



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

Some issues on the uptake of
Modern Foreign Languages
at GCSE

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Executive Summary

Since September 2004 modern foreign languages are no longer a compulsory national curriculum subject at Key Stage 4, which has led to a rapid decline in pupil numbers studying subjects in this area and to considerable concern about the future of modern foreign languages in schools. This statistical report reviews some aspects of the uptake of modern foreign languages at GCSE, with a special focus on community languages.

Key findings

- In 1984, 61% of girls and 43% of boys were studying a modern foreign language. These figures rose to 82% and 73%, respectively, in 1997. The trend has reversed since and, in 2007, 53% of girls and 42% of boys were studying a modern foreign language at GCSE level.
- The uptake of modern foreign languages among the high attaining pupils has fallen below the levels of uptake prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum. In 1984, 94% of pupils in the highest achievement group studied at least one modern foreign language. This percentage dropped to 80% in 2000 and it was at its lowest in 2007, when one in four high attaining pupils was not studying a subject in this area.
- The three main languages continue to be French, German and Spanish. French and German have seen big decreases in numbers of students over the past years. However, the popularity of Spanish continues to grow, and it is set to overtake German as the second most commonly taught language after French. Indian sub continent languages are also declining but other 'world' languages, such as Arabic, suffered a slight growth.
- Among the people who did not study a modern foreign language at GCSE level, 92% have English as their mother tongue and 7% have another language as their mother tongue.
- The percentages of pupils studying French and German are higher among students whose mother tongue is English than among those whose mother tongue is a language other than English. In languages such as Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Panjabi, Turkish, Polish, Portuguese and Urdu the percentages are higher among those whose mother tongue is not English.
- A very high percentage of the entry in the community languages has a previous knowledge of them. The clearest examples are Bengali and Turkish, where 95% and 80% of the entry, respectively, have them as their first language.
- Around 68% of the students that took a GCSE in their mother tongue did not study any other modern foreign language.
- Most schools have fewer than half their pupils studying a language at Key Stage 4. Those include 65% of the comprehensive schools and 87% of the secondary modern schools.
- The majority of independent (72%) and grammar schools (89%) have more than 75% of their pupils studying a modern foreign language.
- 88% of the low performing schools, but only 18% of the high performing schools have fewer than half of their pupils studying a modern foreign language.
- Students are less likely to be studying a modern foreign language if they go to school in a deprived area.

Since the decline in languages became a matter of national concern, a number of initiatives have been put in place to support schools in motivating pupils and increasing take up (e.g. highlighting the value of languages for careers or promotional activities such as talks). It would be worthwhile to see the impact of these initiatives on uptake in the years to come.

1. Introduction

In England, the number of children studying languages at Key Stage 4 is declining. Considerable concern has been expressed about the future of languages in schools and its implications, and a number of activities have been put in place in recent years to support schools in motivating pupils and increase the take up (e.g. highlighting the value of languages for careers or promotional activities such as talks).

Since September 2004, Modern Foreign Languages are no longer a compulsory national curriculum subject, but became one of the entitlement areas that all schools must offer within their Key Stage 4 curriculum. Schools may, if they wish, continue to make modern foreign languages part of their compulsory Key Stage 4 curriculum.

Every student who wants to learn a foreign language will be able to do so, but in most cases this will be a personal choice, not an obligation.

There are many foreign language options that can be offered at Key Stage 4. Although GCSE continues to be the most popular qualification, it is not the only possibility. There are other language qualifications, at different levels of difficulty, that focus on different skills and topic areas, for example, Asset Languages, the assessment scheme for the Department for Children, Schools and Families 'Language Ladder'. In September 2008 around 18% of maintained schools in England had signed up to deliver these qualifications.

Schools must offer at least one course in an official language of the European Union that leads to an approved qualification. The official languages of the European Union are Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Modern Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish and, as of 1 May 2004, nine additional official languages: Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Slovak and Slovenian. There are currently no qualifications approved for Czech, Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Slovak or Slovenian. Schools may, in addition, offer courses in any other foreign language(s). In addition to the European Union languages mentioned above, there are approved qualifications available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Irish, Japanese, Modern Hebrew, Panjabi, Persian, Russian, Turkish and Urdu.

The number of languages in use in England is growing. London is the most linguistically diverse area, but even outside London, at least 196 different languages are spoken (CiLT, 2005). There are many children from multilingual communities who are growing up with knowledge of languages such as Panjabi, Polish or Urdu, in addition to English. Some of these children study their languages at school.

This report describes some aspects of the uptake of modern foreign languages at GCSE in 2007, with a special focus on the community languages. For a more detailed description of the uptake of modern foreign languages by gender, ability and school type in 2000 and 2006 see Vidal Rodeiro (2007).

2. Data

Data for this report was extracted from the National Pupil Database (NPD) 2007. This database is compiled by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. It contains national examination data for all candidates who sat an examination in the academic year 2006/2007.

The PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census) data gives detailed information about all the pupils in the English state school system, including personal data, such as ethnicity, first language or mother tongue, special needs and eligibility for school meals. PLASC data for the cohort of students taking GCSE exams in the academic year 2006/2007 was matched to the examination results.

Students' attainment

To briefly describe the uptake of modern foreign languages by attainment a measure of the students' performance was computed. By assigning marks to the GCSE grades (A*=8, A=7, B=6, C=5, D=4, E=3, F=2, G=1, U=0) it was possible to arrive to a total GCSE score for each student. A mean GCSE indicator was calculated by dividing the total score by the number of subjects attempted. If a subject had been attempted twice, the highest grade was considered. The distribution of the mean GCSE indicator was obtained and used to divide the students into three attainment groups: low, medium and high.

School type

In this report schools have been categorised into four different groups:

- *Comprehensive schools*: schools providing secondary education which admit pupils of all academic abilities.
- *Grammar schools*: secondary schools which select all their pupils by ability.
- *Secondary modern schools*: secondary schools that normally take children who have failed to gain a grammar school place, in the areas that retain academic selection.
- *Independent schools*: schools at which full-time education is provided for five or more pupils of compulsory school age. This group does not include a school maintained by a Local Education Authority (LEA), a self-governing grant-maintained school or a special school not maintained by a LEA.

Schools' attainment

Schools' attainment was computed as the mean of the attainment of the students attending them. The attainment of the students was based on the mean GCSE indicator. A frequency distribution of the school means was obtained and used to allocate the schools into three attainment groups: low, medium and high.

It is possible for individual students to obtain high grades in a 'Low attainment' school and low grades in a 'High attainment' school. However, a 'High attainment' school is likely to have more high attaining students than a 'Low attainment' school which has obvious implications for provision of subjects and teaching. Note that this classification is not necessarily related to school effectiveness. For example, a 'High attainment' school is quite likely to have an entry with higher GCSE scores than a 'Low attainment' school.

Deprivation of schools

The deprivation of the schools was based on the 'Income deprivation affecting children' index, downloaded from the Office of National Statistics website and merged with the school data using the postcode of the school. The index chosen was compiled from the 2001 Census in England and Wales. The 'Income deprivation affecting children' index shows the percentage of children in each area that live in families in receipt of Income Support, Income based Jobseeker's Allowance, Working Families' Tax Credit or Disabled Person's Tax Credit. A score of 0.1 means that 10% of children aged under 16 in that area are living in families that are income deprived.

Three categories for the deprivation variable (bottom, middle and top) were created and schools were allocated into them.

It should be borne in mind that, for large cities, the location of the school might not reflect the intake; in other words, there is a risk that the address of a school may not reflect its catchment area. For example, a school might be located near the boundaries of an area thus attracting a large proportion of children from other areas, a school might be located in an area where students have to travel long distances to get to it or a school could have been affected by parental choice.

3. Uptake of Modern Foreign Languages: general trends

There were 643431 students taking at least one subject at GCSE level in 2007. Among those, 304026 students took at least one modern foreign language (47.25% of the GCSE entry) with a total number of modern foreign languages entries of 345744.

These figures show that there is a continued decline in the number of pupils studying a language at GCSE. In 1984, before the National Curriculum was introduced, 61% of girls and 43% of boys were studying a modern foreign language in Year 11. The National Curriculum had a major impact in this subject area: in 1997, 82% of girls and 73% of boys were entered for a modern foreign language (Bell, 2001). The trend has reversed since and, in 2007, 53% of girls and 42% of boys were studying a modern foreign language at GCSE level. The changes that took place in 2004, making languages no longer a compulsory national curriculum subject, could be one of the reasons for this decline. Another factor that might be influencing the uptake of languages is the diversification of the curriculum as pupils have more subjects to make choices from, and languages lose out as a result.

Table 1 presents the uptake of modern foreign languages in 2007 and Table 2 the distribution of the number of languages.

Table 1: Uptake of modern foreign languages in 2007

Language	Frequency	Percent (of language entries)	Percent (of candidates that took at least one language)	Percent (of candidates that took at least one GCSE)
French	190898	55.21	62.79	29.67
German	76188	22.04	25.06	11.84
Spanish	54135	15.66	17.81	8.41
Urdu	5410	1.56	1.78	0.84
Italian	3315	0.96	1.09	0.52
Chinese	2770	0.80	0.91	0.43
Arabic	1940	0.56	0.64	0.30
Russian	1607	0.46	0.53	0.25
Bengali	1469	0.42	0.48	0.23
Turkish	1271	0.37	0.42	0.20
Panjabi	1088	0.31	0.36	0.17
Polish	1046	0.30	0.34	0.16
Gujarati	1028	0.30	0.34	0.16
Portuguese	973	0.28	0.32	0.15
Japanese	910	0.26	0.30	0.14
Modern Greek	478	0.14	0.16	0.07
Persian	407	0.12	0.13	0.06
Modern Hebrew	404	0.12	0.13	0.06
Dutch	402	0.12	0.13	0.06

The three main languages continue to be French, German and Spanish. French and German have seen decreases in numbers of students over the past years, in particular, the uptake of French has dropped 3 percentage points and the uptake of German has dropped 2 percentage points since 2006. On the other hand, the popularity of Spanish continues to grow, and it is set to overtake German as the second most commonly taught language after French. Indian sub continent languages are also declining but other 'world' languages, such

* An update of the figures in section 3 using a more recent version of the National Pupil Database (NPD 2008) is given in the Appendix.

as Arabic, suffered a slight growth. Uptake figures from previous years can be found in Bell (2001) and Vidal Rodeiro (2007).

Table 2: Number of modern foreign languages

Number of languages	Frequency	Percent [†]
1	264458	86.99
2	37486	12.33
3	2018	0.66
4	61	0.02
5	2	0.00
6	1	0.00

In 2007, there were 225 different modern foreign languages combinations. Table 3 shows the most popular combinations.

Table 3: Combinations of two or more modern foreign languages

Combinations	Frequency	Percent
French – Spanish	14259	4.69
French – German	13759	4.53
German - Spanish	1762	0.58
French – Italian	1169	0.38
French – German - Spanish	569	0.19
French – Chinese	505	0.17
French – Russian	456	0.15
French – Arabic	421	0.14
Arabic – Urdu	377	0.12
French – Gujarati	322	0.11

Table 4 shows the uptake of modern foreign languages by attainment. As reported in Vidal Rodeiro (2007), at GCSE level, modern foreign languages attract high attaining students. In fact, the percentages of students of each attainment group that studied at least one modern foreign language were much higher for the group of high attaining students.

The decline in the uptake of languages affects all types of students and it is not simply a question of the less academic students dropping these subjects. For example, the uptake of modern foreign languages among high attaining pupils has fallen below the levels of uptake prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum. In 1984, 94% of pupils in the highest achievement group studied at least one modern foreign language. This percentage dropped to 80% in 2000 and it was at its lowest in 2007, when one in four high attaining pupils was not studying a subject in this area.

According to CiLT (2008), in some schools, able pupils were being directed to take the three separate sciences and that could have had an adverse effect on the language uptake. In particular, our figures show, for example, that the uptake of French dropped from 52.7% to 48.72% among the high attaining students from 2006.

[†] Percentage of students that took at least one modern foreign language

Table 4: Uptake of modern foreign languages by attainment group (percentages of students)

Language	Low	Medium	High
French	11.63	26.87	48.72
German	3.73	10.51	20.48
Spanish	2.84	6.99	14.84
Urdu	0.86	0.95	0.72
Turkish	0.25	0.21	0.14
Bengali	0.25	0.25	0.19
Arabic	0.19	0.26	0.44
Portuguese	0.18	0.16	0.12
Polish	0.15	0.14	0.19
Italian	0.12	0.36	1.03
Panjabi	0.08	0.18	0.24
Gujarati	0.07	0.11	0.29
Russian	0.06	0.14	0.54
Dutch	0.05	0.06	0.07
Persian	0.05	0.06	0.08
Chinese	0.04	0.19	1.01
Modern Greek	0.02	0.07	0.12
Japanese	0.02	0.07	0.32
Modern Hebrew	0.01	0.02	0.15
Welsh (Second Language)	.	0.00	0.00
At least one modern foreign language	19.86	44.45	74.79

4. Uptake of modern foreign languages in relation to the first language of the students

In some cases, as a result of living abroad or as a result of the home background, students may already have knowledge, skills and understanding in a language other than English. This may apply in particular to community languages. Many schools have found that students can achieve excellent results in these languages and therefore, students of a particular background are entered for examinations in these languages. This can raise the self-esteem of the students (they are bound to obtain good grades in them) and may lead to an improvement in the school's performance.

PLASC data was used to identify the first language or mother tongue of the GCSE students. Data was available for 91% of the students (80% of those studying at least one modern foreign language).

Among the people that did not study a modern foreign language at GCSE level, 92% have English as their mother tongue and 7% have another language as their mother tongue.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the number of modern foreign languages by the mother tongue of the students (English or other).

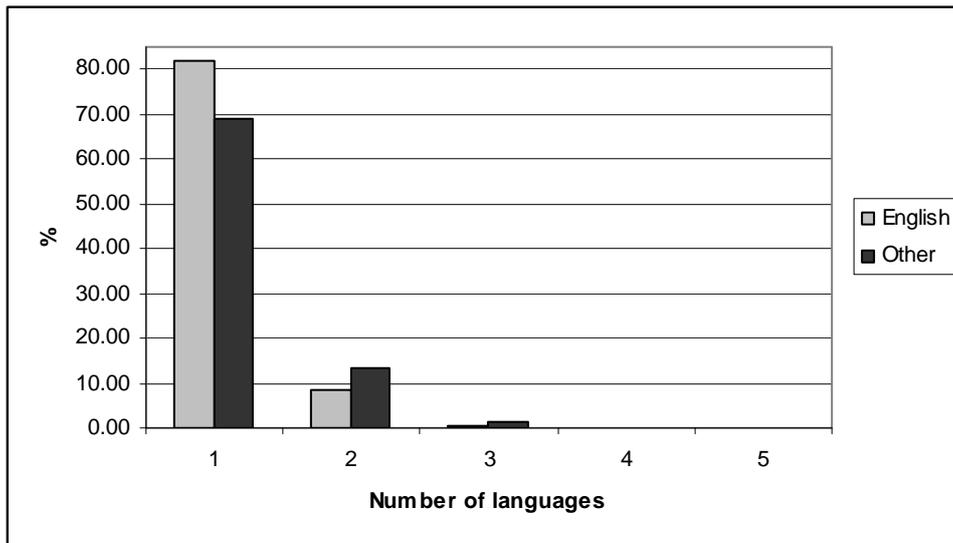


Figure 1: Number of modern foreign languages by mother tongue (English or Other)

Modern foreign languages vary in the proportion of entries coming from English or other language background. Table 5 shows that the percentages of students doing French and German are higher among students whose mother tongue is English (very similar percentages of students are taking GCSE in Spanish). However, in languages such as Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Panjabi, Turkish, Polish, Portuguese and Urdu the percentages are higher among those whose mother tongue is not English.

Table 5: Uptake of modern foreign languages by mother tongue (English or Other)

Language	English		Other	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
French	144795	27.61	14081	27.00
German	63229	12.06	4538	8.70
Spanish	38121	7.27	3959	7.59
Italian	2145	0.41	376	0.72
Russian	626	0.12	339	0.65
Japanese	557	0.11	99	0.19
Urdu	261	0.05	3902	7.48
Chinese	178	0.03	849	1.63
Modern Greek	176	0.03	203	0.39
Modern Hebrew	175	0.03	34	0.07
Panjabi	121	0.02	848	1.63
Gujarati	86	0.02	739	1.42
Turkish	85	0.02	1033	1.98
Arabic	84	0.02	945	1.81
Polish	73	0.01	713	1.37
Portuguese	72	0.01	709	1.36
Dutch	48	0.01	259	0.50
Bengali	21	0.00	1247	2.39
Persian	14	0.00	295	0.57

In 2007 there were 5520 children who studied a GCSE in their mother tongue. Table 6 shows, for each language offered at GCSE, the percentage of students taking it that have that language as their mother tongue.

Table 6: Percentages of students in each modern foreign language that have that language as their mother tongue

Language	Percentage of students whose mother tongue is that language
Bengali	95.28
Turkish	80.86
Polish	77.30
Portuguese	77.29
Panjabi	75.00
Gujarati	74.67
Persian	67.25
Chinese	59.34
Arabic	58.53
Urdu	43.28
Greek	38.14
Dutch	13.59
Russian	12.08
Modern Hebrew	10.15
Italian	3.92
Japanese	3.08
Spanish	0.78
French	0.24
German	0.15

For community languages, it is clear from Table 6 that a very high percentage of the entry has a previous knowledge of them. The clearest example is Bengali, where 95% of the entry has it as their first language.

For those students that took a GCSE in their mother tongue, Table 7 shows the number of modern foreign languages studied (GCSE in mother tongue excluded). Around 68% of the students that took a GCSE in their mother tongue did not study any other modern foreign language and around 30% of them study one modern foreign language.

Table 7: Number of modern foreign languages studied by those who took a GCSE in their mother tongue (GCSE in mother tongue excluded)

Number of languages	Frequency	Percent
0	3742	67.79
1	1595	28.89
2	177	3.21
3	6	0.11

Table 8 shows the other modern foreign languages taken by the group of students that took a GCSE in their mother tongue. For example, 20% of the students that took a GCSE in their mother tongue also took a GCSE in French and 5% sat a GCSE in Bengali. French, German and Spanish continue to be the most popular choices, but other community languages seem to be more popular among this group of students than among the overall GCSE population.

Table 8: Uptake of modern foreign languages for the group of students that took a GCSE in their mother tongue.

Language	Percentage
French	19.60
German	7.06
Spanish	6.68
Bengali	5.07
Chinese	3.53
Modern Greek	2.03
Arabic	0.74
Dutch	0.63
Panjabi	0.62
Urdu	0.60
Italian	0.58
Modern Hebrew	0.40
Portuguese	0.27
Persian	0.25
Japanese	0.22
Russian	0.13
Polish	0.02
Turkish	0.02

Table 9 shows the percentages of students doing a GCSE in their mother tongue (when this was offered at GCSE). The percentages of students whose mother tongue is Gujarati or Panjabi are much smaller than any other. This might be due to a generational shift in communities that are now well established in the UK.

Table 9: Percentages of students doing a GCSE in their mother tongue

Mother tongue	Percentage of students doing the GCSE
French	78.48
Polish	74.11
Turkish	69.07
German	64.86
Spanish	63.58
Japanese	57.58
Russian	56.40
Portuguese	52.34
Modern Hebrew	51.28
Arabic	50.41
Italian	48.02
Persian	46.67
Urdu	46.65
Chinese	46.34
Modern Greek	45.71
Bengali	45.46
Dutch	42.37
Gujarati	17.17
Panjabi	14.70

5. Uptake of modern foreign languages by school

In 2007, there were 1035 centres (out of 5143 – that is 20%) that offered GCSE subjects but did not have any student taking a modern foreign language and 216 centres (around 4%) where all students were doing at least one modern foreign language (it should be noted that GCSEs are offered in centres that are not secondary schools).

This report contains only details of the examinations taken at GCSE and has no information on any language course that students might have taken but which did not culminate in a GCSE examination (e.g. IGCSE examinations or other language qualifications such as Asset Languages or NVQ language units). Although the number of schools offering alternative qualifications to GCSE is still low, it has seen a growth in recent years, in particular the number of maintained schools using Asset Languages has risen from 9% in 2006 to 18% in 2008 (CiLT, 2008).

Centres were allocated in four groups according to the percentages of students in them doing at least one language subject. Table 10 shows the percentages of centres in each group.

Table 10: Percentage of students doing at least one modern foreign language

Percentage of students doing at least one MFL	Frequency (of centres)	Percent (of centres)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Less than 25%	1124	27.36	1124	27.36
25% - 50%	1035	25.19	2159	52.56
50% - 75%	632	15.38	2791	67.94
Over 75%	1317	32.06	4108	100.00

In 2007, around 53% of the centres had less than 50% of their pupils studying a modern foreign language at GCSE and around 32% of the centres had over 75% of the pupils studying one.

Uptake of modern foreign languages varies enormously by type of school and by region. The following tables show the percentages of students in each type of school that study at least one modern foreign language.

Table 11: Percentage of students doing at least one modern foreign language by school type

Percentage of students doing at least one MFL	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern
Less than 25%	32.67	0.60	3.49	60.34
25% - 50%	32.71	3.01	6.97	26.44
50% - 75%	15.19	7.23	17.19	6.32
Over 75%	19.43	89.16	72.35	6.90
All students	0.22	15.06	16.40	0.57

The majority of independent (72%) and grammar schools (89%) have more than 75% of their pupils studying a modern foreign language. This indicates that, although some of the schools in these groups may be taking advantage of the national curriculum changes at Key Stage 4 and allow a small number of pupils to drop a language, they are still maintaining the basic position that a language is needed at this stage.

Schools which have fewer than half their pupils studying a language to GCSE include 65% of comprehensive schools, as opposed to 4% of grammar schools or 10% of independent schools (Table 11). Likewise, 88% of the low performing schools, but only 18% of the high performing schools have fewer than half of their pupils studying a language (Table 12).

Table 12: Percentage of students doing at least one modern foreign language by the schools' attainment

Percentage of students doing at least one MFL	Low	Medium	High
Less than 25%	65.63	29.98	3.52
25% - 50%	22.14	37.96	14.34
50% - 75%	6.01	14.96	21.01
Over 75%	6.23	17.10	61.12
All students	0.41	1.10	11.07

It should be noted that independent and grammar schools tend to offer a higher number of languages. The same holds for the highest attaining schools, compared to the low attaining ones (Claessen, 2005).

Schools with high deprivation scores are the ones with smaller numbers of students taking languages (Table 13). According to CiLT (2007), student and parental attitudes are often seen as a barrier to language uptake, particularly in deprived areas: '*...the culture of the community is unambitious and modern foreign languages are perceived as difficult*'.

Table 13: Percentage of students doing at least one modern foreign language by the deprivation of the school

Percentage of students doing at least one MFL	Bottom	Middle	Top
Less than 25%	16.83	27.32	39.04
25% - 50%	24.96	25.59	25.02
50% - 75%	17.67	15.03	13.25
Over 75%	40.53	32.06	22.70
All students	5.22	3.48	3.85

More statistics on the uptake of modern foreign languages and combinations of modern foreign languages by school type can be found in the Statistics Report no. 4 (Vidal Rodeiro, 2007).

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Appendix

Note

Only examination data up to 2007 was available at the time this report was being written. This appendix, however, contains an update of the figures in section 3 using a more recent version of the National Pupil Database that was released after the completion of the report (NPD 2008).

Modern Foreign Languages uptake in 2008

There were 642996 students taking at least one subject at GCSE level in 2008. Among those, 291595 students took at least one modern foreign language (45.35% of the GCSE entry – 51% of girls and 40% of boys) with a total number of modern foreign languages entries of 331876.

Table A1 presents the uptake of modern foreign languages in 2008 and Table A2 presents the distribution of the number of languages.

Table A1: Uptake of modern foreign languages in 2008

Language	Frequency	Percent (of language entries)	Percent (of candidates that took at least one language)	Percent (of candidates that took at least one GCSE)
French	177503	53.48	60.87	27.61
German	71470	21.54	24.51	11.12
Spanish	57415	17.30	19.69	8.93
Urdu	5206	1.57	1.79	0.81
Italian	3528	1.06	1.21	0.55
Chinese	2701	0.81	0.93	0.42
Arabic	1984	0.60	0.68	0.31
Russian	1685	0.51	0.58	0.26
Polish	1651	0.50	0.57	0.26
Bengali	1420	0.43	0.49	0.22
Turkish	1287	0.39	0.44	0.20
Portuguese	1223	0.37	0.42	0.19
Panjabi	999	0.30	0.34	0.16
Japanese	996	0.30	0.34	0.15
Gujarati	901	0.27	0.31	0.14
Modern Hebrew	507	0.15	0.17	0.08
Modern Greek	488	0.15	0.17	0.08
Dutch	455	0.14	0.16	0.07
Persian	453	0.14	0.16	0.07
Welsh (Second Language)	3	0.00	0.00	0.00
Irish	1	0.00	0.00	0.00

The three main languages continue to be French, German and Spanish. French and German have seen decreases in numbers of students over the past years, in particular, the uptake of French dropped 2 percentage points since 2007.

Table A2: Number of modern foreign languages

Number of languages	Frequency	Percent [‡]
1	253462	86.92
2	36062	12.37
3	1995	0.68
4	75	0.03
5	1	0.00

In 2008, there were 225 different modern foreign languages combinations. Table A3 shows the most popular combinations.

Table A3: Combinations of two or more modern foreign languages

Combinations	Frequency	Percent
French - Spanish	13621	4.67
French - German	12482	4.28
German - Spanish	1909	0.65
French - Italian	1219	0.42
French - German - Spanish	538	0.18
French - Russian	486	0.17
French - Chinese	469	0.16
French - Arabic	360	0.12
Arabic - Urdu	352	0.12
French - Gujarati	318	0.11

Table A4 shows the uptake of modern foreign languages by attainment. In 2008, only 74% of the high attaining pupils studied a subject in this area. In particular, the figures show, for example, that the uptake of French dropped from 52.7% to 47.36% among the high attaining students from 2006.

[‡] Percentage of students that took at least one modern foreign language

Table A4: Uptake of modern foreign languages by attainment group (percentages of students)

Language	Low	Medium	High
French	10.14	25.05	47.36
German	3.46	10.05	19.72
Spanish	2.94	7.71	16.04
Urdu	0.84	0.86	0.73
Polish	0.30	0.23	0.24
Bengali	0.25	0.24	0.17
Turkish	0.25	0.22	0.13
Portuguese	0.22	0.20	0.16
Arabic	0.21	0.28	0.43
Italian	0.13	0.37	1.14
Panjabi	0.07	0.18	0.22
Russian	0.07	0.15	0.57
Persian	0.07	0.06	0.08
Dutch	0.06	0.07	0.08
Chinese	0.05	0.21	0.99
Gujarati	0.05	0.10	0.27
Modern Greek	0.03	0.07	0.13
Japanese	0.01	0.08	0.36
Modern Hebrew	0.01	0.03	0.20
Irish	.	.	0.00
Welsh (Second Language)	.	0.00	0.00
At least one modern foreign language	18.47	43.04	74.34