

### **Abstract**

The Scottish Government 1+2 Languages policy has seen the integration of 1, 2 and increasingly 3 additional languages into and across Scottish primary schools from the Early years upwards. This ongoing transformational change has seen extensive teacher training, resource development and partnership collaborations as teachers develop their skills and schools grow and adapt to deliver the policy. Now, at the mid-way point of the policy implementation, what unique role can Japanese have as schools seek to raise attainment across learning, improve literacy, numeracy and health and well-being, close the poverty gap and develop employability? How do we develop Japanese as an L3 or L4 language in schools and support staff to develop their skills? This paper will explore the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead in the development of Japanese learning for young Scottish learners.

**Keywords:** 1+2 Languages, Japanese, Curriculum for Excellence, Scotland, education

### **1.1 Scottish education policy context: Curriculum for Excellence**

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) was formally introduced in 2011 with the aim to, “help children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century, including skills for learning, life and work” (Education Scotland, 2017) and hailed as, “one of the most ambitious programmes of educational change ever undertaken in Scotland” (Scottish Government, 2008). The priority for schools over the course of its introduction has been on understanding new frameworks and approaches, redeveloping curriculum, exploring and developing new pedagogies and practice and on preparing for and implementing revised Scottish Qualifications Awards (SQA) courses and assessment programmes. This innovation was marked by, “a shift in classroom practices towards more pupil centred approaches to education. This is accompanied by a renewed view of teachers as professional developers of the curriculum and agents of change, and a new emphasis on flexible, local planning.” (Priestly & Minty 2012). The pedagogy and practice of CfE includes approaches such as cooperative learning, active learning, outdoor learning, interdisciplinary and cross-curricular approaches, critical skills development and assessment is for learning (AIFL) (Building the Curriculum 3, Education Scotland).

#### **1.1.1 National Improvement Framework**

By the mid-way point of 1+2 Languages implementation in 2016, the focus in Scotland had shifted towards a new set of educational priorities with the publication of the Scottish Government National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education (2016). This framework, developed in response to the recommendations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) CfE evaluation report, “Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective” (OECD, 2015), sets out four new improvement priorities for schools in Scotland:

1. Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
2. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
3. Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing

4. Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people (Scottish Government, 2016)

These priorities have become the major focus areas for schools in strategic planning for improvement and are supported by £120 million of Scottish Government Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) paid directly to schools and specifically for the purposes driving improvement in these four priority areas. The focus on literacy numeracy are in response to a four-year decline in attainment in these areas (The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy, 2017) and with Scotland recording its worst scores to date in international PISA tests (2016). Literacy and numeracy have become the key priorities for schools with a clear raising attainment agenda being set.

### **1.2 1+2 Languages Policy Development in Scottish schools**

In 2011, the first year of full CfE implementation, the Scottish Government 1+2 Languages policy was also being conceived and developed. The 2011 Scottish Government Languages Working Group report, “Language Learning in Scotland A 1+2 Approach” produced 35 recommendations for Scottish Local Authorities, schools and further and higher education institutions to meet the manifesto commitment which stated that: “We will introduce a norm for language learning in schools based on the European Union 1 + 2 model - that is we will create the conditions in which every child will learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue. This will be rolled out over two Parliaments and will create a new model for language acquisition in Scotland.” (Scottish Government manifesto commitment, 2011). To support this development, £21.2 million of Scottish Government funding has been allocated since 2013 to present date. A national Languages Strategic Implementation Group was also convened in May 2013 to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the recommendations. Further Scottish Government support is provided by the Scotland’s National Centre for Languages (SCILT) and the national schools education agency, Education Scotland. Strategic leadership and development of 1+2 Languages was undertaken by Local Authorities and schools in the context of simultaneous priorities presented by the CfE. This presented challenges in terms of the capacity of leaders, schools and teachers to develop and deliver large scale policy simultaneously but also opportunities to develop language learning practice in line with CfE pedagogies and practice.

#### **1.2.1 L2 Development**

The Working Group recommends that “It is important that local authorities and schools work together to ensure that L2 is embedded from the early stages of the primary curriculum and provides a positive experience for children.” (Scottish Government Languages Working Group, 2011). L2 languages, those being taught from primary 1 (P1) onwards are generally one of French, Spanish or Scottish Gaelic, with French being the most common. A significant number of local authorities have chosen to develop French as the L2 for all schools with a view to facilitating development and implementation. This is also reflected in the progress report on 1+2 development, led by the Association of Directors of Education (ADES) in March 2016 with returned data showing that French, Spanish and Scottish Gaelic are the most mentioned languages in terms of L2. Main aspects of development can be categorised as: Staff development, particularly in language skills, the development of learning materials and teaching resources, partnerships, engagement with native speakers and communications.

The learning and teaching of L2 languages relies in large part on primary teachers upskilling in and then teaching the language. This

again, is reflected in the ADES report which states, “We saw a range of staffing models in authorities (and sometimes within an authority or within a school cluster) including:

- the use of generalist primary teachers with additional language skills or additional training
- the use of specialist language teachers (primary or secondary qualified), in some cases native speakers, both to help to deliver the teaching and learning but also to help build teacher capacity through co-teaching
- the use of relief teachers with a language teaching background normally deployed to cover non-contact time across a school group.” (ADES, 2016)

Scottish primary teachers are generalist teachers and so authorities and schools have taken a, “Every teacher, every classroom” approach, whereby the impetus sits with the teacher to develop the skills to be able to deliver the language. The approach means that teachers have the opportunity to embed and integrate the ML into all aspects of classroom life” (Sweeney, 2007) and are encouraged to do so. This of course, comes with challenges for the teacher, some of which are identified in the report, *Teaching Scotland’s Future*, as “Weaknesses in the performance of children in primary education can stem in part from low levels of confidence amongst primary teachers about their own knowledge of some aspects of what they are teaching. This represents one of the greatest points of exposure of the primary teacher and is particularly the case in literacy, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages.” (Donaldson, 2010)

This responsibility for the delivery and development of language learning is a shift from previous models (specialist delivery at upper stages of the primary) and presents challenges in developing teacher skill sets and competences. To support staff development and upskilling in new language, local authorities have provided local training opportunities and encouraged and supported access to Erasmus+ European staff development funding. Learning and teaching development has focussed on highly supportive materials which are designed to support teachers both in terms of pedagogical approaches and with language through modelling and audio files to support accuracy in pronunciation.

In terms of progress with implementation, the ADES 1+2 evaluation report states that, “31 Local Authority submissions (those submitted by September 2015) state that they are on track for implementation of a first additional language (L2) from P1 to P7 by 2020.” (ADES, 2016)

### **1.2.2 L3 development**

In addition to the developing provision of L2 languages in primary schools, the 1+2 Languages policy also requires that schools introduce “a second additional language (L3) for pupils at a later stage in the primary school. The time for introduction of the L3 language would be a matter for schools and Local Authorities to determine but no later than P5.” (Scottish Government Languages Working Group, 2011)

L3 development is distinct in that it is characterised by a degree of flexibility and is designed to enhance language learning by exploring transferable skills and links between languages. It does not necessarily need to provide progressive routes to accreditation, although the guidance states that this would be preferable. “There is no expectation that the secondary school offer the same L3 as was studied at the primary stages, although this would be ideal.” (Education Scotland, 2017) Primary schools are therefore not restricted in their choice of L3 by what the secondary school can offer. The sample languages identified from the ADES 1+2 evaluation report lists Spanish, German, French, Mandarin, Gaelic, British Sign Language, Italian, Scots, Latin, Polish, Russian, Urdu, Arabic and Makaton as they languages reported to be in development by Local Authorities. Japanese was not identified at the

point of the survey taking place (March 2016).

Three potential approaches, are outlined in detail in the 2017 updated L3 guidance from Education Scotland. These are:

- The same additional language taught over the whole of P5 to P7 through a regular slot each week
- A different L3 each year, to fit in with the resources available locally at that time or the themes being delivered.”
- “An additional language introduced as part of an interdisciplinary (IDL) project over a number of weeks. (Education Scotland, 2017)

This offers an opportunity to engage with a wider range of languages beyond those which are part of the secondary school accredited suite of languages and allows schools to engage with the language of interest to and or spoken by their learners. It also provides sufficient flexibility for 1+2 to become 1+3, 1+4 or 1+5 with multiple language learning experiences being developed in both primary and secondary schools. There are currently schools where these multiple language learning experiences are being developed, so for example two European languages (E.g. French and Spanish) plus Japanese.

### **1.2.3 Secondary school provision of languages**

Secondary schools in Scotland offer mostly (but not exclusively) language learning experiences in line with those which can be taken to certificate level and through the Scottish Qualifications Association (SQA). These languages, available at either full exam level or at award level, include French, Spanish, German, Mandarin and Italian. There are also some qualifications offered in languages which could be considered to be community, heritage or home languages, for example, Cantonese, Urdu and Polish. Japanese is not currently offered at certificate level by the SQA and at the time of writing there is no indication of this being developed. Secondary schools do however, also offer language learning experiences which sit out with accredited routes and with more of an emphasis on cultural and enrichment of learning. Examples of this include Japanese anime clubs, culture and language afternoons and taster language lessons.

## **1.3 Development of Japanese Language Learning in Scotland**

### **1.3.1 Push for Japanese**

Japanese has been taught historically in Scotland but has never been offered as an SQA certificate course. It is difficult to ascertain to what degree it was developed in schools as no data on this could be found to exist. In recent years, there has been a renewed push for the reintegration of Japanese as a language in Scottish schools supported by national and regional partners including the Consulate General of Japan in Edinburgh, the Japan Foundation, Education Scotland and SCILT. Successive Consul Generals to Scotland have met with the SQA and Scottish Governments to press for the development of Scottish school level certificate courses in Japanese. There are currently no plans to proceed on this with the SQA citing lack of demand as a key reason. (Denholm, 2015). This presents a challenge in terms of moving forward with development of the language if there are no accredited routes available to learners. A-Levels and GCSE certification can be accessed by Scottish schools at a cost and if they have staffing to support the provision.

Japanese education networks are beginning to develop in Scotland including the Japan Language Group Scotland with representation from the Consulate General of Japan in Edinburgh, national agencies, schools, higher education, and national partners. Further to this, in February 2017, a group of 20 educational leaders including local authority officers, head teachers and teachers attended a one-week educational engagement visit to Japan organised by the Japan Foundation. This has supported the creation of

a network of education leaders and teachers across Scotland, with an interest and enthusiasm for developing Japanese in their schools. This network has enabled sharing practice between regions, developing partnerships and sharing new and information about developing Japanese in schools. Japanese is being developed to some extent in 8 out of 32 local authorities in Scotland. Most notably, progress has been made in City of Edinburgh and in Orkney.

Japanese is now offered at 8 of the 10 Scottish universities. In 2017, the University of Edinburgh has led the development of the Japanese for Young Learners project (Matsutomo-Sturt, Robertson 2017) which has focused on the development and trialling of Japanese learning and teaching materials and pedagogical approaches specifically for the purposes of the Scottish curriculum and context. This project has produced a range of learning materials designed to support classroom development of Japanese and to support teacher development. They have been shared with schools across Scotland and developed in line with wider 1+2 Languages approaches designed to support teachers with limited language knowledge to engage with and facilitate language learning in their classrooms. This provides a dual-purpose support framework which can be developed to both support learning and teaching and to provide staff development. Approaches were piloted in partnership with a local primary school who also hosted a 6-week introduction to Japanese course for secondary and primary teachers. (Snead, 2017). The project hosted a conference attended by education leaders, teachers and partners in September 2017. (Consulate General of Japan in Edinburgh, 2017). This was attended by a range of key stakeholders including teachers, school leaders, local authority officers and national partners.

The above developments indicate that Japanese language and culture in Scottish schools is beginning to develop and establish. As a language, there are developing networks, developing practice in both secondary and primary schools, sharing of learning and teaching materials, teacher development opportunities and growing partnerships.

#### **1.4 What next for Japanese?**

Some key considerations for developing Japanese in the Scottish context can be summarised below:

- In Scotland, there are established and developing Japanese networks but no one single dedicated strategy for supporting and driving development. A strategic plan for national development of Japanese could support local authorities and teachers to develop Japanese in their own contexts.
- Accreditation remains a key consideration – how do we accredit young people and how do we staff provision in the secondary?
- What are the opportunities for developing Japanese using technology and self-study approaches?
- How do we support young people who are developing an interest in Japanese language and are keen to develop their language skills?
- How do we create a support provision for Japanese that is Scotland wide and support its development regardless of geography?

#### **1.5 Conclusions**

Recent Scottish policy and curriculum redesign offer a unique opportunity for Japanese development in Scotland. The 1+2 Languages policy offers flexibility and the opportunity to explore languages for a range of reasons, particularly in L3 development. There is an opportunity for further research linking Japanese to the Scottish context, particularly looking at learner engagement, raising attainment and pupil equity. Networks, sharing and development around culture, employability and partnerships provide

opportunities for a rich curricular experience linked to the pedagogies, policies and practice of Curriculum for Excellence and key improvement frameworks and priorities. Strategic leadership and planning at a national level could help drive this development and support enhanced communications and professional development. Routes to accreditation for learners remains a key consideration. Further research into learner engagement and autonomous learning of Japanese language and culture could present innovative opportunities for language learning in Scotland.

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