

The Impact of Ofsted Inspection on KS2/ KS3 Language Education In England

A Pilot Study Based on Inspection Report under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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Introduction

□ Key Terms:

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) established in 1992, to improve educational standards and accountability within England, meeting governmental and public demand for rigorous oversight of **educational quality**.

Key stage 2(KS2)

7-11 y/o student for Y3-6, must learn an ancient/modern foreign language.

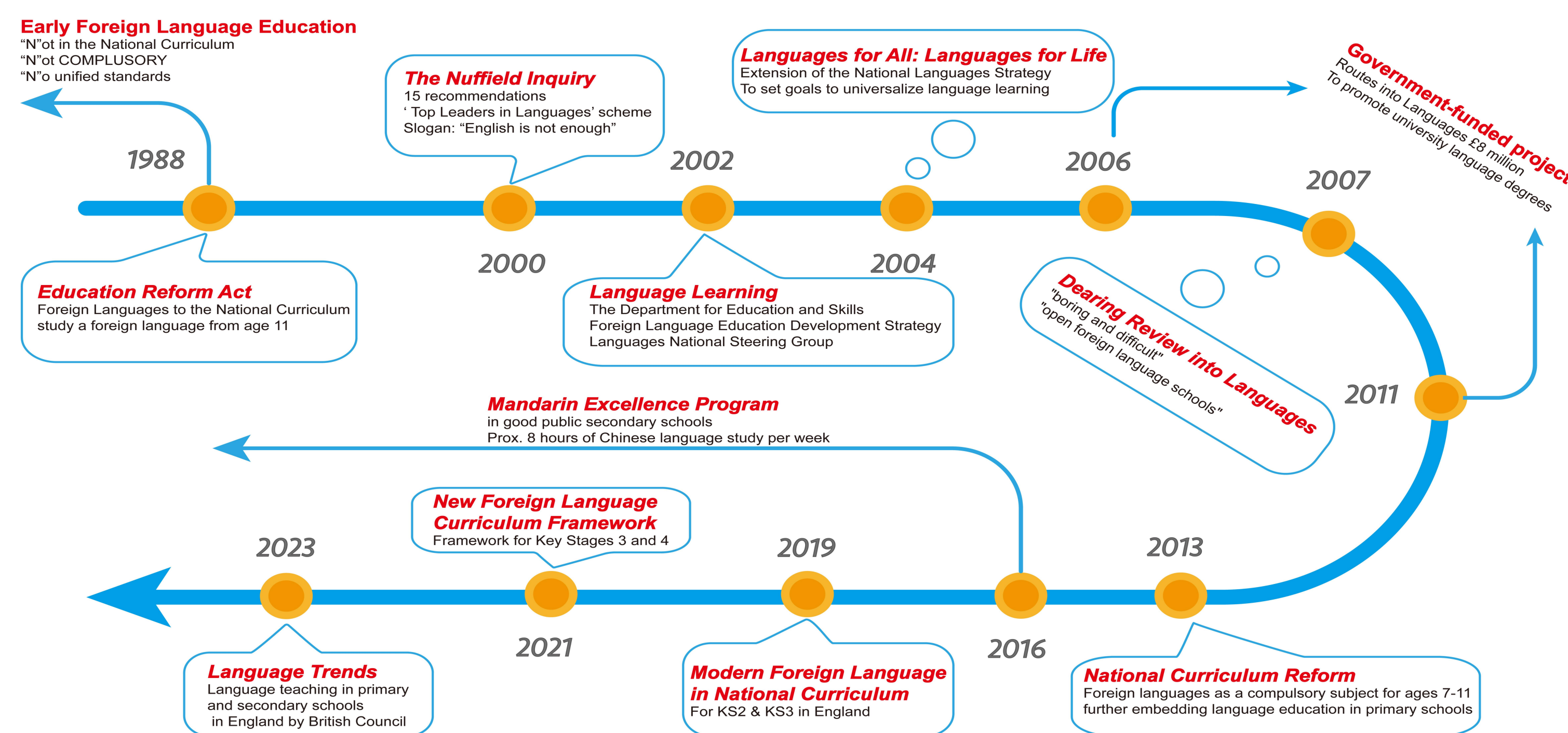
Key stage 3 (KS3)

11-14 y/o student for Y7-9, must learn a modern foreign language.

- Policy Environment:

Inspectors completed an Inspection Report under Sect. 5 of the Education Act 2005. Ofsted follows national education policies held by the Department for Education. This aligns with the National Curriculum, statutory guidelines, and education priorities.

The Context of Language Education Policy in England



□ The Overall Picture

- ◆ **The Academies Act 2010** and the Education Act 2002 (for maintained schools) outline requirements for a **broad and balanced curriculum**.
- ◆ The number of students opting to study languages at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) **dropped significantly after 2004**, when language study beyond age 14 became optional.
- ◆ The education inspection framework (EIF) centers around the national curriculum. While languages face significant challenges **as a subject**, they remain crucial to achieving the national English Baccalaureate (EBacc) goals. A low percentage of disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) continue with languages beyond KS3. Barriers at KS2 include staff expertise, curriculum design, time allocation, and transition. **Exam-driven** learning is seen as a key factor in promoting the success of language subjects.(Ofsted, 2021)

Research methods

- Researcher **scraped** the Inspection documents from 2000 to 2017 from the Ofsted website and **grouped** per Ofsted **Chief Inspector** (as presented in Table 1) .
- Researcher did **code** to cover all phases for the criteria developed through the Text of Inspection Report. **Deep-dive method** will be used to analyze in inspecting the Language Education from the Ofsted Reports (as presented in Table 2) .
- Case study on one primary school and one secondary school based on related reports as presented in Table 1.

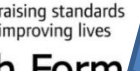
Result & Analysis

Changes to legislation:

Education Act 2005, Section 5 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 10 November 2018. These are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. [View outstanding changes](#)

Chief Inspectors since 2000 to now			
HMCI	In office	Grouping #	Number of documents
Mike Tomlinson	2000-2002	2000-2002	712
Sir David Bell	2002 – 2006	2003-2006	1492
Maurice Smith	January 2006 – October 2006 (acting)	2006	5220
Christine Gilbert	2006 – 2011	2007-2011	8881
Miriam Rosen	July 2011 – December 2011 (acting)	2011	907
Sir Michael Wilshaw	January 2012 – December 2016	2012-2016	8881
Amanda Spielman	January 2017 – present	2017	907

Further Education and Skills Inspection report



100%

Inspection of Barton Peveril Sixth Form College

Overall effectiveness:

8 to 11 November 2022

100%

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education Behaviour and attitudes Personal development Leadership and management Education programme for young people Provision for learners with high needs Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding Outstanding Outstanding Outstanding Outstanding Outstanding Good Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Barton Peveril Sixth Form College is in Eddisbury, Hampshire. Learners come from a wide area, including Southdown. At the time of the inspection, there were around 4,600 learners studying full-time education programmes for young people. Eighteen learners are in receipt of high needs funding. The college offers a wide range of A-levels and a smaller range of advanced-level vocational programmes. Most learners study A-levels, approximately a third study a combination of A-levels with a vocational qualification and a relatively small number study just vocational qualifications. The largest subject areas are science, mathematics and business.

Weaknesses

- below average retention rates on some GCE A-level and adult education courses
- poor pass rates in GCE A-level communication studies
- unsatisfactory management of adult education provision in modern foreign languages.

Scope of provision

83. The college provides courses in English language, English literature, communication studies, French, German, Italian and Spanish at GCE A-level and beyond. There is a very wide range of courses in other languages, including Japanese, Italian, French and German which seek to respond to the needs of the local community and to the needs of the wider world. The college also offers certification in Japanese, French and German for business. Most courses are for students aged 16 to 18, with a total of 875 enrolments. There are also 75 adults enrolled on full-time and part-time courses, mainly in modern languages.

Achievement and standards

Table1 Chief Inspectors and their Inspect Report under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Language Education Mentioned in OFSTED Inspect Report		
Aspect	Primary School	Secondary School
Statutory Language Requirement	Modern or ancient language required from age 7 (from Year 3).	Language required in Key Stage 3; optional in Key Stage 4 (GCSE).
Primary Challenges	Time allocation for languages, teacher training and curriculum planning.	Motivating students, ensuring curriculum continuity, increasing GCSE participation.
Secondary Challenges	Weak communication with secondary schools during transition.	Challenges in sustaining language study post-14 due to optional status.
Focus of Language Curriculum	Building foundational skills and exposure to one language.	Developing fluency, grammar, and cultural understanding.
Common Issues	Inconsistent progress due to variable language time in Year 6.	Declining participation in languages at GCSE and A-Level.
Examples of Languages Offered	Common options include French, Spanish, or German.	French, Spanish, German; some offer Chinese, Italian, or Latin.

Table 2 The Ofsted Inspection & one Assessment Sample of Foreign Language (FL) (Ofsted Communications Team, 2022)

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	116	105	77
		% retention	76	79	79
		% pass rate	71	70	70
GCE A-level English literature 2-year course	3	No. of starts	116	83	128
		% retention	84	83	77
		% pass rate	96	97	89
GCE A-level communication studies 2-year course	3	No. of starts	30	19	33
		% retention	57	68	73
		% pass rate	100	77	75
GCE A-level English language 2-year course	3	No. of starts	122	104	111
		% retention	81	78	78
		% pass rate	99	99	100
GCE A-level French language	3	No. of starts	63	37	45
		% retention	67	78	72
		% pass rate	98	100	97
GCE A-level German language	3	No. of starts	38	26	37
		% retention	61	85	70
		% pass rate	98	100	96

Conclusions

For Policymaker: there will be commonalities and differences in the sentiments of words that contributed to the total sentiment of Ofsted documents. The development of sentiment could **cautiously be linked to policy changes** in the inspection regime. ✖ **Let us reflect on this, what is missing from the policy?**

Furthermore, **key challenges** are highlighted and Ofsted Inspections should more fully reflect the following aspects:

- reflecting more humanistic care for various types of stakeholders(students, schools, etc.);
- encouraging more students to pursue language studies once they are no longer mandatory;
- better integrating language courses into the **national examination system** (e.g., SATs);
- enabling students of all skill levels to advance their language knowledge.

Ruth Perry: The headteacher took her own life after an inspection downgraded her school to inadequate (Standley, 2024)



Portion of References

- Stuart, G. and Great Britain. Parliament. House Of Commons. Education Committee (2011) *The Role and Performance of Ofsted : Second Report of Session 2010-11. Volume II, Oral and Written Evidence.* London: Stationery Office.Nielsen, F.A. (2011) A new ANEW: Evaluation of a word list for sentiment analysis in microblogs. In Proceedings of the ESWC2011.
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