



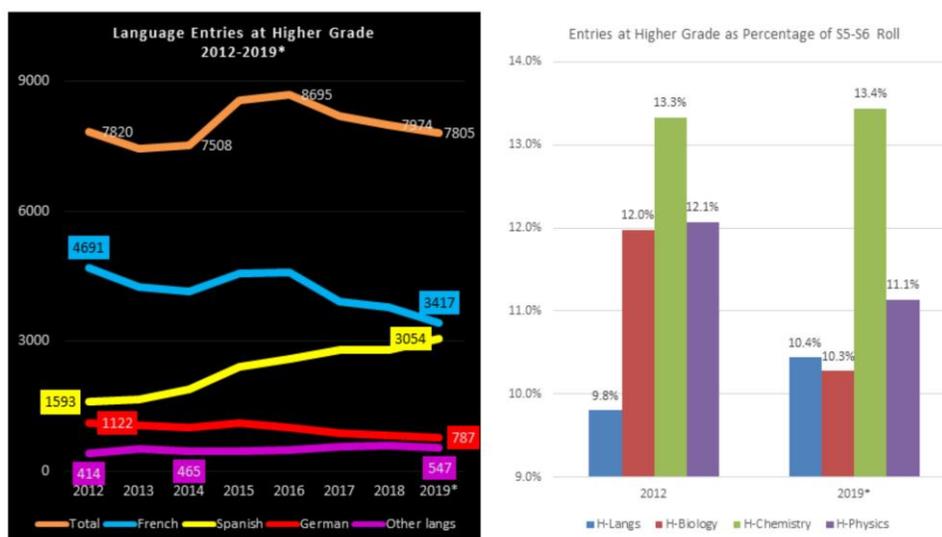
### Overview of Findings

- Entries at Higher in Modern Languages have recently experienced a drop in entries but are still above 2012 levels. **Relative to the S5-S6 cohort, however, there has been an increase.**
- Entries at Advanced Higher in Modern Languages are on an upward trend overall, with a slight decline in 2018. **Relative to the S6 cohort, uptake has also increased.**
- Entries at Advanced Higher in the lesser studied languages (Gaelic Learners, Italian and Mandarin) have been variable.
- Entries below Higher in Modern Languages dropped significantly after 2012, the year which marked the official end of the 'Languages for All' policy. **Relative to the S4-S6 cohort, languages have higher percentage uptake than two of the three sciences (Biology, Physics),** with only Chemistry showing a percentage increase.

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- [Slide 3](#) Entries at Advanced Higher as Percentage of S6 cohort: Languages vs. Sciences
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## Two perspectives on language entries at Higher Grade 2012-2019\*

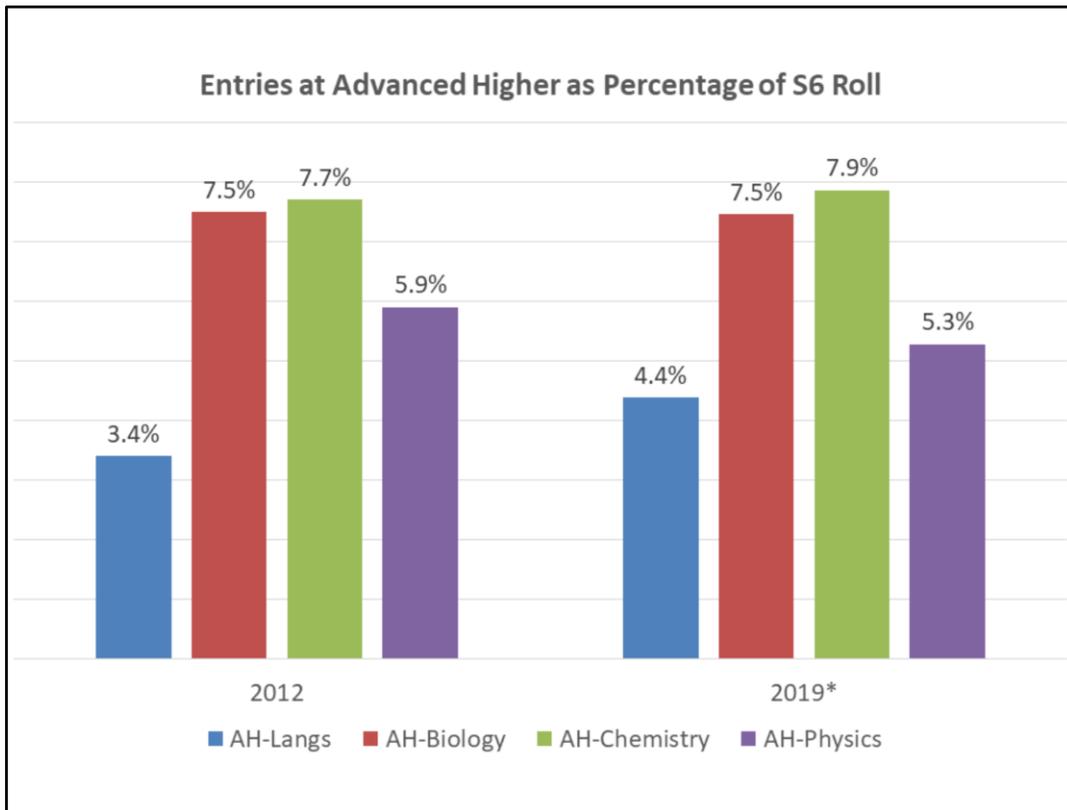


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**NB: We feel justified in considering languages as one subject because currently only around 7% of learners study more than one language in the senior phase.**

The above slide shows that language entries at Higher, i.e. at the point when pupils start to commit themselves to a subject, in relation to the pupil cohort in S5-S6 (when most Higher courses would be taken), uptake in the subject shows an upward trend, from 9.8% to 10.4%. This is virtually unchanged from 2018, when it was 10.6%.

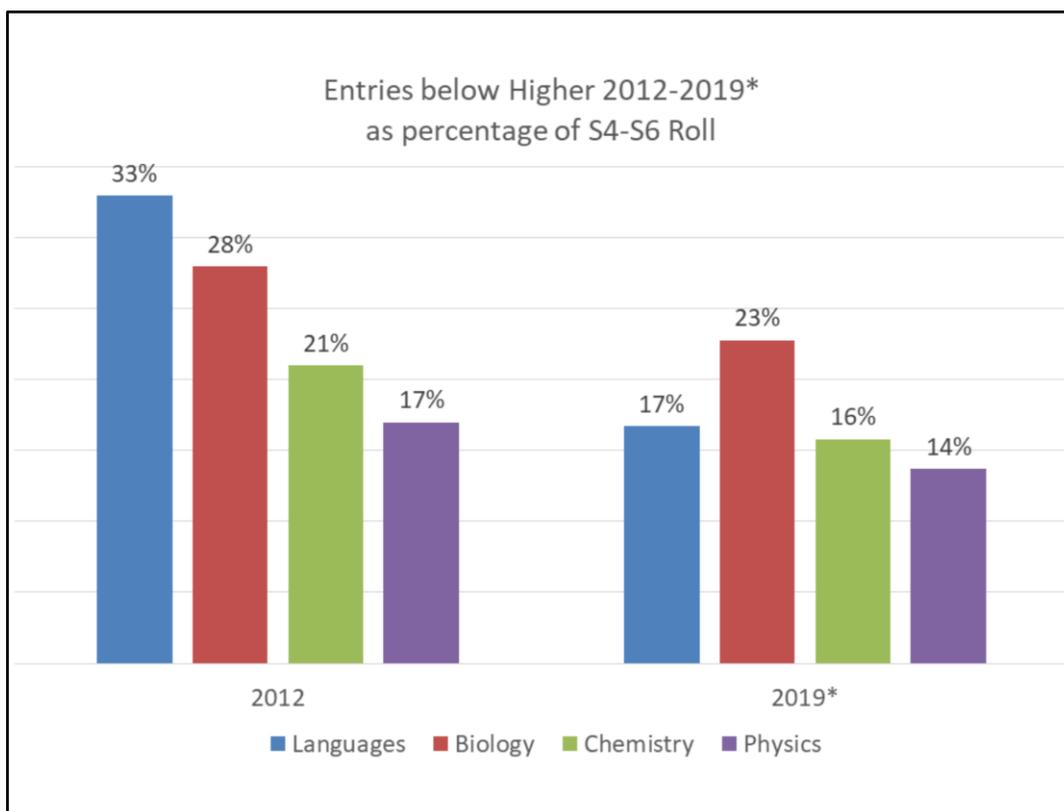
Turning to the three major science subjects, we see that biology and physics experienced a slight drop (from 12% to 10.3% and from 12.1% to 11.1% respectively), whilst chemistry remained almost unchanged, with a rise of just 0.1%.



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### Entries at Advanced Higher as Percentage of S6 Roll: Languages v Sciences

There are some good news for languages at Advanced Higher too. Proportionately to the S6 cohort, entries for biology is unchanged and those for physics decreasing by 0.6%. Entries for chemistry increased by only 0.2%. In contrast, languages have increased by 1% point from 3.4% to 4.4%.



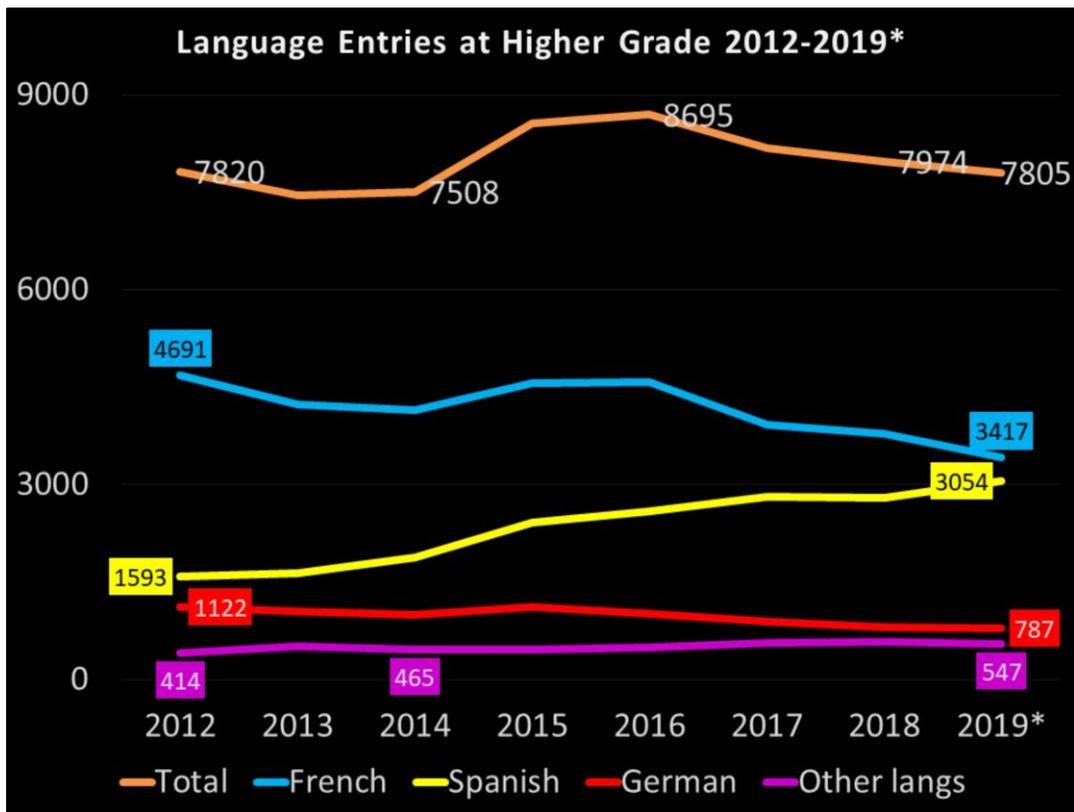
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### Entries below Higher as Percentage of S4-S6 Roll: Languages v Sciences

Although proportional uptake in languages at Higher has increased it is a different story for, entries at National 3-5 levels. We make the assumption that the abandonment of the 'Languages for All' policy in 2012 had a negative impact on uptake, particularly on French (see Slide 11). Whilst in 2012 33% of the senior cohort was studying a language, in 2019 it was only 17% (the same percentage as in 2018).

In the three sciences, there has also been a decline, but at a much lower rate. Biology and Chemistry both dropped five percentage points, down to from 28 to 23% and from 21 to 16% respectively. Physics dropped three percentage points, from 17 to 14%.

Whilst the steep drop in languages is disappointing, it is encouraging to see that overall the subject ranks nevertheless in second place after Biology, and above Chemistry and Physics.



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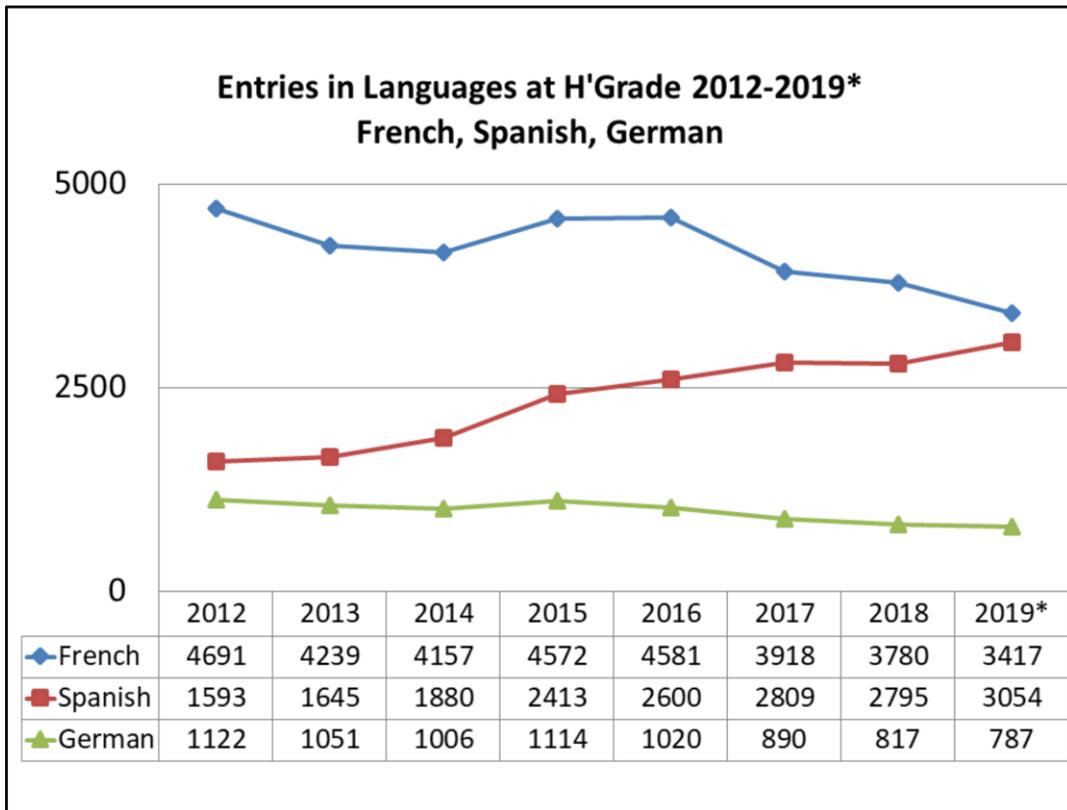
### 8-year trend of entries at Higher (2012-2019) Overview

Overall entries at Higher in 2019 (7805) dropped by 2% compared to 2018 and are now just below those in 2012 (7820), i.e. after the 'Languages in All' policy was abandoned. However, entries are still higher than those in 2014 (7508) when restrictions to the number of option choices were introduced.

Compared to 2018, entries in French dropped by 10%, and in German by 4%, whilst entries in Spanish have risen by 9%. Overall that represents a drop of 2% in the 'Big 3' languages since 2018.

Compared to 2018, entries in the other languages declined by 6% overall, with only entries in Mandarin Chinese rising (+14%), with notable losses elsewhere: Italian (-12%), Urdu (-11%) and Gaelic (Learners) (-19%). Compared to 2012, however, we note an upward trend, with entries up by 32%, and up by 18% compared to 2014.

Entries at Higher show a consistent trend towards a French/Spanish dominant pattern rather than diversity of language provision. We have argued before that the increase of entries in Spanish buys into the 'world language' status claim, and the same reasoning might explain the increase in Mandarin Chinese. However, as two British Council reports have shown ('Languages for the Future' in 2013 and the updated version in 2017), when criteria such as vocational or diplomatic rationales are considered, languages such as German and Farsi have much higher scores, so a narrow focus on languages with high number of native speakers may not adequately prepare our pupils for life in the very diverse linguistic and cultural environment that they are likely to encounter after leaving school.



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### 8-year trend of uptake at Higher in the 'Big 3' languages (2012-2019)

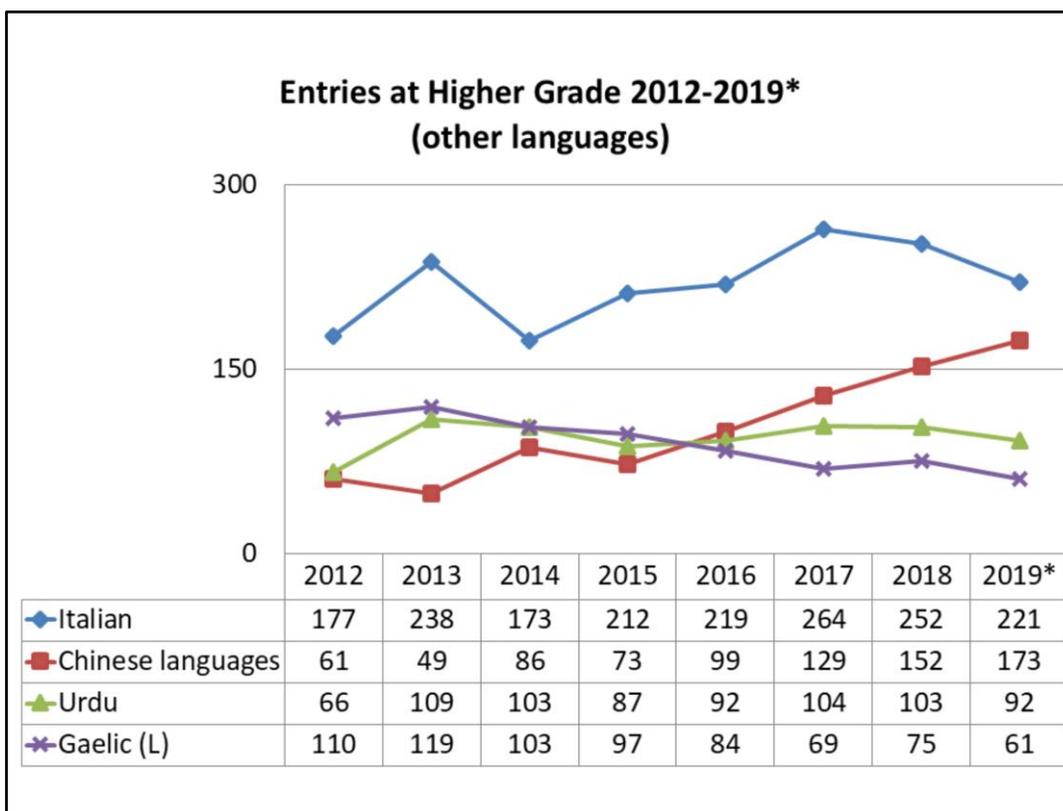
Entries in 2015 increased for all three main languages.

For French, the increase continued until 2016. Entries in 2019 (3417) are 27% below entries in 2012 and 18% below entries in 2014. Entries decreased a further 10% compared to those in 2018.

For Spanish, entries have continued to increase and in 2019 are just 11% below 2019 entries for French. Entries in 2019 (3054) are 96% above entries in 2012 and 62% above entries in 2014. Entries increased a further 9% compared to those in 2018.

For German, entries started to decline again in 2016. Entries in 2019 (787) are 30% below entries in 2012 and 22% below entries in 2014. Entries decreased a further 4% compared to those in 2018.

It is worth noting that the increased entries for Spanish have not compensated for the decreases seen in French and German.



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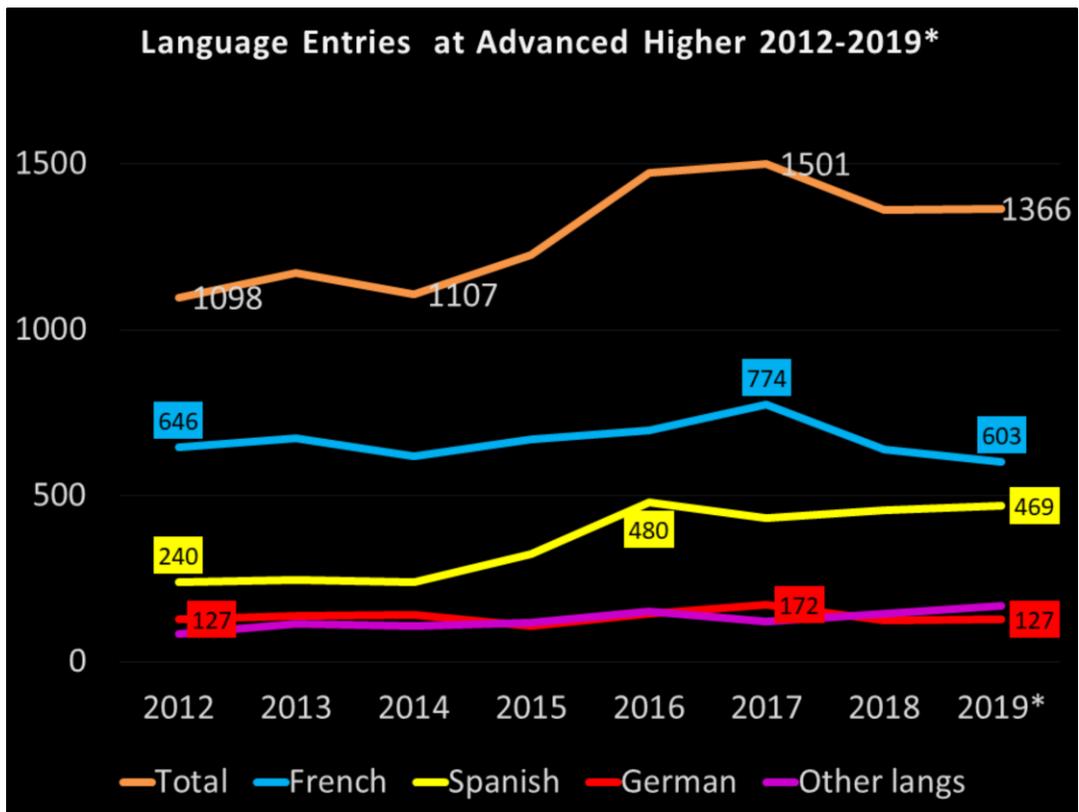
### 8-year trend of uptake at Higher in other languages (2012-2019)

Higher entries in Italian were on an upward trend until 2017, except for a dip in 2014. Nevertheless, entries in 2019 (221) are still % above entries in 2012, and % above entries in 2014. Entries decreased by 12% compared to those in 2018

Higher entries in Chinese languages (mostly Mandarin Simplified) show an upward trend, except for a dip in 2013. Entries in 2019 (173) are % above entries in 2012, and % above entries in 2014. Entries increased a further 14% compared to those in 2018

Higher entries in Urdu have been relatively stable, with some fluctuations. Entries in 2019 (92) are % above entries in 2012 but % below entries in 2014. Entries decreased a further 11% compared to those in 2018.

Higher entries in Gaelic (Learners) have been on a downward trend overall. Entries in 2019 (61) are 45% below entries in 2012 and 41% below entries in 2014. Entries decreased a further 19% compared to those in 2018.



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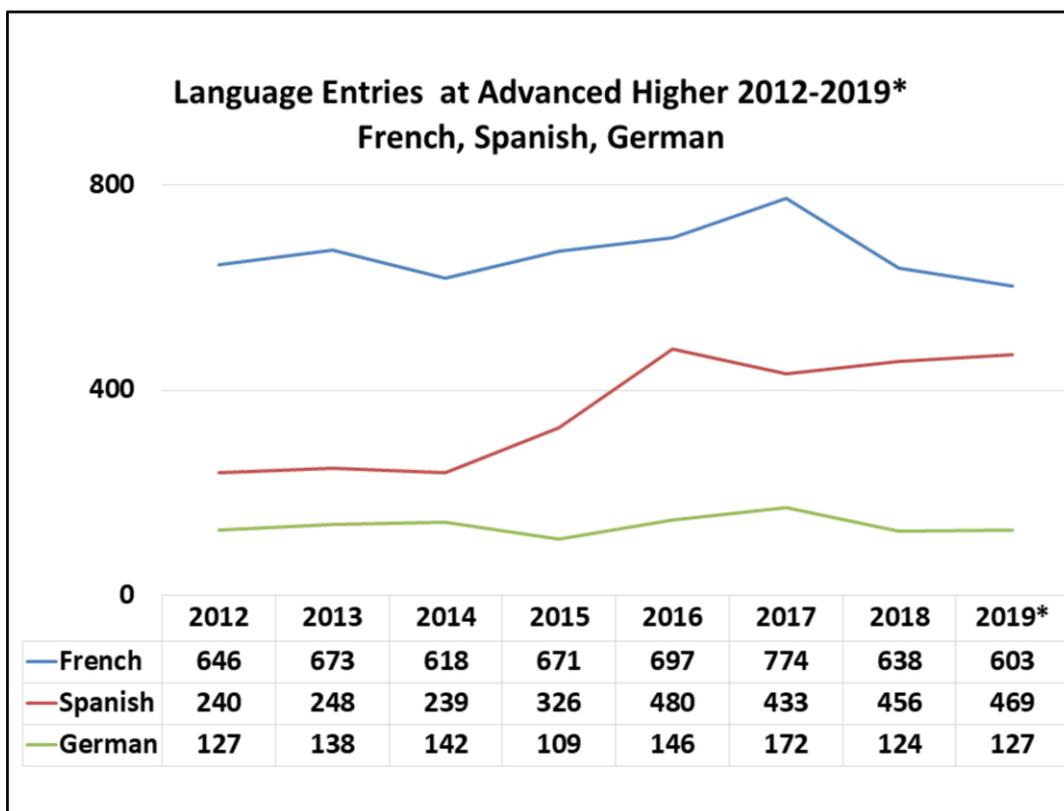
### 8-year trend of uptake at Advanced Higher (2012-2019) Overview

**NB: We have exceptionally included Latin in the analysis of Advanced Higher entries in Languages to monitor uptake for the language at this level.**

Entries at Advanced Higher increased up until 2017 and despite a dip in 2018 entries (and entries for 2019 virtually the same), entries overall are still above those in 2012 and in 2014. This overall positive trend is largely due an increase of entries in Spanish (although the rise seems to be levelling out), and up until 2017, also in French. Entries in German increased between 2015 and 2017 but dipped again in 2018 and 2019 entries are the same as in 2012.

The entries at Advanced Higher languages in other languages have risen again in 2019 (+15% or +7% if excluding Latin).

Most of the languages, with the exception of Italian experienced an increase in entries: Mandarin Chinese (+13%), Gaelic (Learners) (+82%), Italian (-25%), Latin (+34%).



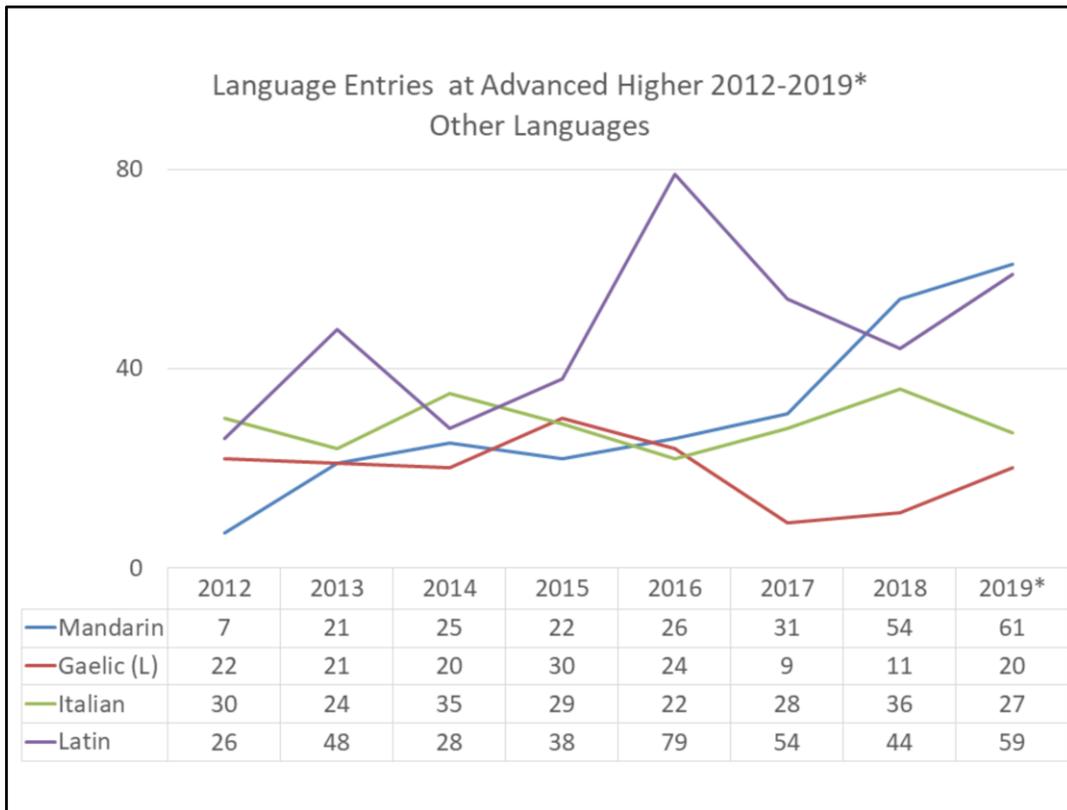
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### **8-year trend of uptake at Adv. Higher French, Spanish and German (2012-2019)**

Entries in French for 2019 (603) are 7% below those of 2012 (646), and 2% below those of 2014 (618). They declined a further 5% compared to 2018.

Entries in Spanish are on an upward trend, and have nearly doubled since 2012.

Entries in German for 2019 (127) are the same as those for 2012 (127), but still below those of 2014 (142). There was a brief rise in entries between 2013 and 2014, and between 2015 and 2017, dropping back in 2018 (124 entries).



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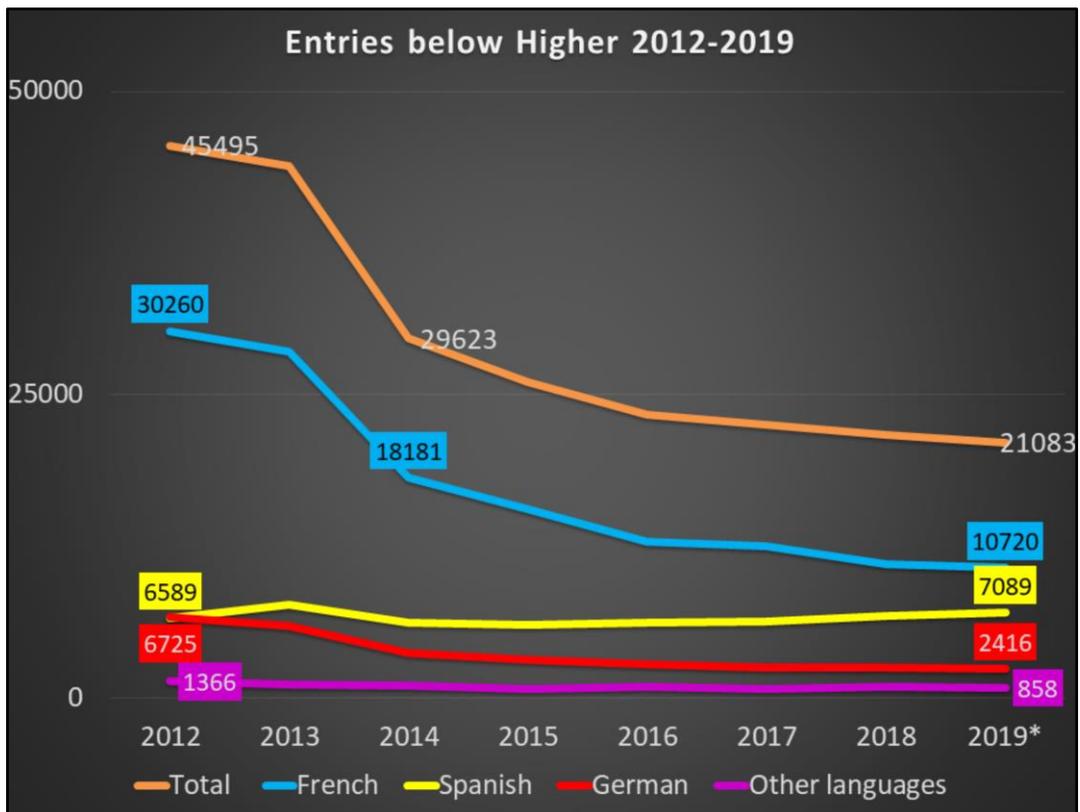
### 8-year trend of uptake at Advanced Higher in other languages (2012-2019)

Entries in Mandarin have been on an upward trend, with a more significant rise in 2018 (from 31 in 2017 to 54 in 2018), and a further slight increase to 61 entries in 2019.

Entries in Gaelic (Learners) were more or less steady up until 2016, but dropped significantly in 2017. However, 2019 saw a rise to 20, the same number of entries as in 2014.

Entries in Italian have remained fairly steady, with a low in 2016 (22 entries) and a high in 2018 (36 entries). Entries dropped to 27 in 2019.

Entries in Latin have been variable, with a low in 2012 (26 entries) and a spike in 2016 (79 entries). Entries for 2019 (59) are significantly above those of 2012 and 2014 (28 entries).

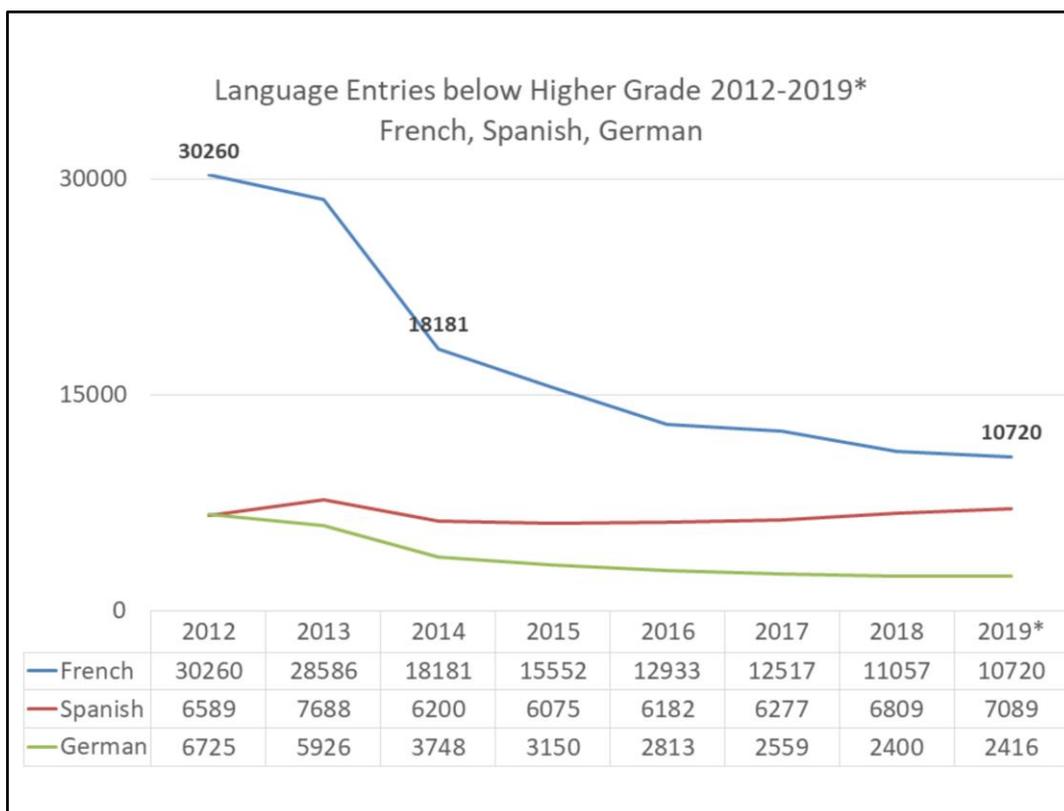


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### 8-year trend of uptake in language entries below Higher (2012-2019) Overview

Language entries overall for 2019 (21,083) are only slightly down from 2018 (21,658). There was a significant drop in entries after 2012 (45,495) and this phenomenon can arguably be directly linked to the abandonment of the 'Languages for All' policy at that time. A further significant drop in entries can be seen after 2014 (29,623 entries) i.e. when restrictions to the number of option choices were introduced. The drop was mainly in entries for French, and to a lesser extent, in entries for German. Spanish has been on an upward trend, despite a dip in 2014.

Entries for the other languages since 2018 have been mixed: Italian (-35%), Chinese languages (-11%), Gaelic (Learners) (+37%) and Urdu (+47%). Overall, there has been a decrease of 10% compared to 2018, and a decrease of 37% compared to 2012.



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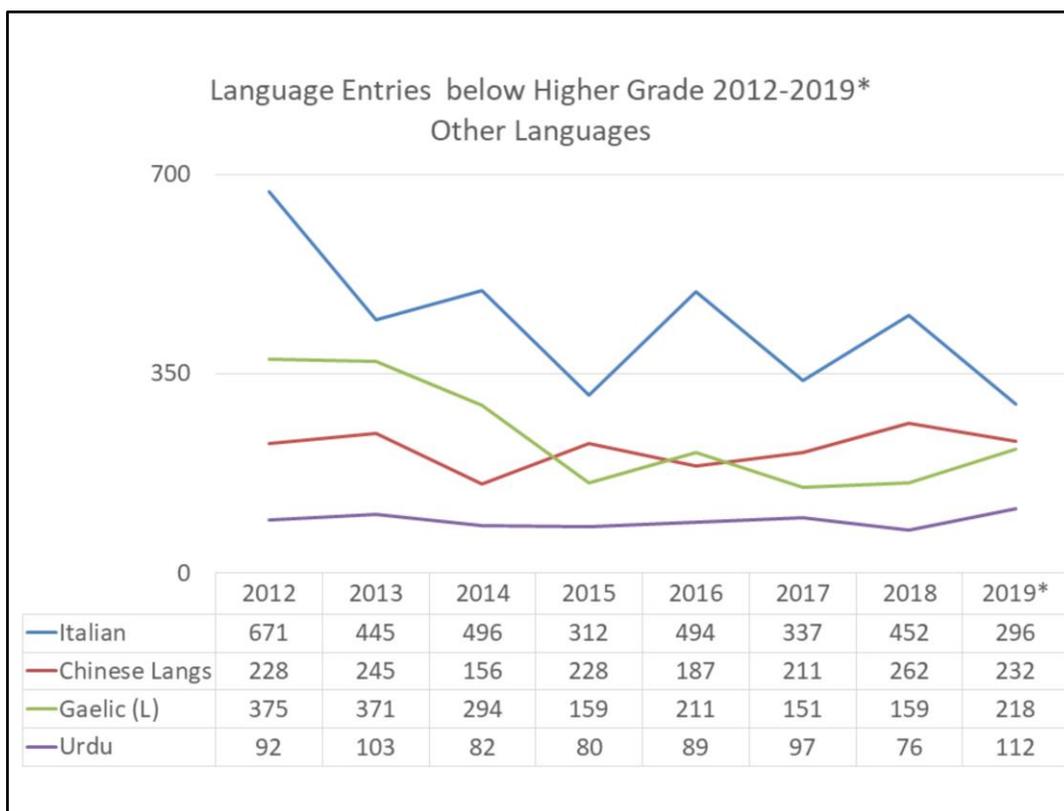
### 8-year trend of uptake in language entries below Higher (2012-2019): French, Spanish, German

Entries in French in 2019 (10,720) dropped 3% below those in 2018 (11,057). This represents a decrease of 65% compared to 2012 (30,260), and 41% compared to entries in 2014 (18,181). More recently, then it appears that the downward trend has slowed.

Entries in Spanish continue on an upward trend except for a dip between 2013 and 2015. Entries for 2019 (7089) are up 4% from 2018 (6809) and are approaching entries for 2013 (7688), i.e. the year before restrictions to the number of examinations were introduced.

Entries in German have remained virtually constant for 2019 (2416), after a steady decline since 2012 (6725 entries), representing an overall decrease of 64%, and a decrease of 36% compared to 2014 (3748 entries).

The data suggest that the abandonment of the 'Languages for All' policy in 2012 had a dramatic negative impact on entries in French, and to a lesser extent on entries in German. The steady increase in entries for Spanish has not compensated for the decreases seen in the other two languages.



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### 8-year trend of uptake in language entries below Higher (2012-2019): other languages

Entries in Italian have been variable. Entries for 2019 (296) are 56% below those for 2012 (671), 40% below those in 2014 (496), and also significantly below 2018 (-35%).

Entries for Gaelic (Learners) were on a downward trend between 2012 and 2015 (from 375 to 159), recovered a little in 2016 (211 entries) before dipping again in 2017 (151 entries) and moving back up again in 2018 (159 entries) and in 2019 (218 entries, but still down by 42% from 2012).

Entries in Chinese languages were on an upward trend up to 2018. Entries for 2019 (232) are below those in 2018 (262) but above entries for 2012 (228) and 2014 (156).

Entries in Urdu have been consistently low but experienced a jump in 2019 (112 entries, up by 47% from 2018). So for the first time entries are higher than in both 2012 (92) and 2014 (82).