This is intended as support, not ES muscling in.
- German Teacher award: as noted last time, high relative proportion of awards came to Scotland. Note that you have to nominate yourself and have your HT endorse it.
- ECML Survey (mentioned earlier): Scotland is not a member, but they did request, via Louise, responses to their survey, which she will supply.

- *Shona Hugh:*

- NeLO: (National e-Learning Offer, via MFL Improvement Hub) provides great resources from, amongst others, e-Sgoil and the West (RIC) Group. Content is filtered: some of it for access by teachers only. Plenty of excellent German resources (including to support other subjects) from Langholm Academy/SALT’s Kirsten Herbst-Gray.
- 88 people are signed up to the Languages Leadership Programme 2021 (in fact 120 people applied, but it’s over-subscribed; the ‘mostly-online’ model is proving more sustainable than the original version).

9. Update from SCILT/CISS: Fhiona Mackay

- Languages Week Scotland 2022 will take place the week commencing 31 Jan 2022, and themed on the 'Right(s) Approach'. There is a survey on the 2021 LWS on MS Forms: please submit responses.
- The new SCILT PL Menu is now live on the website.
- PL engagement is up significantly on last year; both synchronous and asynchronous. Latter obviates need for cover and travel, but we expect to be offering a mixture, as things unlock.
- E-Bulletin: some people are not signed up – so please encourage subscribers.
- We are developing online BSL materials: 10 lessons in a block; sign up via the SCILT website. Course begins in September on Teams.
- Knowledge Exchange planned for 10 September 2021 on the theme of L3: as it affects both primary and secondary, authorities, ITE etc.

10. Update from Scottish Government: H el ene Cornu

- Annual 1+2 Survey: deadline has been postponed to end June. Thanks to those who have already responded, but there are no figures yet. Survey will inform next steps.
- Figures for MFL Senior Phase uptake 2017-20:
 - S4: 31-33%;
 - S5: 11-12%;
 - S3-S4: approx. 30%
- Post-election: Shirley-Anne Sommerville MSP now Education and Skills Minister.
- Turing: SG position is that it is no substitute for Erasmus and application windows for it are currently closed. There is a manifesto commitment to finding an Erasmus equivalent, but the matter is still under consideration and submissions/feedback are still welcome.

11. Conclusion, prior to LA networking:

- Noted that Edinburgh College offers free online courses N5-AH in various languages
- 7 September 2021: Provisional date for 'LANGS Lates' – please join
- Mandy will circulate material from Cultural Organisations updates.
- Thanks, as ever, to all participants and especially to Mandy for co-ordinating this meeting, particularly the technology.
- Date of next meeting: November 4 on MS Teams.