

Ancient languages in primary schools in England: A Literature Review

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report, commissioned by the Department for Education as part of a Research and Public Policy Partnership with the University of Oxford, explores the provision of two ancient languages – Ancient Greek and Latin – in primary schools in England. It also investigates existing literature on the impact of the teaching and learning of these languages on pupils' development and outcomes. It was completed in June 2022.

In 2014, it became a statutory requirement for all maintained primary schools to teach a foreign language at Key Stage 2 (KS2, age 7 to 11), encompassing both modern and ancient languages. Despite basic statutory provision, however, this report shows that there are several barriers to the teaching and learning of Ancient Greek and Latin in primary schools, not least timetabling constraints, the difficulty in breaking down the elitist image of Classics, and a lack of funding for teacher training. Further barriers include skewed perceptions about the viability, value and relevance of ancient languages; a disconnect between policy support and practical assistance made available to schools (Collen, 2020); and some gaps in the inspection and reporting of ancient language teaching in primary schools (see Section 5).

Findings

Insufficient tools for data collection make it challenging to ascertain how many children are studying ancient languages in primary schools and how geographical and socioeconomic factors are, or are not, linked to provision. Many educational charities and organisations have, since 2010, worked to widen participation in Classics at all Key Stages and to increase both student and teacher access to ancient language learning. These organisations currently make a considerable contribution to aid the provision of ancient language teaching at Key Stage 1 (KS1) and KS2, principally through the funding of teacher training, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and distribution of resources to primary school students.

This report reveals that there has been, and continues to be, a lack of research into the impact of ancient languages upon pupil outcomes and development. Whilst it is regularly claimed that learning Latin has a beneficial effect on the first language development of English native speakers, the few published examples of empirical research in this area require contextualisation of both their results and their methods, and, by 2020, there were only two published studies from outside of the US (Bracke and Bradshaw, 2020). However, there is evidence that learning ancient languages has a variety of positive effects on pupils' attainment, especially their literacy levels, as Holmes-Henderson (in

press) shows. From this study, it appears that the students who benefit most from learning Latin are those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), those who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and those who qualify for the Pupil Premium. While this longitudinal study offers promising findings, additional well-controlled studies are needed to better understand the causal links and generalisability to the wider population of learners.

Methodology

The review of the literature on ancient languages in primary schools in England covered both academic literature and grey literature. The literature review was undertaken systematically, using inclusion and exclusion criteria, pre-agreed with the Department for Education, to search for, and retrieve, relevant literature. These materials were then summarised, synthesised and critically evaluated. The literature review involved five stages:

• Development of a research protocol detailing the steps and procedures to be followed in the literature review including: the locations/sources to be searched for literature; the search terms to be used to retrieve the literature (these included; Latin, Greek, primary, Roman, elementary, preparatory, junior, ancient, classical, language and evolved to become more granular, e.g. mythology, rhetoric, as the review developed); the screens each item would pass through in being considered for inclusion in the review (the inclusion and exclusion criteria); processes for recording and storing references; and processes for retrieving and summarising literature.

• Searches of a wide range of online databases and websites, which offer electronic access to most published literature in the area of ancient languages in primary schools in England. These included bibliographic databases such as the British Education Index, the Education Resources Information Center, Google Scholar, ResearchGate and peer reviewed journals such as the *Journal of Classics Teaching*, the *Language Learning Journal* and the *Journal of Latin Linguistics*. The websites and publications of relevant organisations were also searched; for example, the British Academy, the British Council, the Department for Education, Ofsted, Ofqual, the Classical Association, the Association for Language Learning, the Primary Languages Network and a range of Classics charities.

• Screening literature for inclusion in the review using the following inclusion criteria: academic literature (journal articles, books, book chapters), including both empirical and conceptual studies; grey literature (information or research outputs produced by organisations or individuals outside of commercial or academic publishing and distribution channels, such as reports commissioned by charities, blog posts, newspaper, newsletter or magazine articles, podcasts and conference literature).

• Assessment of the quality of potentially eligible articles, books and reports to ensure that the best available evidence was used in the review. The population focus was

students aged 7 to 11 years old but, where relevant, studies focused on secondary education were included. The publication window was the last fifty years: necessarily wide owing to the small size of the research field in this area. Studies earlier than 1972 were, however, included if: (i) they addressed a relevant issue not considered in later literature; or (ii) they were included in a review published post-1972. • Synthesis and critical evaluation of the data.

This report gives highest priority to evidence from recent studies conducted in England but also takes account of academic research studies elsewhere in the UK and in international contexts. Peer reviewed research published in academic journals or in books has been given higher priority than self-published research, action research, practitioner inquiry or articles written for public audiences such as blogs, newsletters, magazines or charity-commissioned publications. It has been necessary to draw on a range of outputs in this review because the quantity of peer reviewed research in this area is smaller than in other curriculum subjects. These studies concentrate largely on Latin, which leaves significant research gaps into the impact of Ancient Greek. Since 'any modern or ancient foreign language' may be studied at Key Stage 2 this could also include, for example, Sanskrit or Biblical Hebrew; however, because both languages are rarely studied and their impact on students' development is even less researched than Ancient Greek, they are considered outside the limits of this review. Studies into the learning and teaching of ancient languages adopt a range of methodologies, which are discussed when relevant. Full information for each can be accessed via the citations at the end of the report.

Recommendations

This report identifies gaps in existing literature on the impact of ancient languages on aspects of primary school students' development and suggests further areas of research requiring urgent attention. It also advises that, although policy support has been in place since 2014, significant investment is now needed to realise this policy ambition. If Latin and Greek are to be taught in primary schools, there needs to be a co-ordinated national programme of teacher training. Such improvements are necessary in order to enable the learning and teaching of Latin and Ancient Greek to 1) improve literacy for those performing below age-related expectations, 2) help stem the decline in language learning which has been a cause for concern in recent years and, 3) contribute positively towards achieving the government's English Baccalaureate (EBacc) target at KS4.

To achieve this, the authors recommend building a reporting system that gives a clearer, more coherent picture of the provision of ancient languages in English primary schools. This will aid the undertaking of future research, CPD provision, improve communication and cross-phase planning, and will allow structures to be put in place to connect schools new to teaching ancient languages with those with established provision. They also note

that positive messaging about the value of ancient languages is urgently needed and should be at the forefront of communication between government, schools, teachers, parents, and students.

1. Introduction

This report was commissioned by the Department for Education as part of a Research and Public Policy Partnership with the University of Oxford (2020-2021) to investigate the current provision of ancient languages in English primary schools and the impact of ancient language learning on student development and outcomes.

1.1. Aims

The main aims of this report are to:

- review existing literature on the impact of ancient languages on aspects of primary school students' development
- detail the work of educational organisations to support ancient language teaching at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- evaluate the provision of ancient languages on the statutory curriculum and within primary schools
- identify further areas for research

1.2. Scope of the review

This review will explore the provision of two ancient languages – Ancient Greek and Latin – in primary schools (both state-maintained and independent) in England. It will not include detailed discussion of the provision of other Classical subjects, such as Ancient History or Classical Civilisation.

Many of the resources, textbooks and courses used to teach ancient languages within primary schools are created individually by teachers or departments and so are not included within the scope of this review. <u>Section 4</u> of this report highlights a sample of the resources freely available online or used widely across a number of institutions.

1.3. Overview of Classics education in England

'Classics' is an umbrella term for the study of the languages, literature, history, culture and archaeology of the ancient world, traditionally centred around the Mediterranean but also reaching to the Near East, India and North Africa.

In England, at Key Stage 4 (KS4) and Key Stage 5 (KS5), there are six Classical subjects which lead to qualifications: Ancient Greek, Ancient History, Biblical Hebrew, Classical Civilisation, Latin and Sanskrit (KS4 only). All of these, except Classical Civilisation, are recognised as EBacc subjects. Some non-language focused courses such as Classical Studies are offered throughout the UK by a range of examination boards including, for

example, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE).

Recent research has shown that "Classics poverty" 'has been a feature of the story of secondary school Classics education in the UK for more than 50 years' and that, today, there remain 'huge geographical "gaps" in the UK where students cannot access any classical subjects at A level' (Hunt and Holmes-Henderson, 2021, p. 1). Policy changes in recent years have not rectified the imbalance in provision and access:

In 2021, 'Latin is very much the preserve of independent schools and state-maintained selective schools in the South and South-East of England. [Ancient] Greek is almost completely absent from the state-maintained sector, and, where it is present in that sector, almost entirely taught at exam level in London. Classical Civilisation is more balanced between the two sectors, with larger numbers than both Latin and Ancient Greek combined. Ancient History is stronger in the state-maintained sector but significantly smaller in overall numbers compared to Classical Civilisation'. – *Hunt and Holmes-Henderson* (2021, p. 2)

The situation is very different in primary schools. At KS2, the study of the Greeks and Romans is compulsory in the History national curriculum and in 2012 the National Curriculum Review advised that it become a statutory requirement for all maintained primary schools to teach a foreign language at Key Stage 2. In 2014, ancient languages were therefore introduced to the National Curriculum:

> 'Teaching may be of any modern or ancient foreign language and should focus on enabling pupils to make substantial progress in one language. The teaching should provide an appropriate balance of spoken and written language and should lay the foundations for further foreign language teaching at key stage 3' – *The National Curriculum*, p. 213

The then Minister for Schools, Nick Gibb MP, had argued that ancient languages:

'taught the mechanics of language in general in a more structured way than the study of English can and, indeed, should, as well as providing the confidence to learn new languages. It was therefore important that there should be no 'either/or' distinction between ancient and modern languages, rather that schools should be free to teach languages, among which Latin would stand as an equal' – *Matthews* (2011, p. 3) At Key Stage 3, Classical subjects have disappeared from the statutory curriculum. This lack of cross-phase continuity acts as a barrier to their growth and means that many students are not able to continue their progression in Classical studies beyond primary school. Many schools, such as academies, retain more flexibility in their approach to building a broad curriculum and some consequently teach Latin (and even Ancient Greek) at KS3 but most non-selective state maintained schools do not.

The Department for Education has sought to tackle these barriers by investing £4m in a Latin Excellence Programme (LEP) to support the subject at Key Stages 3 and 4. The LEP, announced in 20221, aims to foster collaboration between schools which provide the best Latin teaching in the UK, and those which do not currently offer Classical languages. By coordinating the development of teacher training resources, lesson materials and visits to heritage sites, the LEP will support pupil progress over the four years of the programme and encourage schools in disadvantaged areas with low take-up of the subject to increase the number of entries in Key Stage 4 Latin examinations.

Many educational charities and organisations have also worked to widen participation in Classics at all Key Stages, to increase student access to ancient languages and civilisation, and to provide a range of training and teaching resources for teachers and schools. Details of their work are summarised in <u>Section 4</u>.

The next section explores the existing research which has been conducted, both in the UK and internationally, into the impact of learning ancient languages – Ancient Greek and Latin – on pupil development and outcomes.

2. Existing research on the impact of learning ancient languages

Numerous claims have been made for the study of ancient languages. These include: that ancient languages facilitate and even simplify the learning of other languages; develop critical and cultural literacy; foster the growth of historical and intercultural skills; give students insights into their own complex world by drawing parallels to the past at the same time as building analytical skills and confidence; and enrich learning in other subjects, such as geography, sciences and the arts, by explaining and contextualising technical vocabulary via etymological links (see, for example, Morgan and Pelling, 2010; Holmes-Henderson, Hunt and Musié, 2018; Imrie, 2019; Taylor, 2020).

Latin lies at the root of 60% of English words and several studies have drawn positive links between learning Latin and improving pupils' first language (L1) skills, particularly their significant reading and comprehension progress (Bracke and Bradshaw, 2020). However, whilst it has been regularly claimed that learning Latin has a beneficial effect on the L1 development of English native speakers, there has been a historical lack of empirical research in this area and much that is referenced is outdated and comes from outside the UK. For instance, an oft-cited Philadelphia trial, which found that the performance level (measured by assessment) of 4,000 primary pupils given a year of 20 minutes per day of Latin teaching using a 'multisensory' approach was 'one full year higher than the performance of matched control pupils', took place in 1977 (Masciantonio, 1977); a lack of information around methodology and consistency in variables make it very difficult to draw contemporary comparisons or meta-analysis for many of these older studies (Smith, 2007).

2.1. International evidence

For a long time, the majority of research conducted into the impact of ancient languages (primarily Latin) was undertaken in the United States, where 50 reports have been published over the course of the last century. Some of the earliest studies suggested that the beneficial impacts of Latin were both linguistic – with students gaining an improved understanding of English vocabulary via derivatives of Latin words – and vocational, since awareness of Latin enabled students to grasp shorthand more quickly (Perkins, 1914 in Glueck, 2021). While educational researchers today would criticise these studies for being insufficient in quality, method, scope or design, they do add to the body of evidence that points to Latin's positive impact on student literacy. More than 15 of the US studies reported 'significant improvements in English vocabulary among Latin learners in comparison with control groups either with no foreign language learning or with an MFL [modern foreign language]' (Bracke and Bradshaw, 2020, p. 228). A more recent study (1997) went further, suggesting that:

'Latin education on all grade levels, particularly on the elementary grade levels, is related to improved general English comprehension (including reading, vocabulary, grammar and comprehension for both native and non-native speakers) and in facilitating the acquisition of a second foreign language'. – *DeVane* (1997)

In 1995, Sparks, Ganschow, Fluharty and Little had also found that students taking Latin improved in both L2 aptitude and L1 language phonological measures compared to student who did not study Latin (DeVane, 1997). This suggests that Latin benefits students' English as well as their ability to learn additional foreign languages. In Australia, similar claims have recently been made:

'learning languages develops overall literacy. It is in this sense "value added", strengthening literacy-related capabilities that are transferable across languages (e.g. the language being learnt and the learner's first language), across domains of use (e.g. the academic domain and the domains of home language use), and across learning areas'. – *Matters* (2018, p. 51)

For students who already have English as an Additional Language, there are further positive effects: a study at Gallaudet College in the USA (1985) demonstrated that students with EAL 'could make sudden and extraordinary jumps in vocabulary and verbal skills – advancing on average a full year above those not taking Latin' (1985, p. 4 quoted by DeVane, 1997). This positive impact on students with a different L1 language to the majority of their in-school peers has also been propounded by researchers from Europe. Scholars from the University of Humbold have argued that 'Latin instruction assists general integration' (Albrecht, 2012), suggesting that learning Latin can bestow educational advantage to newcomer children in Germany.

The study of Latin and Greek in Brazil provides another interesting point of reference in a non-English speaking country. In 2013, university Classics students were employed as teachers to teach Latin to public school third graders (aged 8-9) and seventh graders (aged 11-13) using <u>Minimus</u>. Lessons were offered to all 250 children in the trial so the efficacy of the project cannot be determined by comparison to a control group or detailed analysis performed on a particular group of students, but it was felt by the twenty participating teachers that 'the study of Greek and Latin during the early years may favour the development of our students' native Portuguese linguistic capacities in terms of reading, vocabulary and grammar, besides aiding the acquisition of modern foreign languages and developing logic and critical thinking' (Correa, 2018, p. 56).

A more recent US research study by Boyd (2018) 'presented a method for assembling questionnaires for conducting quantitative research on comprehension strategies of Latin students' (Adema, 2019, p. 38). Bracke and Bradshaw, however, suggested that 'quantitative data only provide limited evidence, and learning Latin can be about much more than just language' (2020, p. 232) and therefore that qualitative data should be given greater emphasis in future research. A blended methodology, like those of Luger (2018) which combined qualitative and quantitative data and data analysis similar to the Classics in Communities project (see below), may be the most useful approach.

Recent studies have explored the role of communicative approaches in ancient language teaching. Rasmussen (2015) suggested that oral work develops greater fluency and proficiency (almost unconsciously) and builds enjoyment for students of different ages and learning styles by creating room for speaking and conversation in the classroom (Hunt, 2018b, pp. 96-97). The communicative approach, though much less prevalent in the UK than the grammar-centric or reading-based teaching methods, has grown in popularity in both the US and Europe and is increasingly used in higher education settings. Its supporters aim to use a variety of communicative approaches (including the 'active' and 'living' methods) to make ancient languages 'lively and attractive to as wide a range of modern learners as possible' (Lloyd and Hunt, 2021, p. 1).

Whilst studies of the impact of communicative approaches on primary age pupils are scarce, particularly (though not unsurprisingly) since there is a further 'absence of studies documenting primary-language (L1) acquisition patterns in Latin' (Hayes and Owens, 2021, p. 203), one unique example is of import and interest. A case study of two bilingual children who acquired Latin L1 proficiency alongside English, shows how they 'followed all the normal childhood milestones at the expected ages and patterns of modern inflected languages' (Hayes and Owens, 2021, p. 209). Although a highly unusual childhood experience, the study revealed that children can learn Latin as a living language. The authors make recommendations for classroom teaching, indicating how age-appropriate Latin texts could be combined with communicative approaches to improve students' grasp of the language.

Bracke and Bradshaw argued that evidence for the positive impact Latin has on modern language learning and cognitive development is 'more circumstantial' and not a 'claim which can currently be generalised' (2020, p. 229). A small study of L1 German students aged 20-30 (and therefore far removed from a primary setting) studying Spanish were found to have benefited more from having previously studied L2 French than L2 Latin: 'the negative transfer effects of Latin on learning Spanish, which became apparent in the analysis of grammar errors, suggest that accessing Romance languages by way of Latin may not only be a detour but may also be a complication' (Haag and Stern, 2003, p.5). However, there does appear to be considerable, if not overwhelming, evidence that ancient languages support learners, particularly EAL students, in developing vocabulary,

literacy and linguistic awareness of both their own native language and other foreign languages. Research undertaken in the UK helps build a clearer, updated picture.

2.2. Evidence from the UK

The <u>Classics in Communities</u> project (<u>see below</u>) has been investigating the impact that learning ancient languages has on children's cognitive development. It is a longitudinal study in which quantitative attainment data have been collected from a number of schools to reflect the situated perspectives of key stakeholders and get a better understanding of the impact of learning Latin including baseline and progress measures of cognitive attainment, as well as qualitative data via interviews. The majority of schools in the study were in areas experiencing high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

The Project's preliminary findings are that:

- Instead of Latin being seen as the preserve of the 'gifted and talented', or intellectually 'most able', Latin helps bridge the 'literacy gap' for those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), those who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and those who qualify for the Pupil Premium. Learning Latin unlocks significant progress in reading and writing for these students (Holmes-Henderson, in press; Wright, in press).
- There are positive trends in the development of literacy skills when a Classical language is used as the medium for (and supplement to) literacy learning (Holmes-Henderson, in press). Latin has been used successfully 'as an intervention strategy for learners performing below age-related expectations in literacy' (Holmes-Henderson, 2020).
- Students learning Ancient Greek in primary schools comment on its distinctiveness, its utility and its cross-curricular value (Holmes-Henderson, in press).

A small-scale study by Taylor (undertaken in 2020, publication forthcoming) used focus groups with students and semi-structured interviews with six teachers to collect qualitative data across three primary schools in greater Belfast in Northern Ireland to assess the benefits, challenges and sustainable development of teaching Classical subjects in the primary classroom. She noted that 'all participants agreed that showing links between words in Latin or Ancient Greek to English words aids spelling and vocabulary understanding' (Taylor, p. 17) and one teacher explained the benefits for newcomer students: 'I can see right away that you are putting the EAL child on the same grounding as everyone else because suddenly you're all learning a new language together' (Taylor, p. 25). This study highlighted the students' enjoyment of ancient language learning, the cross-curricular uses of Classical subjects, the need for greater

education and teacher support to grow confidence in delivery and the fundamental benefit of statutory support to motivate school leaders, teachers and students.

The Classics in Communities research project has measured progress by qualitative research methods alongside quantitative data. Team members visited schools teaching Latin and Greek and interviewed school leaders, class teachers, pupils and parents to better understand their attitudes towards the introduction and teaching of ancient languages. In most cases, the decision to introduce Latin (not Ancient Greek) was the headteacher's or an enthusiastic class teacher's but it required the support of all class teachers across a key stage. Initial interviews with teachers and parents highlighted doubt about the relevance of ancient languages. Teachers also expressed some trepidation. Later interviews revealed a transformation: parents, in particular, became supportive of their children having access to languages to which they themselves did not have access, and teachers regularly cited the cross-curricular utility of Latin as a support for their teaching of literacy.

As inflected languages – where the endings of words change according to their role in a sentence – Latin and Greek develop a particular type of critical thinking, whereby learners have to make judgments about the roles of words within a sentence, encouraging close reading and analysis of language and meaning (Holmes-Henderson and Tempest, 2018, p. 232-3). Empirical research has shown that the focus within ancient languages teaching upon word origins and derivations can particularly empower those 'who struggle with language. It was as if they could see the formula behind some words' (McGillycuddy, Broad Oak School, Classics For All Impact Report 2010-18, p. 9). The teaching of Latin, with its use of word lists, explanation of root words, and division of words into phonetic parts that are then reassembled, can suit learners with dyslexia, building vocabulary and leading to greater comprehension of English where patterns and features, such as prefixes and suffixes, are commonplace (Thomson, 2017, pp. 11-13).

Positive outcomes were also recorded by the Norfolk Excellence cluster initiative which offered Latin to primary-age gifted and talented students. However, the project leader noted that Latin 'is potentially of huge benefit to all children regardless of ability' (Maguire, 2018, p. 129). Indeed, The Latin Programme (see below) undertook research from 2011-14 which showed that, by the end of the 2013/14 school year, 92 percent of students who had studied Latin using the <u>Via Facilis</u> for three years and who were previously considered 'underachieving' were at the expected level for reading for KS2 and 83% were at the expected level for writing. Many of these students came from groups not commonly associated with the study of Classical subjects: speakers of English as an Additional Language, those with special educational needs, those receiving Free School Meals and those from ethnic-minority backgrounds. Pupils of Latin for one year 'did well, but results for students who had experienced three years of the programme showed a 10 per cent overall improvement' (Wing Davey, 2018, p. 121).

Development is seen in a plethora of ways. <u>The Latin Programme</u> also recorded that students learn how to 'think systematically and logically' since 'Latin boosts cognitive processes essential for maths, science, and engineering, and has been said to cultivate such mental processes as alertness, attention to detail, memory, logic, and critical reasoning'. As Holmes-Henderson and Tempest (2018) show, 'the application of critical and creative thinking skills, together with problem-solving skills, is at the core of learning Latin and Greek' (2018, p. 233). As well as improving student skills, ancient languages, when taught in context, build global awareness – this is 'a common qualitative improvement attributable to the study of Latin, particularly among pupils in economically deprived areas' (Bracke, 2016, p. 16).

A further area where research has been undertaken is on the links between ancient language learning and oracy - that is 'the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language' (Voice 21, 2021). Pelling (2010) suggested that 'improvements could be made to poorer students' literacy, oracy and intercultural understanding' (Hunt, 2018, p. 12) through the teaching of Classical subjects and Holmes-Henderson, in a piece for 'Teaching Citizenship', also argued that oracy is enhanced by cultivating awareness and practice of Classical rhetoric which is embedded in the fabric of Ancient Greek and Roman history, culture and society (Holmes-Henderson, 2018b). Rhetoric was recently highlighted in the Ofsted research review for English, 'rhetoric can provide pupils with insight into how spoken language is used by writers and orators... the meanings and nuances of the spoken word, the craft of a writer or speaker, and the ways in which spoken language conveys, explores and manipulates meaning' (Ofsted, 2022). In turn, oracy is integral to boosting pupils' critical literacy and listening skills and helps them grow in confidence both as communicators and as responsible citizens (Holmes-Henderson, 2021, p. 6), contributing to an improvement in their all-round outcomes and attainment. Primary schools may, therefore, see ancient languages as context through which to introduce rhetoric and concepts of citizenship. Classics For All reported that the introduction of ancient languages 'enhances the reputation of schools, particularly those in areas of low social mobility' (Classics for All Impact Report, 2010-20, p. 8).

When teaching Latin and/or Ancient Greek, classroom discussion usually takes place in English; non-specialist language teachers report that this reduces anxiety for the whole class and students with dyslexia especially benefit from the removal of the difficulties of auditory-verbal processing that can make MFLs challenging. The similarity of phonic systems between Latin and English (there are no silent letters in Latin) develops confidence and understanding of spelling and pronunciation for teachers and pupils alike. Ancient languages are particularly attractive at the primary phase because they offer a clean slate for everyone: Latin is

'the ultimate, yet healthy, leveller. EAL students gain great confidence from the fact that they are so good at this particular subject while they may be marked out as 'behind' in English lessons. And the fact that Latin is a 'new' subject for all at key stage 2 makes it an excellent choice as a primary foreign language'. – *Wing-Davey* (2018, p. 121)

Moreover, as a headteacher of an East London primary school noted:

'I looked at the choice of languages available. I have nothing against modern foreign languages being taught to young children. However, many of my children are of Afro-Caribbean origin and they are really struggling with English. Latin will help them to improve their literacy skills much more than a foreign language'. – *Bell* (2018, p. 115).

Ancient Greek may look more complicated than Latin on the page because it has a different alphabet but it is this difference, giving 'a poetry and mystery to Greek, deriving perhaps partly from its different writing system, which provides access to yet a whole new world of meaning which Latin lacks' (Bracke, 2016). In this respect, Ancient Greek has similarities with modern foreign languages such as Russian and Mandarin. Indeed, a great deal of funding and support has been given for the teaching of Mandarin in the UK with the UCL Institute of Education and HSBC partnership project 'Mandarin Chinese for Primary Schools' reaching pupils in 180 primary schools between 2013 and 2019 (IOE Confucius Institute for Schools, 2020) and the Department of Education funded Mandarin Excellence Programme having enabled over 5,000 pupils from 75 schools in England to develop Mandarin fluency (British Council, 2021). If students are able to grapple with the unfamiliar appearance and complexity of Mandarin, they may well relish the opportunity to learn Ancient Greek. In fact, the removal of the speaking and listening elements for the ancient languages reduces the cognitive load for pupils at KS2 and could make Ancient Greek an even more appealing option.

Indeed, many students not only find the linguistic elements of Ancient Greek appealing but the language also 'taps into current trends in the media and popular culture, which young people are engaged with in their social and recreational lives' (Foster, 2018, p. 172). Through reading, watching, listening, performing and engaging with mythology, many KS2 pupils build familiarity with transliterations of ancient words such as the names and activities of the gods and heroes almost subconsciously and therefore show great aptitude for mastering the foundations of Ancient Greek, if they have the opportunity to do so. As Holmes-Henderson (2021b) has shown, learning about Greek mythology also helps build global awareness and multiliteracies including critical and cultural literacy. As one teacher at a school where 43% of students qualified for the Pupil Premium explained: 'whether it is a Trojan horse, a Herculean effort, or a Sisyphean task, classical

allusions are everywhere. The more "Classics-savvy" a student is, the more culturally literate they are.' (Pinkett, in Holmes-Henderson, 2021b, p. 146).

Ancient Greek is all around us and its relevance can be seen in, for instance, the words used for speech-making and rhetoric, for sport, and especially within STEM subjects (Morwood, 1990). A knowledge of Ancient Greek enhances vocabulary development and can aid understanding in a range of seemingly unrelated fields, by helping to decode both familiar and unfamiliar terminology: from scientific terms such as leukaemia and dermatologist, to common emotions like panic and sarcasm. Ancient Greek also 'teaches and fosters a number of skills: analytical, deductive, methodical, persuasive and evaluative' (Holmes-Henderson and Mitropolous, 2016, p. 57). A language which, at first, looks unintelligible can be understood once students become problem solvers and apply formulae and patterns to break down complex sentences into manageable chunks.

One teacher at Fairstead House School in Newmarket gives a personal account of the implementation and impact of teaching Ancient Greek to pupils once a week:

'To facilitate the teaching of Ancient Greek, the students in Key Stage 2 learn in streamed Literacy groups that are different to their usual Form classes. All of Year 6 accessed Greek in the academic year 2015-16 and all of Year 5 did in 2016-17. The students who were not taught Ancient Greek at first accessed it when they reached a higher year group and greater Literacy attainment; all of the students in Key Stage 2 learn Ancient Greek during their time at Fairstead House. This means that close to 200 children, as of July 2019, have already accessed an ancient language thanks to the Classics in Communities project [who provided training – <u>see section 4</u>].

Our twice annual data, compiled through INCAs assessment, shows that accessing an ancient language has improved English Reading Comprehension, Spelling, Word Reading and Word Decoding for the pupils since they have started studying Greek. No comparative improvement has been seen in the INCAs standardised scores for Maths or Mental Maths which have been collected at the same time as 'English skills' assessment. This is a demonstrable impact for these children who have accessed a Classical language'. – *Hewitt in Holmes-Henderson*, in press).

Despite these positive examples, more research needs to be done into the impact of teaching both Ancient Greek and Latin. Bracke and Bradshaw suggested that 'Latin study in itself cannot guarantee positive progress in English or indeed other native languages'

(2020, p. 232) but this claim also requires further testing. Adema (2019) recommended that more research is undertaken to investigate which elements in Latin texts are salient for more experienced readers; how cross-linguistic awareness may be promoted by comparisons of vocabulary between languages; and how the effectiveness of different methods of teaching Latin can be compared. Moreover, whilst Classics education, as a field, is understudied, this is particularly the case with the impact of Ancient Greek, which shows clear gaps in research evidence.

The research cited above from the UK, however, does indicate that the study of Latin can grow language awareness and have a significant positive impact on L1 development and other personal and educational outcomes. But to what extent can primary school children access the teaching of ancient languages? The following two chapters outline the provision available.

3. The teaching and learning of ancient languages in primary schools in England

3.1. Key points for consideration

Recent research within English primary schools has shown that many children aged 7-11 receive only 'ad hoc and minimal' foreign language teaching, if any at all (Tinsley, 2019). Timetabling constraints, competing priorities and a lack of funding for initial teacher training and professional development, as well as inadequate support have all exacerbated the challenges that face the teaching of foreign languages in the primary phase. *Language Trends* (Collen, 2020) found that 70% of primary school class teachers had delivered modern languages without subject-specific CPD within the previous 12 months.

A 2019 White Paper written by Holmes and Myles for *Research in Primary Languages* documented key issues facing the teaching of all languages in primary schools. They include:

- Timetabling: 71% of responding schools found it highly challenging to find sufficient curriculum time for foreign languages due to, for example, block timetabling or external pressures such as SATs (Holmes and Myles, 2019, p. 7). 30 minutes a week timetabled for foreign languages amounts to just 2% of curriculum time (this is very low compared with other European countries such as Spain, for example, where language learning takes up to 10% of the primary curriculum), whilst even an hour a week is not sufficient to reach the expectations specified for primary children and their teachers in the Department for Education's 'Language Programmes of Study' (2013). Therefore, 'either the number of weekly hours needs to be increased considerably, or expectations adjusted' (Myles, 2017).
- Competing priorities: the prioritisation of focus and resources given to English and Maths leads to a relative lack of status for primary languages in the curriculum at KS2. Half of all primary schools offer pupils no international activity at all (Tinsley, 2019).
- A lack of knowledge and confidence amongst teachers: schools can face a lack of qualified language teachers or adequate support for their training and professional development. This links directly to learning outcomes, teacher/student motivation and enjoyment, and can lead to over-reliance on volunteer student-teachers in some school projects.

• Curriculum uncertainty: schools can be unsure about what 'substantial progress' in a language over KS2 means and how it can sustainably be achieved.

Moreover, a chronic 'infrequency of Ofsted inspection of primary languages is a further cause of concern', (Holmes and Myles, 2019, p. 9) and continues to be in 2022.

A lack of awareness of the importance and value of languages (British Academy, 2020, p. 7) and fears of multilingualism – bilingual pupils are often considered a problem rather than a tremendous asset (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages, 2019) – both form additional challenges. Barriers to secondary school language provision can also have an indirect impact on primary provision: the national decline of KS3 and KS4 languages 'means that few of our beginning teachers, whether undertaking an undergraduate teaching degree or a PGCE, have the subject knowledge necessary to teach a language' (Macrory, 2020). Hunt (2018a) shows that Classics has suffered from a lack of PGCE places and a school-led rather than HEI-led strategy, and this situation was worsened by funding cuts to Classics teacher bursaries which meant that postgraduates undertaking Initial Teacher Training in 2021 were only able to access a bursary of £10,000, compared to £26,000 in 2020, although the bursary will rise to £15,000 in 2022-23.

3.2. Provision of ancient languages at Key Stages 1 and 2

In 2014, ancient languages were introduced to the KS2 National Curriculum as options alongside modern foreign languages (<u>see above</u>).

However, as the 'Policy Briefing on Modern Languages Educational Policy in the UK' argued:

'statutory provision alone does not guarantee successful outcomes: it must be accompanied by adequate funding and resources, a clear and realistic implementation plan, and an effective reporting mechanism. In practice, provision for languages is uneven within each of the four jurisdictions, raising issues of equality of opportunity'. *Ayres-Bennett and Carruthers* (2019, p. 1)

As Hunt has shown, after the inclusion of ancient languages on the curriculum from 2014 'the old problems of finding age-appropriate resources, the lack of timetable allocation and shortage of trained teachers remained' (Hunt, 2018, p. 12-13). The burden for providing and promoting ancient languages teaching and training was pushed onto educational charities, whose work will be highlighted in the next section. Statutory provision did not guarantee school provision: Bracke reported that 'only about 2% of all primary schools so far have opted to teach Latin and none (to my knowledge) have chosen Greek' (Bracke, 2015, p. 35).

By 2021, only a handful of primary schools had chosen Ancient Greek and it is estimated, based on grants, training and resources provided by Classics charitable organisations (records have been kept), that perhaps 5-10% of primary schools currently teach Latin. This percentage is an estimate because although there is a monitoring system (the British Council's *Language Trends* Survey) that does include information on Ancient Greek and Latin provision, it relies on self-reporting and, in 2020, only 10% of primaries completed the survey (Collen, 2020, p. 2). A 10% response rate to such surveying is not uncommon but since the majority of responding schools are in affluent areas, it is not wholly representative and suggests that this survey is not, in its present form, a sufficient data-gathering tool for the primary sector. Without a more comprehensive means of collecting data, it is very difficult to ascertain how many children are studying ancient languages at KS1-KS2 and how geographical and socio-economic factors are, or are not, linked to provision.

Indeed, this dearth of statistics is a significant barrier to both research and to expansion because, since such knowledge is not being accrued centrally, it is difficult for local authorities, Regional Schools Commissioners, Opportunity Areas or Classics organisations to partner up schools that are introducing ancient languages with those where they are already being successfully taught.

4. Providers of ancient language courses

4.1. Classics For All

Classics for All is an educational charity which supports state schools across the UK, many in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, to introduce or develop the teaching of Classical subjects on the curriculum or as an after-school activity. They:

- offer free training, Continuing Professional Development and mentoring for teachers in state schools
- develop stimulating and engaging resources to support the teaching of Classics
- fundraise from foundations, trusts and donors to fund regional projects

Since 2013, Capital Classics, a project funded by the Mayor of London's *London Schools' Excellence Fund* and run by Classics For All, has coordinated training for teachers and reached pupils in over 87 London schools via hubs such as the East End Classics Centre in Hackney and smaller hubs across the capital in Haringey, Westminster and Walthamstow (Olive and Murray-Pollock, 2018, p. 158).

Their 2010-2020 Impact Report shows that the organisation is successful in offering training to non-specialists; providing ongoing regional support via Classics hubs and networks; and by stimulating interest at primary level. This early intervention generates demand for Classical subjects at secondary school. To date, they have worked in 479 primary schools and, as laid out in their 2010-20 Impact Report, they are focused upon three long term outcomes:

- that schools will offer a broader and more balanced curriculum, leading to an improvement in schools' local and regional reputations
- that there will be evidence of learners' improved academic results and school profile in communities
- that there will be proof that sharing approaches to Classics teaching improves professional practice

Classics For All has produced three ancient language teaching courses:

4.1.1. Basil Batrakos

An Ancient Greek course for pupils aged 9-12 which is freely available to download online: together pupils work with Basil the Frog as he attempts to decode a secret letter written by one of his ancestors in Ancient Greek.

4.1.2. Mega Greek

Ten thematic lessons for KS2 pupils which combine basic Greek language learning with work on Ancient Greek civilisation and culture. All materials (including PowerPoints, worksheets for students and teaching guides) are free to download. There are also three 'taster' modules available (each comprising three lessons) that introduce pupils to a particular aspect of Ancient Greek culture – 'Homer's Heroes', 'Professor Pythagoras' Magical Maths' and 'Speak Like the Gods.'

4.1.3. Maximum Classics

This online course for KS2 and KS3 pupils combines foundational Latin language learning with work on Classical civilisation and culture. Learning the roots of the English language enriches vocabulary: stimulus posters and worksheets explore Latin and Greek roots which feature frequently in English.

4.2. Classics In Communities

Classics in Communities promotes and encourages the teaching of Latin and Ancient Greek at primary and early secondary level in UK state schools. It has twin aims: to equip teachers in primary schools with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach these languages; and to conduct parallel research to determine the impact of ancient language learning on children's cognitive development.

The project provides schools and teachers ('non-specialists' in particular) with information and guidance about teaching approaches and methods, as well as offering classroom resources and support to help introduce the teaching of Latin and/or Ancient Greek in schools. They offer step-by-step guides on how to introduce Latin to a primary school, pedagogical videos and progression grids to help teachers monitor how students' skills improve over the course of learning Latin in line with the national curriculum expectations for their age.

The project brings together primary, secondary, and higher education level teachers, helping to create and develop self-sustaining networks of educators committed to sharing their knowledge and expertise. Academics in seven universities have supported experienced and non-experienced teachers via training days and workshops 'to establish open channels of communication for knowledge exchange across educational phases' (Holmes-Henderson, Hunt and Musié, 2018, p. 2).

The research conducted by Classics in Communities into the cognitive impact of learning ancient languages is a longitudinal study which is due for publication in 2022. Based at the University of Oxford, it is the first study of its kind in the UK. The project produced the

book, *Forward with Classics: Classical languages in schools and communities* (Bloomsbury) in 2018 and the team won awards in 2019 and 2020.

4.3. Hands Up Education

Hands Up Education, a not-for-profit organisation and community interest company, creates and shares innovative and accessible resources for Latin and Classics, with three new Greek courses under construction for a range of audiences. Between 2017 and 2020, the organisation created, trialled and launched <u>Suburani</u>, a Latin Course which covers language teaching up to KS4 which seeks to be relevant and representative. It is being adopted in schools across the UK and the USA. In addition to free online resources, Hands Up also offers a separate Primary Latin Course:

4.3.1. Primary Latin Course

The Primary Latin Course is designed to help primary schools deliver Latin and Roman civilisation – online and for free – without the need for any background in Latin. The course provides a gentle introduction to the Latin language for pupils in Years 3-6, aiming to establish reading fluency of simple sentences. Language learning is fully integrated into an immersive cultural and archaeological course set in ancient Herculaneum. The course is driven by photographs and evidence from the ancient site for pupils to explore and investigate. There are Latin stories with 'clickable' vocabulary and embedded audio, interactive reconstructions, online games, downloadable worksheets, activities and guides for teachers.

4.4. The Iris Project

The Iris Project, an educational charity, trains undergraduate students to introduce the languages and cultures of the ancient world to primary school students. They deliver weekly 'Literacy through Latin' lessons on the curriculum in state schools. The Project particularly targets schools in deprived regions of the UK, where literacy levels can be low and many children qualify for FSM. Since 2006, the Project has worked with thousands of pupils and hundreds of schools to improve literacy, confidence and enjoyment of languages. The Literacy through Latin project operates in London, Manchester, Reading, Swansea, Fife and Glasgow with a dedicated headquarters at the Community Classics Centre and Rumble Museum based at Cheney School in East Oxford.

'Learning Latin is a brilliant way to support children's literacy. It helps children make connections between Latin and English grammar and vocabulary and gives them the key to unlock English'. – *Lorna Robinson, Founder of The Iris Project*

4.4.1. Telling Tales in Greek

Telling Tales in Greek takes the reader on a journey through tales from Homer's *lliad* and the *Odyssey*. Along the way, readers pick up the Greek alphabet, words and grammar and are encouraged to explore the connections between Greek and English. This Greek illustrated course reads like a story book, and as such, appeals to a wide range of learners. Every chapter leads readers through the tales, exploring new aspects of grammar, and ends with suggestions for activities, as well as ways in which the story can be explored from literary and creative perspectives. Emphasis is placed upon thinking about the resonance and universal appeal of mythical stories, and identifying why these stories developed.

4.4.2. Telling Tales in Latin

Telling Tales in Latin takes the reader on a journey through tales from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Along the way, readers pick up Latin words and grammar and are encouraged to explore the connections between Latin and English, and the ways in which Ovid's stories still speak to us today. This illustrated Latin course reads like a story book, and as such, appeals to a wide range of learners. It also contains the necessary vocabulary and grammar needed for the OCR Entry Level Latin qualification, so readers and schools can use this as the only Latin course geared towards this qualification.

Every chapter leads readers through the tales, exploring new aspects of grammar, and ends with suggestions for activities, as well as ways in which the story can be explored from literary and creative perspectives. Emphasis is placed upon thinking about the resonance and universal appeal of mythical stories and identifying why these stories developed. The book also encourages readers to think about the many ways in which the stories connect to modern ideas and features ranging from scientific advances to climate change and caring for the planet. Alongside these cross-curricular connections, there is a continual focus on literacy and language.

4.5. The Latin Programme

The Latin Programme's specialist peripatetic teachers deliver Latin lessons to London state school pupils in mixed-ability, whole-class groups to help them 'attain higher literacy levels and thereby improve their life chances' since 'learning Latin dramatically broadens students' vocabulary while deepening their understanding of English grammar' (Wing-Davey, 2018, p. 117).

In 2018-19 alone, their in-curriculum programme reached 1,036 state school pupils across 37 classes spanning the breadth of Greater London. They also work throughout each academic year to provide a number of free or subsidised extra-curricular activities

and events, such as a writing competition, a Summer School and various storytelling events. The Latin Programme seeks to 'dismantle the fallacy that Latin and Classics are subjects only suitable for higher-level ability groups and the privileged elite...[and] to deconstruct the imposing and daunting grandeur of Classics' (Wing-Davey, 2018, p. 123). They use the 'Via Facilis' curriculum:

4.5.1. Via Facilis

The Latin Programme takes a comparative approach by looking at Latin through the lens of English grammar rather than the reading-based style of many similar textbooks. The aim is that students gain 'a mechanism for investigating and understanding grammatical structures, for getting used to analysing and questioning how language works, how and why linguistic patterns matter, and to get students used to the idea that there are patterns in their own language, even if they are not directly relatable to Latin grammar' (Wing-Davey, 2019, p. 118). By choosing The Latin Programme, schools ensure that both literacy and foreign-language provision are taken in hand. Through an arts-based programme, using music, arts and kinaesthetic methods, the Programme not only measurably improves results, but also fosters individuality, diversity and creativity, all of which increase pupils' life chances.

'Using our curriculum as a foundation, each teacher designs bespoke lessons that bring in music, movement, drama and even cookery to allow our pupils to flex their creative muscles and build the confidence, creativity and resilience that are of vital importance in adult life'. – *Via Facilis Impact Report* (2019-20, p. 3)

4.6. The Primary Latin Project

The Primary Latin Project is an educational charity which promotes the teaching and learning of ancient languages in primary schools and provides teacher training and resources. The Project runs the Minimus Programme in schools, providing grants to state schools to assist with the purchase of teaching materials. They also hold an annual <u>Mythology Competition</u> which encourages pupils to develop their creativity and practise their communication skills.

4.6.1. Minimus

Minimus is a Latin course designed for children aged 7-10 with textbooks and supplementary print and digital resources, such as *Minimus in Practice*, which aims 'to teach English grammar, including the main parts of speech and to build their [students'] English vocabulary through derivation exercises' (Bell, 2018, p. 112). A short spin-off book, *Minimusculus*, caters for learners aged 3-6. The series is published by Cambridge

University Press and has sold more than 166,000 copies. It is used in more than twenty countries, including Argentina, Germany, India, Kenya, Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia and Montenegro, and Sri Lanka (Bell, 2018).

The course is based on a real family who lived at Vindolanda in 100CE: Flavius, the fort commander, his wife Lepidina, their three children, assorted household slaves, their cat Vibrissa – and Minimus the mouse. It is designed to be taught by non-specialists and is used in many different situations, from a timetabled subject compulsory for all, to lunchtime and after-school clubs – since publication in 1999, it has been used by students aged 4-97.

4.7. Other Courses

4.7.1. Alpha is for Anthropos

Alpha is for Anthropos is an alphabet book with an original Ancient Greek nursery rhyme for each letter of the Greek alphabet which can be sung to familiar tunes. Each poem or song aims to teach a basic Greek vocabulary word while placing it in a broader cultural and linguistic context. The accompanying illustrations in the style of Greek red-figure vase paintings complement the verses and amplify the meanings of the words and songs with allusions to Greek mythology. A teacher's book and colouring book provide additional enrichment materials.

4.7.2. Gorilla Greek

Gorilla Greek helps young pupils learn Ancient Greek alphabet and make links between Ancient Greek and English vocabulary. Many of the 72 pages show an image of the eponymous Gorilla with a caption in Greek which describes what he is doing. An English derivation is provided as a hint to the meaning of the caption. A translation is also provided (although printed upside down to encourage decoding). There are also eleven double-page spreads ('Greek Around You') which explain how Greek words are commonly used in every area of the curriculum from Maths to History, P.E. and Music. The book has an alphabet guide, a guide to verbs and a dictionary of words used.

4.7.3. An Introduction to Classical Greek

This textbook takes pupils from beginners to Level 1 or Level 2 of the Common Entrance Classical Greek exam at 13+. It introduces pupils to Classical Greek grammar and vocabulary and features clear explanations, unseen translations and challenging practice questions to help pupils develop their exam technique.

4.7.4. Latin for Common Entrance

Written specifically for preparatory schools, this book takes pupils from beginners' level to the Common Entrance exam and includes grammar explanations, intentionally challenging content and practice exercises. All the grammar, vocabulary and syntax on the Independent Schools Examination Board Level 1 syllabus is covered and passages for translation are geared towards the Greek Mythology and City of Rome topics for the non-linguistic studies element of the Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB) syllabus.

4.7.5. So You Really Want to Learn Latin

This series of textbooks teaches the essential grammar and vocabulary required for 'a confident and competent use of Latin' and can be used by learners of all ages and abilities. It comprises short chapters with exercises, a vocabulary list, and a summary of the grammar covered as well as sections on Roman history.

4.7.6. Vocabulous

This website uses videos and quizzes to aid targeted and explicit vocabulary teaching in Key Stage 3 English lessons by focusing on using Latin and Greek root words to teach word patterns. Students then use these patterns to work out the meaning of unknown English words which share the same root. Students develop vocabulary and investigatie skills as they look at parts of words for meaning, which is key for them to be able to expand their own English vocabulary after using the website.

4.8. Case Studies

This section captures further evidence of the impact of the work of the organisations listed throughout this section and how the teaching of ancient languages impacts primary school pupils.

The Classics For All Impact Report, 2010-20, states that:

'St Matthew's Church of England Primary School [now Research School] is situated in the Nechells area of inner-city Birmingham, the 5th most deprived ward in the UK. 79% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals and the majority of pupils do not speak English as their first language. The school's leadership team is striving to ensure that the curriculum St Matthew's offers its pupils is on a par with, if not better than, any school in any area. As part of this vision, Latin is now the school's language of choice for study at Key Stage 2 in order to support pupils' literacy skills and enhance their cultural capital. In September 2018, Classics for All trained 11 teachers to introduce Latin at Key Stage 2. Given the success of Latin with pupils in Years 3 and 4, by September 2020 all pupils from Years 3-6 were studying Latin each week on the curriculum'. – *Classics For All* (2021, p. 7)

The Primary Latin Project's *Minimus* course was introduced in a school where 25% of students were recorded as struggling with literacy due to special educational needs and disability. Non-specialist teachers reported that they relished:

'the chance to build interesting lessons which linked to other curricular areas in the school and which delivered learning on so many levels: cultural and historical awareness, linguistic understanding, development of confidence in discussions, improvements in English literacy through reading, speaking and writing, opportunities for drama, music and the creative arts'. – *Holmes-Henderson, Hunt and Musié* (2018, p. 266)

The Classics in Communities project inspired secondary school teacher Andrew Christie to introduce Latin in local primary schools in South East London:

> 'I found the Classics in Communities project's interim data on the impact of learning Latin on literacy development and the cultivation of critical skills particularly compelling. Emboldened by the strength of the data and directly quoting the findings of the Classics in Communities project, I wrote to all our local state primary schools offering free Latin lessons, which my school had not offered previously.

One school, Christ Church Streatham Church of England Primary was quick to take up the offer, which led to me teaching Latin for an hour a week to the Year 5 class. Over the last 3 years (2016-19), 86 Year 5 pupils have studied the content of Chapters 1-12 of the Minimus primary Latin textbook. The teachers and pupils have felt that this had a positive impact on literacy, knowledge of the Roman world and self - esteem.

On discovering that the class study ancient Greece during Year 5, I thought that it would be beneficial to teach them some Ancient

Greek. As I had never taught Greek to this age before, I used the Classics in Communities' website extensively for the guidance about resources. I found the Greek pedagogical videos particularly helpful. A course of 6 weeks of Greek has now been inserted into the Latin course for two years (2017-19).

After the success of the first year of Latin teaching at Christ Church, one of my colleagues started teaching Latin to the Year 6 class at Streatham Wells Primary for an hour a week. This has taken place for two years (2017-19) and 59 pupils have benefited with similar advantages for the member of staff and pupils.

Following on from the success of these projects, in order to encourage more primary schools to consider teaching Latin, we ran a Roman Day for 210 pupils, from Year 3 to 6, in June 2019, which included pupils from Christ Church and Streatham Wells as well as pupils from Henry Cavendish Primary, Forest Academy and Epsom Primary, where Latin is not currently taught'. – *Christie* in Holmes-Henderson (in press)

Anna Donnelly, Headteacher of St John's Roman Catholic School in Banbury, identifies the importance of resources which help teachers to monitor and track progression in ancient languages:

During 2013-2017 I was employed by a large collaborative of schools as an Educational Adviser in North Solihull. During this time, one of my roles was to support schools to adapt their curriculums to respond to the new expectations in the 2014 curriculum in England. I encouraged schools to use *Minimus*, and 16 schools did so in whatever ways suited them; some as part of their languages curriculum, some as clubs. However, schools had nothing with which to assess the progress of the children and thus support them to plan for next steps in learning. It was at this time that I managed to contact the Classics in Communities team, who produced a full set of documents to support leaders and teachers in assessment for learning, as well as summative assessment.

Having these has enabled practitioners to better understand Latin progression at a primary level. Having the links to the *Minimus* text makes it very easy for those not experienced in Latin to access, as it related directly to what is being taught... In my current role as headteacher, my new school began Latin last year. We are still in the early stages, but in the next two years, the aim is to ensure that Latin establishes itself on the curriculum more firmly and meaningful cross curricular links with humanities and spelling, grammar and punctuation are made'. – *Donnelly* in Holmes-Henderson (in press)

5. Barriers and challenges

As an area of education, Classics is under-studied in comparison with other curriculum subjects. Significant gaps in evidence form barriers to drawing conclusions from the small amount of UK-specific research which has been conducted into the learning and teaching of ancient languages in primary schools.

There are four key gaps in evidence:

- There is a lack of accurate data regarding the number of schools teaching ancient languages in England. This is especially acute at KS2 and KS3.
- There is a lack of recent UK-based evidence for the impact of ancient languages on L1 development beyond the Classics in Communities project.
- There is no recent published evidence which includes a control-group or which is large-scale.
- There is significant regional variation, especially in locations where the educational organisations of <u>Section 4</u> are less active, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions or to evaluate access and impact across the country.

Despite these gaps in evidence, it is obvious that there are several challenges facing the provision and teaching of Latin and Ancient Greek, including:

- the curriculum is crowded and unconscious bias can exclude languages (Ofsted, 2021)
- the prioritisation of STEM subjects at all stages of education (Holmes and Myles, 2019)
- skewed perceptions about the viability, value and relevance of ancient languages
- teacher training is needed as few practising primary school teachers have had any access to Latin or Ancient Greek in their own education
- the difficulty of breaking down the elitist image of Classics
- lack of funding: currently many schools rely on charities
- reduced scrutiny by Ofsted regarding languages (both ancient and modern) in primary schools, which adds to the lack of clarity about targeted outcomes and definitions of progress for KS2 leavers (Holmes and Myles, 2019). Data released in November 2020 showed that only 3% of all state primary school inspections in

2019-20 that had subject deep dives were for languages (60 out of 8,130). Infrequent inspections may lead to a deprioritisation of languages at both the micro (school) level and at macro (funding, research, policy) levels.

- a disconnect between policy support and practical assistance given to schools (Collen, 2020)
- lack of communication and cross-phase planning between primary and secondary schools about students' language acquisition

The 2021 Ofsted Curriculum research review for languages acknowledged and echoed the concerns of Holmes and Myles (2019) and correctly highlighted many of the barriers to high-quality foreign language teaching in primary schools but failed to make any significant reference to ancient languages. The review's suggestions for assessment focused upon the four modalities (listening, reading, speaking, writing) and included 'testing phonics knowledge', accuracy of pronunciation of vocabulary and assessing achievement in socio-linguistic (for example, politeness), pragmatic (for example, comprehending subtle intentions of the speaker) and discourse (for example, linking ideas across paragraphs) competencies, none of which is relevant to assessing progress in ancient languages.

6. Concluding discussion

6.1. Recommendations

While the work of Classics charities, societies and collectives (see <u>Section 4</u> for a nonexhaustive list) has been instrumental in widening access to ancient languages to students of all ages, the policy support afforded to Latin and Ancient Greek in the national curriculum has been vital to increasing their availability in primary schools. It is key that Latin and Greek are kept on the KS2 curriculum as language options, alongside the ancient components of the primary History curriculum. If statutory provision were extended to KS3, it would:

- create clear progression and goals which motivate and incentivise teachers and pupils to engage with Classical languages at KS2
- improve coordination, development and communication at the point of transition between KS2 and KS3
- and, in turn, build a clear pathway towards KS4 and KS5 qualifications. This could support the government's ambition that 75% of Year 10 pupils study the EBacc subject combination at GCSE by 2022 (for examination in 2024), and 90% by 2025 (for examination in 2027).

As Maguire highlighted from the Norfolk Latin Project 'secondary schools were likely to offer a continuation of Latin to students coming from primary schools where it was already established and primary schools were encouraged by the knowledge that their pupils would have the opportunity to continue their Latin studies' (Maguire, 2018, p. 131).

More consideration could be given to the language policies practised in other parts of the UK which celebrate and encourage multilingualism: for example, Scotland's '1+2 policy', and Wales' plurilingual method which integrates 'languages and cultures into usual classroom activities' (Bowler, 2020, p. 49).

Teacher training and CPD is integral to the ongoing success of primary language teaching, both within schools and via Classics organisations. Reports such as the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages' 'National Recovery Programme for Languages' (2019) or the British Academy's 'Towards a National Languages Strategy' (2020) make recommendations to improve the supply of teachers, with the latter specifically suggesting 'an extension of the amount of time allocated to primary languages subject specialism and stipulation of a statutory minimum amount of time for subject specific pathways' (p. 3). A possible solution would be to introduce an Ancient

Languages elective as part of BA (Education) degrees, as is currently offered for Modern Languages. This would be an efficient route to equipping primary school teachers with the knowledge and skills required to teach Latin and/or Ancient Greek.

Positive messaging about the value of ancient languages is urgently needed and should be at the forefront of communication between government, schools, teachers, parents and students. This could involve a collaborative communication campaign between the national subject association for Classical subjects, the Classical Association, the Chartered College of Teaching and the Department for Education.

It is not currently clear how many primary schools in England provide teaching in ancient languages. The annual British Council *Language Trends* survey provides some data but a more accurate picture needs to be established in order to reduce the real gap between policy ambition and classroom practice. Having greater funding for data collection, monitoring and tracking would aid the undertaking of future research, CPD provision, improve communication and cross-phase planning, and would allow structures to be put in place to connect schools new to teaching ancient languages with those with established provision.

6.2. Conclusion

Ancient languages offer students a portal to the past and act as a foundation for learning several other languages. Latin and Greek are worthy of study in their own right, offer advantages of accessibility and facilitate connections across the curriculum as learners explore ancient cultures through, and beyond, language study.

'The legacy of the Romans encompasses literature, art, architecture, philosophy, history and language. Learning Latin helps young people begin to discover what life was like for the Romans. Graffiti from the walls of Pompeii are short and relatively simple, so even at primary school level, children can engage with some real Latin'. – *White and Holmes-Henderson* (2019, p. 7)

This report has provided a review of the extant evidence relating to the learning and teaching of ancient languages in primary schools. There is strong evidence to suggest that where Latin and Greek are given the opportunity to flourish, so do students, from a range of backgrounds and pupils with EAL, SEND and FSM tend to make greater progress than other learners. Policy support has been in place since 2014 but significant investment is now needed in teacher training and further research, to widen access to Latin and Greek in primary schools.

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