

Submission to the 2024 Curriculum and Assessment Review

The Queen's College Translation Exchange, University of Oxford & The
Stephen Spender Trust

Section 1: About you

1. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

3. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, which of the below best describes which part of the sector your organisation represents?

[If more than one applies, please select the one that you think is most important to understanding your consultation response.]

Charity, social enterprise organisation or non-profit organisation

4. What is the name of your organisation?

Stephen Spender Trust // Queen's College Translation Exchange

5. What is your role within the organisation?

Director, Stephen Spender Trust

Founding Director, Queen's College Translation Exchange (University of Oxford)

6. What is your name?

Dr Charlotte Ryland

7. What is your email address?

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Section 2: General views on curriculum, assessment, and qualifications pathways

10. What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways are working well to support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

I lead two charitable organisations dedicated to increasing participation and progress in language learning at UK schools: the Stephen Spender Trust [SST] is a small charity and The Queen's College Translation Exchange [QTE] is a research, outreach and advocacy centre based at the University of Oxford. Over 16,000 young people take part in our programmes in their (majority state) schools every year, and that number is growing.

Our experience is that languages is the place in the curriculum where social justice can best be delivered, for two reasons: equal access to language learning provides a framework for young people from all backgrounds and heritages to investigate, validate and share their own and their peers' identities; and equal access to language learning provides the cultural capital that increases life chances by breaking through the class ceiling. If participation in languages education continues to decline, access to this cultural capital becomes increasingly exclusive, further strengthening the class ceiling.

Languages should be the place in the curriculum where young people learn to interact confidently and on equal terms with people and communities within and beyond our shores; where they become skilled, agile and critically-minded wordsmiths; where they are challenged to encounter cultures, including their own, from new and intellectually stretching perspectives. Our society has so much to gain from a rising generation of inspired, skilled and outward-looking young linguists. These positive elements of language learning are wholly encapsulated in the existing National Curriculum Purpose of Study and Aims: **these are commendable and should not be changed**. They show that language learning is about communication as well as 'liberation from insularity and opening to other cultures'; fostering curiosity and deepening understanding of the world; learning new ways of thinking; and reading great literature in the original. They mandate that pupils should access a variety of **authentic sources** and develop an appreciation of a range of writing.

The National Curriculum Purpose and Aims are appropriate, but crucially they appear **not to be reflected** in the experience of most learners, especially in KS2-4. A focus in assessment on accuracy over competencies means that much curriculum time is used for drilling accurate communication, and very little remains for fostering the **transformative life skills** encapsulated in the Purpose of Study.

This Purpose can be fully and easily realised if the curriculum and assessment shift to a culture-based model.

Our submission outlines the **reasons** for and **feasibility** of this culture-based model. It is underpinned by three forms of evidence:

1. The unique evidence that we offer the panel is **teacher voice**: the results of action research into the cultural-creative practice that QTE and SST has developed and delivered since 2010 (**participation: over 16,000 learners and 500 teachers in 2024**).

2. **Peer-reviewed research** on QTE & SST's '**dynamic**' and '**creative**' **interventions** (Beauvais 2019, Barnes 2021, Ardizzone & Holmes 2020 and linked here:

<https://www.stephen-spender.org/research-on-the-impacts-of-creative-translation/>)

3. **Peer-reviewed research on creativity in education and the role of culture in languages education**, esp. the cognitive benefits of language-learning and creativity (cf. Collard 2013, Li & Woll 2019); **cultural content** in language pedagogy (Woore et al 2018, Beauvais 2019, Barnes 2021, Lawes 2021, Holmes 2022); and the role of languages in **social justice and inclusion** (Phipps 2019, Panford 2021, Hird 2023).

11. What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways should be targeted for improvements to better support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

Languages must be given careful attention. They represent the place in the curriculum where social justice and inclusion can best be delivered, yet participation is very low. As such it is essential that this subject area is made as accessible and inclusive as possible, in order to increase participation.

Our recommendations to achieve this are:

Our starting point is to **reject the binary between language and culture** in the current curriculum. **Effective factors**, such as teaching pupils to be proficient communicators, should not be separated from **affective factors, such as motivation**. We recommend that the MFL curriculum is adjusted so that language **acquisition is embedded within authentic cultural content**. This culture-based curriculum has the following benefits for all learners:

1. A culture-based MFL curriculum: motivation and relevance

- Participation in language learning is low because current MFL curriculum content is restrictive, emphasising linguistic proficiency but failing to provide compelling intrinsic motivation for the hard work that achieving proficiency requires.

- **Intrinsic motivation:** the curriculum needs to show learners why they should work hard to acquire another language, and effectively teach them those language skills – affective + effective pedagogy, combined.
- That intrinsic motivation is effectively delivered by integrating cultural content fully into the curriculum, so that culture is not simply an additional theme but **the context for all learning**.
- **Motivation through culture** improves language acquisition: engaging with the target culture makes learning the mechanics of language both **desirable and possible**. Learners want to understand how the language works because they want to understand what an authentic, engaging text is trying to say to them.
- Creative approaches to cultural content also enable **joyful, playful** approaches to language learning which move beyond instrumental gamification to foster a **genuine love of language**.
- This culture-based curriculum enables MFL to move beyond communication to teach **core skills** and dispositions for the **world of work**: communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity, independence and adaptability; and to foster a culture of **global citizenship**.

2. A culture-based MFL curriculum: transition

- A culture-based curriculum focuses on the holistic development of pupils' capabilities, where '**knowledge-rich**' means **enriching pupils** rather than overburdening them with content to be learnt.
- This **inclusive** approach to MFL is best seeded at KS2, with a focus on creativity, culture and language awareness that is then sustained through to KS5.
- This approach to languages is broader and more inclusive than the current curriculum because it **moves beyond narrow instrumental skills** into cultural engagement, from beginner level onwards.

3. A culture-based MFL curriculum: diversity and representation

- The **community of linguists** built by a culture-based curriculum is one in which students see themselves in the content they learn, as well as being encouraged to be knowledgeable about and respect others.
- A focus on creativity and language awareness at KS2 makes it straightforward to integrate Home, Heritage and Community Languages [HHCL] into language learning.
- A culture-based languages curriculum at KS2-5 enables the straightforward integration of a broad range of texts and contexts, so that the current Eurocentric curriculum can be **decentred, and anti-racist and decolonising texts easily introduced to all pupils** [cf. CAR submission by Decolonising the MFL Curriculum Special Interest Group, Association for Language Learning]

4. A culture-based MFL curriculum: social justice and inclusion

- Students of all socioeconomic backgrounds **have the right to access the cultural capital** that allows us not only to lead richer lives but to understand the world around us. Embedding language acquisition within authentic cultural content guarantees **universal provision of this cultural capital**.
- Delivering cultural capital through languages education works against the 'soft bigotry of low expectations' and **breaks through the class ceilings** of socioeconomic disadvantage. At present, socioeconomic disadvantage correlates strongly with low participation in language learning beyond KS3, across England.

5. A culture-based MFL curriculum: breadth and balance

- Culture-based language teaching enables the **full breadth of skills** that can be learned and employed by linguists to be taught and realised by all – above all critical thinking, intercultural understanding, creativity, and language awareness.
- This culture-based curriculum enables languages to sit equally alongside other Humanities and STEM subjects, where participation is much higher, because it foregrounds these key life skills and contains content that is **relevant to the pupils' age and stage**.
- Culture-based content makes possible **cross-curricular activity**, where languages interact productively and inclusively with, for example, English, History, Physics, Art, Music.

6. Culture-based curriculum: teacher recruitment and retention

- A culture-based curriculum values and **makes full use of the linguists' skills** and enthusiasm that MFL teachers bring to the classroom. This reduces teacher workload, increases teacher autonomy and motivation, and supports retention.
- A culture-based curriculum supports teacher recruitment by bringing the profession into line with the **skillset of a Modern Languages graduate** - establishing a clear link between languages at Higher Education and at school. This **motivates** talented graduate linguists to enter the teaching profession, and to **stay there**.

7. Culture-based assessment

- A culture-based curriculum requires **culture-based assessment**. This would enable a move away from accuracy to **competency**, focusing on what young people can do rather than what they cannot, and would more realistically reflect how communication functions in the real world.
- Given significant constraints on curriculum time for MFL, **what is not assessed is rarely taught**. If cultural engagement is assessed, it is far more likely to be integrated fully into the classroom experience.

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Section 3: Social justice and inclusion

12. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers to improving attainment, progress, access or participation (class ceilings) for learners experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage?

Teaching languages through personal content (describing your family, your house, your weekend, your pets, your holidays), as in the current curriculum, is exclusive. It assumes that learners wish to share the details of their home lives. No other curricular subject requires this.

The low participation in the current curriculum means that the majority of learners (55%) do not progress to KS4. Those who drop languages before KS4 are predominantly from groups experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage. As a result, the cultural capital and workplace skills ideally delivered by a languages education are withheld from many experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage.

Both these conditions compound socioeconomic disadvantage and need to change: Teaching language through cultural content is inclusive. Embedding language acquisition within authentic cultural content from KS2 onwards guarantees universal provision of cultural capital. It breaks the 'class ceiling' and low expectations that often restrict socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils from accessing the cultural capital needed to make sense of and benefit from a 'window to the world' (Lawes 2021).

"Creative Translation gives young people access to a culture to which many don't feel entitled" – Lisa Panford, PGCE Tutor, St Mary's Twickenham; Chair of Decolonising Modern Languages Special Interest Group (Association for Language Learning)

Using **diverse, authentic material** in the MFL classroom means that language learning becomes **relatable and relevant** to pupils' age and stage, and therefore **increases participation and motivation**. This is particularly necessary when teaching complex language (see Woore et al 2018 on the impact of reading on foreign language acquisition in school).

Cf. Teacher reception of Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators:

"The Anthea Bell Prize offered us a real example of the relevance of language study. As a department we are truly grateful this initiative is gathering momentum at a time when recruitment of language learners remains a challenge."

Anthea Bell Prize resources *"show what languages can be in the real world"*

The Anthea Bell Prize “is great for showing that languages are a part of everything” and “promoting a love of languages across the school”.

- A language is a **valuable workplace skill**. It aids social mobility in helping disadvantaged groups access higher-paid and higher quality jobs across the world (Ayres-Bennett 2022). Languages can also play a positive role in vocational pathways.
- **Expanding accreditation** e.g. considering special qualifications for native speakers of HHCL also recognises multilingual UK students (often first- or second-generation migrants) as assets, who can use their mother tongue to contribute to the UK economy.
- A state secondary teacher reported using QTE creative translation resources to make **direct links to careers**: “As part of our department's celebrations of National Careers Week, we spent time in French class completing a sample translation task in groups and pairs, demonstrating to students the potential careers available when studying languages. This was an ideal work-related task and we spent time discussing the skills and qualities a translator must possess.”

13. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways are there any barriers to improving attainment, progress, access or participation which may disproportionately impact pupils based on other characteristics (e.g. disability, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion or belief etc.)

British classrooms are diverse places, already boasting a variety of languages and cultures. On a global scale, knowing more than one language **is the norm** to which the UK is an exception, despite **multilingualism being recognised as an asset** for government, business and national security interests. Further, multilingualism is an asset for students themselves, with net benefits for **literacy attainment** and English acquisition.

The MFL curriculum does not currently recognise or build on this asset. An inclusive culture-based languages curriculum would create an ideal space for bringing Home, Heritage and Community Languages into the classroom and turning them from a deficit into an asset. This is particularly effective through Creative Translation techniques developed by QTE and SST:

“It was so inspiring and fun, and has given me lots of ideas about how I might involve my many EAL students to be the experts in the room.” – secondary English teacher, participant in SST webinar 2021

“I found the webinar inspiring and it made me think that introducing creative translation into the classroom would be an engaging way to encourage our

monolingual pupils to understand and empathise with all of our children who are learning EAL and have to translate on a day-to-day basis.” – primary school teacher, participant in SST webinar 2021

Culture-based activities in different languages allow **EAL students** to be, as one teacher put it, ‘**the experts in the room**’, boosting **confidence**, **inclusivity** and developing **oracy**:

"Two Somali children would not even admit that they spoke a language other than English until they took part in the project. By the end, they were correcting people and directing people in speaking their language.";

"A Hungarian girl who rarely speaks, even one-to-one, said a line on stage to the whole of Key Stage 2." – participants in Stephen Spender Trust programmes

14. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers in continuing to improve attainment, progress, access or participation for learners with SEND?

The current MFL curriculum best serves learners with effective recall and good literacy in English. The culture-based, creative curriculum that we recommend appeals to a **wider range of learners** (Barnes 2018 & 2021).

"The children with special educational needs seemed on much more of an equal footing than they often were before, and the majority could access it without a great deal of help. It also gave them confidence, and this confidence grew as the project progressed." – Year 3 teacher, West Norfolk, on a Creative Translation course designed by Stephen Spender Trust.

"The children really enjoy the process and learning that translating is not as straightforward as they think it is! We have also found that those children who do not always find writing so easy in English surprise us when completing the tasks by thinking more creatively." – primary school teacher on Creative Translation activities

15. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any enablers that support attainment, progress, access or participation for the groups listed above? [e.g. socioeconomically disadvantaged young people, pupils with SEND, pupils who are otherwise vulnerable, and young people with protected characteristics]

Attempts to introduce more culture into the MFL curriculum have enabled these groups to engage more effectively. This is an important step towards a fully integrated, culture-based curriculum.

Section 4: Ensuring an excellent foundation in maths and English

16. To what extent does the content of the national curriculum at primary level (key stages 1 and 2) enable pupils to gain an excellent foundation in a) English and b) maths? Are there ways in which the content could change to better support this aim? [Please note, we invite views specifically on transitions between key stages in section 9.]

English and maths - primary content:

We have found that creative approaches to language learning at primary enable the inclusion of Home, Heritage and Community Language speakers, which otherwise rarely happens. This supports core literacy skills, oracy and confidence. This form of creative **language awareness** should be integrated into the **literacy curriculum** at primary level.

cf. teacher responses to SST's Creative Translation programmes:

“Oral communication was improved as the groups were required to spend a lot of time talking in groups as well as to an audience. They all grew with confidence when speaking to each other both in English and in a foreign language.” Primary School Teacher, Buckinghamshire.

“What did my pupils get from the day? Masses. A significant increase in their awareness of language on a word, sentence and whole text level; a new way of looking at punctuation and every segment on a written page; seeing the links between visual cues and pictures and the words that accompany these to convey meaning and the interrelationship between the two; a love of language and an appreciation of their role in creating story; increased aspirations, a broadening of their horizons; an opportunity to speak and engage with and use a foreign language in a meaningful way; a chance to meet new and interesting people in a novel place; development of their capacity to be resilient in terms of focusing for a prolonged period and use of reciprocity to work with and learn with others they would not normally collaborate with; an evolving appreciation of cultural and lexical differences and similarities between English and other languages; being changed as people and learners and writers and readers.” - Primary School headteacher

“This is a vital project to building the confidence of those students who speak a language beside English.” Year 5 teacher, Sir John Heron Primary

18. To what extent does the content of the a) English and b) maths national curriculum at secondary level (key stages 3 and 4) equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for life and further study? Are there ways in which the content could change to better support this aim?

Diversifying the English curriculum is an urgent necessity, if it is to adequately represent and motivate today's learners.

Stephen Spender Trust's Creative Translation methods make it easy to diversify the literature curriculum, making texts in Home, Heritage and Community Languages accessible to all, while also hitting 'all sorts of **crunchy target curriculum objectives**':

"It was excellent. I also think, with subject English teachers, you could be even more confident about the role of this work in the KS3 curriculum – it's not peripheral at all. It hits all sorts of crunchy target curriculum objectives such as knowledge and understanding of form, pattern, context, culture and voice/perspective." – Secondary English teacher, participant in SST webinar 2021
Culture-based translation activities provide cross-curricular benefits for English Language and Literature.

Beauvais 2019 finds that engaging with authentic texts in a different language raises pupil awareness of **what makes a text 'literary'**, an essential foundational skill for analysis and argumentation in English assessment.

Culture-based literacy teaching can also take place in the English classroom, with noticeable impact on EAL student performance and confidence, including oracy. By bringing their native language and literature into the English classroom, it becomes an inclusive space, as English teacher Ali Al-Jamri has demonstrated in Salford: <https://worldkidlit.org/2023/03/27/poetry-translation-schools/>

"I found the webinar inspiring and it made me think that introducing creative translation into the classroom would be an engaging way to encourage our monolingual pupils to understand and empathise with all of our children who are learning EAL and have to translate on a day-to-day basis." – primary school teacher, participant in SST webinar 2021

In a multilingual and superdiverse society, languages can be introduced across the curriculum, similarly to how literacy and numeracy are fostered outside of timetabled Maths and English lessons in order to support the learning of other subjects. (Gilak in Hird 2023).

21. Are there any particular challenges with regard to the English and maths a) curricula and b) assessment for learners in need of additional support (e.g. learners with SEND, socioeconomic disadvantage, English as an additional language (EAL))? Are there any changes you would suggest to overcome these challenges?

Challenges with curricula and assessment - changes to overcome these: Ref. EAL, see our response to qu. 19:

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outside of timetabled Maths and English lessons in order to support the learning of other subjects. (Gilak in Hird 2023).]

Section 5: Curriculum and qualification content

22. Are there particular curriculum or qualifications subjects* where: a) there is too much content; not enough content; or content is missing; b) the content is out-of-date; c) the content is unhelpfully sequenced (for example to support good curriculum design or pedagogy); d) there is a need for greater flexibility (for example to provide the space for teachers to develop and adapt content)? Please provide detail on specific key stages where appropriate.*This includes both qualifications where the government sets content nationally, and anywhere the content is currently set by awarding organisations.

Subject content:

This question is hugely relevant to MFL. Participation in language learning is low because current MFL curriculum content is restrictive, emphasising linguistic proficiency but failing to provide compelling intrinsic motivation for the hard work that achieving proficiency requires. The curriculum content needs to **show learners why they should work hard to acquire another language**, as well as effectively teaching them those language skills: **affective plus effective pedagogy**, combined to generate **self-efficacy** ('the individual has to value the challenging tasks which they seek to master', Graham 2021).

By including authentic texts from a range of foreign language traditions, a culture-based curriculum **empowers learners to become active members of a community of linguists**. This is a community of speakers of different languages across generations and continents, that represents the multilingual communities in all English schools in the 21st century.

Learning grammar or vocabulary through reading and translating an authentic text provides **tangible progress through accessible content**. Texts **model** how to use the language, and resources can provide **scaffolding** (e.g. glossaries) so that pupils of all attainment levels are able to **access** the content. As a result, **participation increases rapidly**:

"A creative translation day from the Stephen Spender Trust with our Year 9s led to a dramatic increase in GCSE uptake this year – more than doubling compared to previous years. The opportunity for the students to meet inspiring professional linguists and to use their languages creatively was transformative." – Teacher, secondary academy in Rochdale

"This programme has really helped us to recruit students for A level next year. We had not been able to have the right number of students to run the

course for the last two years, so it has been amazing to see how the little club we run for this competition last year has made such a difference in the appreciation of the language from our students.” – MFL teacher at secondary academy (2023)

Embedding language acquisition in creative-cultural content increases language proficiency and confidence amongst language learners:

"Through these activities, many students said that their understanding of language differences has improved and that they felt more confident in translation tasks. On top of that, students also showed great interest in learning Chengyu [classical Chinese proverbs] and other stories in a different language.” – state secondary teacher, Newcastle

Creative approaches to cultural content also enable joyful, playful approaches to language learning which move beyond instrumental gamification to foster a genuine love of language (Beauvais 2020). This joyful emphasis on translanguageing, literary creativity and play improves student engagement (Wei 2018; Warner 2022, 2024).

A culture-based curriculum **enables teachers to adapt the curriculum content** for their particular cohort of pupils, while retaining the same **rigorous** pedagogical approach.

A culture-based curriculum enables languages to move beyond communication to teach core skills and dispositions for the world of work: communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity, independence and adaptability, and to foster a culture of global citizenship.

Cf. Teacher reception of Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators:

The teaching resources “really appeal to critical thinkers” and “bring languages to life”; Teaching resources “open up loads of discussion” and “great conversation”.

Learning a language by engaging with authentic content provides a host of **interpersonal cognitive benefits, particularly empathy, sociability, and cultural literacy**. (Li and Woll 2019)

“My pupils said it was nice to feel ‘in control’ of the language rather than assume that there was only one way to put things. As a teacher, I enjoyed watching students become ever more creative about their expression and watching them puzzle out ways to accomplish their communication.” – secondary MFL teacher re. Anthea Bell Prize resources, Wales

This expression of teacher enjoyment and satisfaction is a regular feature of creative and culture-based pedagogy.

For the different skills and cognitive benefits of language-learning to be encouraged, they **must be central to languages assessment**:

- Barnes 2021 proposes a form of **creative assessment**, that would allow pupils to translate an authentic text and provide a **commentary** justifying choices made, much as we expect critical analysis from **English Literature** pupils. Such assessment could include **identifying and reflecting** on differences between several published translations of the same text.

- Such an approach **has already been trialled** by the GIMAGINE programme (National Consortium for Languages Education), delivered by the Goethe-Institut and co-funded by the **Department for Education**, including modules on Creative Translation and AI designed by Stephen Spender Trust.

23. Are there particular changes that could be made to ensure the curriculum (including qualification content) is more diverse and representative of society?

Changes to ensure curriculum is more diverse and representative of society: Languages are the subject best placed to represent and engage with the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of British society. **A broad languages education reflects the diverse British society pupils are living in, and positively supports social cohesion** (Holmes 2015, Lamb et al 2020).

Some of the highest-stakes topics of global history so often reduced to ‘culture wars’ can most **sensitively be tackled in the languages classroom**, but only if the content allows the foregrounding of what sociologist Paul Gilroy (2004) describes as ‘**convivial culture**’.

A culture-based curriculum enables the languages classroom to build such a ‘**convivial**’ **community**. A sufficiently diverse, culture-based languages curriculum provides the unique space for all pupils **to see themselves represented** in the content they learn, as well as having to engage with lives, experiences and forms of expression **different to their own**.

Many pupils already speak a second language (Home, Heritage and Community Language/HHCL). **Accreditation and access to qualifications** in these languages should be promoted and not stigmatised compared to mainstream taught languages (Balosa in Hird 2023). Valuing HHCL raises the profile of MFL across the school, and shows that we already live in a multilingual society (Phipps 2019).

24. To what extent does the current curriculum (including qualification content) support students to positively engage with, be knowledgeable about, and respect, others? Are there elements that could be improved?

The representation of the world beyond England in the current MFL curriculum is Eurocentric and un-diverse (Panford 2021), although there is gradual improvement in this area. A culture-based curriculum would enable this improvement to proceed rapidly, and enable teachers to easily adapt the content to their particular cohorts.

Culture-based language teaching prepares students for real-life engagement with people from across the world, that is, **to produce language for a purpose, not for its own sake.**

A more diverse languages curriculum includes authentic cultural material, e.g. literature, film, music and history, **from a whole linguistic sphere**, rather than single nations. This enables students to access the multicultural and multi-ethnic world of the languages they study e.g. Latin American Spanish or Francophone African French, as well as HHCL cultures.
(cf. <https://www.pearson.com/en-gb/schools/subject-resources/modern-languages/why-languages-matter/diversity-and-inclusion/permission-to-speak.html>)

Section 6: A broad and balanced curriculum

28. To what extent does the current primary curriculum support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

The primary curriculum misses a major opportunity by failing to recognise and integrate Home, Heritage and Community Languages into curricular learning. Creative approaches and language awareness methodologies would enable HHC languages and cultural contexts to be integrated into every area of the curriculum - literacy, history, geography, music, art... This is exemplified by Stephen Spender Trust Creative Translation programmes and the WoLLoW project.

29. To what extent do the current secondary curriculum and, qualifications pathways support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

The current MFL curriculum is **neither broad nor balanced**. It privileges accurate communication over cultural engagement and knowledge. Assessment structures compound this further. We suggest that this is re-balanced through a culture-based, creative curriculum:

Authentic content demands that pupils engage with cultural production emotionally, linguistically and creatively. A language is both a creative skill and a body of knowledge: linguistic training should be rigorously embedded within the study of engaging and authentic cultural content to **combine proficiency with holistic development** (Deng 2022).

There is **widespread consensus on the need for creativity for pupil development, health and well-being**. As Collard 2013 argues, the attributes of creativity, such as lateral thinking, resourcefulness, self-efficacy and self-confidence **are synonymous** with the cognitive development of the executive functions of the brain.

- The 2019 Durham Commission (Arts Council England & Durham University) on Creativity also emphasises the **need for a creative curriculum**, to which Languages can uniquely contribute.
- The majority of the outputs from the AHRC-funded Open World Research Initiative [OWRI] projects 2016-20 confirm this need for a much broader languages curriculum.
- As a 2019 report from the British Academy (Li and Woll 2019) demonstrates, language-learning is uniquely placed **to aid cognitive development of 'creativity flexibility'**, by considering synonyms, repair strategies in assessment, alternative translations or expressions, and considerations of register and tone.
- A teacher in a Welsh state school commented their pupils *'said it was nice to feel "in control" of the language rather than assume that there was only one way to put things. As a teacher, I enjoyed watching students become ever more creative about their expression and watching them puzzle out ways to accomplish their communication.'*

A broad and balanced curriculum should move away from 'exam tunnel vision' and provide opportunities for pupil enrichment and development. A cultural, creative languages curriculum would be uniquely placed to **raise standards** whilst attending to pupils' developmental needs and interests **beyond exam results**.

Languages are uniquely placed to **link traditional core subjects with creative subjects**. Culture-rich languages lessons can intersect productively with other curricular subjects, notably English Language and Literature, as well as Geography, History, Art, Food Tech, therefore giving pupils are more **meaningful and integrated experience of the curriculum**.

The dozens of free teaching resources provided by the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators (16,000+ participants in 2024) show how translating literary texts can augment not just the languages curriculum, but provide cross-curricular connections.

(Sample resources: <https://www.queens.ox.ac.uk/research-at-queens/translation-exchange/anthea-bell-prize/anthea-bell-prize-sample-resources/#collapse10010>)

"They offered a more diverse range of texts and authors and allowed me to link to topics covered in the syllabus such as Life in the GDR, Immigration/Integration/Racism, history of art and culture in the Weimar Republic. The students found the translation tasks stimulating and challenging."
- MFL teacher, FE College, South East England.

A parent whose child participated in the Anthea Bell Prize commented on the link they noticed between mathematics and language through creative translation (2024): *"[We engaged] in delightful first-ever conversations about translation with J. as he worked on his entry for the Anthea Bell Prize. Such a treat - thank you! Had to convince him to be bothered to enter but he's been really into it since he got the text to translate. Last night he was even enthusing about the parallels with maths (his main passion) and language construction. We have never had conversations like this before."*

Section 9: Other issues on which we would welcome views

52. How can the curriculum, assessment and wraparound support better enable transitions between key stages to ensure continuous learning and support attainment?

Wraparound support enabling transitions between key stages:

For languages, current transitions between primary and secondary level are either ineffective or non-existent (British Council 2024, p. 18-19).

Culture-based pedagogy gives **continuity of method (how we learn) and content (what we learn) to students**, easing the difficult transition from KS2-KS3, and onwards to KS4 & KS5.

Consistent expectations: If a skill is not assessed, it is most likely to be squeezed out of the curriculum, in particular in schools with minimal curriculum time for languages. Pupils should have consistent expectations of language learning as culture-based from KS2 through to KS5 and beyond.

'Dynamic' translation-based assessment (Barnes 2021) of creativity and translation should be trialled and embedded in existing expectations we have of pupil linguists. In Barnes' (2021) words, 'this would reward students not for memorising vocabulary but for **engaging sensitively** with L2 texts and **successfully communicating meaning through critical evaluation of language and context.**'

Creative Translation methodology, regularly used by over 300 UK schools, offers a **straightforward** way of implementing and sustaining that consistency across key stages: defining what it means to 'be a linguist' at every age through to adulthood (Barnes 2021, Holmes 2022, Ardizzone & Holmes 2020).

53. How could technology be used to improve how we deliver the curriculum, assessment and qualifications in England?

Languages are the place in the curriculum where young people can best learn to navigate an increasingly AI-dominated world.

Cultural Literacy: In an AI-saturated world, skills like creativity, judgment, discretion, oracy – all essential to understanding another culture and making oneself understood – become essential. A culture-based, creative languages education is best placed to provide these skills, as well as AI-literacy.

As Artificial Intelligence enters the language classroom, language teaching should aim **beyond accurate reproduction** of vocabulary and grammar, instead providing an intrinsic interest (culture) for reaching linguistic self-efficacy.

Assessment: Changing assessment of translation to **reflect the place of cultural transfer and creativity** would insulate it from a reductive word-for-word view of translation, which AI can now provide.

QTE and the Stephen Spender Trust developed creative translation-based assessment activities for the Goethe-Institut GIMAGINE programme, which was AI-assessed.

AI-Literacy: Creative language teaching presents opportunities for increasing AI-literacy and digital literacy more widely.

“The Anthea Bell Prize not only focuses on literary translation but it also highlights how an automated translation is never going to be as good as a good translator. This is something that in language teaching in secondary we are always fighting with, and every year we are faced with pupils convinced that AI can do the job, so why should we learn languages.” – secondary MFL teacher