

Language Trends England 2021

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Headline Findings 2021

1 in 5 of responding primary schools had suspended language teaching in January 2021 due to Covid-19.

64% of responding primary schools and **38%** of state secondary schools have no international activities within their school.

2 in 5 of KS3 pupils in state secondaries did not engage with language learning during the first national lockdown.

Ongoing concerns around the **withdrawal** of some pupils from KS3 languages.

Headline Findings 2021 ctd.

Decline in number of GCSE and A level entries for 'Other Modern Languages'.

French is the most popular language at Primary, KS3 and GCSE.

Spanish is the most popular language at A level (2nd year in a row).

Resourcing and opportunities for **online CPD** have increased.

Less contact reported between primary and secondary schools **but** primary schools are **collecting more data** on pupil progress and reporting **better progress** in language learning.

Methods

‘What is the current situation for language teaching and learning in state primary, state secondary and independent schools in England?’



What did we do?

Two post-primary surveys

21.2% response rate from state secondary schools

21.7% response rate from independent schools

One primary survey

12.6% response rate



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Primary Survey: Main Findings

756 respondents out of a sample of 6000.

78% of responding primary schools have been teaching languages at KS2 for more than 5 years.

61% assess pupil language learning informally.

72% teach French, **29%** Spanish, **5%** German.

64% have no international activities within their school.

Time Devoted to Languages at KS2

	Less than 30 minutes	30 – 45 minutes	More than 45 minutes but less than 1 hour	Between 1 and 2 hours	No language teaching
Year 3	8%	52%	29%	11%	-
Year 6	5%	45%	34%	15%	1%

International Engagement in Primary Schools

	2018	2019	2020	2021
The school has one or more partner schools abroad	35%	27%	19%	18%
Involvement in international projects w/involvement in international projects	22%	16%	10%	8%
Host a language assistant	5%	5%	2.5%	2%
None	46%	50.5%	61%	64%



Challenges to meeting the National Curriculum requirements

		Rank
Impact of wider restrictions in relation to Covid-19	66%	1
Insufficient curriculum time in general	51%	2
Need to use curriculum time to 'catch-up' in other subjects due to Covid-19	49%	3
Staff language proficiency	47%	4
Accessing language-specific CPD	19%	5
Funding and resources	16%	6
Finding suitably qualified teachers	10%	7
Other reasons	7%	8=
School does not experience any challenges	7%	8=
Achieving support from parents/carers	5%	10



Primary Survey

What is working well...

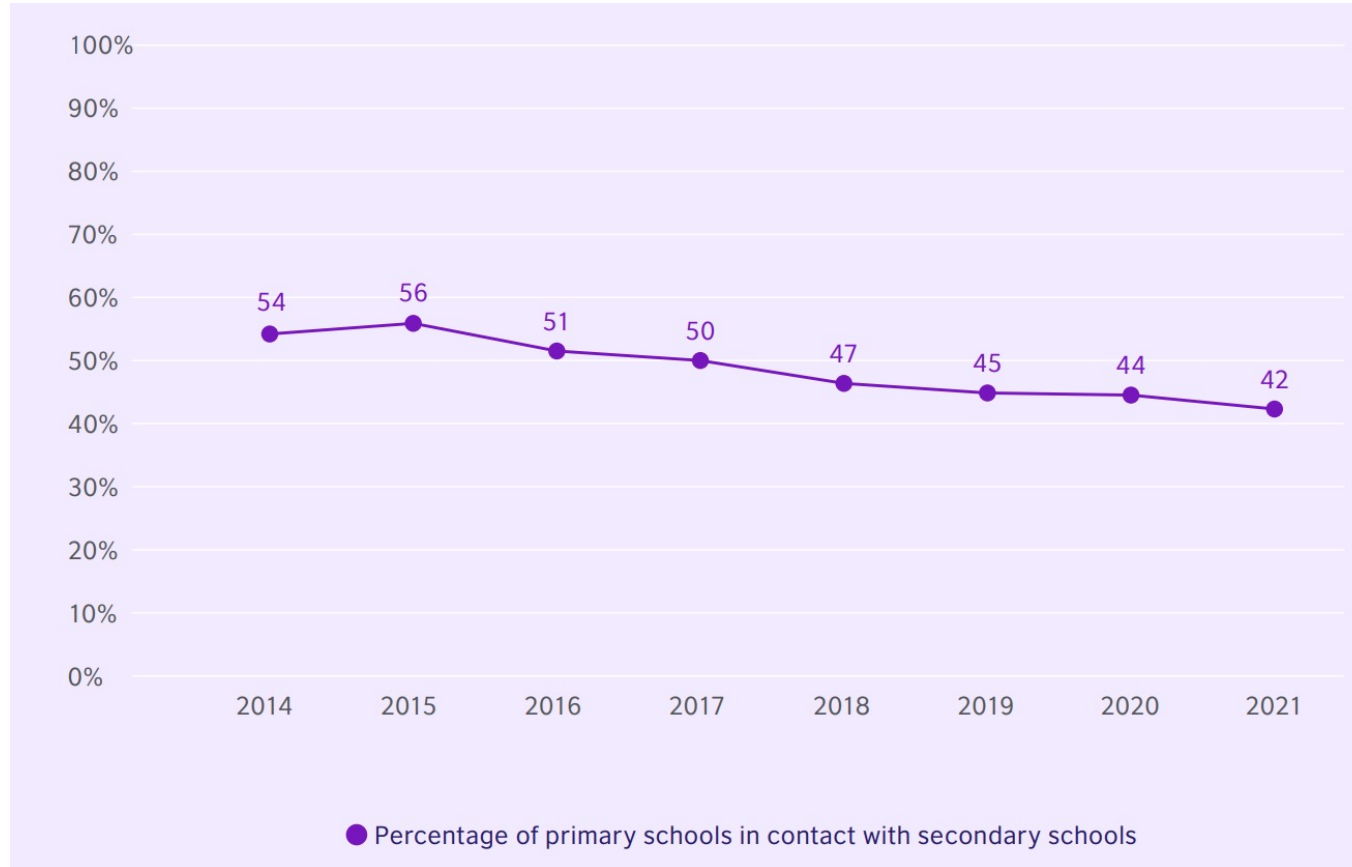
- ✓ Teacher Competence
- ✓ Pupil Motivation
- ✓ Resources

Even better if...

- Funding
- Time to upskill

KS2–KS3 Transition in Languages

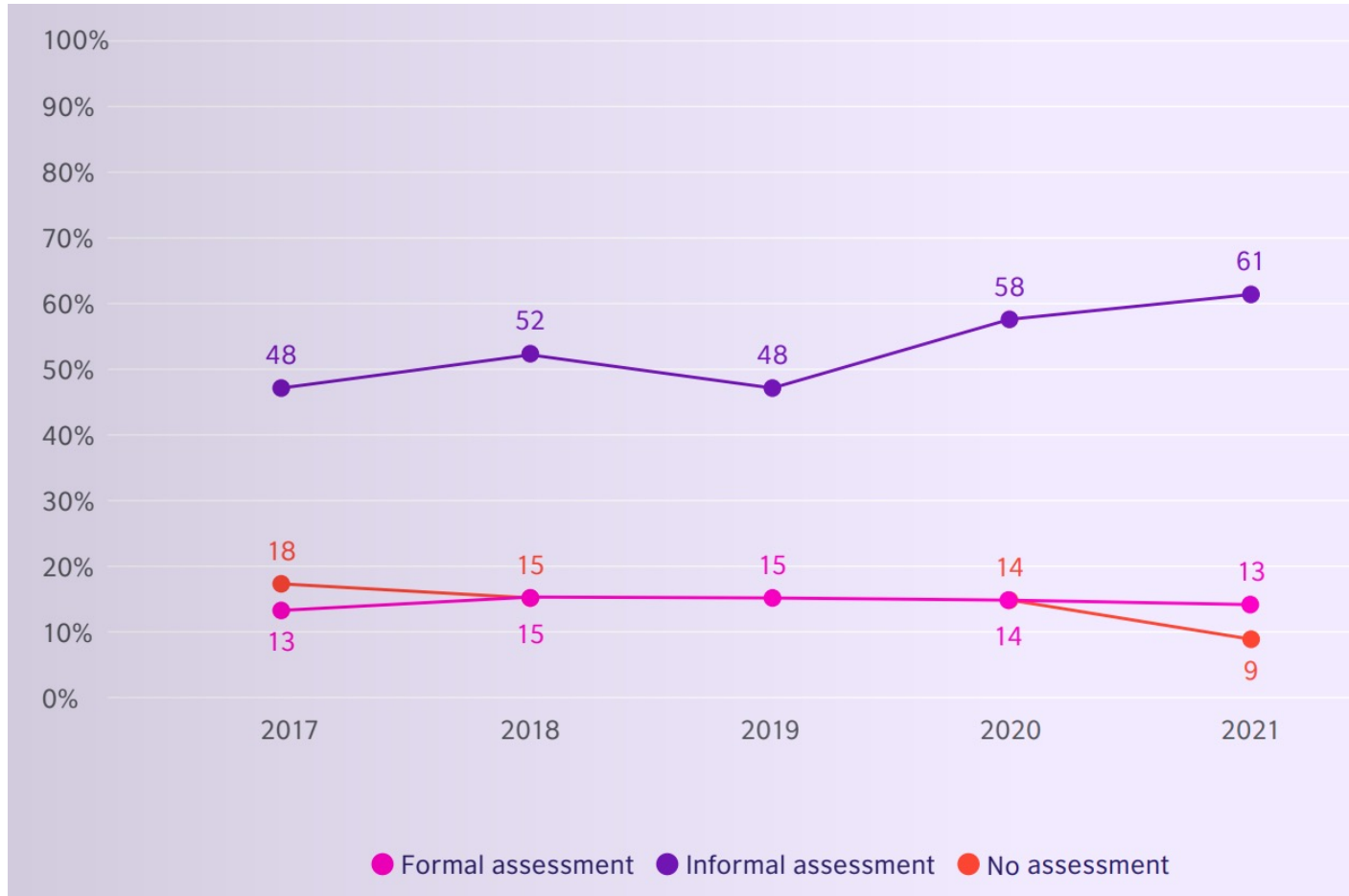
7-year decline in contact between primary and secondary schools.



71.9% of state secondary schools report that they receive **no data** on pupil prior attainment in languages.

KS2–KS3 Transition in Languages

Most popular form of primary-secondary collaboration is ‘**exchanging information informally**’ (48.7% of respondents).



5-year trend shows that primary schools are **informally** collecting **more data** on pupil progress in languages.

KS2–KS3 Transition in Languages

41% of primary schools are reporting **better progress** in language learning at the end of Year 6,

but

87% of secondaries report that pupil progress among current Year 7 was about the same (**69.3%**) or worse (**17.6%**).

Divergence in primary and secondary attitudes remains.

Secondary teachers' comments point to **patchy** and **uncoordinated** provision at KS2 as a barrier to successful transition.

Secondary School Findings - KS3

755 respondents

Languages taught at KS3

	State Secondary	Independent
French	91%	92%
Spanish	74%	89%
German	36%	70%

German provision is **patchy**.

4 out of **5** responding schools teaching German have the least deprived pupil populations (FSME quintiles 1 and 2).

Secondary School Findings - KS3

	State Secondary	Independent
Quintile 1	38%	-
Quintile 3	27%	-
Quintile 5	14%	-
Total Responses	29%	75%

% of responding schools which offer pupils a choice as to which language they study at KS3

Secondary School Findings - KS3

Disapplication at KS3 is increasingly an issue for some groups of pupils

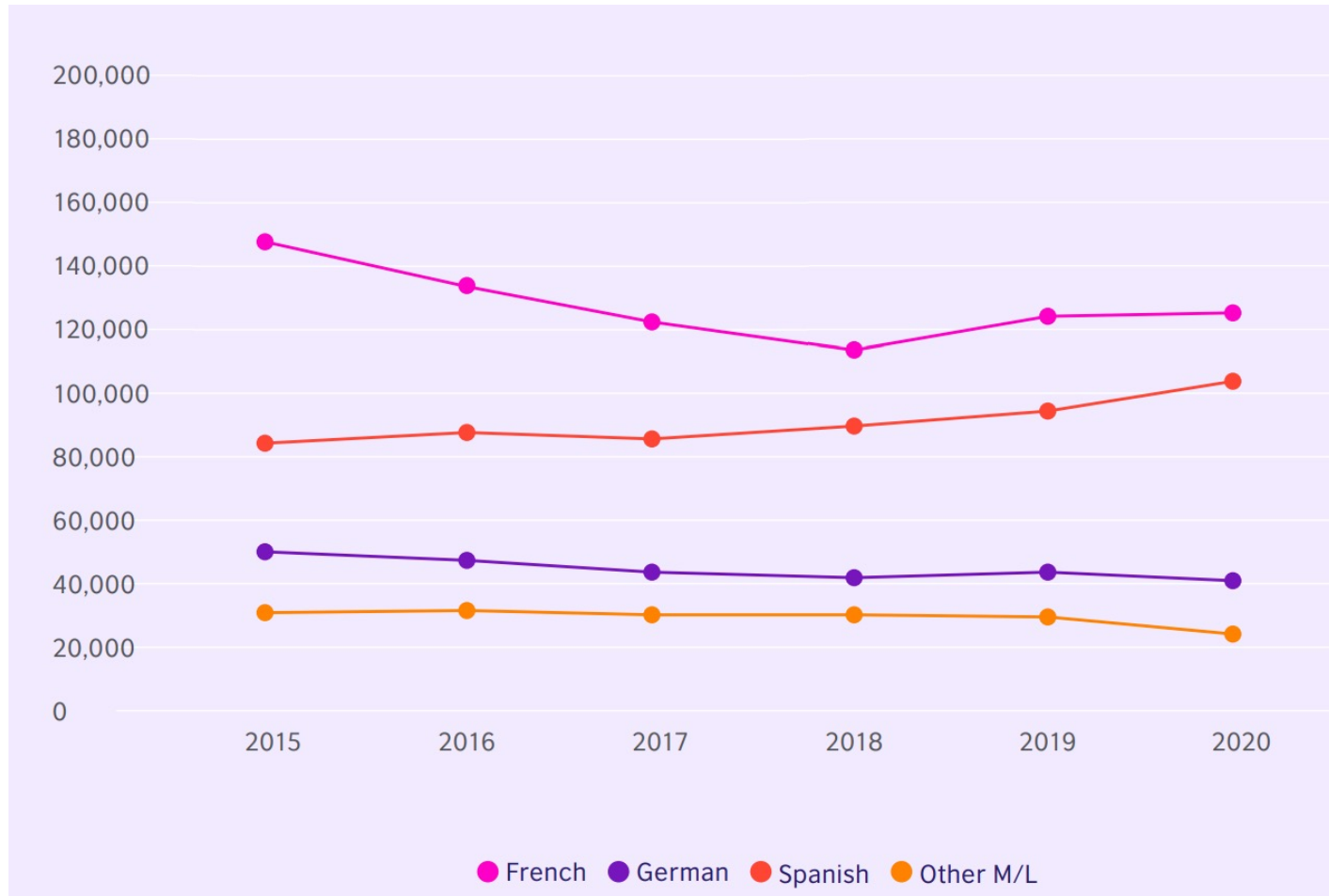
	All pupils study languages	A small number of individual pupils do not study languages	Some groups do not study languages
Year 7 2019	66.1%	28.5%	3.8%
Year 8 2019	60.5%	33.9%	4.2%
Year 7 2020	67.5%	28%	4.5%
Year 8 2020	60%	35%	5%
Year 7 2021	67%	26%	6%
Year 8 2021	62%	29%	8%

Typical characteristics of schools where some groups do not study a language:

- higher proportion of FSME pupils;
- higher allocation of Pupil Premium funding;
- lower Attainment 8 results;
- Sponsor Led Academies;
- higher proportion of EAL pupils.

Secondary School Findings – KS4

GCSE Entries in French, German, Spanish and Other Modern Languages in England 2015-2020



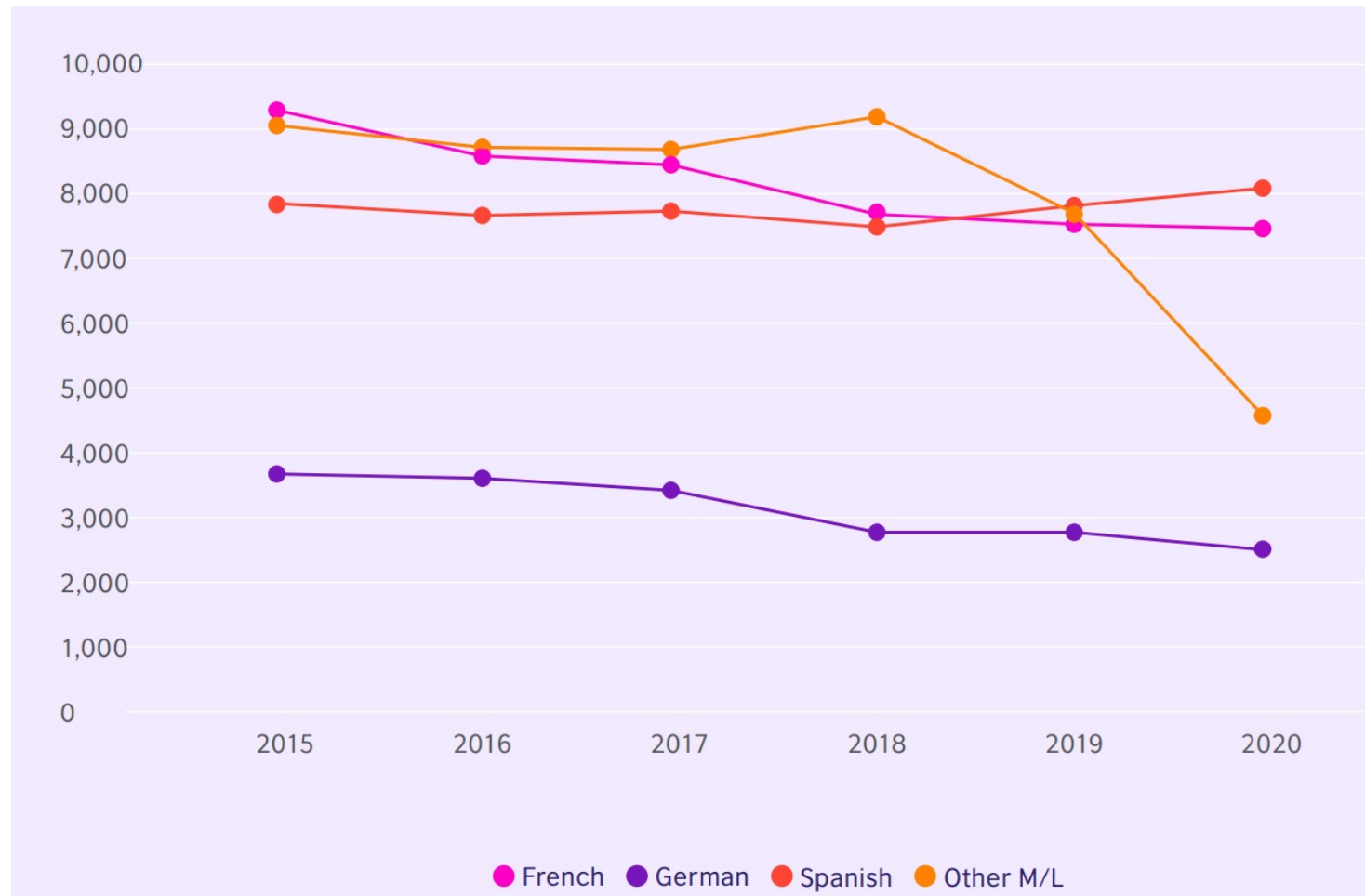
Differences in Provision at KS4

- **84%** of Year 10 pupils in responding independent schools and **53%** of Year 10 pupils in state schools are currently studying a language for GCSE.
- **65%** of independent schools offer GCSE Latin compared to **9%** of state schools.
- **1 in 3** independent schools offer Ancient Greek compared with less than **2 %** of state schools.

Schools at or below the England average for FSME (quintiles 3,4 and 5) are statistically more likely **not to provide support** to pupils who wish to take a GCSE in a home or community language.

Post-16

A Level Entries in French, German, Spanish and Other Modern Languages in England 2015-2020



Post-16

31% of state secondaries and **48%** of independent schools report **fewer pupils** taking a language post-16 over the past 3 years.

Evidence of **composite classes** in Year 12 and Year 13

- future research would be desirable into the impact of this.

1 in 5 state and independent schools report having **fewer staff** in the languages department than in previous years.

Staff recruitment is an issue for **half** of state schools.

Language Teachers

70% of state and **80%** of independent schools have at least one staff member in the languages department who is an EU citizen (excepting Ireland).

1 in 5 state schools have a language assistant in the current school year, but this drops to **10%** for schools with the most deprived pupil populations (quintile 5 – FSME).

Of those schools which do not currently have a language assistant, **71%** say this is due to financial pressures.

International Engagement

	State Schools		Independent Schools	
	2018	2021	2018	2021
The school has one or more partner schools abroad	31%	31%	41%	42%
We host language assistants	23%	21%	50%	69%
Joint Curriculum Projects	10%	8%	17%	11%
None	11%	38%	3%	11%

Conclusions

Impact of the pandemic

Languages were greatly disrupted in primary schools during national lockdowns.

In secondary schools, the most disadvantaged pupils are more likely to have been impacted negatively by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Equality of Provision

The most disadvantaged pupils are less likely to be offered a choice as to which language they learn.

Children who attend a quintile 5 school are statistically less likely to have a language assistant.

The disapplication of groups and individual pupils at Key Stage 3 sends out the message that languages are not for all.

Conclusions

There is a need to **include language learning** and schools' **international engagement** in post-Covid education recovery plans.

Stakeholders need to learn from the **alarming decline** in entries for Other Modern Languages at GCSE and A level and the problematic awarding of examination grades in summer 2020.

As the UK renegotiates its place on the world stage, it will be important that schools seek to **rebuild international connections.**

On y va! Auf geht's! ¡Vamos!

