

Language Learning in Scotland: a 1+2 Approach

Further guidance on continuity of learning from P7 into S1

Background

Recommendation 8 of the *1+2 report* states:

The Working Group recommends that primary and secondary schools work effectively together to ensure articulation between the sectors in terms of content, skills and approaches to learning and to enable effective transition, progression and continuity between P7 and S1, particularly for the L2 language.

Where authorities are able to deliver continuity of L3 from P5-P7 and into S1, this is an ideal scenario. However, all schools are not yet in a position to provide a P5-P7 experience in a second additional language. Some schools may even prefer to provide the broader experience of different languages over that time. For those reasons, continuity of L3 into the secondary school is not a requirement.

Current landscape

Increasingly, authorities are moving to one language across all schools from P1, in order to facilitate the introduction of language learning, P1-P7. The alternative involves some primary schools within each cluster offering a different language and secondary schools ensuring that these children continue with that language in the secondary school. Where this is working well, there is no reason to change that practice. Indeed, it supports the continuing provision of a range of languages at the secondary stages.

Where clusters have moved to one language as L2, most commonly French, secondary schools are concerned that the second modern language on offer stands to lose potential candidates for national qualifications. Moreover, some secondary schools would find it impossible, within their current staffing complement, to offer the same modern language to all at S1.

Amendment to the recommendation: response to need

In order to support schools and respond to a need identified by authorities through their audit, an amendment to the recommendation has been agreed. This amendment applies only to those clusters where:

- primary schools can offer a coherent, progressive and in-depth experience of L3 from P5-P7, delivered by trained PLL teachers.
- the L3 experience builds on the language skills already being developed through L2.
- teachers' planning and assessment of learning ensures that children have the opportunity to achieve at second level or beyond in L3 by the end of P7.

Where this is the case and where it responds to local need, the L3 may be chosen as the language to be continued into S1 and to the end of the BGE, with the option of acquiring a national qualification in the senior phase. This would be an option, in agreement with the cluster of schools concerned.

Children would continue to benefit from the language skills they have built up over P1 to P7 in L2. It is those skills which will allow them to achieve more quickly in L3 over P5 to P7. In addition, this amendment would respond to the interests of some children who may prefer their second additional language to their first, or find they achieve more easily in that language.

Parameters and implications of the amendment

This would not be an option for children who had studied L3 for part of the time only during P5-P7, such as through an interdisciplinary learning project or even an intensive term of language learning. The parameters outlined above must apply. This additional option is aimed at:

- meeting the needs of children and young people better
- protecting the diversity of languages offered at the secondary stages and
- ensuring secondary staffing is sufficient to meet potential demand for L2 and L3 languages in the senior phase.

It does have training implications for the authorities which wish to adopt this option. For the many schools and clusters which do not intend to offer an in-depth experience in L3 from P5-P7, there is no change to current arrangements.