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Language Trends Insight

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British Council and Languages

We believe that speaking another language is crucial to understanding another culture and for long term growth and prosperity. So, no matter how many people around the world speak English, we still need to go to the effort of mastering foreign languages ourselves in the UK.

We believe that every young person should have international experience woven into the fabric of their formal and non-formal education to add value to their learning and boost their aspirations

International experience refers to intercultural *encounters* with people of other countries and cultures, at home and through periods of time spent overseas

Language Trends survey

Language Trends, which started in 2002, is an annual survey of primary and secondary schools in England, designed to gather information about the situation for language teaching and learning. Its aims are to assess the impact of policy measures in relation to languages and to analyse strengths and weaknesses based both on quantitative evidence and on views expressed by teachers.

Headline findings 2020

- **Clear evidence that primary languages are embedded in policy, but not in practice**
- **In the state sector, primary to secondary transition remains underdeveloped**

There are diverging attitudes between primary and secondary teachers in relation to pupil progress at the point of transition

- **A growing number of pupils are being disappplied from languages at KS3 in both state and independent sectors to receive extra support in literacy**
- **Top challenges at secondary nature, content, marking of exams and Global English**

French remains the most popular language in primary schools

	EARLY YEARS	YEARS 1 AND/OR 2	YEARS 3 AND/OR 4	YEARS 5 AND/OR 6	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Ancient Greek	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	100.00% 2	2
Arabic	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	100.00% 1	1
Chinese	17.39% 4	34.78% 8	78.26% 18	78.26% 18	23
French	18.10% 99	34.55% 189	95.80% 524	95.98% 525	547
German	20.00% 7	17.14% 6	48.57% 17	74.29% 26	35
Italian	28.57% 4	35.71% 5	57.14% 8	42.86% 6	14
Japanese	28.57% 2	28.57% 2	71.43% 5	57.14% 4	7
Latin	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	62.50% 10	81.25% 13	16
Spanish	22.73% 50	36.82% 81	81.36% 179	90.91% 200	220
Urdu	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0
Other	68.00% 17	52.00% 13	48.00% 12	56.00% 14	25

Time for languages

	LESS THAN 30 MINUTES	30-45 MINUTES	MORE THAN 45 MINUTES BUT LESS THAN 1 HOUR	BETWEEN 1 AND 2 HOURS	MORE THAN TWO HOURS	NONE	WE DO NOT HAVE THIS YEAR GROUP IN OUR SCHOOL	TOTAL
Early Years	38.40% 278	2.90% 21	0.97% 7	0.69% 5	0.00% 0	54.83% 397	2.21% 16	724
Year 1	36.88% 267	11.19% 81	2.35% 17	0.97% 7	0.00% 0	46.69% 338	1.93% 14	724
Year 2	35.77% 259	14.36% 104	3.73% 27	0.97% 7	0.14% 1	42.96% 311	2.07% 15	724
Year 3	7.60% 55	52.35% 379	28.87% 209	10.36% 75	0.28% 2	0.41% 3	0.14% 1	724
Year 4	7.18% 52	50.97% 369	30.11% 218	10.91% 79	0.28% 2	0.28% 2	0.28% 2	724
Year 5	5.39% 39	45.86% 332	33.70% 244	13.95% 101	0.41% 3	0.41% 3	0.28% 2	724
Year 6	5.39% 39	44.34% 321	33.84% 245	14.23% 103	0.41% 3	0.69% 5	1.10% 8	724

International Engagement

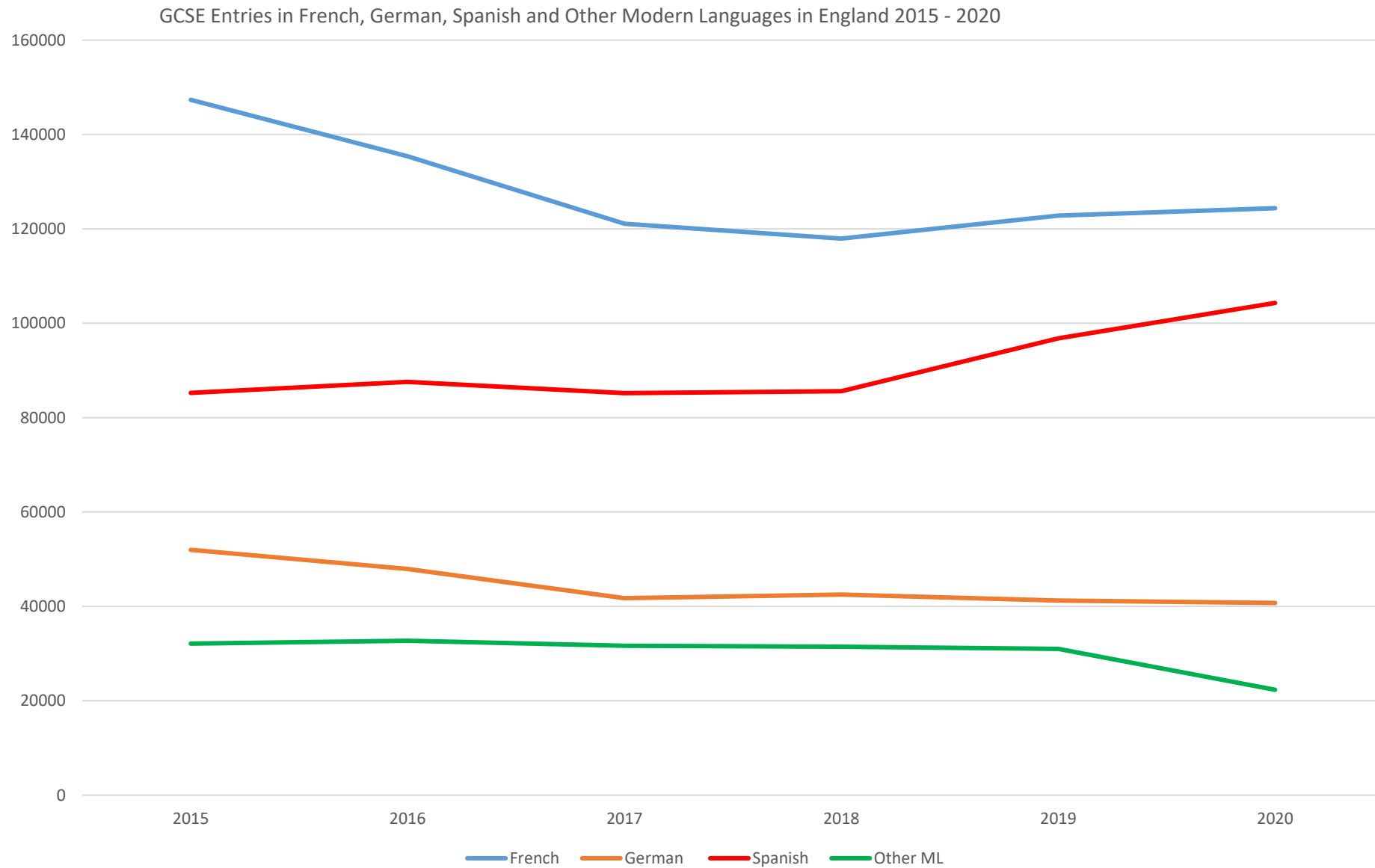
	2018	2019	2020	2021
The school has one or more partner schools abroad	35%	27%	19%	18%
Involvement in international projects	22%	16%	10%	7.5%
Host a language assistant	5%	5%	2.5%	1.5%
Pupil exchanges	5%	2%	1.5%	
School trips abroad	12%	8%	8%	
Teacher exchanges	6%	7%	4.5%	
Teacher CPD abroad	9%	7%	5%	
eTwinning	-	11%	6%	7%
None	46%	50.5%	61%	64%

Transition KS2/3

Q21: Do pupils in your school continue with the same language they learned at Key Stage 2?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
All pupils continue with the same language	2.95%	18
The majority of pupils continue with the same language	21.28%	130
Some pupils continue with the same language	65.96%	403
No, our pupils start a new language from scratch	9.82%	60
TOTAL		611

GCSE Entries – JCQ Data



State Secondary – Most frequently taught languages

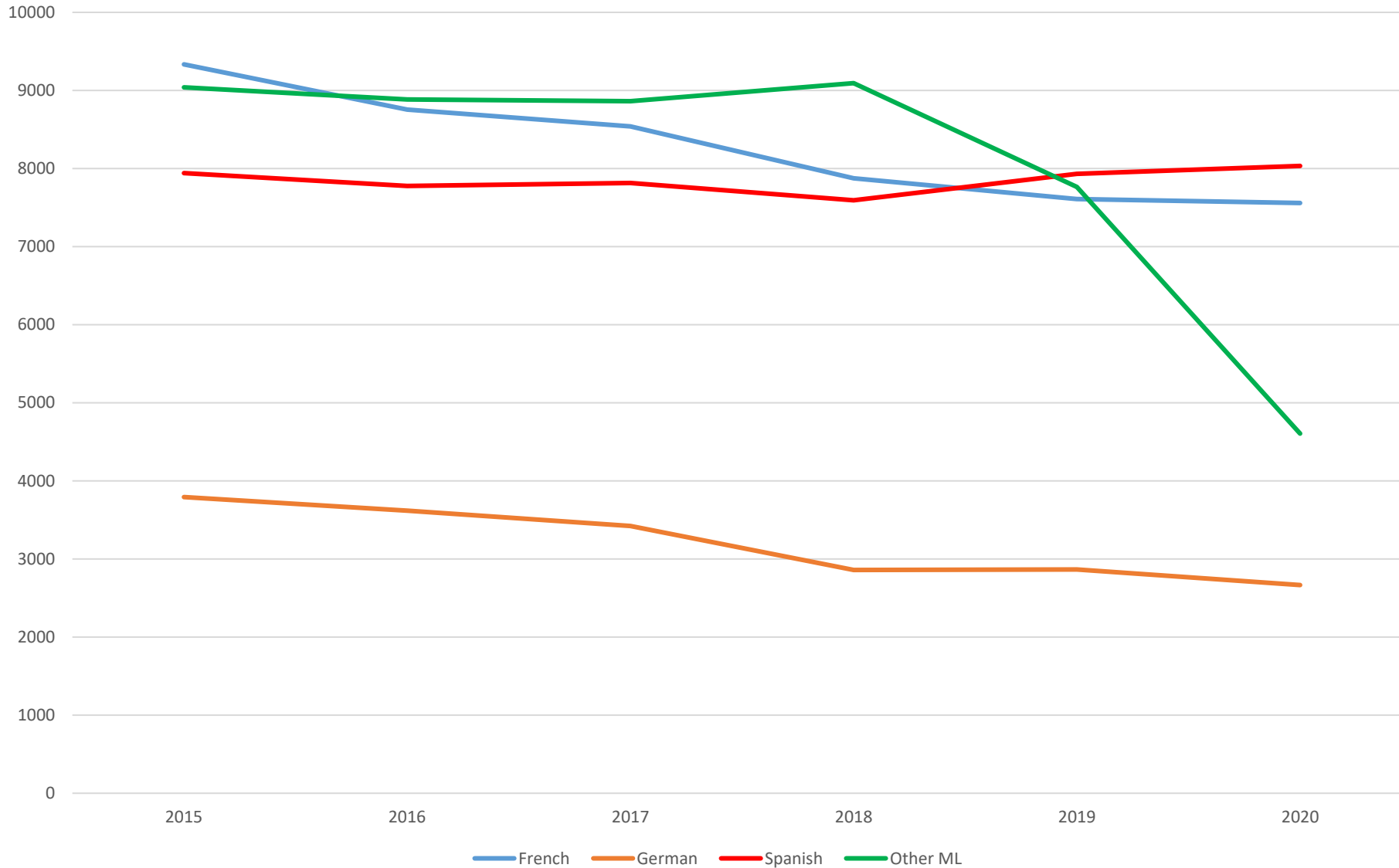
Language GCSE	% of responding schools
French	95.2
German	65
Spanish	87.5

State Secondary – GCSE exam options in lesser taught languages

Language GCSE	% of responding schools
Arabic	5.1
Chinese (Mandarin)	8.9
Italian	10.3
Japanese	3.5
Polish	8.9
Russian	6.1
Urdu	6.1

Post-16 – JCQ Data

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



Post-16 – compared to previous years (our survey)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More pupils taking a language post 16	24.04%	81
Fewer pupils taking a language post 16	31.45%	106
Similar numbers	44.51%	150
TOTAL		337

Independent – GCSE uptake over the past five years

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The trend in our schools has been an increase	4.76%	6
No change, fairly consistent	50.79%	64
The trend in our school has been a decrease	44.44%	56
TOTAL		126

Independent – post-16 uptake

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More pupils taking a language post 16	8.94%	11
Fewer pupils taking a language post 16	47.97%	59
Similar numbers	43.09%	53
TOTAL		123

Questions

Why do you think that schools in less affluent areas are least likely to respond to our survey and what can we do better to reach them next year?

How can schools give pupils an international experience post-Covid and is it does it matter if we don't?

What other information would you like to see in the Trends report?

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