How Schools in England Understand and Enact Education Policy

The Case of Modern Languages at Key Stage 4

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Abstract

Whilst learning an additional language throughout compulsory schooling is increasingly the norm across the world, this is not the case in England, where currently fewer than 50% of young people study a modern language at upper secondary level (key stage 4). However, a recent change to education policy has required the 'vast majority' of young people to study a language to GCSE level as part of the combination of subjects which form the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) performance measure. This research explores the interrelated nature of the factors that help and hinder schools in responding to this policy requirement to extend participation in language learning.

The study adopts a multiple case study approach and draws on qualitative data generated from semi-structured interviews, participant observation and document analysis in three schools to develop an in-depth understanding of how schools make sense of education policy and make policy their own. In order to preserve the voices of the participants the findings are presented in the form of three portraits which aim to capture the cultural and linguistic identities of the schools and their communities. A range of theoretical resources are drawn upon in the analysis, including Ball et al.'s theory of 'policy enactment' (2012) and Bourdieu's tools of habitus, capital and field. These are used as lenses through which to analyse the contested field of participation in modern languages at KS4.

The study finds that the evolving national policy imperative is understood and enacted locally in different and unequal ways according to a complex interplay of habitus, capital and field - the interplay of school specific factors, circumstances, contexts, histories, and the dispositions of school leaders. This determines the differing opportunities afforded to young people to learn a language at KS4. The Bourdieusian analysis suggests that, in the current political context of school accountability and linear examinations, schools' enactment of the language policy reform can be understood as a 'game within a game', and that the field of modern languages at KS4 cannot be seen in isolation from the broader education field which has a significant impact on how schools understand and enact language education policy. The research concludes that given the complex interrelated range of factors at play, sustainable change cannot be effected by schools alone and that action is required at all levels to address the inequalities that persist in language education at KS4. While individual schools and educators may exercise considerable agency and work hard to meet the language policy expectations at a local level, the multiplicity of factors and the tensions and contradictions made transparent in this research illuminate how these interrelated aspects need to be recognised and addressed at national and regional levels, as well as locally. The study puts forward a number of recommendations for action at these different levels.

The study also sheds light on opportunities for change and spaces for action. It offers positive examples of how schools strive to offer more equitable language learning opportunities for young people. The findings contribute to a more hopeful and critical discourse than the one that currently characterises language education in England by challenging taken-for-granted binaries and illuminating how educators are key actors rather than merely subjects in the language education policy process. The research also points to the need for educators to maintain a focus on the 'bigger picture' of why language learning matters in the 21st century in their day-to-day practices. It highlights the need for educators to exercise critical agency and to develop 'a feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990) in order to offer all young people an inclusive and high-quality modern languages education at KS4 which will enable them to embrace the linguistic and cultural diversity of the global 21st century.

Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is my original work. It does not include material previously presented for the award of a degree in this, or any other university.

Signed:

Lesley Hagger-Vaughan

15th March 2018

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One of the tasks of the progressive educator… is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be.

(Freire, 1994: 3)

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Contexts: educational and political

The world's population is becoming increasingly multilingual with over two thirds of children globally growing up bilingually (Crystal, 2012). Learning an additional language throughout compulsory schooling is also increasingly the norm across the world. This is not the case in England, which has seen a significant decline in the number of young people studying languages at upper secondary level in spite of the fact that the number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is increasing; 20.6% of primary school pupils and 16.2% of secondary school pupils have English as an additional language (DfE, 2017a: 10). However, fewer than 50% of 14-16-year olds in England gained a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in a modern language in 2017. There has been a fall of 44% since 2002 when the study of a language at KS4 was made optional (UCML, 2017). Research also suggests that those taking languages post 14 tend to be educated in the independent sector or are 'high attainers' in state secondary schools (Sutton Trust, 2015). This has led to a growing concern about restrictions in opportunities for many young people to build on and develop the necessary linguistic skills and intercultural competences with which to embrace the mobility and diversity of the global 21st century. A recent change to education policy requires 'the vast majority' of young people to study a language to GCSE level as part of the combination of subjects which form the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) performance measure (DfE, 2015a; DfE, 2017b) (Appendix 1).

Existing studies in the field of modern languages education often focus on pupils' perceptions of language learning (Evans and Fisher, 2009; Graham, 2004) or take the form of snap-shot surveys of language teachers' views (Tinsley and Board, 2016, 2017). There is a dearth of literature which draws on the voices of school leaders or explores how schools understand and enact language education policies.

The research therefore seeks to answer the following question and sub question:

Research question

How is the policy of extending modern languages provision at key stage 4 understood and enacted in English state secondary schools?

Sub-question

What are the benefits, enablers and challenges to extending the study of languages to the 'vast majority of pupils' within the key stage 4 curriculum?

The study was conducted between 2015-2017 at a time of significant political and educational policy change. The referendum vote by the UK to leave the European Union took place in June 2016. The backdrop to this was an ongoing negative discourse towards immigration, in which multilingualism and diversity are often portrayed as problematic (Creese and Blackledge, 2014; Lamb, 2015; Mitchell, 2014). In the political sphere, there was a change of Prime Minister (2016) and there have been four different Secretaries of State for Education since I commenced my research. Schools have been required to respond to a plethora of education reforms. The research period, then, has been characterised by a great deal of uncertainty and turbulence, compounded by the referendum vote to withdraw from the European Union which seems likely to have particular significance for language education in the longer term.

1.2 Contexts: personal and professional

This research study also emanates from my personal experiences of growing up bi-culturally with two languages, and from my professional experience of working for over twenty years in a school with pupils from a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds, for whom communicating in two or more languages was the norm. It arises from my concern that the 'languages world' operates within a bubble and that as language educators we have not involved school leaders in a debate about the contribution of language learning to a broad and balanced curriculum. I am troubled by the negative discourse which abounds with regard to diversity and multilingualism and I am worried that we have failed to clarify the advantages of learning an additional language and how this contributes to preparing young people for their lives as citizens in a diverse world in which they encounter different cultures and languages on their doorstep as well as further afield. I continue to grapple with

why learning a language at KS4 is not considered to be an essential part of a 'balanced and broadly-based curriculum which prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of later life' (Education Act, 2002: Section 78).

In my professional roles I have visited many schools and have been surprised by the very different opportunities young people are afforded to learn languages in the KS4 curriculum. I have also been frustrated by the way in which language education policy can be appropriated by commentators or educationalists with limited knowledge and often no experience of teaching languages across the age and ability range. I believe that this research will help to improve understanding of how schools make sense of language education policy and what needs to be done to improve matters to ensure a more socially just and equitable place for languages in the KS4 curriculum.

This section explains how I have come to the research outlined above drawing on both my personal and professional experiences and how this has led to the development of my own very specific lens. Two small but significant incidents offer some insight into how my current position has been formed. In a career in language education spanning over 35 years, I was moved to tears by a quotation from the Times Educational Supplement:

> My visit to [school X] was made in the week after the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US, and the Asian community had become a target of abuse based on ignorance and fear. The contrast with these articulate, broad-minded students was poignant. It was a privilege to meet them.
>
> (Thomas, 2001)

This reference was to the pupils at the school where I spent a large proportion of my career. These words captured our purpose in encouraging multilingualism within the curriculum; enabling pupils to thrive in an increasingly diverse world in which the ability to understand other cultures and the ability to communicate in other languages is essential for intercultural dialogue. A second critical incident for me took place at a conference in 2004. The keynote speaker was the BBC Security correspondent Frank Gardner, shot whilst filming in Saudi Arabia. Gardner, who is fluent in Arabic, offered a strong message about the importance of learning languages to understand other views and ways of thinking about the world. My pupils interviewed Gardner, school leaders and policy makers about the link between learning languages and world peace. They captured a variety of voices, among them this head teacher:

> In reality learning a language and learning about other people's culture is a way of understanding them… and the way of understanding them more clearly and empathising with them is to try to understand their language.
>
> (Headteacher B, 2004)

I grew up in an Anglo-Austrian family in a small town in the southwest of England. I was immersed in two languages and two cultures and experienced at first hand the benefits of being able to communicate across languages and cultures. From a very early age I found myself engaged in 'comparative study' - I recall Sunday meal times which often ended in an argument about, the pros and cons of the Austrian and English health services or education systems. This opened a window on different worlds to me and perhaps was the reason why I was prepared to challenge what was seen as the 'norm'. On the other hand, growing up with Austrian heritage post war in a small, largely monocultural town also meant that I experienced first-hand a mistrust of 'otherness' and 'difference'. I became adept at challenging assumptions. I told stories of the annexation of Austria, which my mother witnessed at the age of 11 and introduced some of my peers to unfamiliar central European cuisine, now commonplace in the Lidls of 2017. My decision to study German at university gave me an opportunity to explore and develop my Austrian linguistic and cultural identity. Studying at Birmingham University also meant that I suddenly found myself in a more diverse and culturally rich environment in which I instantly felt at home. Later, I had an opportunity to study at the Free University in Berlin which provided another opportunity to experience two different cultures on either side of the Wall and to challenge simplistic assumptions about East and West.

I began my career teaching languages in an urban secondary school in Birmingham and then as an English teacher in Germany. I was fortunate to work at the Gesamtschule Köln-Höhenhaus which, along with the IGS Köln-Holweide, was one of a number of comprehensive schools to have been afforded special status to develop their own curriculum model. The school drew on the ideas of Peter Petersen and placed 'soziales Lernen' (social learning) at its heart, through its team structure, 'Team-Kleingruppen-Modell' and integrated core curriculum, 'Kern'. 'Kern' is the distinguishing feature of the Höhenhaus model. It comprises integrated cross-curricular modules underpinned by an inquiry-based approach. This single year teaching in Germany was particularly influential in the development of my own theory of practice. On my return to England it instilled in me the confidence to challenge the status quo in my school where I felt the curriculum did not value or build on the skills of its bilingual pupils. I set up an exchange with IGS Köln-

Holweide and continued to draw on their ideas and practices and combined them with my own evolving ideas around pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. Studying for a degree of Master of Education also allowed me to explore and deepen my understanding of alternative approaches to comprehensive education. In a single case study, I considered how the ideas of John Dewey (1916, 1938) had influenced Peter Petersen and had led to the establishment of what was known as the Team-Kleingruppen-Modell at IGS Köln-Höhenhaus and examined the limitations and possibilities of reform in an 'alternative comprehensive school' within a tripartite framework (Hagger-Vaughan, 1986).

A large proportion of my career has been spent working in one linguistically and culturally rich urban school. I miss the dynamism and diversity of the school, the pupils and its communities. While the school was situated in an economically disadvantaged area it provided a rich and dynamic environment for learning languages. Developing intercultural competence and learning languages were regarded as life skills for all pupils, and this was underpinned by a belief in making language learning real (Dewey, 1916). A key influence was Eric Hawkins, whose ideas on Language Awareness (1981), together with the experience I gained working in Germany, led me to restructure the languages curriculum. I established an introductory 'All our Languages', programme to build on the linguistic skills of our many bilingual pupils. All pupils studied at least one language throughout KS3 and KS4 choosing from a range of world languages. This structural change was underpinned by a broader intercultural focus which permeated the whole curriculum. This was combined with a pedagogy which enabled young people to develop transferable language skills and apply their language skills in meaningful contexts (Hagger-Vaughan et al., 2004).

Another significant period in my career which led me to this research is the period that I spent working for the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) first as a consultant and later as a curriculum advisor. Following the decision by the Conservative-led coalition to close a number of arms-lengths bodies including QCDA in 2011 I found it a difficult task to 'wind up' the valuable work of schools and to see much of this support and guidance relegated to the National Archive or 'lost', despite the best efforts of the modern languages lead at the DfE. After the closure of QCDA, in common with many other colleagues from national agencies and local authorities who lost their jobs, I 'lost my voice'. Although it would have been straightforward to find a platform as an education commentator I have

been on a journey to gain a stronger, more research-informed voice. My work on the professional doctorate has led me to view my policy work through a more theoretically-informed lens. This dual role as a language education policy actor and researcher brings uncomfortable challenges but also a rich lens through which to construct my research. This is especially pertinent at a time in which the debate about the place of languages has gained prominence in the light of the policy announcement which includes a language as one of the core of 'academic' subjects within the English Baccalaureate to be studied by the 'vast majority of pupils' (DfE, 2015a).

As I write, the flight of the Syrian refugees becomes more acute and an ability to find a collaborative approach to supporting refugees and migrants appears to threaten the premise of the European Union. The future of the 'European Project' has been further destabilised by the UK referendum vote in favour of leaving the EU and the rise of populist parties in a number of European states. As the daughter of a brave, post-war Austrian immigrant (Trestler, 2014) I have had the privilege of growing up with two cultures and two languages. This has led me to value 'otherness' and 'difference' and to regard plurilingualism as an asset. My mother's passing has made me more determined to complete this study and to acknowledge this important gift she gave me. I have moved from being faintly embarrassed by my 'otherness' to regarding it as an important aspect of who I am. As a language educator I am acutely aware of the different interpretations and translations that can be brought to narratives through individual lenses. My own lens is shaped by growing up bi-culturally; which I believe has given me confidence to challenge what is considered the norm and to suggest other possibilities.

Pillow (2010: 275) suggests that our reflexivity can only be 'as strong, as rigorous, as our own knowledge base and our abilities to continually and critically interrogate our knowledge and constructions'. My study is underpinned by a commitment to social justice and a firm belief in the potential that education offers for improving life chances and opportunities (Ozga, 2000) but also a concern that current language education policy and its enactment are not yet providing equality of educational opportunity. As an education professional involved in some of the studies, policies and reports discussed in the literature review below, I do not wish to diminish the work of colleagues in the languages world. However, breaking out of the 'languages bubble' will enable me to 'add to the conversation' (Thomson, 2015) and to

contribute to a better understanding of what helps and hinders schools to make sense of language education policy in their own contexts.

1.3 The structure of the thesis

The thesis commences with this introductory chapter which outlines the focus and the educational and political context of my research. I set out my research questions, discuss my positionality and explain how I have come to the research. Chapter 2 comprises a literature review. I explore the literatures which relate to language education and education policy enactment. This provides an interface between the two fields and sets the context for my study. The review considers the key debates which surround the 'place' of modern languages in the KS4 curriculum in an era of globalisation and superdiversity and discusses how the notions of 'multilingualism' and 'plurilingualism' are portrayed in the literatures. I explore some of the education policy enactment literatures and focus in particular on Ball's work on policy enactment. Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology and methods I have adopted in order to answer my research questions. I explain how I have drawn on Thomson and Hall's work on place-based approaches for researching schools (2017) and have adopted an interpretive, multiple case study approach to gain a nuanced understanding of how schools make sense of language education policy. I explain how I have employed Ball et al.'s 'tentative' theory of 'policy enactment' (2012) and Bourdieu's thinking tools of habitus, capital and field (1986) as lenses through which to analyse my findings. Chapter 4 reports the findings of the research. I present three individual portraits of the case study schools which illuminate the ways in which each school interprets and enacts language education policy at KS4. In chapter 5 I present a cross-case analysis in which I consider the particularities and patterns which emerge from the data and in chapter 6 I view the contested and changing field of participation in modern languages at KS4 through a Bourdieusian lens. This provides an opportunity to examine the taken-for-granteds in the field and get beyond some of the binaries which often characterise language education. Chapter 7 sets out the implications of the research and offers a number of recommendations as to what could be done at a micro, meso and macro level to support schools to extend the study of languages to the 'vast majority of pupils' at KS4. I point to further questions which have arisen from the study and reaffirm my commitment to working as an advocate for a more socially just languages education for young people.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction and rationale

In this chapter I explore selected literatures which have been defined and refined by the needs of the study. I initially employ a scoping approach (Thomson, 2012) which allows me to identify key debates in the field(s) and gaps in the literature. Alongside the personal context outlined in chapter 1 this helps to shape the research questions. My review of the literatures has been an evolving process in parallel with my data collection and analysis, responsive to the themes which emerged from the data and the broader social and political backdrop.

The literature review is divided into four inter-related sections which are relevant to the key themes of my research:

- Language education in an era of globalisation and superdiversity
- The language education landscape in England
- Language education policy from 1988
- Education policy

It is the relationship between language education and education policy enactment which is at the heart of my study. The research therefore brings a wider educational perspective and lens to a debate which is often conducted in silos and can lead to a recycling of arguments amongst language educators and to a polarised debate which is seemingly disconnected from wider educational and political concerns. The review therefore provides this important interface between the fields, sets the context for my study and the foundation for addressing my research questions.

2.1.1 Some thoughts on terminology

A review of the literatures immediately highlights how terminology is used interchangeably and variably in language education. This reflects the breadth and diversity of the field and of theoretical understandings in relation to the learning of an 'additional language', a 'second language' (L2), a 'foreign language', a 'modern (foreign) language', a 'heritage language', or 'language(s)'. For example, the term 'foreign languages' is contested in a context in which 'globalisation is understood as blurring distinctions between the international and the domestic, the global and the local and in so doing affects a new spatiality to politics' (Ozga and Lingard, 2007: 65). Blommaert (2010) suggests that globalisation and superdiversity (Vertovec,

2007) have led to a fluidity of the 'places' in which languages are spoken and encountered, which requires the problematisation of the concept of 'foreign' languages (Lo Bianco, 2014). The term 'language' is increasingly used in the field to reflect an interconnected world where many different languages and cultures are encountered both locally and virtually, in addition to when travelling to 'foreign' countries. Meanwhile Guilherme (2018: 88) has coined the term 'glocal languages' to capture the diverse uses and contexts of languages.

In the context of secondary schools in England the terms modern foreign languages (MFL) or modern languages (ML) are most commonly used. I have found making decisions on terminology problematical in the course of writing this thesis which perhaps reflects the changing and complex nature of the field as highlighted by the Douglas Fir Group (2016). This group of North American scholars has devised a 'transdisciplinary framework for SLA in a multilingual world' to better address the 'multilingual realities of the 21st century'. They highlight their unease about 'certain labels' and their concern that terminology is often laden with 'deficit ideologies' which have been frequently contested (2016: 21). For the purposes of the review I will use the terminology employed by different authors and participants and I will endeavour to clarify and qualify my meanings. I am aware that the readers of my work may bring different understandings and interpretations.

2.2 Language education in an era of globalisation and superdiversity

2.2.1 Globalisation and superdiversity

Blommaert and Rampton (2011: 1) suggest that 'there is a growing awareness that over the past two decades globalisation has altered the face of social, cultural and linguistic diversity in societies across the world'. Globalisation is a problematic and contested notion and subject to different interpretations (Bourdieu, 2003; Giddens, 2011; Hobsbawm, 2007; Taylor, 2004). According to Rizvi and Lingard (2010) globalisation refers not only to shifts in patterns of transnational economic activities, especially with respect to the movement of capital and finance, but also to the ways in which contemporary political and cultural configurations have been reshaped by major advances in information technologies. Drawing on Taylor (2004) they suggest that the idea of globalisation represents both an 'ideological formation and a social imaginary that shapes the discourses of education policy' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 23). Taylor (2004: 24) understands 'social imaginary' as:

> The ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations.

Taylor adopts the term 'imaginary' rather than 'theory' as his interest is in how 'ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings'. He sees 'social imaginary' as 'the common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy'. Rizvi and Lingard argue that while a 'neoliberal global imaginary' has become dominant this 'social imaginary' of globalisation can and should be challenged, as alternatives are possible.

Rizvi and Lingard suggest that under globalisation the assumption of discrete nation cultural formations is challenged, due to an increasing level of cultural interactions across national and ethnic communities. Education policy is often linked to the construction of the imagined community of the nation and to issues of difference and national identities (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 17). However, they also point to policy talk about 'the need for education to produce global, cosmopolitan citizens able to value and work with difference' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 16). Appadurai (1996) notes how growing interconnectedness brings with it the potential for international understanding and cooperation on the one hand and reactionary politics and xenophobia on the other. Bloomaert (2010) also argues that migration has 'fuelled' the influence of the right-wing and led to increased nationalism and national chauvinism in European societies which has altered the face of multilingualism. It is these tensions and the associated possibilities and limitations which are particularly pertinent to language education.

Block and Cameron (2002) suggest that as language is so central to human interaction it needs particular consideration within the context of 'globalisation'. Given the development of technologies which enable people to interact across the world, 'globalisation changes the conditions in which language learning and language teaching take place' (Block and Cameron, 2002: 5). They argue that under globalisation 'communication skills', as well as competence in one or more second language, represent valuable 'linguistic capital' with language regarded as an 'economic commodity'. This 'commodification of language' affects people's motivations and their choices about which languages to learn, which in turn impacts on the resources allocated for language education. They suggest that increased mobility as a result of globalisation leads to intense movements across national borders which produces increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse populations

within them. In a similar manner to Rizvi and Lingard they argue that this calls into question traditional representations of the 'imagined community' and makes possible plural or hybrid identities.

In a similar vein, Blommaert conceptualises globalisation as 'a shorthand for the intensified flows of capital, goods, people, images and discourse around the globe, driven by technological innovations… resulting in new patterns of global activity, community organisation and culture' (2010: 13). He views language, in an age of superdiversity, as 'something intrinsically and perpetually mobile, through space as well as time, and made for mobility'. Drawing on Vertovec (2007) he conceptualises superdiversity as 'an increased mobility and an explosion of new technologies so that consequently, the idea of stability in social, cultural and linguistic formations can no longer be presupposed because of a disappearance of predictability' (Bloomaert, 2010: 13).

Vertovec (2014) explains how by coining the term 'superdiversity', he aimed to address the changing nature of global migration which has brought with it transformative 'diversification of diversity'. This has not only occurred in relation to the movements of people reflecting more ethnicities, languages and countries of origin, but also with respect to a 'multiplication of significant variables that affect where, how and with whom people live' (Vertovec, 2014: 1). In spite of a 'superdiversity turn' in the social sciences, the construct of 'superdiversity' has been subject to varied interpretations and critique (Blackledge et al., 2017; Deumert, 2014; Makoni, 2012; Pavlenko, 2016). Makoni (2012) has raised concerns about the Eurocentric perspective of 'superdiversity' while Pavlenko (2016: 1) suggests that 'the rise of superdiversity is a result of concerted strategic efforts, known as academic branding'. Meanwhile Blackledge et al. (2017: 3) see the strengths in the notion of superdiversity in its 'potential to offer an interdisciplinary perspective on change and complexity in changing social and cultural worlds':

> It seeks to critique the ideological and structural apparatus of neoliberalism, to address inequality in all its forms, to situate its analysis historically, to be adaptable to different global contexts and temporal scales, and to have practical application to improve people's lives.

Borrowing from Bourdieu they conceive superdiversity to be a 'theory of practice', and as a 'contingent and ideological orientation to difference' (ibid.: 9).

The notion of superdiversity, is also increasingly employed in the literatures relating to language education (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Lamb, 2015; Mitchell, 2014). The Douglas Fir Group (2016: 23) notes:

> What globalization has accomplished is a heightened awareness of the reality of multilingualism in Western societies… indeed, diversity is now being felt on an unprecedented scale, prompting anthropologists and, subsequently, sociolinguists and scholars in many other social science fields to use the term superdiversity.

Lamb (2015: 153) takes the view that 'if tempered with a critical awareness of the hegemonic forces engendering social and cultural reproduction, superdiversity as a construct can counter the limitations of binary explanations, suggesting bottom-up ethnographic and participatory approaches to research and action with linguistic communities themselves'.

2.2.2 Defining multilingualism and plurilingualism

According to the Douglas Fir Group (2016: 19):

> Multilingualism has been catapulted to a new world order in the 21st century...social relations, knowledge structures, and webs of power are experienced by many people as highly mobile and interconnected - for good and for bad - as a result of broad socio-political events and global markets.

In the context of the discussions above relating to the changing conceptualisation of languages in an era of globalisation and superdiversity, it is important to consider the notions of multilingualism and plurilingualism which are often used interchangeably in the field alongside other concepts such as 'translanguaging' (García, 2009), 'metrolingualism' (Pennycook, 2010) and 'linguistic repertoires' (Blommaert, 2010). Below I explore a number of definitions of multilingualism and plurilingualism from the literatures. Blommaert (2010: 102) suggests that:

> Multilingualism should not be seen as a collection of 'languages' that a speaker controls, but rather as a complex of specific semiotic resources, some of which belong to a conventionally defined language, while others belong to another 'language'.

He goes on to argue that multilingualism does not describe separate competences in fixed and labelled languages. Meanwhile, Weber and Horner (2012: 3) understand multilingualism as a dynamic, evolving linguistic repertoire:

> Multilingualism is a matter of degree, a continuum and since we all use different linguistic varieties, registers, styles, genres and accents, we are all to a greater or lesser degree multilingual…the varieties, etc. that we use

> constitute our linguistic repertoire. Moreover, repertoires are not static but dynamic, since the resources in them change over time.

Coste et al. (2009: v), writing for the European Language Policy Division, note that a 'focus on the individual as the locus and actor of contact encouraged a shift of terminology, from multilingualism (the study of societal contact) to plurilingualism'. They also suggest that languages and speakers' plurilingual and pluricultural competence should be perceived as 'fluid, dynamic and changing over situations and time'. The Council of Europe makes the following distinction between plurilingualism and multilingualism:

> Plurilingualism is the ability to use more than one language – and accordingly sees languages from the standpoint of speakers and learners. Multilingualism, on the other hand, refers to the presence of several languages in a given geographical area, regardless of those who speak them.
>
> (Beacco et al., 2010: 16)

This distinction is now increasingly adopted in the literatures. For example, according to Lamb (2015: 152) multilingualism refers to 'the presence of a range of languages in social spaces…' and 'plurilingualism refers to 'an individual's capacity to use a range of languages'. Meanwhile, Cummins (2014: 4) suggests that this distinction between 'plurilingualism' and 'multilingualism' is less common in many contexts where the term 'multilingualism' 'tends to be used inclusively to refer to both individual and societal linguistic diversity'. For example, the Arts and Humanities Research Council Open World Research Initiative Multilingualism: empowering individuals, transforming societies (MEITS) defines being multilingual as having 'linguistic competence in more than one language' (2017: 1).

2.2.3 Discourses around multilingualism

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) highlights the importance of multilingualism and diversity. Diversity is understood to be 'humanity's greatest source of creativity and wealth' and multilingualism 'an essential requirement for intercultural dialogue and communication in a globalized world' (UNESCO, 2013: 16). According to UNESCO (2017: 1):

> Languages, with their complex implications for identity, communication, social integration, education and development, are of strategic importance for people and the planet. There is growing awareness that languages play a vital role in development, in ensuring cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, but also in attaining quality education for all and strengthening cooperation.

Education is conceptualized as an ‘essential common good’, as a transformative force ‘to promote human rights and dignity, to eradicate poverty and deepen sustainability, to build a better future for all, founded on equal rights and social justice, respect for cultural diversity, and international solidarity and shared responsibility’ (UNESCO, 2015: 40). This resonates with me as a researcher and provides an optimistic framework within which to conceptualise languages education, an approach which goes beyond ‘narrow utilitarianism and economism’ and takes a step beyond the ‘neo-liberal social imaginary of globalism’ (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 23). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also highlights the importance of multilingualism and emphasises the importance of language and intercultural skills as key global competences (OECD, 2017) that will enable young people to work globally and live in increasingly heterogeneous communities. This asset-based discourse stands in sharp contrast to the deficit discourse around linguistic and cultural diversity in the UK.

> **‘From Afghan to Zulu: The voice of our classrooms - 130 languages in city schools.**
>
> The Express and Star can today exclusively reveal the true diversity of Wolverhampton’s classrooms, with school children speaking more than 130 languages.
>
> (Wolverhampton Express and Star, 4.11.2014)

At a first glance the colourful and eye-catching front page of a regional newspaper appears to celebrate diversity and the linguistic skills and talents of the many pupils in its schools. Closer reading reveals that in fact this is not the case. Instead the focus of the article is on the ‘problems’ that linguistic diversity brings. This example reflects the wider socio-political context within which modern languages education in schools in England is situated. It is often characterised by a dominant monolingual discourse and prevailing negative attitudes towards immigration, in which multilingualism is often portrayed as problematic rather than seen as a benefit for all and a valuable resource for 21st century communication (Blackledge et al., 2017; Evans, 2007; Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese, 2012; Mitchell, 2014; Pachler, 2007).

In their analysis of the media coverage of the ‘UK language learning crisis’, Lanvers and Coleman (2017) argue that the media perpetuate the ‘English is enough’ fallacy.

Coleman suggests that 'the negativity of public opinion, itself echoed and shaped by the media and by Government, is stronger than the positivity of those within Government and education' (Coleman, 2009: 112). He argues that multilingualism is often linked to immigration and is frequently constructed as a problem or a threat to national unity in public discourse. For example:

> So many settlers have arrived in Boston, Lincolnshire, that 65 languages are spoken in a market town of only 70,000 inhabitants.
>
> (Daily Mail 23.4.2008 cited in Coleman, 2008: 120)

Furthermore, he believes that language professionals have failed to make the case that 'bilingualism is a resource not a problem, an asset not a deficit' (Coleman, 2009: 122). The MEITS (2017: 1) research project mentioned above, seeks to counter this deficit discourse and to provide evidence of how multilingualism can 'empower individuals and transform societies'.

2.2.4 Language education in the context of multilingualism

According to Martin-Jones et al. (2012: 1) the last twenty years have been characterised by an expanding interest in multilingualism due to the 'significant linguistic, cultural and demographic changes that have been ushered in by globalisation, transnational population flows'. In spite of these shifts, they point to the enduring nature of monolingual ideologies and note the persistence in both public and political discourse that 'citizens of a one-nation state should have just one shared language' (Martin-Jones et al., 2012: 3). New strands of research on multilingualism have emerged over the last two decades (Arnaut et al., 2015; Blommaert, 2010; Cenoz and Gorter, 2015; Martin Jones et al., 2012; May, 2014; Weber and Horner, 2012).

Cenoz and Gorter (2015: 13) argue that the study of multilingualism has taken on new character and significance due to globalisation and that it 'demonstrates the intersection of social and individual perspectives as multilingualism is taught and enacted in educational settings around the world'. Coffey and Wingate (2018: 1) suggest that:

> The recent proliferation of ways of talking about multilingualism reflects the inadequacy of applying descriptive frames that are grounded in modern nation-state sensibilities to our age of late modern diversity, as observers try to account for what people actually do with language in the social world.

Hélot (2012: 214) argues that there is a need to challenge the 'monolingual habitus' (Gogolin, 2011) prevalent in many schools. She suggests that in education systems characterised by an ideology of linguistic uniformity, addressing and encompassing linguistic diversity is problematic, because 'many schools see themselves as linguistically and culturally homogenous spaces'. Anderson (2011: 135) adopts a more optimistic tone and notes that ideas about the nature and goals of second/foreign language learning have changed 'as an awareness of global interdependence and of the importance of intercultural communication has grown'. This has seen increased importance placed on both linguistic and intercultural competence and the development of 'plurilingualism'. This theme of rethinking language education in the context of globalisation and superdiversity is taken up by Kramsch (2014; 2016). She argues that 'through its mobility of people and capital, its global technologies, and its global information networks, globalization has changed the conditions under which foreign languages (FLs) are taught, learned, and used' (Kramsch, 2014: 296). Kramsch argues that there is a need to reconceptualise what is meant by FL teaching 'as we move from a modern to a late modern perspective of language education' (Kramsch, 2014: 297). She highlights how these modern and late modern worlds 'co-exist with increasing unease' (Kramsch, 2014: 297) and points to a growing tension between what is taught in the FL classroom and what students will actually need when they have left the classroom and find themselves in the 'real world'.

Building on her seminal paper, *The Cultural Component of Language Teaching* (1995) she highlights the centrality of combining linguistic skills with intercultural competences in order to equip young people to 'prepare pupils for the 'hybrid heteroglossic reality of the world outside' (Kramsch, 2014: 297). Similarly, Scarino (2010: 324) suggests that by adopting an intercultural approach:

> students decentre from their linguistic and cultural world to consider their own situatedness from the perspective of another. They learn to constantly move between their linguistic and cultural world and that of the users of the target language. In this process, they come to understand culture not only as information about diverse people and their practices but also, and most importantly, as the contextual framework that people use to exchange meaning in communication with others and through which they understand their social world.

Lo Bianco (2014) also draws attention to the important 'interplay between language education and globalization' which demands a new understanding of the 'enterprise of language education' (Lo Bianco, 2014: 312). He asserts that globalisation has influenced foreign language education leading to a destabilisation of the ideas that

have formed ‘national languages’ and ‘foreign languages’ and a ‘domesticating of the foreign’ (Lo Bianco, 2014: 312). He argues that there is a need to challenge the assumptions we make ‘as a result of seeing languages as foreign’ and to reorganise the field of languages ‘in light of contemporary globalization’ (Lo Bianco, 2014: 316). He suggests that language educators are often ‘barricaded behind walls of professional identity’ and that a better professional dialogue is required in order to provide a more coherent and effective language education with a focus on multi-cultural and multilingual realities rather than ‘foreign’ languages (Lo Bianco, 2014: 312).

2.3 The language education landscape in England

2.3.1 The English context

According to Crystal (2012), the world is becoming increasingly multilingual however, the Eurobarometer Survey (2012) found that only 39% of UK citizens are able to take part in a conversation in a language other than their mother tongue in comparison to the European average of 54%. Meanwhile the 2011 UK Census reported that eight per cent of all residents reported that English was not their main language (Office for National Statistics, 2013). Concerns have also been expressed about low levels of language proficiency amongst young people (European Commission, 2012). The European Survey of Language Competence (2012) found that young people in England had the ‘weakest’ foreign language skills amongst the participating countries. This is perhaps unsurprising given the limited amount of time allocated to language study in England (OECD, 2014). Lanvers and Coleman (2017: 3) suggest that the poor outcomes of the survey ‘jar with the linguistically diverse demographics of the UK, where 17.5% of primary and 12.9% of secondary school pupils speak languages other than English’. This paradox of multilingualism and monolingualism within the UK (Lanvers, 2011) indicates a failure to harness England’s linguistic and cultural diversity and to value the ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll et al., 1992) of the increasing number of bilingual pupils in schools.

The past decade has also seen a decline in the proportion of young people learning languages post-14 in English state schools since languages were removed from the compulsory core at KS4 in 2004. Learning an additional language throughout compulsory education is increasingly the norm in Europe and across the world, with the OECD considering the inclusion of ‘foreign language skills’ in future tests in the Programme for International Student Assessment or PISA (OECD, 2017). In spite of

the introduction of the EBacc Performance measure in 2010, fewer than 50% of 14-16-year-olds in England gained a modern languages GCSE in 2017. The number of young people taking a modern languages GCSE dropped by 43.60% between 2002 and 2017 (UCML, 2017). In 2002 there was a total of 565,285 entries for a languages GCSE, dropping to 318,794 in 2017.

The Education Act (2002) requires all English schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and yet the place of modern languages within the curriculum at KS4 is contested. This reflects the wider debate concerning language skills and language education in an increasingly multilingual world, where speaking more than one language is commonplace (All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Modern Languages, 2014; British Council, 2013; CBI, 2016; Nuffield, 2000). At the heart of this debate is a question of whether learning a language should be a core component of the education of all young people throughout their compulsory schooling (Crystal, 2012; DfE, 2011a; DfE, 2015a; DfES, 2002a; Macaro, 2008; Mitchell, 2014; Pachler, 2007). The teaching of a language is currently mandatory in maintained schools in England at KS2 and KS3 and an entitlement at KS4. French, Spanish and German are the most commonly taught languages in English state secondary schools. However, recent education policy now requires the majority of pupils (DfE, 2015a, 2017b; Morgan, 2015) to study a language (modern or ancient) through to GCSE level. This is likely to require significant curriculum change in many secondary schools in order to extend languages provision within the KS4 curriculum.

Although academies and free schools are not required to follow the National Curriculum, they are required to have a curriculum that satisfies the requirements of Section 78 of the Education Act (2002) as set out in the Academies Act (2010). This means that all state schools are required to offer a curriculum which is ‘balanced and broadly based’; a curriculum that ‘promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils’ and ‘prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life’ (Education Act, 2002: Section 78). It is for schools to define a balanced and broadly-based curriculum in their local context and to determine the place of languages in that curriculum. However, the Ofsted inspection framework and accountability measures play a significant role in framing expectations and curriculum decisions (Ball, Maguire and Braun, 2012). Therefore, the aforementioned policy announcement that ‘at least 90% of pupils in mainstream secondary schools’ should study the ‘core academic

subjects' to GCSE as part of the English Baccalaureate (DfE, 2015a: 19), has brought renewed focus to the debate about the place of modern languages in the KS4 curriculum.

2.3.2 The European context

In the context of debates about the UK's membership of the European Union and subsequent vote in favour of leaving the European Union, it is unsurprising that language education policy in England falls short of the recommendations of European policy. The cornerstone of European language education policy is the promotion of 'plurilingualism'. The Council of Europe (COE) encourages the learning and use of languages in order to support intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and democratic citizenship. It is considered to be an important economic asset in a modern knowledge-based society. Particular emphasis is placed on improving the language skills of school leavers and promoting the learning of two languages in addition to the mother tongue. This strategic approach is outlined in 'Multilingualism – an asset for Europe and a shared commitment' (European Commission, 2008). According to the COE (2014: 2):

> Linguistic diversity is a fundamental component of European culture and intercultural dialogue, and the ability to communicate in a language other than one's mother tongue is acknowledged to be one of the key competences which citizens should seek to acquire.

A particular emphasis is placed on increasing commitment to and engagement with language learning in order to reduce the number of learners who abandon studying languages before gaining 'an adequate level of proficiency' (COE, 2014: 4). The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) facilitates support for this policy strand. Unfortunately, language educators in England are missing out on collaboration with the ECML, since the UK's funding was withdrawn in 2012.

In 2014 the European Council agreed to assess progress in the development of language competences. The assessment is based on: 'the percentage of pupils age 15 or, where, appropriate due to national circumstances, 14 or 16 years old, who attain the level of independent user (B1) in the second language studies (main language of instruction is considered the first language)' (COE, 2014: 5). Member states were invited with regard for the principle of subsidiarity and in accordance with national circumstances, to:

> Adopt and improve measures aimed at promoting multilingualism and enhancing the quality and efficiency of language learning and teaching, including by teaching at least two languages in addition to the main

> language(s) of instruction from an early age and by exploring the potential of innovative approaches to the development of language competences.
>
> (Council of Europe, 2014: 3)

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) suggests that the European Commission can be seen as a transnational policy actor with the capacity to steer policy priorities in education (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: xii). There is, however, little evidence to suggest that European language education policy has influenced language education policy in England.

Broady et al. (2016: 269) take the view that while previously EU membership had offered a meaningful context to develop linguistic and intercultural competence, 'this vision of a plurilingual, more integrated Europe… was not one that the referendum majority chose to identify with'. They suggest that membership of the EU appears to have had limited impact on motivation for language learning in the past and voice a concern that the referendum vote may lead to a reinforcement of 'negative social attitudes towards language learning' (Broady et al., 2016: 269). Research points to an increase in negativity towards 'foreigners' and 'otherness' and a rise in 'linguistic xenophobia' (Baynham et al., 2016) and also a rise in hate crimes in the weeks leading up to and following the referendum vote according to Mark Hamilton, Head of the National Police Chiefs' Council (2016).

Broady et al. (2016) emphasise the increased importance of promoting plurilingualism in the wake of the UK's vote to withdraw from the European Union. There is a concern that leaving the EU may lead to the loss of access to valuable programmes such as Erasmus +, and exacerbate problems with language teacher recruitment and retention, given that 36% of teachers are EU nationals (Kelly, 2017) particularly at a time when there are proposals to extend the number of pupils studying modern languages at KS4. In this context Kelly (2017: vii) emphasises the importance to the UK of people who speak 'other languages':

> We have more need than ever of such people. Without them, our country will struggle to renegotiate its cultural and commercial relationships with the rest of Europe and will struggle to build new relationships with other international partners.

2.3.3 The place of English

The position of English as a global language has been explored extensively in the literature (Coffey and Wingate, 2018; Crystal, 2012; Graddol, 2007; Guilherme, 2007; Kramsch, 2014; Lo Bianco, 2014). The place of English as a global language

of international communication brings particular challenges and opportunities for second language learning. Kramsch notes that globalisation has increased the competition between the languages taught at educational institutions around the world – with global English as the 'front runner' (Kramsch, 2014). In many countries English is increasingly framed as a 'basic skill' (Lo Bianco, 2014) and whilst the rest of the world is becoming multilingual, there has been a decline in second language learning in English speaking countries (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010). Lo Bianco and Slaughter (2009: 8) refer to 'an anglophonic reluctance to becoming bilingual' whilst Lanvers (2011: 63) points to a 'tacit assumption that English is enough', suggesting that this has had a major influence on language education policies and practices in the UK. Graddol (2007) warns that as increasingly millions of students globally are able to speak English and at least one other language, the career prospects of monolingual young people in England could be restricted. Mitchell (2014) also highlights the disadvantages of being monolingual in a fluctuating global language system, which is seeing the rise of other global languages. According to the Internet World Statistics, although English is still the most widely used language on the Internet the figure dropped from 51.3% in 2000 to 26.8% of internet users in 2011 (Cenoz and Gorter, 2015: 1). While there is strong support for the proposition that 'English is not enough' amongst language education professionals and advocates (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages, 2014; Nuffield, 2000), this is not universally accepted, as the review of the literatures below illustrates.

2.3.4 Languages –the academic/vocational divide

Rose (2004) suggests that one of the most influential dichotomies in the lives of young people is the distinction between 'academic' and 'vocational' and how this influences the school curriculum, qualifications and pathways that they follow. The contradictions and consequences of this distinction affect the place of languages at KS4, with languages typically framed as an 'academic' subject (DfE, 2010). This is further complicated by a lack of clear definitions in education policy of 'vocational' and 'academic' learning. The Wolf Report (2011), suggests that vocational learning is suited to 'those whose aptitudes and talents are practical' and vocational qualifications, known as technical awards are described as qualifications 'which equip students with applied knowledge and associated practical skills' while academic GCSEs include Mathematics, English, Science, History, Geography and a Language (DfE, 2015a: 4). The Wolf Review led to the removal of a range of 'alternative' modern language qualifications which had been designed to cater for a broader range of abilities, interests and purposes. This notion of languages as an

'academic' activity was implicit in the removal of languages from the compulsory subjects to be studied at KS4 in 2004 (Sewell, 2004), as explored later in the chapter. It is explicit within current educational policy (DfE, 2010; Gibb, 2015) with languages framed as a 'traditional subject discipline' – 'the curriculum should embody rigour and high standards and outline a core of knowledge in the traditional subject disciplines' (DfE, 2010: 4.8).

King (2004) questions the assumption that language learning is an 'academic pursuit', when millions of people across the world of all backgrounds, ages and abilities learn a second language and the use of more than one language is common practice in daily life. This framing of languages as an 'academic' subject rather than one which equips students with applied knowledge and associated skills highlights the contradictions of a vocational/academic divide and is at odds with the purpose of learning a second language. Meanwhile Byram's notion of 'intercultural communicative competence' (Byram, Holmes and Savvides, 2013) conceptualizes a meaningful languages curriculum as one which combines the development of both linguistic and intercultural competence. It integrates the ability to understand and manipulate linguistic structures and apply them in meaningful contexts (Lightbown and Spada, 2013) in order to communicate effectively, with the development of 'a greater critical awareness of ourselves and others' and 'thereby becoming more adequately educated for an international world' (Byram, 2008: 18).

2.3.5 Modern languages perceived as a 'difficult' subject

Another perception which features prominently in the debate surrounding the place of languages in the KS4 curriculum is that learning a modern language is 'difficult', a theme which emerges from several studies that have researched young people's attitudes towards language learning (Evans and Fisher, 2009; Filmer-Sankey and Marshall, 2010; Graham, 2004). This has implications for pupils' perceptions of languages and progression routes. An ongoing debate surrounds the complaint that gaining a 'good' GCSE in a modern language is a greater challenge than in some other subjects due to the perceived 'severe grading' of modern languages (ASCL et al.,2014, 2017; Dearing & King, 2007; Myers, 2006; QCA, 2008). Teachers participating in the 2016 Language Trends Survey also pointed to the comparative difficulty of modern language exams in relation to other subjects and harsh and inconsistent marking (Tinsley and Board, 2016).

According to the RSA's Open Public Services Network, the pressure on schools to perform well in league tables is having a direct impact on the opportunities afforded

to young people to learn languages at KS4. Their report found that 'the curriculum a pupil will be taught varies according to whether they live in a wealthy or poor neighbourhood' (RSA, 2015: 8). For example, pupils in 'wealthy Kensington', were four times more likely to be enrolled for a language GCSE than pupils in 'poorer Middlesbrough' where only one child in every four takes a language GCSE (RSA, 2015: 8). However, there are a number of local education authorities in the lowest deprivation quintile where more pupils are taking languages, possibly due to the linguistic diversity of these areas (RSA, 2015). The RSA Director of Public Services criticised school leaders for 'dumbing down' the curriculum, arguing that they should be aiming to improve the standard of their teaching rather than narrowing the curriculum in order to achieve better grades.

2.3.6 The cases for modern languages education - in England

The importance of language skills and language education in an increasingly multilingual world, where speaking more than one language is commonplace, has been the focus of numerous reports, research studies and policy documents (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages, 2014; British Council, 2013; CBI, 2016; Crystal, 2012; DfE, 2002b; DfE, 2010; DfE, 2017b; Mitchell, 2014; Nuffield, 2000). A review of the literature reveals conflicting and divergent rationales and cases for modern languages education. These range from an instrumental skills rationale which conceives of language skills as essential for economic success (CBI, 2016) to a more holistic, humanistic approach which combines notions of social justice with the cognitive benefits and importance of learning languages for the purposes of global citizenship and intercultural understanding (Byram, 2008; Kramsch, 2014; Mitchell, 2014; Pachler, 2007; UNESCO, 2013).

McLelland (2017: 25) employs a historical lens to discuss the 'changing values and legitimacies' in making the case for languages. She notes how the rationales and goals for the teaching of modern languages have varied over the last century. For example, the Leathes Report (1918) placed a particular emphasis on 'speaking with accuracy and fluency' as a practical necessity for some whilst the importance attached to literature has received renewed attention in the 2013 National Curriculum. In relation to language education policy and advocacy, McLelland argues that governments and subject associations alongside teacher educators have played a key role in determining the place of languages in schools in England. She highlights the transience of 'well-supported policy proposals' which are often not implemented or embedded due to financial constraints and suggests that other

educational polices or policies from other arenas may also have consequences for school-level language policy decisions. Pachler et al. (2014) also refer to a constant 'pendulum swing', influenced by the views of ministers. These policy swings manifest themselves in frequent changes to the status of languages in the curriculum and changes in modern language qualifications.

In this section I explore two frequently-referenced reports and a government manifesto which articulate the case for modern languages to illustrate the contrasting rationales at play in current discourse. Firstly, I consider the Nuffield Report, Languages: the Next Generation (2000) written at a time when languages enjoyed a secure place in the National Curriculum for all. I then discuss the British Council Report, Languages for the Future. Which Languages the UK needs most and why? (2013), and finally the manifesto of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages (2014).

The Nuffield Languages Inquiry was commissioned to review the UK's capability in languages and to provide policy advice on how to improve it. The inquiry concluded that 'English is not enough' and that 'capability in a broad range of languages is crucial for the country and its citizens to flourish' (Nuffield, 2000: 6). It argued that the next generation should acquire the 'personal skills, qualities and values, to enable them to function rewardingly and responsibly as citizens of a multilingual community both in the UK and the wider world' (Nuffield, 2000: 30). A key recommendation was that that all pupils should be required to learn languages throughout compulsory secondary education. This was not put into practice; in fact language education policy took a very different turn with languages removed from the compulsory core, which is discussed in some detail below.

While the Nuffield Review foregrounded a holistic justification and rationale for learning languages the British Council report (2013) takes a more instrumental stance. It puts forward a list of ten languages which it is suggested will be of key importance to the UK's 'prosperity, security and influence in the world' (British Council, 2013: 3). Buried in the appendix, the writers acknowledge that the choice of indicators and the weighting given to each indicator is subjective. They suggest that the aim is not to provide 'a definitive answer to the question but rather to stimulate debate and more strategic thinking' (ibid.: 44). According to an updated version of the report (2017: 32) the British Council suggests that the five languages 'which have the potential to add most to the UK's strategic interests post-Brexit' are French, German, Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin Chinese.

In 2014 the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages published a cross-party manifesto, which highlighted similar issues to those foregrounded by the Nuffield Inquiry (2000). The manifesto called on all parties to make a commitment to improving the linguistic and intercultural skills of the nation in their election manifestos. It argues that languages are in need of a 'national recovery programme' and that 'speaking only English is not enough in the global 21st century, in which knowledge of other languages is important for education, skills, the economy, international engagement, defence, security and community relations' (APPG on Modern Languages, 2014: 1). The manifesto highlights the gap between those gaining language qualifications in the independent and state school sectors. Notably, the manifesto does not foreground the potential to harness the linguistic diversity of the UK, perhaps reflecting prevalent political discourses around diversity, otherness and immigration. The 'cutting edge' research is also only partially referenced and illustrates how ministers often rely on research from a limited number of sources that is repackaged and recycled (Ball and Exley, 2010).

A review of reports and surveys from industry reveals an instrumental rationale for the learning of languages and also points to a mismatch between language education policy and the needs of business and industry. Concerns are repeatedly expressed about the decline in modern language learning which is seen to impact on the employability and mobility of young people and to hold back 'UK PLC' (CBI, 2016; Foreman-Peck, 2007; Mann, Brassell and Bevan, 2011;). According to the CBI/Pearsons Skills Survey (2017) only 34% of businesses were satisfied with the foreign language skills of school and college leavers entering the jobs market. It found that businesses want employees who can communicate competently in an increasingly diverse range of languages and operate effectively across cultures with French, German, Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic and Polish most in demand. These findings strengthen the case for a more responsive long-term language education policy that will result in competence in a more diverse range of languages amongst the population. Furthermore, it is important to note that speaking skills and communicative competence are repeatedly cited as generic areas of weakness amongst school leavers (CBI, 2016; Mourshed, Patel and Suder, 2014; UKES, 2014;). Language learning - with its explicit focus on interaction and active listening and speaking skills - has an important and unique contribution to make to the development of young people's communication skills. In particular, at a time when the opportunities to focus on speaking skills and interaction within the 14-19

curriculum and throughout secondary education are squeezed and with speaking and listening skills no longer assessed in the English GCSE.

I now turn to the research of Hawkins, Mitchell and Byram and explore their distinct but complementary rationales for language learning in the secondary curriculum. In Modern Languages in the Curriculum (1981) Hawkins notes that in the 1960s language teachers could look forward to the opportunities offered by Britain's entry into the European Community. In 2017, we find ourselves in a very different scenario with the UK's withdrawal from the European Union on the horizon. Nevertheless, the fundamental question which Hawkins poses is pertinent today: Why a modern language for all? His arguments are underpinned by a belief that 'modern language study has a uniquely valuable contribution to make to make in the apprenticeship of citizens of a multi-cultural Britain and a polyglot world' (Hawkins, 1981: xii). Hawkins foregrounds the case for modern language study as part of a coherent modern languages education (Hawkins, 1981). He emphasises the importance of a 'language apprenticeship' which equips young people with the language learning skills that they can apply throughout life to acquire additional languages in the future. He also highlights the important link with pedagogy in order to secure successful learning for all in the classroom. Hawkins (1981) notes how 'much language learning since the 17th century 'has been mere rehearsal, not followed by performance' (ibid.: x). Perhaps one could argue the same remains true today with regard to the opportunities provided for young people to apply their language skills in meaningful contexts, in classrooms where there is often an over-emphasis on presentation and practice rather than personalised 'production'. 'Relaying other people's messages in obedience to teacher and textbook, as in the exercises tested in 16+ examinations, does not make language stick for the average learners' (Hawkins, 1981: xi). Hawkins also foregrounds the importance of 'dialogue across the curriculum fence' in order to facilitate a coherent languages education.

Ros Mitchell (2010, 2011, 2014) has contributed significantly to research on language education policy and language teaching in British schools and universities over the past two decades. In a similar vein to Kramsch (2014) and Lo Bianco (2014) Mitchell believes that in an era of globalisation the traditional concept of 'one language one nation' is no longer valid. Mitchell draws on her empirical research and takes the position that 'a positive language-learning experience is integral to every child's education' (Mitchell, 2014: 208). In common with Pachler (2007) she puts forward a strong case for language study as part of a basic education and

points to the ‘unique place of languages in school life’ (Mitchell, 2014). She places a particular emphasis on the study of modern languages for all at KS3 and ‘perhaps’ in KS4. She emphasises the contribution of language learning to the development of meta-linguistic capability (Bialystok, 2004, 2011), intercultural competence (Byram, 2008) and the broadening of learners’ communicative repertoires and ‘their prospects for developing this repertoire further in the future in line with societal and economic needs’ (Mitchell, 2014: 216). Mitchell’s arguments reflect the rationales offered by language educators such as Hawkins (1981) and Trim (2000) and also echo the sentiments expressed in the Curriculum Matters series (DES, 1985).

She situates her discussion within the broader debate relating to the unique position of English in the world today (Mitchell, 2014: 204). Whilst she acknowledges how English is highly prized she also supports the view of the Nuffield Inquiry (2000) that ‘English is not enough’. However, she questions whether ‘the bar has been set too high’ and questions the validity of comparing young people’s linguistic proficiency and competence with other young people who are learning English, where motivations and opportunities are very different. Mitchell argues that appropriate targets for achievement need to be set in the context of what is attainable under local conditions. The notion of ‘appropriate targets’ is therefore particularly germane in the context of the introduction of ‘reformed’ language GCSEs and the idea of ‘an adequate level of proficiency’ in a second language put forward by the Council of Europe (2014).

Michael Byram has played a significant role in the development of a distinct rationale for language teaching which foregrounds the combination of the development of intercultural and linguistic competence, into what he terms ‘intercultural communicative competence’ (Byram, 1997). Byram asserts that the need to clarify purposes should be at the heart of the theory and practice in foreign language teaching (Byram, 2010). He takes the position that the broader educational purposes of foreign language education are often weighed down by ‘making language learning efficient and effective for instrumental purposes with concerns about proficiency attained through language teaching foremost amongst policy makers’ (Byram, 2010: 317). He argues that methodology should be seen as second-order issue derived from the question of purposes.

In his view, the case for foreign languages is frequently made from an instrumental viewpoint and language education policy can often be seen as a response to the economic needs of globalisation rather than as a recognition of the need for the

development of an international perspective. Byram notes how the relationship between foreign language teaching and learning with equality of opportunity has attracted little - if any - attention from writers concerned with the politics of language learning and the hegemony of English (Byram, 2008: 25). He suggests that foreign language learning offers the potential to take learners 'beyond a focus on their own society, into experience of otherness, or other cultural beliefs, values and behaviours to give them a better purchase on their previous culturally determined assumptions' (Byram, 2008: 29). Building on Hawkins' notion of 'apprenticeship' Byram argues that the focus of language teaching should be on developing the ability to learn languages, to become a plurilingual 'language person' with a range of competences to different levels in different languages (Byram, 2008: 17).

2.4 Language education policy from 1988

In this section I look at some of the literature relating to the place of modern languages within the secondary curriculum, with a particular focus on KS4 in the period from the introduction of the National Curriculum to the present. I draw on policy documentation, reports and reviews, as well as academic journals. For the purposes of this study I understand language education policy to incorporate both overt and explicit policy but also policies that are implicit and covert (Hornberger, 2015: 13). This includes the three key message systems of schooling - curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation (Bernstein, 1971) that may take the form of de facto language policies (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Shohamy, 2006). According to Shohamy (2006: 77):

> It is often the case that Language Education policies are stated explicitly though official documents such as curricula or mission statements. Yet, at other times language education policies are not stated explicitly but are rather derived implicitly by examining a variety of de facto practices …through the study of text books, teaching practices and testing systems.

An analysis of the literature relating to modern languages in the secondary curriculum over the past twenty-five years reveals numerous policy swings. Pachler et al., (2014) suggest that contradictions and short-termism in language education policy have resulted in confusion surrounding national requirements and expectations with schools expected to 'make sense of the uncertainties, incoherence and complexity of change' (Ball, 1990: 12). Successive administrations have commissioned reviews and appointed 'experts' to provide language education policy advice to improve participation in language learning, which is often disregarded (Dearing and King, 2007; DfE, 2010; DfES, 2002b; Nuffield, 2000).

However, participation in modern languages at KS4 in 2016 is not dissimilar to pre-National Curriculum figures.

2.4.1 Languages 'for all' in the National Curriculum

Prior to the introduction of a National Curriculum in 1988, gaining a modern language qualification at 16 was largely the preserve of pupils in the independent sector or the 'more able' in state schools (Hawkins, 1981), although there were a number of comprehensive schools where a foreign language formed 'part of the curriculum for all or almost all pupils up to age 16' (DES, 1987a: 1)

The HMI Curriculum Matters series (DES, 1984 - 1989), published prior to the 1988 Educational Reform Act, aimed to stimulate professional discussion about the nature and purposes of education and how this should be given expression within a National Curriculum. It was argued that the curriculum should aim to be 'broad' by bringing all pupils into contact with an agreed range of areas of learning and experience and 'balanced' to allow the adequate development of each area. HMI suggest that the study of languages should be located within the 'linguistic and literary' area of experience, combining all aspects of language learning as a coherent whole to support the development of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes in this area (DES, 1985: 7). Implicit in the argument is the recognition of the contribution of second language learning to the development of communication, broader literacy skills and social interaction. Curriculum Matters 8 takes the position that learning a language provides 'an apprenticeship' in the skills of foreign language learning, enabling pupils to develop the transferable skills necessary to learn other languages (DES, 1987b: 40). It was this thinking combined with some of the innovative work of languages teachers 'on the ground' on Graded Objectives in modern languages (Buckby et al., 1981) and Certificates in Secondary Education that informed the introduction of languages as part of a National Curriculum for all pupils between the ages of 11-16 at KS3 (1992) and KS4 (1995). The National Curriculum emphasised not only the economic and employment benefits of language learning in a global society, but also highlighted the intellectual and cognitive benefits of developing metalinguistic skills, broader communication skills and the contribution of learning languages to intercultural competence and global understanding (DES, 1991). Between 1996 and 2002 the majority of pupils at KS4 were entered for a 'new' modern languages GCSE or an equivalent (Nuffield, 2000).

2.4.2 Languages as an 'entitlement'

A review of education policies and reports in the period 2000-2004 identifies a shift in education policy, as reflected in the Green Paper 14 -19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards (DfES, 2002a). The Green Paper was predicated on the notion of 'increased choice and flexibility' in the 14-19 curriculum; it saw the introduction of a range of 'high quality' vocational qualifications (DfES, 2003a: 7) and led to the removal of languages from the compulsory core curriculum at KS4 in 2004. The Green Paper proposed that there should be a core of compulsory subjects 'essential for progression or for personal development' (DfES, 2002a: 22). Modern languages were not deemed to be 'essential'. The then Education Secretary explained that '15-year olds studying languages at the expense of something else is something I am more than happy to leave to schools' (Morris, 2002). This change, although contested by many in the 'languages world' (including myself), led to a rapid decline in the number of young people studying modern languages at KS4. This was not only strategically incoherent but was also in direct contradiction to the recommendation of the Nuffield Inquiry, that all pupils should learn a language throughout compulsory schooling to enable them 'to function rewardingly and responsibly as citizens of a multilingual community both in the UK and the wider world' (Nuffield, 2000: 30). The policy change was also at odds with the newly published National Languages Strategy - Languages for All: Languages for Life - which claimed that, 'language competence and intercultural understanding are not optional extras, they are an essential part of being a citizen' (DfES, 2002b: 5).

Paradoxically, a new policy focus was placed on the teaching of primary languages (Morris, 2002), with little consideration given to the KS2 workforce implications of the removal of modern languages from the core at KS4. This resulted in a situation where an increasing number of intending primary teachers may not have a language qualification (Hood and Tobutt, 2015). Evans (2007) reflects that the introduction of primary languages was unlikely to improve competence and take up of languages at KS4 without structural change post-14. Meanwhile, Pachler (2002: 4) suggests that '2002 might well become a defining date' for language learning in England. He asserts that the Green Paper (DfES, 2002a) and the ensuing Languages Strategy marked a break with policy which supports the notion of language study for all from 11 to 16. He considers the policy as 'problematic in relation to equal opportunities' (Pachler, 2002: 5) and argues that the policy decision of 2002, which has led to a rapid decline in young people studying a

language at KS4, is leading to language learning becoming an elitist activity (Pachler, 2007: 7).

Building on this in Choices in Languages Education; Principles and Policies (2007), Pachler problematises the notion of 'choice', foregrounded in the 14-19 Opportunity and Excellence Strategy (DfES, 2003a). He is also highly critical of the lack of research informing the 2002 National Languages Strategy. He suggests that the political decision to remove languages from the core at 14+ was in fact a 'knee-jerk' reaction due to a lack of qualified language teachers, concerns surrounding the lack of motivation amongst pupils to study languages in the context of 'societal and political insularity' and 'a disdain for linguistic otherness' (Pachler, 2007: 7). He goes on to argue that the fundamental question for policy makers is whether or not foreign language competence should be regarded as a 'basic skill' in the same way as L1 literacy, numeracy and technological literacy' (Pachler, 2007: 2). He contends that the place of modern languages in the secondary curriculum is out of line with European language policy, which encourages plurilingualism, the development of 'a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place' (Pachler, 2002: 4). Whilst providing a forceful critique, Pachler's assertions appear to overlook the agency of language practitioners to enact policy at a grass roots level (Hagger-Vaughan et al., 2004).

The Languages Review (Dearing and King, 2007) endorsed the policy position set out in the revised 14-19 policy (DfES, 2003a). The government commissioned Lid King, the director of the National Languages Strategy, and Ron Dearing to conduct an 'independent' review with a brief to consider how to address the decline in the number of pupils gaining a modern languages qualification. The report acknowledges that making languages an 'entitlement' had undermined key aspirations of the National Languages Strategy; it therefore puts forward measures to encourage more young people to continue language study after 14. Emphasis is placed on introducing languages at KS2 and 'revitalising' the language learning experience rather than on structural change. The report concludes that if the decline in the number of pupils studying languages is not halted within a 'reasonable timeframe' (Dearing and King, 2007: 2) a return of languages to the statutory curriculum at KS4 should be considered. Whilst the report claims that 'evidence' was gained through six consultation conferences for language stakeholders and questionnaires distributed to groups of pupils by conference attendees, the methods used to collect and analyse evidence are not discussed. This raises the broader

question of the trustworthiness of data gathered in this way and the need for the authors to acknowledge their positionality. It was unlikely that King, as the director of the National Languages Strategy, would question a key component of his own strategy, still less challenge current education policy.

Whilst expressing similar views to Pachler, Evans (2007) is perhaps more appreciative of conflicting policy positions. Writing in the Language Learning Journal which has some reach amongst language practitioners, he critiques and contrasts the views expressed in the Languages Review (2007) in the context of other countries where the study of languages is the norm for all pupils to at least the age of sixteen. As previously noted, he reflects that the introduction of primary languages would be unlikely to improve competence and take up of foreign languages without changes at KS4. Concurring with Pachler, Evans suggests that the decision not to return to mandatory languages at KS4 may have been due to the cost of the recruiting and training sufficient language teachers, the perceived difficulty of languages and the insular mentality prevalent in English society (Evans, 2007). He asserts that 'languages may be regarded as unimportant by pupils and parents as they seem to be considered unimportant by the English education system, given their lack of prominence in the curriculum' (Evans, 2007: 303). This supposition was subsequently investigated and confirmed in a longitudinal study (Evans and Fisher, 2009), discussed later in the review. Whilst acknowledging the Dearing Review's recognition of the importance of language learning, Evans criticises the lack of an analysis of the fundamental issues underlying foreign language provision in England. He suggests that the lack of a language policy is holding back the development of a coherent approach to language provision in English schools.

In contrast, Macaro (2008) adopts a rather different position on the place of modern languages within the KS4 curriculum. Macaro supports the notion of choice articulated in the 14-19 strategy (2003) and argues that 'we are not going to be able to increase our national language competence by forcing reluctant learners to learn a language at the age of 14' (Macaro, 2008: 106). He rejects the claim that the optional nature of languages automatically leads to a decline in numbers and posits the view that the introduction of GCSE had a far greater impact on the rise in numbers. This position has been contested in the literatures with Coleman (2009) offering a rigorous challenge to his interpretation of the data. Macaro argues for the development of appropriate and engaging pedagogies at KS3 which will enable

young people to succeed and impact on their decisions at KS4. This again brings questions about 'choice' to the fore: such as who frames the choice and the assumptions about which subjects should be included in a core curriculum.

2.4.3 The English Baccalaureate performance measure

A review of the policy literature following the change of administration in 2010 shows that the Conservative-led coalition government made no change to the statutory position of languages in the KS4 curriculum. This was at odds with views of respondents to the National Curriculum Consultation Call for Evidence (DfE, 2011b) and the report submitted by the Expert Panel of the National Curriculum Review. The majority of respondents believed that a language should be part of a broad and balanced National Curriculum at KS4, but that the GCSE should not be the sole assessment available. The Expert panel also recommended that a modern foreign language should be a core subject for all throughout compulsory secondary education (DfE, 2011a). The panel's report draws on national and international research evidence, consultations, the views of teachers, academics, subject communities, employers, expert panels and evidence from empirical studies conducted by panel members. The panel argued that a common feature of high-performing jurisdictions was the requirement for all students to study a broad range of subjects until the age of 16 (DfE, 2011a). It asserts that the English education system does not guarantee a broad curriculum for all students, thus 'reducing access to powerful forms of knowledge for some social groups' (DfE, 2011a: 31). The report concurs with the recommendations of the Nuffield Inquiry (2000) and with the National Curriculum Consultation Call for Evidence (2011b) and recommends that 'modern foreign languages' should be made statutory at KS2, KS3 and KS4 (DfE, 2011a).

In spite of the wealth of international empirical evidence underpinning the report, ministers chose, at the time, to disregard the views of the expert panel and consultation respondents. They argued that the inclusion of languages as one of the 'traditional subject disciplines' (DfE, 2010) within the English Baccalaureate performance measure 'had led to a significant increase in the take-up of languages at GCSE' (DfE, 2012: 8) and there was therefore no need 'to make foreign languages compulsory'. Whilst there has been an increase in participation at KS4 fewer than 50% of young people gained a modern language GCSE in 2016. Panel members expressed concern over the perceived legitimacy of the review, alleging that stakeholder consultation responses had been treated lightly. However, it

appears that some aspects of the views articulated by the panel may have been re-considered in the light of the 2015 policy announcement that the majority of young people will be expected to study a language throughout compulsory schooling as part of the EBacc (Morgan, 2015).

2.4.4 Languages for the 'vast majority'?

A review of policy documentation and reports following the 2015 general election sheds some light on the implications of the Conservative government's education reforms on the place of languages in the 14-16 curriculum. A policy announcement (DfE, 2015a; Morgan, 2015) requires 'at least 90% of pupils' to take GCSEs in all EBacc subjects, including a language, from 2020 with Ofsted 'unable to award its highest ratings to schools that do not comply' (Conservative Party Manifesto, 2015: 34). Whilst this proposal appears to promote languages for all within a broad and balanced KS4 curriculum, it disregards a key recommendation from the NC Expert panel, namely that 'not all pupils should follow GCSE courses in all subjects and that a range of appropriate qualifications should be available' (DfE, 2011a: 27).

The 2015 consultation on implementing the EBacc includes a goal for the 'vast majority' to take EBacc subjects. Of the five subject 'pillars' which make up the EBacc (English, mathematics, science, languages, humanities), data shows that the language 'pillar' is the principal barrier to entry and achievement of the EBacc. For example, in 2015, 27% of pupils entered for four EBacc pillars, which meant that they were only one pillar away from entering the full EBacc. For many of these pupils the missing 'pillar' was a language. Sixty-seven percent of pupils who were entered for four 'pillars' did not enter the full EBacc because they did not take a language GCSE (DfE, 2015a: 18).

The narrowing of language qualifications in the wake of the Wolf Report (2011) has reduced accreditation of 'lesser-taught' languages and has impacted on take up at KS4. The Asset Language qualification, which accredited a wide range of languages, has also been withdrawn and awarding organisations have announced the withdrawal of further qualifications of 'lesser taught' languages. Although there appears to have been a rethink by some awarding organisations, qualifications in 'lesser taught' languages remain vulnerable. This highlights a lack of a coherent strategy to encourage and maintain a range of world languages within state schools and to acknowledge and accredit the skills of many bilingual pupils.

Meanwhile, the EBacc performance measure which recognises the proportion of young people gaining a 'good' GCSE (grades A*- C) (DfE, 2015a), has the potential to limit the number of young people with access to an appropriate language qualification.

In 2017 the DfE published their response to the consultation on the EBacc and set out a revised ambition for 75% of year 10 pupils to take a languages GCSE as part of the EBacc by 2022 and 90% by 2025 (DfE, 2017b) accompanied by revised performance measures. From 2018 there will be two EBacc headline measures: EBacc entry and EBacc average point score.

In 2017 the proportion of pupils entering and achieving the EBacc in state-funded schools decreased. This decrease in the proportion of pupils entering the EBacc is largely driven by a decrease in pupils entering the languages pillar DfE (2018: 8). In 2002 there were a total of 565,285 entries for a modern language GCSE dropping to 318,794 in 2017 (UCML, 2017). In 2002 there were 338,468 entries for French. This fell by 61.44% in 2017 to 130,509. German entries also decreased; in this case by 65.42% from 126,216 entries in 2002 to 43,649 in 2017. The numbers in Spanish are more encouraging. They rose by 57.01% from 57,983 entries in 2002 to 91,040 in 2017.There has also been a slight increase in 'other languages' between 2002 and 2017. This fall at GCSE has had an impact on numbers studying A-level where the numbers have dropped by 7.25% between 2002 and 2016. The number of pupils studying modern languages at university is also in decline.

2.4.5 Language practitioner perspectives

A view articulated by some researchers is the need for language practitioners to provide a more coherent and confident contribution to the debate. Some argue that the languages community needs stronger political skills to push for a place for languages in the KS4 curriculum which meets the needs of learners in the 'distinctive circumstances of an Anglophone environment in a globalising century' (Mitchell, 2011: 16). The contribution of these practitioners to the debate, as interpreted and reported through the literatures, is explored in the following section.

Language practitioners' views of the place of modern languages within the secondary curriculum are frequently captured through discussions at network level, in school-based action research enquiries or through government consultations (DfE, 2011b) and increasingly on social media. They are captured less frequently through robust empirical research. Perhaps the most rigorous recent study

providing evidence of practitioners' views is an empirical longitudinal study commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Conducted by Evans and Fisher (2009) from the University of Cambridge, the study employed a mixed methods research design, including surveys and detailed qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews with language teachers, head teachers and pupil focus groups in 16 case study schools.

The study found that for language teachers a key focus at KS3 was on making language learning successful in order to encourage take up at KS4. Almost 50% of the heads of department reported some negative effects of the optional status of languages at KS4 on KS3. Whilst the initial survey found limited support for compulsory languages for all at KS4, over 50% were in favour of languages for most pupils at KS4. The participants articulated a tension between supporting 'languages for all' and the notion of choice at 14+, in particular in a societal context in which they find themselves 'battling against years of an attitude that languages is totally irrelevant' (Evans and Fisher, 2009: 90).

A more recent NFER evaluation commissioned by the DCSF in 2010, investigated the impact of the Languages Review (2007) on the decline in participation in modern languages at KS4. The study found that heads of languages perceived structural issues to be the main barrier to participation. The review's recommendations to encourage the take up of modern languages, including the benchmark for participation set by the schools' minister were perceived to have had little effect. Other perceived barriers to securing the place of languages in the KS4 curriculum included lack of support from senior leaders, a perception that languages are 'hard' and insufficient time-allocation (Filmer-Sankey and Marshall, 2010: 34). The study was cut short by the new administration which impacted on the depth and detail of the qualitative data. Senior leaders' perspectives were not sought. This was a significant omission given that language practitioners cite lack of support from senior leaders as a barrier to take up of languages. This therefore warrants further exploration.

The study with arguably the broadest reach amongst practitioners and policy makers is the annual Language Trends Survey, conducted by the CfBT and the British Council in collaboration with the two main subject associations. It was originally established by CILT to monitor languages at KS4 following the removal of languages from the core in 2004. It now focuses on the 'health' of language teaching and provides a small-scale snapshot of the practitioners' perspectives. For

example the 2013/14 survey (Board and Tinsley, 2014) draws on the views gathered through an online survey of 415 state schools and 96 independent schools from a random sample of 2,500 secondary schools. The 'free comments' provide insights, mediated through the lens of the authors, into the perspectives of language practitioners. Qualifications were a major concern for 76% of the respondents, in particular the nature of the reformed GCSE and the effect this will have on making languages accessible to all pupils. Given that the findings of the survey are widely cited in national reports and language education literature (APPG on Modern Languages, 2014; British Council, 2013; Mitchell, 2014; Swarbrick, 2011) it is perhaps important to be aware of its influence and also mindful of possible over-claiming.

2.4.6 School leaders' perspectives

The limited existing research into school leaders' views on language education policy and its enactment (Evans and Fisher, 2009; Filmer-Sankey and Marshall, 2010) suggests that they are less convinced of the value of languages for all pupils from 11-16 and in particular at 14+. However, a lack of qualitative data makes it difficult to understand the underlying reasons for this. Understanding the perceptions, assumptions and related actions of school leaders is important in an educational landscape characterised by a relentless focus on raising standards (Ball et al., 2012). In the Evans and Fisher study mentioned above, headteachers offered a different perspective to language practitioners, claiming that the factors which led them to make languages optional at KS4 were the importance of choice and the belief that learners should enjoy what they were studying. This is very much in line with the position outlined in the DfES 14-19 Opportunity and Excellence report (2003a: 2):

> We are committed to supporting language learning, because of its vital contribution to cultural understanding and economic competitiveness. However, we do not believe that requiring schools to teach languages to every young person beyond the age of 14 is the best way to achieve the objective, particularly when students struggle with a subject in which they have little interest or aptitude.

The majority of head teachers were resistant to the idea that GCSE results influenced their decision-making (Evans and Fisher, 2009: 93). This is surprising given the aforementioned and longstanding concerns about severe grading and the perceived difficulty of modern language GCSEs (ASCL et al., 2017; Dearing, 2007; Myers, 2006) and warrants further exploration. According to Lanvers (2011) even prior to languages becoming an entitlement at KS4, schools were removing modern

languages from the core curriculum due to concerns that poor GCSE outcomes could impact negatively on league table performance. The 2015 policy announcement that all pupils will be expected to take GCSEs in EBacc subjects including a language has prompted some emotive responses from school leaders:

> We cannot get good language teachers in our area. They don't exist. So what will I do? If we're forced to teach every pupil a language, our results will be so terrible our Ofsted rating will be bad, and if I choose to ignore the policy, the government will ensure our Ofsted rating is bad.
>
> (Guardian, 2015)

> Our school historically made it a requirement for all pupils to take an MFL option at KS4 and we breathed a huge sigh of relief when it was removed from the compulsory GCSE option blocking system. Parents were delighted, pupils felt empowered, and staff relieved.
>
> (Watkin, 2015: 6)

These comments highlight the need for further research in order to gain a more rigorous and nuanced understanding of the concerns and practices of school leaders in relation to modern languages at KS4.

2.4.7 Lack of a coherent, long-term language education policy

To conclude, a prevalent theme in the literature is the short-termism of language education policy when ministers' 'personal taste or instincts' (Smith, 2013: 2) result in policy which is fragmented and incoherent and policies which are frequently altered and amended according to 'ministerial fiat' (Ball, 1990: 11). Another critique is the lack of an explicit language education policy (Byram, 2008; Evans, 2007; Lamb, 2001; Mitchell, 2014). Language education policy is implicit in the languages National Curriculum (Brumfit, 1995: 16) and also shaped through performance measures such as the EBacc but in a fragmented educational landscape in which schools have apparent curriculum freedom (Academies Act, 2010) the place of modern languages in the KS4 curriculum remains contested.

Over fifteen years ago Lamb (2001: 3) argued for a national policy framework 'designed to promote appropriate language policies in all areas to meet the linguistic needs of all children regardless of where they live'. Evans (2007) also criticised the lack of an analysis of the fundamental issues underlying foreign language provision in England and suggests that the lack of clear policy is holding back the development of a coherent approach to language provision in English schools. Meanwhile Byram (2008) points to the need for 'more conscious planning of foreign language education' to encourage linguistic and cultural diversity' (Byram, 2008: 7).

Mitchell (2010) takes the view that language education policy in England is not sufficiently informed by educational research. This she argues has led to a situation where the place of languages within the curriculum is vulnerable to broader political agendas. Furthermore, she contends that the stress on achieving pre-determined learning outcomes and the pressure of accountability measures have stifled experimentation, making it harder 'to devise a viable foreign language curriculum for an Anglophone environment' (Mitchell, 2011: 1). She suggests that there may be a connection between the place of languages within the curriculum, how schools are held accountable for public examination results and the limited time available for study (Mitchell, 2011: 16).

2.5 Education policy

It is the interface between modern languages education and education policy enactment which is at the heart of my study and therefore a review of both fields of literature is important. In this section I consider a number of key texts from education policy sociology literature to explore the notion of education policy enactment. I draw in particular on the work of Ball and Maguire, Braun and Hoskins (Ball et al., 2012; Braun et al., 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Maguire et al., 2011, 2014). Their research has a particular focus on 'How schools do policy' (Ball et al., 2012) and goes beyond the limitations of 'implementation research' by drawing on sociological theory 'to 'fill-out' the interpretation of policy work in schools (ibid.:1). They articulate a clear ambition to conduct research which makes sense to practitioners – an ambition I share.

2.5.1 What is education policy?

In *Policy Research in Education Settings: Contested Terrain*, Ozga (2000: 2) claims that there is 'no fixed single definition of policy'. She argues that the way the term is understood depends on the 'perspective of the researcher'. She notes how some understand policy 'as the actions of a government, aimed at securing particular outcomes'. Ozga adopts the view that policy is a 'process' rather than a product; a process which involves contestation and negotiation between different groups.

According to Stephen Ball (1994: 10) 'policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended'. He conceives of policy as text and 'things' (legislation and national strategies) but also discursive processes that are complexly configured, contextually mediated and institutionally rendered' (Ball, 1994: 2). He draws a distinction between policy implementation and policy

enactment and coins the term ‘policy cycle’ to conceptualise the education ‘policy process’.

He rejects a linear, normative approach to policy implementation, which does not recognise the dynamic, context-related processes at play (Ball et al., 2012: 6). Ball challenges this ‘normative policy analysis’ which sees policy as the ‘closed’ preserve of the government’s policy making apparatus. He critiques what he regards as a traditional view of policy analysis based on a positivist view of knowledge, that policy could be put into practice in a value-neutral manner, such as the ‘top down and linear’ approach adopted by Supovitz and Weinbaum (2008). He goes beyond the notion of policy implementation and reframes the policy process ‘as diversely and repeatedly contested and/or subject to different ‘interpretations’ as it is enacted (rather than implemented) within institutions and classrooms (Ball, 1990, 1994,1997; Ball et al., 2012; Maguire et al., 2014).

Similarly, Taylor et al. conceive of policies as dynamic and interactive and not merely a set of instructions or intentions (Taylor et al., 1997: 15). Ozga builds on this perspective and conceptualizes policy as a ‘process which involves contestation and negotiation between different groups’ even if these groups are not officially involved in policy making. She suggests that education policy is ‘struggled over, not delivered, in tablets of stone, to a grateful or quiescent population’ (Ozga, 2000: 1). According to Ozga, policy is to be found everywhere in education, not just at the level of central government. She argues that engaging in policy in this way importantly contributes to a ‘democratic project in education’ (Ozga, 2000: 2).

Ozga emphasises the notion of agency, seeing practitioners as ‘policy makers or potential makers of policy, and not just the passive receptacle of policy’ (Ozga, 2000: 7). This notion is further developed by Bell and Stevenson (2006: 2) who regard a separation between policy generation and implementation as unhelpful and argue that leaders in educational institutions are both ‘policy implementers and policy generators’:

> It has been demonstrated that policy is a dialectic process in which all those affected by the policy may be involved in shaping its development. It is both a continuous and a contested process in which those with competing values and differential access to power seek to form and shape policy in their own interests.

They suggest that it is more important to talk about a process of policy development than ‘policy makers’ (Bell and Stevenson, 2006: 9). They contend that although

policy is shaped by 'powerful structural forces of an economic, ideological and cultural nature… the crucial role of human agency in the development of policy should be recognised' (Bell and Stevenson, 2006: 9). Policy making is conceived as a process which happens 'down here' as well as 'up there' (Bell and Stevenson, 2006: 10) with those working in schools not merely passive receivers and implementers of policy decisions made elsewhere. In many cases, school leaders are able to shape the educational policy process, especially at institutional level (ibid.: 2).

Ozga also suggests that 'it is important to bring together structural macro-level analysis of education systems and education policies and micro-level investigation, especially that which takes account of people's perceptions and experiences'. However, she is wary of approaches 'that generate a view of policy making which stresses ad hocery, serendipity, muddle and negotiation' (Ozga, 1990 cited in Ball, 1994: 14). Ball counters Ozga's position and argues that policy texts are localised and therefore display 'ad hocery and messiness'.

He argues that it is indeed important to consider the 'ad hocery of the macro with the ad hocery of the micro'. This, he suggests, demands a rethink of some of the simplicities of the agency/structure dichotomy to account for agency in a constrained world, to show how agency and structure are implicit in each other rather than being two poles in a continuum (Ball,1994: 15).

Ball's theorisation of policy enactment is underpinned by a notion that 'policies are permeated by relations of power' and that power should be conceptualised in a 'relational and situated way' (Ball et al., 2012: 9). He highlights both the possibilities and limitations of policy enactment and contends that 'policy is done by and done to teachers' (ibid.: 3). Ball foregrounds the notion of power within discourse, noting that 'discourses are about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority' (Ball, 1994: 21). Drawing on Foucault, he highlights the negative and positive, the repressive and productive aspects of power and the possibilities for resistance.

> Discourse transmits and produces power, it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.
>
> (Foucault, 1981: 101)

Ball et al. (2012) also foreground the agency of policy actors in the policy process. They regard educators as 'key actors, rather than merely subjects in the policy process' (Braun et al., 2010: 549). They assert that policies from 'above' are not the only constraints and influences upon institutional practice' (Ball, 1994: 24). Ball highlights the importance of 'key mediators of policy' (ibid.:17) such as school leaders who are relied upon by others to relate policy to context. It is school leaders who must make sense of reform through their interpretations and enactments of policy. That is to say the way in which they understand policy and translate it into practice by making it 'palatable and doable' for their colleagues (Ball et al., 2012: 16). Spillane (2009) also highlights the importance of 'sense making' by educators but adopts a more linear approach, top-down approach than Ball. He suggests that 'policy implementation' is like a telephone game – 'in which the message morphs as it moves from player to player' (Spillane, 2009: 43).

Ball places a particular emphasis on 'translation and interpretation' by these key actors and the roles played by these 'enactors' in policy work. He argues that policy enactment 'involves creative processes of interpretation and recontextualisation' - the translation of texts into action and the abstractions of policy ideas into contextualised practices (Ball, 1994: 3) which involves 'interpretations of interpretations' (Rizvi and Kemmis, 1987). Furthermore, he suggests that 'policies do not normally tell you what to do, they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed, or particular goals or outcomes are set' (Ball, 1994: 19).

Ball et al. (2012: 5). challenge undifferentiated conceptions of policy work in schools, which view all polices and schools and teachers in the same way, paying insufficient detail to context. They note the limitations of school-based policy implementation studies which place a clear division between policy development and policy implementation and conceive of the school as homogenous and de-contextualised organisation that is an undifferentiated 'whole' into which various policies are slipped or filtered into place either successfully or 'unsuccessfully' (ibid.: 5). They argue that research is often characterised by a lack of recognition of the different cultures, histories, traditions and communities of practice that co-exist in schools'.

According to Ball, context is at the heart of the policy enactment process – at the heart of 'how schools do policy'. Braun et al. (2011b) 'take context seriously' and suggest that 'how policies are interpreted and enacted will be mediated by

institutionally determined factors – the contextual dimensions which need to be considered in depth; situated contexts, professional contexts, material contexts, and external contexts' (Braun et al. 2011b: 588). They explore the localised nature of policy actions and suggest that it is in fact more 'real' and realistic than that often assumed by policy making (Braun et al., 2011b: 585). They suggest that school-specific factors shape and influence policies and note that often in central policy making and research the constraints, pressures and enablers of policy enactments tend to be neglected.

Ball highlights the important interrelationship between policies and how they impact on each other:

> Sometimes when we focus analytically on one policy or text we forget that other policies and texts are in circulation, and the enactment of one may inhibit or contradict or influence the possibility of the enactment of others.
>
> (Ball, 1994: 19)

Ball et al. (2012: 7) suggest that the way in which policies collide and overlap can lead to contradictions, incoherence and confusion; policies can 'empower some and displace others'. At school level, this is manifested in 'struggles over resources, posts and curriculum time' (ibid.: 7-8). Ball's work is underpinned by a conviction that in spite of appearances and claims of autonomy, national policy imperatives dominate and the role and work of schools has been increasingly prescribed by national government, in particular since the demise of local authorities and rise of academisation (Academies Act, 2010). Schools and teachers are expected to be familiar with and able to enact multiple (and sometimes contradictory) policies that are planned for them by others and they are held accountable for this task' (Ball et al., 2012: 9).

Ball et al. focus on the context of schools and how this influences the way in which policy is mediated. In their research, they point to the central role of school histories and culture on the interpretation and enactment of policy. They also suggest that 'interpretations of policy take place on the grounds set by 'bigger' educational discourses' (2012: 10). They point to a lack of 'values-talk' in their data which led them to conclude that 'ethical-democratic concerns come into play weakly over and against and within the interpretation and enactment of policy' (Ball et al., 2012: 10).

Vidovich (2007) claims that Ball's conceptualisation of education policy as a process which includes both its original development and subsequent interpretation and

enactment by schools marks an important departure from a focus on implementation. She suggests that this conceptualisation of education policy has been 'instrumental in characterizing the study of education policy as a 'messy' process and foregrounding the agency of individual practitioners at micro level' (Vidovich, 2007: 288). Ball's approach which foregrounds agency over structure has led to some critique particularly of his earlier work (Hatcher and Troyna, 1994) who argue that Foucault's influence on Ball has led to inconsistencies and contradictions in his work. Vidovich takes the view that these debates have played an important role in framing educational policy studies in a more theoretically informed manner. For example Viczko and Riveros (2015: 479) writing in a special edition of the journal *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* identify a shift in policy research towards 'analyses embracing the notion of policy enactment, and specifically, theorizations' which according to Braun et al. (2011b: 586) focus on 'the creative processes of interpretation and translation, that is, the recontextualisation – through reading, writing and talking – of the abstractions of policy ideas into contextualised practices' (Braun et al., 2011b: 586). The papers in this special edition critique instrumentalism, which views reform as producing a single result (Viczko and Riveros, 2015: 479) and the way in which linear approaches compartmentalise policy making into 'discrete categories of design, implementation, and evaluation that privilege the agential actor as instrumental decision-maker'. They point to the 'interpretive turn' (Yanow, 2000) and argue that the concept of 'policy enactment' provides a challenge to linear conceptualizations of policy design, implementation and evaluation and foreground the 'importance of agency, interpretation, sense-making, translation, embodiment, and meaning throughout the policy process' (Viczko and Riveros, 2015: 479). Maguire et al. (2015: 487) sum up the fragile nature of enactments in this way:

> Enactments is a theoretically richer concept which better captures the multifaceted ways in which policies are read alongside/against contextual factors, by different sets of policy interpreters, translators and critics - that is to say enactment then is messy, incomplete and a form of interpretation and intersubjectivity in action…depending on the perspectives, values and positions of different types of policy actors and different types of policies, as grounded factors of time and place, enactments are contingent, fragile social constructions.

Gulson et al., (2015: 6) understand education policy as something to be problematized rather than accepted on face-value as part of governmental and everyday life while Johnson points to the agency of educators 'in the interpretation

and appropriation of top-down language education policies' (2013: 53). It is this thinking that underpins my approach to this research.

2.5.2 Reconceptualising education policy

In *Globalizing Education Policy* (2010) Rizvi and Lingard contend that there is a need to reconceptualise what is understood as education policy given the effects and workings of globalisation. They note how national and local education policies, often in the form of curricula, are increasingly linked to global educational policy discourses. These policy discourses from organisations such as the OECD, the EU and the World Bank 'manifest in vernacular ways, reflecting the varying cultures, histories and politics within different nations' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: x). They argue that there has been a shift away from social democratic orientations in thinking about educational purposes. These purposes have been redefined within a neoliberal ideology 'in terms of a narrower set of concerns about human capital development, and the role education must play to meet the needs of the global economy and to ensure competitiveness of the national economy' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010:3). Angus (2015: 395) also notes how 'key elements of the neoliberal world view are normalized in the day-to-day practices of schooling and how certain norms and values that characterize neoliberalism are shaped and reinforced in the education system'. In common with Rizvi and Lingard he suggests that an important task for educational sociology is 'to 're-imagine the prevailing neoliberal imaginary'.

Rizvi and Lingard go on to argue that this move from social democratic to neoliberal orientations in the thinking about educational purposes and governance has led to the development of policies of corporatization, privatization and commercialisation on the one hand and increased accountability on the other (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 3). This economising of education policy has resulted in a push towards 'comparative measures of educational outcomes' particularly in relation to the OECD's PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) which has become increasingly influential. The 'policy of numbers' approach has seen the development of a 'culture of performativity' (Ball, 2003) and the 'tyranny of numbers' (Ball, 2015). Building on Ball's notion of 'educational performativity' (Ball, 2003), Maguire et al. (2015: 488) suggest that education policy making in England is characterised by a steer from central governments towards an incessant focus on raising standards, and improving examination results, which has been driven by wider international policy imperatives. Lingard et al. (2013: 539) highlight the

importance for policy sociology of 'recognising testing as, perhaps the, major policy steering systems and the work of schools today'.

Ozga and Lingard (2007: 3) wrote that 'education policy as a field, in respect of schooling, at least, deals with all texts, apart from curricula, which seek to frame, constitute and change educational practices'. However, writing with Rizvi in 2010, Lingard adopts a different view and suggests that curricula are key policy documents. They take the view that whilst curriculum studies and education policy studies have been considered as separate fields they are in fact inextricably linked (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 93). They argue that the three key message systems of schooling - curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation (Bernstein, 1971) - at the heart of the day to day practice of schools and educators - are often disregarded in educational policy studies (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 93-94). They claim that they need to be thought of as policies (ibid, : 15) as they have a significant influence on how policy is understood and enacted. This chimes with Shohamy (2006) who regards text books, teaching practices and testing systems as de facto language policies. Rizvi and Lingard contend that for policies to be 'effective' they must engage more directly with issues of practice because it is 'in the framing of these message systems that competing interpretations of globalisation become evident' (Rizvi and Lingard ,2010: 94).

Writing in the Curriculum Journal, Wyse et al. (2014) also consider the changing position of policy and curriculum as fields of research and point to how governments are using regulations or legislation to reshape education. They highlight the pressures of international performativity and the growing hegemony of political thinking on curriculum and assessment which is reflected in the increased influence on education of pupil testing and in particular international measures such as PISA which influence the way policy makers think about curriculum. They maintain that this often leads to a reduced emphasis on a curriculum for future citizens and more emphasis on securing a high position in the international league tables. Hayward et al. (2016: 169) note that while 'the idea that curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are inter-related and enacted in harmony seems common sense' this is often not the case. They contend that education systems often develop education policy as if these three message systems (Bernstein, 1971) were independent of each other leaving educators to make sense of the curriculum.

> If planners of innovation cannot conceptualise curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as a whole, then the task for teachers becomes increasingly

> complex as they try to impose coherence and meaning on a misaligned system.
>
> (Hayward et al., 2016: 169)

They argue that the alignment of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment is essential and assert that if this is not achieved it leads to contradictions and tensions for policy makers and educators.

This review of the literatures illustrates that in spite of numerous studies and reports into language education low participation in modern language learning at KS4 remains an issue. The review has confirmed the complex and interrelated nature of the fields and the need for a better understanding of how language education policies are enacted in schools in the context of globalisation and superdiversity and the multilingual realities of the 21st century. The review of the literature has also strengthened my belief that another 'social imaginary' of language education is possible and necessary but that this demands a more nuanced understanding of the perceptions and actions of school leaders in their different contexts. In chapter 3 I focus on the methodology and methods I have adopted in order to answer my research questions and to maintain a focus on 'the bigger picture and the small one' (Thomson and Hall, 2017: 11)

Chapter 3 Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the methodology and methods adopted in my study and explain how they fit with the purpose of my research. I outline why I have chosen to employ an interpretive, qualitative and inductive multiple case study approach to address the research questions in order to illuminate how state secondary schools make sense of the policy requirement to extend the study of languages to the 'vast majority' at KS4. I outline my chosen conceptual and theoretical frameworks and the ethical considerations underpinning my work. I explain how I have drawn on a range of theoretical resources including Thomson and Hall's place-based methods for researching schools (2017), Ball et al.'s 'tentative' theory of 'policy enactment' (2012), and Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' of habitus, capital and field as lenses through which to consider my findings.

Taylor et al. (1997) consider education policy analysis to be an 'inherently political activity' which can serve different purposes that are determined by the reasons for undertaking policy research. Bell and Stevenson (2006: 10) point to a distinction between 'analysis for policy' and 'analysis of policy'. Stevenson (2015) foregrounds 'analysis of policy' in order to make the 'politics and power visible', while Ozga (2000: 4) highlights the importance of making policy in education the subject of scrutiny. Similarly, Rizvi and Lingard (2010: 45) argue that analysis for policy often lacks a critical orientation as it 'takes as given the research problem as constructed by those framing policy' in contrast to analysis of policy which sets its own research agenda:

> It does not take for granted the policy construction of the problem which a new policy seeks to address. Indeed, the first step in policy analysis might very well be a critical deconstruction of the problem as constructed by the policy, and of the contrast and history assumed by the policy.

However, Lingard (2013: 127) cautions against the employment of a 'tight binary distinction' and suggests that it is helpful to regard 'research of policy' and 'research for policy' as part of a continuum. In order to address a gap in the literature my research seeks to explore 'taken for-granteds' by considering language education policy and its enactment through a broader, more holistic educational policy/practitioner lens, than is often the case in language education research. I therefore devised the following research question and sub-question:

Research question

How is the policy of extending modern languages provision at key stage 4 understood and enacted in English state secondary schools?

Sub-question

What are the benefits, enablers and challenges to extending the study of languages to the 'vast majority of pupils' within the key stage 4 curriculum?

The research questions provide a 'conceptual structure suitable for designing and interpreting educational research' (Stake, 2013: 25). Following Crotty (1998: 2), I believe we can choose where to begin and so 'move towards understanding and expounding the research process, after our own fashion, in forms that suit our own particular research purposes'. I have grappled with the concept of allegiance to one paradigm since commencing this study. Nevertheless, I acknowledge the need for congruity between the methodological approach to be adopted and the epistemological and ontological positions and assumptions within my study (Crotty, 1998).

In order to gain a nuanced and in-depth understanding of how schools understand and enact language education policy in their own contexts I considered it appropriate to adopt a qualitative, inductive, interpretive, constructivist approach. An interpretivist paradigm is appropriate in the context of the chosen research questions and the need to gain and explore the realities created and constructed by individuals in a qualitative manner. Ledger et al. (2014: 59) suggest that an interpretivist paradigm 'can be helpful in trying to understand and explain the social and human reality of educators, its micro level emphasis and focus on the individual motives and interpretations of the world'.

I acknowledge that these research questions and my chosen approach is also shaped by my own positionality, as a practitioner and policy professional committed to the practical application of educational research. The problem is constructed through my own lens as a result of my review of the literature and my personal and professional experiences. As an interpretive researcher, I regard myself as an important part of the research topic that I am investigating. Not only does my work impact on my research participants but also the participants impact on me as a researcher and, in turn, influence my perceptions, assumptions and interpretations. In order to understand the claims of my research I need to reflect on my own

evolving beliefs as a researcher and recognise the potential impact of these on the study. This demands an open-minded approach in which I endeavour to learn the culture of the individual schools and 'suspend' my own prior cultural attitudes and assumptions (Hammersley, 2012: 21) at the same time as acknowledging my own positionality (Sprague, 2010). In the course of the research I strive to give place and emphasis to my 'position' as an 'objective researcher' mindful of the languages advocate lens I embody as an embedded participant which has forced me to become 'a little dualistic' (Thomson and Hall, 2017: 61).

My ambition is that my research will 'seep into the policy making process' (Lingard, 2013: 113). I am mindful that academic research usually has its effect in the longer term, impacting the assumptive world of policy-makers however, I feel a sense of urgency to 'point to strategies for progressive change' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 51). I share with Thomson and Hall (2017) a fundamental belief that it is possible to be positive about formal education and what can be achieved in spite of constraints. Freire (1994: 3) suggests that 'one of the tasks of the progressive educator …is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be'. This optimistic and hopeful approach has underpinned my professional work in the classroom, at school level and beyond and it is the approach I bring to this research.

3.2 A Case Study approach

My methodology has developed in response to my evolving theoretical framework and is broadly located within a case study approach. According to Thomson and Hall (2017: xii) a case study is:

> an in-depth, intensive analysis of the single or multiple case within its naturalistic context, valuing its particularity, complexity and relationships with the context. The case uses multiple methods and perspectives to look at the case holistically.

I decided to adopt a qualitative, multiple case study approach (Stake, 1995, 2013; Yin, 2009) in order to gain an in-depth and nuanced understanding of how schools in different contexts make sense of the policy requirement to extend the study of languages to 'the vast majority of pupils' at KS4. Case studies observe effects in real-life contexts, recognising that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects, and that an in-depth understanding is required to do justice to the case (Cohen et al., 2011; Robson, 2002). Cohen et al. (2011: 289) suggest that case studies 'can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis'. In an educational policy landscape dominated by numbers

(Ball, 2003), I believe that it is important to get beneath the numerical data, in order to understand the thinking and actions of school leaders.

Yin (2009) suggests that qualitative case studies are a suitable choice when answering 'how' and 'why' questions and that a range of rich, descriptive data can be gathered from the perspective of the participants through multiple data sources within and across 'real-life' settings (Miles and Hubermann, 1994; Yin, 2012). As the purpose of the multiple case study is to go beyond the individual case (Stake, 2013: 27), this is suited to addressing my research questions. The multiple case study is organised around the research questions which provide the binding concept to hold the cases together. This multiple case study approach facilitates the exploration of the variations and similarities between individual cases and the detailed and contextualised portraits make the case studies accessible and relevant to other practitioners in the field (Cohen et al., 2011).

I have given consideration to criticisms of case study research such as generalisability, problems of cross-checking and observer bias (Cohen et al., 2011). These criticisms reflect broader debates relating to the nature of research, conceptual frameworks and research methodology. Silverman (2014) warns against adopting a defensive position with regards to generalisability. In their case study research Thomson, Hall and Jones argue that research at the micro/vernacular level of schooling can make an important contribution in the education policy analysis field. They suggest that 'application of social theory to small units of social phenomena has some capacity to reveal large patterns' (2010: 639). Thomson and Hall (2017: 10) take the view that case studies 'can show difference that is patterned in ways that connect the school and its teachers and students to a larger world'. They argue that:

> We can only really understand what is common to all schools, no matter where they are and who is in them, if we also deliberately seek out what is special and unique to each of them. Rather than attempting to statistically remove difference, or to thematise it out of existence, we argue that it is important for researchers to find approaches that simultaneously allow them to see both the bigger picture and the small one.

Notions of 'validity' and 'reliability' are also problematical and contested within qualitative research with terminology subject to varied interpretations (Denzin, 2009; Hammersley 2007; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). A prevalent view is that quantitative definitions of 'validity' and 'reliability' are neither appropriate nor applicable to qualitative case study research methods and that notions of 'trustworthiness' and

'authenticity' are more applicable (Bassey, 1999; Denzin, 2009; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) 'trustworthiness' includes establishing credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. By foregrounding the notion of authenticity in my study, I place an emphasis on research that is meaningful, worthwhile and relevant to the lives of the researcher and the researched (Bush, 2012; Hartas, 2010) and the conduct and evaluation of the research, which is genuine and credible (Busher and James, 2012). For the purposes of this research I will adopt the notions of 'trustworthiness' and 'authenticity' as I regard these as more appropriate to interpretative case study research and the associated qualitative methods I propose to employ. This multiple case study approach also offers readers an opportunity to consider fuzzy generalisations (Bassey, 1999) as to what helps and hinders schools to extend language provision at KS4 and to reflect on the relevance for their own contexts. The research design includes participant validation to reduce researcher bias and sources of evidence have been triangulated to secure the trustworthiness of the data.

3.3 The research design

My research design provides a clear structure to move from the research questions to my conclusions. I draw eclectically on the case study approaches of Yin (2009; 2012), Stake (1995, 2013) and Merriam (1995) and on a range of multiple case study research designs (Gu, 2013; Hall and Thomson, 2017; Mitchell, 2010). Ethical considerations are at the forefront of my research design (Bassey, 2012) and are interwoven into the discussions below.

In this section I discuss the following aspects of my research design and methods:

- The selection and sample of case study schools and participants
- Developing and maintaining a strong research relationship
- Data generation
    - Documentary evidence
    - Semi-structured interviews
    - Participant observation
- Analysing and interpreting the data
- Reporting and discussing the findings
- Researching ethically

These aspects should not be regarded as fixed and separate, but as interconnected, dynamic and evolving entities, informing each other and developing in a cyclical manner

My aim was that participation in the research would extend the agency of participants and encourage democratic conversation (Oancea and Bridges, 2009) in order to enable them to examine 'the taken-for-granted presuppositions implicit in their practice' (Carr, 2004: 62).

3.3.1 The selection and sample of case study schools and participants

My first step was to select the sample of case study schools and the participants for the study. The decision as to which schools and participants I should target evolved as I refined my research question and considered the rationale behind the research with my supervisor. Following Thomson and Hall (2017) my aim was not to find schools where there is 'good practice' but rather to look for schools which would offer a 'high theoretical yield' and provide findings that could help other schools and policy makers 'to rethink taken-for-granted assumptions and think instead about complexities, principles and diversity in practices' (Thomson and Hall, 2017: 43). In order to identify a 'purposive sample' (Patton, 2005) from within the university's partnership of schools I envisaged that my 'insider' knowledge of the schools and the language departments would enable me to make an informed choice. This would allow me to explore the research questions in different contexts but within the framework of the partnership. I considered this to be an important decision in a fragmented education landscape in which schools co-exist in localities as part of different networks, trusts and alliances.

In order to select my sample, I constructed a typology grid with seven possible schools from within the partnership. The tension between breadth and depth was addressed by placing the research question at the heart of considerations. I felt that in order to gain the in-depth data and understanding necessary to answer the research questions it would be advisable to focus on two or three schools. I selected three schools each with differing geographical locations, socio-economic context, school structure, governance and language provision. In order to provide anonymity and maintain confidentiality, I have used pseudonyms for the three schools in my study: Westfield, Midwood and Eastbridge. Westfield is a large 11-18 co-educational, comprehensive, community school located on the outskirts of a small industrial town in the Midlands. Midwood is a smaller than average size 11-16 urban academy secondary school situated in the north of a Midlands city.

Eastbridge is a large 11-18 co-educational academy situated in a small rural market town in the Midlands.

A second consideration was to decide which participants I should interview to secure access to a range of voices in order to understand the interplay of perspectives and actions within each institution. The literature review identified a dearth of research which explores how school leaders make sense of language education policy. I felt it was therefore important to target participants who had strategic curriculum leadership roles. The limited existing research into language education policy (Evans and Fisher, 2009; Filmer and Sankey, 2010) also seemed to suggest that school leaders have a strong influence on the place of languages within the KS4 curriculum. For the purposes of this research I have chosen to focus on 'people in formal school leadership positions – heads and deputy heads, as well as those with middle leader positions' (Thomson et al., 2013: 157). I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews with the headteacher, the curriculum deputy and the head of modern languages in each school as they all have strategic and interconnected professional roles to play in making meaning of language education policy.

3.3.2 Developing and maintaining a strong research relationship

Once I had received approval from the University Research Ethics Committee I sent an initial letter to the headteacher of each of the identified schools which explained the purpose of the study. In order to ensure that potential participants understood the nature of informed consent (Seidman, 2009) I also sent an information sheet and a sample consent form which outlined measures to ensure confidentiality (Appendix 2). The letter was followed by an email sent directly to the headteachers, as I was aware that post is often opened by a PA, whereas headteachers often deal with their own emails. Of the three schools identified I was fortunate that two immediately agreed to participate in the study. The third school did not respond to follow up emails or letters. With the assistance of my supervisor I then identified a replacement school for the sample and made contact with the headteacher who initially acted as gatekeeper. At the forefront of my mind was the importance of building up a productive research relationship with the schools – I reflected on this important process of 'Getting into School' using notes from my research journal (Appendix 3)

3.3.3 Data generation

Creswell views data collection as 'a series of interrelated activities aimed at generating good information to answer emerging research questions' (2011: 146). I decided to generate data through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and participant observation. This combination allowed different voices to be heard at different points in time and different contexts. A realistic time-line was adopted for gathering the data and due care and attention was given to minimising disruption to individual participants (Cohen et al., 2011). The fieldwork generated rich data providing insights into the lived experience of participants within the specific contexts of the case study schools, as well as across the schools.

3.3.3.1 Documentary evidence

In advance of the first set of interviews I analysed a range of documentary evidence relating to each of the case study schools in order to gain a contextual background (Duffy, 2010). Although the range of documents I was able to obtain from the case study schools varied, this approach contributed to an iterative process of checking throughout the research period and to the development of a more comprehensive account of emerging themes (McCulloch, 2012). Fitzgerald suggests that documents in fact 'offer a form of voice' (2011: 297) and bring an additional range of perspectives to the fore providing further insights for the researcher into events. School policy documents, prospectuses, Ofsted reports and curriculum plans were analysed and triangulated with data from semi-structured interviews, participant observation and notes from my research journal. I was mindful of both the 'official' and the 'unofficial' within the various texts which added to each individual school's story (Thomson and Hall, 2017: 186)

3.3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

Seidman (2012) understands interviewing as a way of enabling people to tell stories and an important meaning-making process. He suggests that 'at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience' (Seidman, 2012: 9). I felt that a semi-structured approach to interviewing was appropriate for my purposes as it offered a clear focus, but it also afforded participants the flexibility to shape the interview within their own specific contexts (Bush, 2012). My approach was underpinned by Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015: 4) conceptualisation of the research interview as:

> an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and interviewee. An inter-view is literally an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) highlight the active engagement of the participants or 'subjects' alongside the interviewer in this meaning making process because they talk about their experiences and reasons for action. However, they also emphasise how the participants are 'subject to discourses, power relations, and ideologies that are not of their own making but nonetheless affect and perhaps even constitute what they talk about and how' (2015: 3). I drew flexibly on Kvale's 'seven stages' to guide me through the 'messy practice' of conducting my interviews (Brinkman and Kvale, 2015: 128-129).

I designed the interview questions to include predominantly 'open-ended' questions (Appendix 4) which secured coverage of the research agenda and also enabled participants to articulate what was significant to them (Hobson and Townsend, 2010). The questions were drafted several times to ensure that they provided an opportunity for participants to steer the conversation but also to provide a broad framework to allow for cross-study checking and cross-case comparison. In the initial interviews the questions were loosely grouped and designed to overlap. I also prepared a number of follow-up questions to probe aspects in further detail if required. I piloted the questions with a former deputy head; this enabled me to consider the order of questions to ensure that they enabled the conversation to flow and develop. In practice, I did not always ask the questions in the same order as some participants covered these questions in advance of them being posed or incorporated them in other answers. My aim was to ensure coverage of all of the questions during the course of the interview; this required dexterity and careful listening from me. Professionally, I have extensive experience of working with and talking to school leaders. This was a valuable skill I was able to draw on to 'bound' the conversation when necessary in the context of time constraints and the purpose of the research. School leaders have few opportunities to reflect and articulate their views and perceptions confidentially and they had much to share.

Authenticity and trustworthiness were secured through 'active listening' (Seidman, 2012: 81) in order to follow up participants' answers effectively and to enable participants to contribute to shaping the conversation (Bush, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). This then offered an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of their unique contexts and histories. Whilst covering the broader themes the conversations all developed in contrasting ways which illustrated the importance of

adopting this holistic approach. Throughout the process I was conscious of the need to ensure 'that the right questions are asked of the right people' (Ball et al., 2012: 146). The follow up interviews and observation of meetings provided an opportunity for me to ask additional questions and clarify aspects that had emerged from my initial coding.

Prior to conducting the interviews permission was sought for audio recording and an interview schedule for conducting interviews was developed as part of a broader ethical protocol to ensure informed consent was given and confidentiality secured. I was mindful of the importance of establishing a rapport and trust so that participants felt safe to use their 'inner voice' rather than a more guarded outer voice (Seidman, 2012: 82). Mears (2012) highlights the importance of ethics of accuracy and principled conduct in relation to conducting interviews, including communicating honestly, treating participants fairly, accurately representing their views and using the interviews as agreed. In order to secure a reflective approach and with particular regard to the interpersonal nature of the interview situation (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015: 4) I created an interview guide for myself prior to conducting the interviews. This included prompts in relation to strategies to establish rapport, use of body language. As an 'insider' researcher it also served as a reminder to me that in this role I was a researcher and not a languages advocate, advisor or fellow school leader.

The interviews took place in two phases. During the first phase I conducted three 45 - 50-minute audio recorded interviews; with a headteacher, a curriculum deputy and head of modern languages. This was then followed by attendance at a modern languages department meeting and informal participant observation in my role as an ITE tutor. The follow up interviews with the deputy heads took place at the at the beginning of the next academic year and following the referendum vote by the UK to leave the European Union. My rationale for the timing of the follow up interviews was that I believed that government response to the consultation on the EBacc (which closed in January 2016) would have been published, which would potentially have an impact on the school's understanding of language education policy and their enactment. However, on my return to schools in the Autumn of 2016 the response had still not been published.

By this stage I had coded the data from the first sets of interviews and had begun to consider some emerging themes. These interviews included two common open questions but different supplementary questions which related to themes which had

emerged from my initial coding in each case study school and across schools. My initial consideration of the data suggested to me that the deputy heads were best placed to clarify questions that had emerged from the initial interviews.

The interviews were transcribed shortly after they were conducted. I would have preferred to transcribe them myself. However, I took a pragmatic decision and arranged for them to be transcribed by a colleague who has many years of experience of transcribing interviews for colleagues engaged in qualitative education research. I then listened to the interviews and checked the transcriptions at the same time as carrying out some initial coding. This enabled me to re-connect with the interviews and to think about my own interview style and approach (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). In preparation for the follow up interviews I re-listened to the initial interviews so that I was able to 'pick up' the conversation.

Respect for the participants was the central ethical consideration that underpinned my research; therefore, respondent validation was employed. The interview transcripts were sent back to all participants via email to be reviewed and validated. This secured trustworthiness and authenticity and provided an opportunity for them to amend their responses and ensured that their voices had been truthfully represented (Mears, 2012). Only one of the participants chose to make any alterations to the transcript and these were minor details rather than any changes to the substance of their argument.

3.3.3.3 Participant observation

Since I have stopped working full time in one school I have become acutely aware of how difficult it is to understand the ethos and context of a school as a visiting tutor, researcher or inspector. In addition to conducting the interviews, and 'hanging about' in the schools (Thomson and Hall, 2017) I also built in a number of formal opportunities for participant observation which comprised observation of departmental meetings in the schools. This provided me with valuable data which I was able to triangulate with data collected during the interviews and proved to be helpful to inform my preparation for the follow up interviews.

I observed a modern languages department meeting in each school. These meetings provided an important opportunity to observe how heads of languages transmitted key messages to their teams. I was made to feel very welcome in all meetings, although all schools were keen to draw me into their discussions, which I endeavoured to minimise. Former and current trainees and mentors were present at

each of the meetings. It was evident that each head of modern languages made a strong effort to showcase aspects of the department's practice but also to address issues for further development. I found attendance at these meetings as an observer somewhat uncomfortable. It felt strange for me to be listening and watching rather than contributing, something I sensed the heads of modern languages and the departmental members felt as well. I was keen to put them at ease. In each case I spent almost an hour in each school talking informally to the department after the meeting.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015: 34) suggest that the interview can take the form of learning process for both the interviewer and the interviewee so that the process can 'instigate processes of reflection where the meanings of themes described by the subjects are no longer the same after the interview. This I felt to be the case with the interviews but also through the participant observation. Throughout the data generation process I sensed a real engagement with language education policy and a commitment to supporting my research from participants. One participant commented that it was refreshing to find a researcher who 'had been there themselves' and 'understood the pressures of constant change and accountability'. Interestingly, throughout the process several of the participants asked me about the logistics of enrolling for masters or doctoral programmes themselves. I was pleased that I had made the researcher role tangible for busy educators in schools.

As a regular visitor to the case study schools in my capacity as an ITE tutor I had a valuable opportunity to collect a wealth of data through informal observation captured in a research journal. I made at least 3 additional visits to each of the schools and teachers from the schools attended meetings and training at the university on a regular bias during the research. Often it was a throw-away remark which proved to be significant and provided an opportunity to get beneath the projected image of the school. In order to expand my understanding of the context of the schools, where possible I travelled by public transport and spent some time observing in local cafes and shops to get a feel and gain some understanding of the local communities. The data from the participant observation provided invaluable evidence for triangulation and an opportunity to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the contexts of the case study schools.

3.3.4 Analysing and interpreting the data

According to Bathmaker (2010: 202) analysis is understood as a combination of 'close engagement with data, interpretation of data, and theorising'. She suggests

that different ways of dealing with data analysis have an effect on the interpretive representation of the data, on the story that can be told and the choice of an analytic perspective provides a particular lens on a research issue, which may make it possible to see some things but not others (Bathmaker, 2010). Within this interpretive, multiple case study, the processes of data generation and data analysis were closely intertwined. I analysed my data throughout the period of the data generation so that initial findings and emerging themes served to illuminate and inform subsequent data generation as outlined above. I recognise that as a researcher I can only observe facts through the use of lenses made up of concepts and theories (Silverman, 2014: 39). Ball notes that a critical policy analyst must 'take risks, use imagination, but must also be reflexive' (1994: 2). He rejects the notion of 'theoretical purism' or 'conceptual niceties' but foregrounds 'the use of the concepts and interpretive devices which offer the best possibilities of insight and understanding' (1994: 3). In my own analysis and interpretation of the data I have drawn on a range of theoretical resources including Ball et al.'s theory of 'policy enactment' (2012) and Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' of habitus, capital and field. These theoretical tools provide me with an analytical framework and serve as an 'interpretive device' offering a way of interpreting and thus understanding what is happening within and across the case study schools (Gulson and Parkes, 2010: 78).

I have accepted Ball et al.'s invitation to use their 'Thinking about policy enactment' map (Appendix 5) which places the school at the centre of the process and 'represents some of the material, interpretive and discursive dimensions of policy enactment' (Ball et al., 2012: 143). I have drawn on this map to construct the interview questions and I revisited it again as a tool in the reporting and discussion of my findings. It has provided an invaluable tool to support my thinking about policy enactment. Taking context seriously is at the heart of this theory –-the material, structural and relational contexts of schooling are incorporated into policy analysis in order to secure a better sense of policy enactments at an institutional level. They foreground the important role and responsibility of educators in schools as policy actors who interpret and translate policy into practice according to their differing contexts.

During my fieldwork, I turned to the empirical work and writing of Bourdieu because the emerging data led me to believe that his thinking tools might be a helpful addition to my researcher toolbox. I sliced through the data again and employed a

Bourdieusian lens to analyse and examine the contested and changing field of participation in modern languages at KS4. Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field to support my analysis helped me to examine taken-for-granted practices and 'what goes without saying'. James (2011: 4) suggests that Bourdieu helps us to get past the structure/agency dichotomy by proposing an approach which goes beyond 'portraying people or institutions as completely in control of own destiny or conversely as being simply determined by their circumstances'. This has proven to be particularly helpful to 'find a way through the range of sticking points' (Rawolle and Lingard, 2013: 117) in a field dominated by dichotomies which can sometimes lead to a lack of confidence, a sense of powerlessness and an abdication of responsibility amongst language educators to challenge what they perceive as the unchallengeable. I expand on Bourdieu's ideas in further detail in chapter 6.

I adopted an inductive, ongoing cyclical approach to the analysis of the data. My first step was to organize and condense the data, building towards a narrow focus which allowed the particularity and patterns to be seen and reveal how elements are linked (Silverman, 2005: 178), first for individual schools and then across schools. I adopted a thematic analysis approach and drew on Braun and Clarke's six phases of thematic analysis (2006). This enabled me to understand the narrative from the conversations and in so doing allowed me to explore specific aspects in my follow up interviews in relation to my research question (Appendix 6).

3.3.5 Reporting and discussing the findings

An important step in the iterative process of analysis and interpretation of the data sets was the writing and reporting of the findings. In order to preserve the voice of the speakers I decided to present my findings in the form of three portraits (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). My decision to present the data in this way draws on the placed–based methodological approach adopted by Christine Hall and Pat Thomson (Hall and Thomson, 2017; Thomson and Hall, 2017). The portraits seek to capture the perspectives of the participants and explore the practices they adopt as they make sense of the policy requirement to extend participation in languages at KS4. I place a particular focus on the school-specific factors which act as challenges and enablers and aim to shed light on how the schools make language education policy 'their own' and seek to 'make it work' (Hall and Thomson, 2017: 27). The portraits illustrate the uniqueness, 'particularity' and 'specificity' of the

individual schools (Thomson and Hall, 2017) whilst also revealing 'patterns', which are discussed in a cross-case analysis in chapter 5.

The actual process of writing the portraits and in particular the use of the direct quotations from participants caused me to challenge and rethink some of my initial interpretations and informed the writing of my cross-case analyses. I sliced through the data twice to present two different cross-case analyses of the three schools in order to consider patterns and particularities. Firstly, I used Ball et al.'s (2012) visualisation of policy enactment as a 'thinking tool' to support the cross-case analysis and discussion in chapter 5. I then sliced through the data again and continued the process of interpretation and analysis by addressing my research questions through a Bourdieusian lens in chapter 6.

3.4 Researching ethically

Seidman (2012: 144) contends that

> Interviewers seek and are given the opportunity to enter the lives of their participants. Participants share and reflect on their experiences with their interviewers. They entrust the interviewers with a part of themselves. They make themselves vulnerable to the interviewers.

Ethical considerations are at the heart of this participant-centred case study research (Plowright, 2011), which is conducted in a natural context within an ethic of respect for the persons involved in the research undertaken (Bassey, 2012). Continual attention has been paid to methodological, ethical, and prudential principles, 'what they might mean in the particular circumstances faced, and how best to act in those circumstances as a researcher' (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012: 7). Throughout the study I have been mindful of further challenges and complexity relating to ethical issues which have arisen as the qualitative research probes the personal, subjective truths of people's lives, which in turn exposes the frailties, concerns and questions of interpretive researchers (Williams, 2012).

Ethical guidelines were drawn up for each stage of the research with regard to informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality of data to comply with the university's Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics. Participation in the research was voluntary and participants were afforded the opportunity to withdraw at any time. The documentation outlined the potential benefits of the research both locally and nationally and explained how measures have been taken to avoid 'risk' and 'harm' according to the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research

(2011). Care was taken to articulate this clearly to schools, foregrounding the voluntary nature of participation, measures taken to protect anonymity and highlighting the open and inclusive approach underpinning the study. A realistic time-line was adopted for collecting the data which was negotiated with the schools and staff involved. Extensive first-hand experience of school leadership roles ensured that I was well placed to approach this sensitively.

At the forefront of my research has been the development and maintenance of an ethical relationship with the school and the participants. The literatures point to problems associated with anonymity and confidentiality (Kelly, 2009; Thomson and Hall, 2017) where contextualization is an important aspect of the research. Kelly (2009: 443) takes the view that there are 'limits to guarantees of anonymity' and that researchers should stick to 'reasonable assurances'. It was in the writing and in the planned dissemination of the study that issues of anonymity and confidentiality come to the fore and particular consideration has been given to an approach that would avoid causing unnecessary harm to those affected by the research findings. Following Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) and Thomson and Hall (2017) I adopt the position that in order to 'learn from the school' as well as 'about it' it is important to look for the positives and then the difficulties and dilemmas. I take the view that 'getting the bigger picture allows a nuanced understanding of the school as a place and why things are as they are' (Thomson and Hall, 2017: 234). Although I had given the schools pseudonyms I was aware throughout my research that the contextual details might render the anonymity fragile, in particular for people who know the area. For these reasons, ethical considerations were live throughout – and beyond – the conduct of the research.

Chapter 4 The Research Findings

In this chapter I report the findings of my research study. I present three portraits which tell the story of how each of the case study schools has understood and enacted the policy requirement to extend the learning of languages at KS4 to the 'vast majority of pupils'. The individual portraits shed light on the particularity of the individual schools by drawing on the voices of the participants.

4.1 Westfield School

4.1.1 Getting to know Westfield School

Westfield is a large 11-18 co-educational, comprehensive, community school situated on the outskirts of an industrial town in the Midlands. Whilst all other secondary schools in the area have academy status, Westfield has chosen to remain a community school. The school's website emphasises how Westfield prides itself on its commitment to offering a broad and balanced curriculum, its academic achievement and its strong pastoral record. Over half of the pupils are from a white British background with other pupils coming from a range of ethnic backgrounds including Indian and Pakistani. The proportion of bilingual students with English as an additional language is above the national average whilst the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below. Attainment is above the national average. A high proportion (90%) of pupils were entered for the English Baccalaureate in 2016 and 52% achieved the EBacc in comparison with the national figure of 22.8% (UK Statistics Authority, 2016).

I arrived at lunchtime for my first formal 'research' visit, so I had a chance to get a feel of the school and I immediately felt at home. In many respects it had a similar atmosphere to the school where I had worked for a large proportion of my career. At the reception desk three lunchtime supervisors were speaking a mixture of English and Panjabi. On a subsequent visit I watched the Deputy show a new Polish pupil and his family around the school. She took time to put them at ease – the notion of community and pastoral care spoken about on the website could be clearly observed.

As part of the data collection process I interviewed the Headteacher, the Curriculum Deputy and the Head of Modern Languages. I was keen to gain an understanding of their own experiences of language learning. The Head (a science teacher) has an O' Level in German, travels frequently to France and is learning Italian at an

evening class to 'keep his brain active'. He explained that he found speaking and listening a challenge but grammar easy 'because it was like an equation and these are the rules and this is the ending that comes out'. The Head had a strong commitment to German in the Westfield curriculum:

> We thought German might die here when we brought in Spanish as it has in many schools but actually we've still got enough people to be running German. It appeals to certain pupils more than French or Spanish.

The Deputy (a mathematician) had also enjoyed learning languages at school and had studied French, German and Maths to A-level and had some limited experience of teaching French. She had chosen to study languages because:

> they were mechanical, and I could apply the same skills as I could in maths to languages… I didn't have a particularly good accent… but I could get a decent grade by learning rules.

The Head of Modern Languages had a degree in French and German. She had studied Spanish A-level at night school to support the introduction of Spanish into the curriculum and had taken a Mandarin course. This reminded her of 'how tiring learning a language can be' and 'how difficult it is when you first start'.

4.1.2 The benefits of learning a modern language

For school leaders at Westfield the benefits of learning a language were manifold. The Head put it like this:

> There are various sides to it: the practical benefits to pupils in terms of employment and access to further and higher education are important because it does open doors for them particularly if they are looking at working for companies that work in Europe or other parts of the world. The general practical benefits of being able to function in another country if you are on holiday or speak to people from other countries here – that's very important.

He was keen to stress that learning languages helped pupils to develop the skills to embrace different cultures and speak different languages locally – 'here' - on the doorstep. He pointed out that one of the major employers in the town attracted an international workforce so employees had to interact with people from all over the world. The Head of Modern Languages stressed how learning languages enabled young people to develop a particular set of skills which would provide the foundation learning tools for young people to develop their linguistic repertoires:

> Languages are a key part of the skill set that students are going to need in the future in a globalised economy because we are going to need to have language skills and the country is terribly short and employers are

> constantly reiterating the fact that they don't have enough people with language skills so I think that we are doing our bit to try and ensure that children have exposure to certainly one but, for the vast majority, two languages so that for the future they are going to be more adaptable and learn potentially new languages on the back of their experience of learning a language.

This notion of a distinct skill set was echoed by the Deputy:

> It is important because they can then interact wherever they are working in the future …if they've learnt how to learn a language it's quicker to learn another language. …The way that you learn a language is totally different to …. history or geography or sociology GCSE …it gives them a totally different set of skills.

The Head of Modern Languages was keen to acknowledge the linguistic and intercultural skills that many of their bilingual pupils possess. She highlighted what she perceived as an 'open mindedness about learning a language' and how they are used to language learning and 'the idea of structure and grammar and practising and the reinforcement of new concepts in different ways'.

> A lot of the languages have got different scripts and so that is an extra challenge certainly for the children who are doing community languages. I'm always really impressed by how readily they get used to writing in a completely different script.

Another aspect deemed to be a particular benefit by the Head was the 'academic rigour of learning a foreign language'. I was keen to understand what he meant by this, given the way languages has been framed as an 'academic subject' in the EBacc. By delving a little deeper, it became clear that the Head was referring in particular to the knowledge, understanding and application of grammar and structures:

> In your own language you don't have to be so aware of many of the grammatical things but once you learn a foreign language you do have to be aware. So, in some ways, I think it ought to and it probably does improve students' use of English if they are adept at a foreign language.

4.1.3 The place of modern languages in the curriculum

The school website explains that 'all pupils at Westfield School follow a broad and balanced curriculum, which reflects the needs of our pupils and national priorities'. It allows pupils 'to develop the skills and knowledge required to succeed in the adult world now and in the foreseeable future'. Languages has a well-established place in the 11-16 curriculum as the Head of Modern Languages explained:

> Languages are still a core subject of the curriculum at this school and they always have been. We never made them optional when most schools did

> so and we've got over ninety percent of students doing a GCSE in a foreign language so languages are pretty highly valued as a key part of the curriculum.

The Head of Modern Languages outlined provision like this;

> All our pupils study French from Year 7 through to Year 9 and nearly all of them do a second language which is either German or Spanish or Punjabi or Urdu though that is currently under review and then over ninety percent of our Year 10 and 11 take a full GCSE in a modern language which is mostly French or Spanish.

Emphasis is placed on diversity of provision and choice. A small number of pupils with 'significant literacy and numeracy issues' or very new arrivals with little if no experience of French, German or Spanish do not take a ML GCSE. Westfield also supports pupils to gain qualifications in additional home languages such as Polish, Dutch, Italian and Arabic. The Head of Modern Languages explained how the curriculum builds on the knowledge and skills of local communities:

> So it's just seen as being the norm that you study a language. We have a very positive attitude towards language learning in as far as having quite a multi-ethnic mix in the school children are used to hearing different languages and there is not a predominant 'oh why do we have to learn a foreign language?' The children tend to travel and to have families that recognise the value of language learning.

Trips to France, Spain and Germany are regarded as an important aspect of languages provision at Westfield but do not feature in the Panjabi and Urdu curriculum as the Deputy explained:

> The last Urdu teacher did ask about arranging a trip but basically the message we needed to get to him was to make sure you are teaching good quality lessons and make sure we see your organisational skills in the classroom first because we can't let you do a trip until we know that you are really well organised.

The involvement of staff from across the school with trips helps to embed the language ethos. The Head outlined their importance:

> We take over two hundred Year 8 students to France every summer as a single trip…for a lot of them, it is their first time away from home… and the first time in a foreign country.

The Head of Modern Languages stressed the significant role of the headteacher and governors in securing the place of languages within the curriculum. She summed it up like this:

> The previous Head and the current Head are both very positive in their recognition that languages are worth learning and valuable and they both

> took an interest in languages. Our current Head, for example, goes to language classes at night school to learn Italian so he has an interest in language. Our previous Head was the same and he was a real Francophile.

The Governing Body are felt to be supportive towards the notion of 'languages for all' at KS4. The Head of Modern Languages, as a governor, has a helpful insight into whole school policy making process and is well placed to articulate the contribution of languages to the curriculum. This support for modern languages as a core subject is also reflected in an institutional narrative that centres around the high achieving profile of the school. As the Head explained:

> They [the governors] are also aware of the kind of image that we want to present and that we have never gone in for alternative curriculum courses and that sort of thing because that suits our children who are mostly of average or above average ability, so it fits well with the school to have a lot of language teaching going on.

More recently there has been some tension and pressure from the Governing Body in relation to the teaching of community languages.

4.1.3.1 The disappearance of Panjabi and Urdu

For many years Panjabi and Urdu have been a core part of the mainstream curriculum at Westfield and have enjoyed strong support from the community, parents and the governors. The Head of Modern Languages explained the evolving nature of Panjabi and Urdu within the community:

> Most children who choose to do community languages can speak and understand them to some extent but very often can't read and write. Largely what they learn when they take up Urdu and Punjabi is the script and how to read and write in the language but mostly their listening and speaking skills are fairly well developed. In some cases, they are practically fluent because they do speak it at home but more and more it is mainly grandparents that speak it so they speak it to some extent but generally the parents are second generation and native English speakers.

The pupils who chose to study Panjabi and Urdu therefore require specific teaching which enables them to build on their speaking and listening skills and consolidate their reading and writing skills. The place of Panjabi and Urdu within the curriculum is also changing due to the on-going problems with the recruitment and retention of 'high quality teachers' as the Head explained:

> For a long time we've offered those subjects in Years 8 and 9 and for GCSE and then for A-level but that has very much rested on a historical accident that we happened to have teachers of Punjabi and Urdu and in the case of Punjabi a qualified science teacher who was also fluent in Punjabi who moved across from science to Punjabi and in the case of Urdu

> we had somebody who wasn't a qualified teacher…What has happened is that as those teachers have moved on through retirement it's proven very difficult to replace them.

The Deputy outlined the problems the school had encountered with recruitment:

> The Urdu teacher left us at Christmas quite suddenly and we've been trying to recruit a new Urdu teacher but we are insisting that that teacher must have a UK qualification.

This is a particular dilemma for the Head who is 'under pressure' from the local community to employ someone who speaks the language but is not qualified, something he has resisted. For the school a particular 'struggle' has been 'to provide Punjabi and Urdu teaching that is of sufficient quality and reliability'. The Head is mindful of scrutiny from Ofsted and is keenly aware that 'it won't get me off the hook if I tell them that we couldn't find a qualified teacher so the quality isn't very good'.

The Deputy shared her concerns about the quality of teaching and learning:

> Ideally we want them to do Urdu because that is what their parents want them to do and they've got the background and they want to get the culture. What we need is for Urdu and Punjabi to be taught in the same lively way as French, German and Spanish are at this school …in the Urdu class it's 'copy page twenty-six'.

This story unfolded during the course of my research. During the final interview the Deputy explained that although provision for Urdu and Panjabi at GCSE had been resolved in the short-term, a longer-term issue remained.

> We had such strong demand from parents during the options process last spring that the lady who had always taught Panjabi here and thought she had retired came back… We've now also found a lady who comes in just for the five lessons of Urdu. So, she is now coming to us saying that these children are not prepared for their controlled assessments …none of us can tell that the standard of their written work isn't good enough.

It gradually became clear that Urdu and Panjabi would no longer be offered as part of the mainstream curriculum. The Head planned to offer these languages either in a twilight session or in the out-of-hours community-provision. The Deputy had a slightly different take:

> We're not actively looking… if we end up with a lot of pressure we might have to look at what alternatives exist but if there isn't much pressure then we just won't offer those languages.

The School Council was concerned about the loss of Panjabi and Urdu, as the Deputy explained:

> One of the things that we discussed was how we hadn't been able to replace the Urdu and Punjabi teachers and that we wouldn't be offering those in Year 8 next year and they were very disappointed about that… they see the value of languages and they would like more variety.

I was keen to explore longer-term solutions with the Head. He felt that ITE had an important role to play:

> I think the only thing that would do it would be to have a bigger supply of normally trained people either by PGCE or other routes who are trained in teaching Punjabi and Urdu…There is a chicken and egg situation here as well because if you haven't got the high-quality teachers in the first place it is quite hard to see who is going to train up the next generation.

4.1.4 Maintaining modern languages for the 'vast majority' at KS4: enablers and challenges

Westfield's interpretation of the policy requirement to extend the study of languages to the 'vast majority' at KS4 needs to be understood in the context of its well-established tradition as a former specialist Language College, where additional funding brought depth and breadth to the modern languages curriculum (DfES, 2003b). The Deputy was keen to point out that the 'vast majority' of their pupils already studied a modern language from 11-16 and that this was not a 'reaction' to the government's EBacc performance measure.

> Way before EBacc came in we said that every child should do a language at GCSE apart from that small number who do a study support course. So when EBacc came in we didn't have to change anything because we'd got sufficient children doing languages and sufficient staff to cover it.

She reflected on how she had attended a city meeting of curriculum heads and they had joked that 'Westfield are still doing what they did twenty years ago'.

At Westfield their aim is to maintain languages for the 'vast majority' at KS4. They identified a number of school-specific factors as enablers: the strong commitment to languages from 11-16 from parents and governors; the secure place of modern languages within the broad and balanced curriculum, the range and choice of languages and their success in recruiting well qualified dual linguists. However, they were equally aware of the fragility and interrelated nature of these factors and pointed to a number of challenges which they felt might undermine their ability to continue to offer 'languages for all' from 11-16.

4.1.4.1 Maintaining languages for all in the face of the new specs

A major challenge at Westfield is how to align the well-established vision of modern languages as a core element of a balanced and broadly-based curriculum from 11-

16 with the introduction of a 'reformed' more 'rigorous' modern languages GCSEs qualification for all pupils, a qualification which presumes a foundation level of knowledge and understanding in a ML at KS2 and demands a specific approach to assessment. It was in this context that the Head believed that the tension between maintaining the curriculum vision and the pressures of accountability came to the fore:

> The worry is what happens with the new specifications as to whether we'll be able to maintain languages for all in the face of the new specs. We will have to see. What I can't do is have a position whereby we're making everybody do a language and I know that they are going to get lower grades. I'm accountable for the overall performance of the school and I can't damage that.

His specific concern related to 'lower ability' pupils and how the qualification could pose a potential barrier to maintaining languages for all or nearly all. The Head of Modern Languages felt that 'alternative qualifications should be more fully recognised' and that 'there needs to be a bit more recognition that not everybody can necessarily cope with the GCSE'. However, as the Head pointed out:

> There is a difficulty in selling non-GCSE qualifications for a school like this because we've got very highly aspirational parents and pupils and to say to a parent that their child isn't up to doing a GCSE is difficult because they will resist that.

The Head of Languages considered the reformed ML GCSEs as challenging but also an opportunity to raise linguistic competence:

> I think it's good in two ways: one because I think it is a more authentic experience and a more realistic demand of what students should be able to do in order to claim to be competent in a language. But the other side of it is that if you've got such an academic curriculum for foundation students… there are ones that will cope with it but there are others who will really struggle with the extended writing, for example, or the demands of the speaking test all done in one go.

The Head of Modern Languages was worried that the terminal nature of the exams would mean that there would be 'less control' for her department to embed assessment within day-to-day teaching and that it would be more difficult for pupils to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding. One response from Westfield was an increased emphasis on formal exams and regular testing, as the Deputy explained:

> We've started to address that even lower down the school by having more whole school exams and getting children used to revising for a lot of exams.

The Head of Modern Languages projected a pragmatic approach towards the challenges. She drew on her experience of dealing with the many changes to the modern language GCSE qualifications since they were introduced in 1997. She explained it like this:

> So I have seen it all and I know that it did work before and so that is why I'm not as scared as maybe younger teachers might be of the prospect of it going back to what it was ten years ago. But whether we can do it with the bigger range in ability that we have now compared to ten years ago is where the challenge lies.

The Deputy conveyed a slightly different picture:

> The languages department are horrified! Because we make nearly everybody do a language and we are only taking about twenty children out of languages… now it could be on any topic.

She also expressed concerns about the future outcomes at GCSE:

> I think also they struggle to get those top grades in languages. I think they do generally find it more difficult or the workload is more problematic in getting an A* as opposed to getting an A* in maths or sciences

Concerns about the new modern languages GCSEs also manifested themselves in discussions about dual linguists. Westfield is reviewing which pupils should study two languages in years 8 and 9.

4.1.4.2 Starting from scratch in year 7

The fragmented and diverse provision at KS2 was also considered to be an obstacle. School leaders at Westfield were worried about the GCSE qualification which presumes a foundation level of knowledge and skills understanding in a ML at KS2. Whilst previously, through its transition work, Westfield had been able to establish a clear idea of the linguistic profile of pupils on entry, this was no longer appeared to be the case. The Head of Modern Languages explained how:

> It is quite a mixed bag when it comes to what languages they've done and how much they've done but I would say that the vast majority have done French…some have done it from Year 3 and some have done quite a lot in Year 5 and 6.

Mixed ability classes in year 7 meant that a pupil with two years of French at KS2 might find themselves starting again alongside a complete beginner as the Head explained:

> Year 6 has been totally dominated by preparation for literacy and numeracy tests… some of the local primary schools have got fully bilingual staff who can deal with French to a very high level and some have got

> people who are learning it one step ahead of the children and don't really know how the language is spoken or written. We are still ending up in Year 7 starting from scratch because we have mixed ability groups…

School leaders felt more could be done nationally to support primary schools to provide a coherent and systematic language learning experience for pupils. They were less clear on what could be done at Westfield to build on prior learning.

4.1.4.3 A high-quality team of reflective dual linguists

A key enabler in the maintenance of a quality language learning for all from 11-16 is Westfield's ability to recruit and retain a high-quality languages team. The Head articulated the importance he attached to the school's strong links with Higher Education as part of his recruitment strategy:

> Well we have University X for PGCE and we will use other universities as well; we haven't got into the school-based training here because we are still feeling that we'd like people who have some broader education background… We need people at this school who can reflect on and think about their practice and the practice of others …there is always a risk of being too much head down due to the practicalities of doing the job and taking your eye of why you do things and what are the issues and barriers to children's learning and what are the links to the world outside school.

Due to my insider role as a PGCE Modern Languages tutor I was aware that Westfield has adopted a strategic approach to the recruitment of modern language teachers. The Head of Modern Languages requests dual linguists for teaching practice placements in order to build capacity but also to 'try out' potential teachers. Westfield is keenly aware that the diversity of provision and the opportunity to teach A-level helps to attract high calibre candidates. Equally the recruitment of dual linguists is essential to sustain the diversity of languages on offer to pupils and cost-effective timetabling.

> We've recruited well and introducing Spanish was very successful. But, equally, German, which could easily have suffered under this introduction of Spanish, has held up because, again, we've managed to recruit some very passionate teachers who are really committed.

There can however be a problem with the retention as the Head recounted:

> There has also been quite a bit of turnover and the sort of people that we've had have either quickly gone on to promotion elsewhere or we have quite a few young teachers now who will work for a year or two and then they go abroad.

He felt that one solution might be to offer teachers a sabbatical but was also aware of the problems he has encountered when attempting to recruit languages staff on a

short-term basis. The recruitment and retention of high quality teachers of Panjabi and Urdu - however has been problematic as reported above.

School leaders believe that the key factor that enables Westfield to offer quality language learning for all from 11-16 is the high calibre, stable languages team which is able to motivate and encourage learners. The Head's belief in the languages team is strong:

> We've managed to cope with that because we've got a very strong languages team… they've got a very good, almost self-sustaining, culture within the languages department and they are very tightly knit and they spur each other on to do better. It doesn't suit everybody and we've had one or two staff who have joined and have not enjoyed being here because it's been too high pressure.

The Deputy displayed a similar belief in the team:

> We have got a very talented department of language teachers and they deliver very interesting lessons so you will never be bored in a language lesson here and it is always good fun.

The languages team is led by an experienced Head of Modern Languages. She is able to 'make the case' for languages in her role as a governor and also through frequent conversations with the Head and the Deputy:

> I think in some schools they are quite remote and maybe people don't get the opportunity to have those discussions… with the dual linguists where senior management are saying to me that they don't think they can run it… so I say that maybe we could use our French assistant for one lesson and that would reduce the amount of time it runs or can we fit it into one slot rather than two slots.

The Head of Modern Languages was keen to acknowledge the strong support from the school leadership team:

> When I go to the subject network meetings I sometimes come out thinking thank God I work where I work because some people have such a hard time getting support for languages.

However, she also foregrounded the collaborative, consistent team approach as fundamental to the success of languages.

> We've had a very stable team over the last ten years and when I came I was the first new person in a long while …we are a strong department and we've created a sense of team work and they get the chance to teach a good range of abilities…so I think we've been successful in keeping the team together which gives us the consistency that a lot of other schools have struggled with.

The Head of Modern Languages also displayed great belief in her team to respond to the demands of the new GCSE: 'basically whatever the new GCSE format will be we'll just tailor our teaching to deliver that'. I have witnessed the 'tight knit' nature of the languages department in both formal and informal settings and their 'can-do' approach to 'making it work'. The department meeting which I observed provided a good example of this (Appendix 7). Another important enabler is the opportunity to work with other language educators and Westfield is proactive in this respect. Members of the department participate regularly in languages events at the local university and the Heads of Modern Languages network which exists within the Local Authority provides an important opportunity to share ideas although access to this has been reduced following budget cuts.

4.1.4.4 Extending the role of the Modern Language Assistant

A reduction in school budgets is another constraint on Westfield's ability to maintain and preserve the diversity of language provision from 11-16. Particularly vulnerable are dual linguists GCSE option groups and A-level groups, where numbers are often beneath what is regarded as financially viable. The school has sought solutions to maintain the status quo. One approach has been to extend the role of the Modern Language Assistants (MLAs) to teach dual linguists at GCSE and at A - level. The school believes that the individuals employed as MLAs have a good knowledge of the curriculum. This approach means that contact time and the diversity of provision can be maintained at GCSE which in turn is vital for recruitment at A-level. On the other hand, there is a recognition that 'unqualified' staff are being used to 'plug the gap' so equality of opportunity and quality assurance are important considerations. There seemed to be less concern about how this might be perceived by Ofsted than was the case in relation to Panjabi and Urdu. The deputy outlined the dilemma:

> Our dual linguists for the last several years have numbered about ten [at GCSE] and really our budget means that we do need to have a class of fifteen to twenty for subject survival… they tend to be our more able children which means that those dual linguists will come out with A*, As and Bs in both their languages… so we've said is that one of their five lessons will be with the language assistant.

Many schools no longer employ MLAs due to a reduction in budgets. However, at Westfield the role of the MLA has gained increased importance. The school has chosen to recruit native speakers of French, German and Spanish who live locally rather than from the British Council as they believe that this offers continuity and is

more cost effective. The German MLA is a parent and a lunch-time supervisor which also brings important whole-school benefits:

> Well in some ways it was luck the way it worked out but what is also good is that she can be helping a group of Year 11 supporting a teacher and when she sees the children playing football at dinner time she can check that they've learnt their vocab.

4.2 Midwood Academy

4.2.1 Getting to know Midwood Academy

Midwood Academy is a small 11-16 urban secondary school situated on a large housing estate which is designated as an area of social deprivation in a Midlands city. It became an academy in 2011 and was 're-brokered' by the Regional Schools Commissioner to a different local Academy Trust in 2016. Midwood's website highlights its 'ambitious', 'inclusive' and 'supportive' culture; meanwhile a lively Twitter feed showcases a range of extra-curricular activities and provides an ongoing link to parents and the community. A high proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals and the number of pupils supported by the pupil premium and who have special needs and or disabilities is above the national average. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is below average. Pupils enter school with attainment that is significantly below national averages. In 2016 40% of pupils were entered for the EBacc and 15% achieved the EBacc, which was just below the Local Authority figure of 16.6% (UK Statistics Authority, 2016).

On my first research visit I arrived on the bus with some Midwood pupils who were switching effortlessly between Polish and English. 'School-watching' in reception also provided an opportunity to get a feel of the day-to-day comings and goings. This included two pupils who came to pay for a Spanish trip and a concerned mother who had brought her son to school as he was not able to do PE. The receptionist asked the mother to note this in his planner. She explained that she could not write very well and the receptionist immediately offered to help.

The three school leaders I interviewed were locally educated. The Deputy and the Head of Languages both recounted how their love of languages had been sparked by local language teachers who had inspired them. The Head of Languages recalled the important influence of his German teacher:

> He was the first male language teacher that I had in Year 9 and he was great. He knew how to get the best out of me and how to make me feel good and how to push me.

After graduating with a joint honours degree in French and German he travelled in South America and added Spanish to his linguistic repertoire. He articulated a particular interest in bringing his skills to support the growing number of bilingual learners with EAL at Midwood. The school's Deputy Head (an English teacher) had also benefited from the breadth of languages offered by her school 'driven by an amazing languages teacher':

> I was very fortunate to go to the school I went to because I did French all the way through to A-level; I did German at GCSE and… I studied an additional GCSE in Spanish and I also did Russian as my subsidiary course at university so I would definitely consider myself to be a linguist.

This love of languages was not shared by the Head:

> I'm not a linguist; I wish I was. I'm in huge awe of people that can speak languages. My own experience of languages was that it was compulsory, and I was made to do it… I had to learn French and I didn't understand what the value of it was… Italian was different… it was partly 'The Godfather' and partly that I used to work on market stalls with an Italian family and I was in awe watching them speak.

Despite his own strong communication skills, he believed that speaking a language was something beyond his grasp.

4.2.2 The benefits of learning a modern language

The school leaders at Midwood emphasised the important contribution learning a language made to 'opening up the world' to their pupils. In the Head's words:

> Because of the levels of deprivation here, for children to get an insight into another culture is really important and hugely beneficial. We understand that because of poverty mobility is not always great and they feel better to stay in their community.

The Deputy echoed the importance of cultural awareness:

> I think one of the main benefits is just broadening their cultural awareness because quite a lot of our students are very entrenched in their local community and they say things like 'I don't know why I need to learn that language because I am never going to go there'.

She also spoke about the benefits of the increased diversity of their intake:

> I think students from other countries bring a really interesting dimension in and they are able to talk about life overseas and different types of experience… I certainly think that they bring a cultural reference because one of the things that we always see at Midwood is that the cultural knowledge of our students is so limited.

The ‘low literacy of children upon entry’ is a particular concern at Midwood and learning a second language was seen to contribute to pupils’ broader literacy skills. The Head spoke about the benefits of the year 7 Modern Languages Spelling Bee which contributed ‘to phonics, decoding skills and communication’. He described it like this:

> I think it is literacy rich and that is why I am such a fan of this programme. It’s not about Spanish to me actually; it’s about children just embracing any language and it could be English…So he creates a buzz and an excitement… the kids feel that something exciting has happened.

Conversely he was concerned that ‘high numbers of students enter the academy who have not yet acquired the literacy skills to cope with the demands of the national curriculum in languages’. The Head wondered to what extent the ability to ‘converse’ and interact was at the heart of learning a language:

> I have a view, not being a linguist, that if you were going to receive a GCSE in a subject you would be competent conversationally in that language but that is not within the requirements of the qualification.

The Head of Languages explained how learning a modern language developed pupils’ understanding of grammar, structures and patterns: ‘often students get more grammar chat, especially in KS3, in languages classes compared to English classes’. The Deputy felt there were opportunities to develop a more integrated approach to language education within the school.

> The majority of our English teachers have not been through formal grammar training so the language teachers are probably better at teaching grammar.

The Head emphasised the benefit of learning a language as a facilitating subject for ‘more-able’ students and that he did not want to bar them ‘from some of their HE opportunities’. In the context of the vote to leave the European Union, the Deputy believed that expertise in a language had become ‘increasingly valuable’:

> As a subject itself, it is really useful… I don’t think it is a fundamental one but it is an important one.

4.2.3 The place of modern languages in the curriculum

The Midwood prospectus states that the KS4 ‘curriculum will focus on the core subjects of English, maths and science, supported by an extended curriculum providing a broader balance of subjects’ to ensure that all students will have the ‘necessary academic and social skills for the future’. Modern languages sits within

this ‘extended curriculum’. The Head outlined how the place of languages has evolved over time:

> We did teach it [modern languages] and it was actually one of the largest departments in the academy, but we then became an Engineering Specialist school and that was really in response to our local context… Huge rafts of young people placed more value on the idea of a vocational pathway that would take them straight into the workplace and the pressures of distribution in a curriculum model meant that we can’t keep doing everything. When we removed it altogether we ran very small groups of select students and we brought in specialists to assist them but I’m talking about maybe ten or twelve kids in a year group.

He explained why modern languages had ‘disappeared’:

> It died as a subject in terms of interest and part of the reason was a value-based judgement from the students and the parents in the community and another part was the low literacy of our children upon entry… They are challenged with the English language and so the idea that for many of our children to be able to overcome the skills and knowledge requirements of an additional language when so many of them are challenged by English you have to make a decision about what the priorities are for the good of the kids.

The Head recounted how the change of government in 2010 and a new education policy focus on an ‘academic curriculum’ (DfE, 2010) had influenced the Midwood curriculum. Funding for the engineering specialism disappeared and a number of vocational qualifications were removed from the ‘approved list’ (Wolf, 2011). These factors, combined with the introduction of the EBacc performance measure, led Midwood to reintroduce modern languages into the curriculum:

> We’ve swung the pendulum too far the other way in terms of becoming very vocationally led which meant that we were barring some young people who were more academically minded.

Currently ‘all’ pupils at Midwood learn Spanish at KS3 for two hours a week apart from some ‘weaker’ students ‘with the idea that if they were struggling with their own English ability it isn’t right for them to spend time working on a second language’. The Deputy revealed ‘mixed feelings’:

> There is a school of thought that the teaching of the grammar that comes with the teaching of a second language is equally beneficial. For me personally I’m quite committed to giving all the students at some time – particularly at KS3 – the opportunity to have at least been exposed to a language.

In order to extend the range of languages on offer a French pilot group had been established for year 9 pupils. The Head of Languages recounted how this had come about:

> It started with the students actually. We've always wanted to do two languages but then the students started coming to us and going down to see Mr A [the Head] as well… we came from a position of strength regarding teaching and learning and we said that we could do this and we could teach French.

The Deputy explained how they hoped that the pilot would lead to further breadth:

> Spanish will be available to all and French, as an additional language, will be available to all. Now we do guide our students on their options so we would be saying to our students what we think would be right for them. I have been quite rightly challenged by the Head about adding this breadth by putting French on and if the languages team aren't able to be successful with one language is it the right thing to then move to two languages?

On a follow-up visit later in the year however the Deputy explained that they had made a decision to halt the French pilot due to the 'poor' GCSE results.

At KS4 Spanish is an option subject. The Deputy said, 'I would always encourage students about the importance of a language, but I don't treat it as core...'. She expanded on the importance of 'individual choice' at Midwood:

> I suppose, if I am really honest, I see maths and English as the top tier and I do think they should have exposure to science but then, for me, what matters is that all students have a choice of whether they take academic or vocational qualifications… I am resistant to this idea that somebody can say that all students must have this because I don't think that is necessarily individualised enough and what we try and do is about a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual.

The Deputy explained that the number of pupils studying a modern language at KS4 had dropped from eighty-five in the previous year to thirty-one in the current year 11 and one Spanish group in year 10. There was a small group of 'high ability' studying it as an after-school provision in order to 'work towards an EBacc'. The Deputy was keen to emphasise that the options figures were not what had been expected: 'triple science was very popular as was the vocational offer…Spanish took a real knocking, but it wasn't what they were predicting at all'.

Since Midwood had been re-brokered to a different Academy Trust the school had again begun to consider which languages they should offer. The Deputy put it like this:

> Within the Trust, there are more languages being taught and Spanish isn't necessarily the dominant one and that is interesting because Spanish here is a passion of the Head of department and so there may be some reflection and consideration at some point about whether we have to align ourselves more fully.

In addition to teaching Spanish, the school builds on the language skills of its increasing number of bilingual pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). One response has been to establish the EAGLE Centre (English as a Growing Language) to support these learners. The Head regards this as an important way in which to support and value the increasing diversity of languages and cultures within the school and to support pupils to gain a GCSE qualification in their 'mother tongue'.

4.2.4 Extending participation in modern languages at KS4 through choice: enablers and challenges

The Head of Midwood rejected the notion that the 'vast majority' of pupils should study a language as part of the EBacc policy requirement. He put it like this:

> The idea that we will require ninety-five percent of all students to do it [EBacc] is flawed in a model of a school that is supposed to offer breadth in experience and qualifications… I am ignoring the government mandate and I have put breadth back into my KS4 curriculum.

He suggested that the EBacc performance measure was 'not in the best interest of all pupils' at Midwood as it narrowed their curriculum. He felt that:

> A curriculum model should have the flexibility and the capacity to accommodate the needs of all young people. We talk about the EBacc at KS4 but if you are going to have a successful EBacc then you have to have a KS3 EBacc.

He was adamant that a 'one size fits all' approach to education policy militated against social inclusion:

> My children are weak ability on entry… my current Year 9 has just shy of thirty percent entered with a reading age below nine which means that they can't access the text of the National Curriculum and they are supposed to get on with languages… we are setting children up to fail.

He felt that the EBacc removed choice from young people, which he believed conflicted with Midwood's philosophy of allowing students to have a say in their curriculum at 14+.

> So we talk about the rights of young people and about the importance of choice and pupil voice… The truth of the matter is that children are not getting to choose their KS4 qualifications and that is the reality.

He also believed that the expectations of the EBacc performance measure were not in the spirit of the Academies Act (2010):

> We have a current administration that is expecting ninety-five percent of all KS4 children to be doing an EBacc qualification, which is slightly at odds with both the Academies Act, which is supposed to be about curriculum freedom and liberty. And my expectation, as a Head teacher, is to develop enough breadth in experience for children to be holistically developed and ready to deal with the challenges of life.

Nevertheless, the Deputy at Midwood believed that more students at Midwood should continue to take a modern language 'all the way through'. She thought that extending participation in modern languages at KS4 was dependent on encouraging more pupils to choose to study a language:

> We had a lot of provision put in place and we were going to recruit another member of staff and the team were telling us that they thought the kids were going to choose languages but my goodness they didn't! It was really disappointing.

In the Head's view this apparent curriculum 'freedom' is driven by what is measured. As an 'underperforming school' Midwood is heavily scrutinised. The Head believed that this had curtailed the opportunities for his staff to be innovative, as their day-to-day work was defined by the imperative of improving outcomes.

> I don't believe that they can make EBacc or languages compulsory for an academy against the Academy Act. However, if they say 'do what you like but we are going to measure you against these things'… We are, by definition, an underperforming school and so I am heavily scrutinised… I have a lot of innovative staff here who are constrained by the pressures.

He also had concerns about a lack of understanding from policy makers of the day-to-day realities of 'inner city schooling'. He believed that Ofsted's view of the curriculum and the DfE position contradicted one another:

> We have Michael Wilshaw who stood up three weeks ago and said that he would damn any school in the country that didn't offer breadth beyond EBacc and we have a Secretary of State for Education and an Undersecretary in Lord Nash who are very clear of what the expectations are of all of our children in the country and they are forgetting the distinct differences around the country and what they do is they pedal out a couple of examples and they then believe if that person can do it - so can everyone.

The Head's deep frustration with the pace of educational reforms and their impact on his staff and pupils shone through:

> I question, as many do, the expectation of the speed in which it is supposed to be in place and I question the confused message around how all schools are performance managed equally against that set of qualifications and then I have to balance all of that because if the diet is not rich and broad enough for my children they will not necessarily come to school.

4.2.4.1 A coherent language learning pathway

The Head of Languages considered their well-established links with Midhall, their main feeder primary school, to be an important enabler in extending languages provision and improving outcomes at Midwood. He explained that the creation of 'a coherent language learning pathway' was a priority:

> We work very closely with Midhall Primary and the Head of Spanish there, who is a bit of a hub for many of the primary schools in this area, many of which are our feeder schools. Many of the primary schools have non-specialist teaching and sometimes the children will have as little as twenty minutes a week. So we're involved in that with linking KS2 to KS3. So we do a Mexico Day... When we have our Year 10 Spanish students come over from Spain we go over to Midhall.

The two schools had worked together to establish schemes of learning in Spanish which bridged KS2 and KS3. The Deputy pointed to the more general benefits of learning any additional language at KS2:

> I think it's preferable if they've done Spanish but I don't think it's a problem if they'd done French. That's an additional benefit in some ways being exposed to a different language.

The Head of Languages highlighted the need to re-consider setting arrangements in year 7 in order to build on prior learning and to capitalise on the linguistic skills of the increasing number of bilingual EAL learners. The Deputy agreed that the setting arrangements needed to be reviewed:

> It means that you are going to have classes that are very mixed in terms of attainment because for some of them languages are completely new and for others they've already done four years of it and you are trying to teach a great range. Our foundation subjects are not able to set their classes themselves.

4.2.4.2 The opportunities and challenges of the modern languages GCSEs

The existing and the reformed modern languages GCSE qualifications were regarded as appropriate for some but not all of their pupils. According to the Deputy:

> We tend to take students on entry who are significantly lower than the national average and sometimes the GCSEs aren't always appropriate and in the past, we might have looked at the entry level courses.

The Head of Languages was 'keen to have some conversations with students to see what we can do for them and if they don't want to do the GCSE is there another kind of qualification that we can give them'. The Deputy emphasised that she did not think that languages should just be for the 'more able':

> A student whose target is a G can be equally successful at gaining that G in a language if they are doing a vocational course. When it comes to options though it's more about students exploring what they enjoy so it's about student choice and not ability directing things.

She went on to talk about the tricky balancing act between meeting students' needs and ensuring their 'success' in a modern languages GCSE:

> The needs of the students are paramount but, equally, we have to be aware of putting learners through who will be successful. Our Spanish department has had a bumpy ride in terms of its own success around outcomes … it is on an upward trajectory but that has taken quite a bit of work and so I do always have an eye to balancing the needs of the students with the needs of the school and the fact that we are all judged by our outcomes.

The Head thought that time was a major constraint: he believed there was insufficient time for his pupils to make the necessary progress to be successful at GCSE. He put it like this:

> My children enter this academy as significantly below national expectation in both English and maths so there is some confusion in the expectation. I share the view that English and maths are important as is a good basic education and what the EBacc and these new measures of Progress and Attainment 8 have done is they have now suffocated the KS4 curriculum model …in an academy like this sometimes we start to shred away some of the qualifications that they are clearly not valuing and where they are not going to be successful so that we can buy more time for them to get the qualifications that are most important.

The Head felt that time constraints also had a negative impact on how pupils are taught languages at KS4. He wondered whether 'all those rich cultural opportunities are always harnessed or taken because of the pressure of getting through the syllabus'. The Head had allocated additional time for ML at KS4. The Head of Languages welcomed the increase from two to three hours which he felt would enable more pupils to successfully access the modern languages GCSEs. However, he had concerns about the 'quitting culture' outlined above

The Head of Languages displayed an ambivalent attitude towards the reformed modern languages GCSEs. He saw it as both a challenge and an opportunity. He was worried about the short timeframe in which the department had to come to terms with the new requirements. The Head was also concerned about the lack of time for his teachers to prepare for the changes:

> When you are talking about building a foundation in Key Stage 3 so that children will be successful in Key Stage 4 we are building a foundation that

> bridges to the unknown because the assessment models for English and maths still haven't been signed off and yet we are teaching them.

The lengthy accreditation process of the new modern languages GCSEs meant that the modern languages team planned to switch to a different Awarding Organisation which had already received accreditation. The Head of Languages believed that the new modern languages GCSEs 'give you the freedom to make it more relevant to young people' and although concerned about the demands of the writing paper felt that in the long term it would encourage teachers to teach pupils to manipulate language. He put it like this:

> It is going to make us as teachers really consider how we are going to be able to make students more spontaneous and less robotic. To be honest it is a little daunting for a school like ours but I think it will be beneficial.

He considered the reformed GCSEs to be an improvement on the existing ML GCSEs:

> The current ML GCSE is basically about having a great memory when it comes down to it and being able to stuff all of this information into your head and then to release it in the assessment. …I'm always open to languages for all but, unfortunately, in that model there wasn't that flexibility.

However, the increased level of demand of the reformed ML GCSE was also a worry. He was concerned that the new grading system and in particular the definition of a grade 5 as 'good pass' at GCSE could have a negative impact on outcomes. He was acutely aware that although the Head and Deputy were supportive of the ML team, he needed to demonstrate 'good' GCSE outcomes. This was confirmed by the Deputy who felt that the 'poor outcomes' in languages had influenced poor take up of languages at KS4 because pupils find Spanish 'hard' and the 'kids do know which subject areas get results'.

4.2.4.3 Holding on to high quality language teachers

The modern languages team at Midwood is locally educated and they have close personal connections to the area. The deputy explained 'we've really struggled historically to recruit and retain good MFL teachers, but I think we now have a really strong department'. The Head was impressed by 'their creativity, their enthusiasm, their absolute unwavering passion for languages.' The Deputy explained that in order to build the languages team they had 'recruited somebody who wasn't really at that stage yet and tried to develop them'. The Head of Languages felt confident that he could move forwards with his newly established team but emphasised the

challenge of recruiting and 'holding on' to high quality teachers in an 11-16 school in 'challenging circumstances':

> Getting the quality of language teachers, getting teachers who are willing to work in this type of environment without the A-level and with the type of kids that we have -you need a year to get your feet under the table at this type of school but then they will trust you and they will make progress because they know that you are staying. Sometimes trying to find a languages teacher who is willing to dedicate themselves for a few years to that project has been hard work.

However, the Deputy felt that there was more to be done:

> Spanish is one of our lines of enquiry because it is one of our lower performing subjects within school and so we've always been very transparent about that and about the fact that more needed to happen in that subject area…They are a strong team in terms of their ethos and their ability to reflect and to be open to challenge and it's just that, as yet, that has not translated to the results that they ought to be getting.

A priority, for the Head of Languages was to provide professional development and support to secure good modern languages teaching 'which engages pupils, encourages them to want to choose to continue with languages at KS4 and leads to successful GCSE outcomes'. In order to maintain ownership of the process the Head conducted an internal Team Quality Assurance Review with the Head of Languages. The review concluded that the team needed to focus on broadening teaching approaches, encouraging independent use of the target language through the application of grammar and connecting learning with the 'real world'. The Head of Languages noted that the team needed to 'spend more time building confidence in learners so they can taste and enjoy success'. The Deputy believed that the languages department were now in a position to address these points which would also help them prepare for the 'reformed' GCSE.

The Head of Languages outlined how team members constantly sought out opportunities for professional development. They engage with the modern languages network in their Academy Trust, participate in a Language Education Research Group at a local university and also contribute to an ITE modern languages Subject Advisory Group. The modern languages department meeting that I observed provided a snapshot of how the ML team were addressing the areas for development outlined in the review. They were keenly aware of the need to evidence pupil progress and secure 'good' outcomes. They believed that the senior leadership were supportive but also were aware that they wanted to see 'the proof of the pudding' (Appendix 7).

4.2.4.4 Parental perspectives

The school leaders explained that one of their priorities for the Midwood Academy was to raise aspirations and to help parents to understand the benefits of learning languages. They believed that many of the parents have had limited access to language learning themselves and often did not see the benefits. They regarded this as an obstacle to extending participation. The Head put it like this:

> I work in a community which is a white working-class community and we understand, academically, that their aspirations are low.

The Head of Languages echoed this view and outlined the challenge of articulating the value of language learning to parents:

> This is a big battle for me because I loved languages as a kid and yet I didn't go to a school like this one which is in such a socio-economically deprived area… I came with the point of view that everyone should be doing languages because of all the benefits such as finding out about other cultures and seeing what is outside of this community. But it is a battle because for a lot of these kids the people at home aren't really bothered and you go to parent's evenings… and they are asking questions like 'what's the point of my son studying Spanish if he is off his target grade? The cultural benefits are massive for our kids because, speaking generally, a lot of the parents have a lot of misconceptions about languages.

The Deputy suggested that 'at the minute I think there would certainly be a backlash from the community if we were forcing more kids to do languages'. This attitude also was prevalent amongst some of the students. The Deputy explained that 'some of our students have very fixed ideas about different languages and how difficult they can be and there is definitely an entrenched belief that languages aren't for them or they are not that important'. She went on to voice a concern that the decision to leave the European Union might harden negative attitudes towards learning languages. However, the developing diversity of the community as reflected in the increase in the number of bilingual pupils joining the school with a range of languages was seen as helpful to make the concept of mobility and travel a reality. The Head believed that the Eagle Centre had an important role to play in this:

> It's making the richness of different cultures from around the world available at the heart of our school. The reason why I launched the EAGLE Project is because our school is eighty-six percent white British and it serves a white working-class community. So, while I believe our EAGLE students can gain greatly from being immersed in our school I actually think it is the eighty-six percent who will learn the most from it.

4.3 Eastbridge Academy

4.3.1 Getting to know Eastbridge Academy

Eastbridge Academy is a large, 11-18 co-educational, comprehensive school. It is situated in the rural market town of Eastbrook in the Midlands and also draws pupils from neighbouring towns and villages. It was a convertor academy (2011) and now plays a leading role in a local Academy Trust. The Eastbridge website emphasises its 'outstanding track record of pupil care and achievement'. The majority of the pupils who attend the school are White British and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals or with special educational needs/disabilities is below average. There is a small number of pupils whose first language is not English. A significant proportion of pupils (60%) were entered for the English Baccalaureate in 2016 and 44% achieved the EBacc, which is above the national figure of 22.8% (UK Statistics Authority, 2016).

On my first research visit to Eastbridge, whilst waiting in reception, I came across a group of pupils talking about their French homework. They were discussing the preparation for a speaking task and spoke about the key grammar points they would include and the 'authentic' images they intended to use. During subsequent visits, I was always invited into the staff room – the 'modern languages corner' is energetic and the discussion is often about approaches to language teaching.

The school leaders I interviewed all had strong personal ties to learning languages. The Deputy (a PE teacher) had grown up with English and Irish.

> The Irish language was compulsory until the age of eighteen …my parents made the decision that for me to really grasp Irish I had to be a little bit more immersed in it during the summer holidays…I'm not a natural linguist at all but I suppose I'm a very resilient learner and I learnt about my heritage …and that, I suppose, made me have an affinity to it.

She compared her own frequent experiences of 'immersion' to language learning at Eastbridge:

> I think that is what is missing sometimes here with the community because they do a little bit of French in school but that is it and if they get to go on one of the exchanges then that's a real bonus but the number of students who do that are tiny.

The Head (a maths specialist) regarded himself to be multilingual. He put it like this:

> As a multi-linguist myself, I've found I can speak Pashto fluently which is a language of the Afghans; I can speak Urdu because I spoke that from a

> very young age and I can also speak Punjabi… My parents didn't want me to lose my mother tongue…I do think it's given me an edge and I think youngsters who have done languages are able to pick up another language quite quickly.

At the beginning of the research the MFL Performance Director post was a job share. I spoke to Jenny one of the teachers who shared the role. She speaks French, German and Spanish, the three languages taught at Eastbridge as she recounted:

> I studied French from middle school and I picked up German at secondary school and I did French and German A-level and then I went to uni and did French and German with Spanish as a subsidiary.

4.3.2 The benefits of learning a modern language

The Head set out his vision for the school's curriculum like this:

> Our curriculum should be able to meet the demands of the twenty-first century… Curriculum shouldn't be driven by performance tables but by the needs of this country and this world.

Eastbridge Academy therefore aims to support its students to become 'confident, global citizens equipped to make positive contributions to society'. According to the Head, learning languages has a crucial role to play in achieving this aim and 'to open doors; to widen horizons'. The MFL Performance Director put it like this:

> The benefits are endless really - particularly in a community like Eastbridge which is quite inward looking and there are a good proportion of students who don't really think about anything beyond their own front doors.

The Deputy echoed these sentiments and went on to explain how she felt that learning a language could open up the world to young people in what is perceived as 'an insular community'.

> If, at school level, we don't open the opportunity that includes a language for young people then I believe we are narrowing them for life. We can't be naïve enough to think that all our students are going to travel the world because some students will live here and probably never move…this can be quite an insular community and so if we don't do that education work around languages then there is no way it will ever happen.

The Head was also keen to highlight the cognitive benefits of learning languages:

> From the research in neuroscience I do think your brain develops in a particular way if you develop languages. There is a linguistic part to the brain and what has been said is that if you were to develop all the

> intelligences and you become proficient in most areas then that helps to you achieve more.

For him learning a language was also about 'developing people', enabling students to become confident individuals, able to cope and operate in 'whatever situation you find yourself in' and to 'stand out from the crowd academically'. He believed that gaining a modern languages qualification at 16 opened the doors to top universities for his students. Meanwhile the Deputy spoke about the significant contribution learning a language makes to the general communication skills of speaking and listening:

> I think it is the only subject now where speaking remains and for our youngsters one of the most difficult things they find is speaking in class confidently and to have to do that as part of learning a language is just a fantastic challenge but that is why they find it hard. They don't have to speak in any other subject…we want them to be well rounded and to stand out in a crowd and part of that is being able to publicly speak with confidence and, for me, that is a huge part of French or German or Spanish.

She felt that learning to speak a language pushed students 'out of their comfort zone' and encouraged them to 'persevere'. She believed that sometimes pupils could be inhibited by the 'sounds they had to make'. She expanded further:

> We want the students to become confident whilst they are here and languages provide that unique opportunity through speaking but also through listening because listening to a language which is not English requires a different level of concentration and a different focus.

4.3.3 The place of modern languages in the curriculum

According to their prospectus the Eastbridge curriculum provides 'a broad and balanced learning experience for all'. Modern languages is regarded as a 'core' subject for 'most' students at KS4:

> During our three-year KS4 programme, most students study the English Baccalaureate core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, a Modern Foreign Language and a Humanities subject such as Geography or History.

Pupils are able to study French, German and Spanish. The MFL Performance Director explained that they had been keen to expand the number of languages on offer so had 'picked' Spanish because of pupil demand. The Head felt that offering a range of languages was important:

> I think we are the only school in the area that offers all three languages but I am not doing it to gain any brownie points but I'm doing it because I think all three languages are important. We are going to look like second class

> citizens compared to the other countries because we haven't got the linguists.

The school's most recent Ofsted report in 2011 notes the strong participation in modern languages at KS4. Nevertheless, the Head regards this very much as 'work in progress'. He outlined the evolving place of languages in the context of the school's development over the last decade:

> Languages has been an important subject on the curriculum here for many years. We went through a small period where languages wasn't compulsory in 2007/8 so languages narrowed a little bit in the school because we found ourselves in a position where we were under pressure from Ofsted. We were trying to move beyond satisfactory and into good and sometimes we were driven by the performance tables so we could have secured more GCSEs doing different subjects some of which were vocational rather than putting a youngster through languages when they didn't really want to be doing them.

The Deputy outlined the current place of modern languages in the KS3 curriculum and the rationale behind it:

> The students come in and they try out German, French and Spanish throughout Year 7 because we have over twenty feeder schools and so we wanted them to taste them all before they chose them.

The MFL Performance Director explained that at the end of Year 7 pupils are asked to rank the languages in order of preference. Out of the fourteen tiers in Year 7 the top four tiers in terms of ability study two languages in Year 8 and everybody else studies one. The lowest three tiers have less modern language provision in Year 8 because 'they do extra literacy'.

The Deputy outlined the evolving place of modern languages in the KS4 curriculum which commences in year 9. She explained that 'for current Year 8 going into 9 we have moved our line just a bit, so it will be about seventy-five percent doing a language. We made a decision not to force all of them to do it'. At KS4 single linguists have three lessons a week and dual linguists have three lessons for each language. Pupils from the lower tiers who want to continue with a language are able to take part in after school classes that lead to a GCSE. The Deputy was keen to highlight the significant resourcing of Languages:

> So we put it up there with science, English and maths and it gets the same amount of time and expertise.

This time allocation was regarded as crucial by the MFL Performance Director. Eastbridge offers all three languages at A-level and the MFL Performance Director was optimistic about a 'year on year' increase in participation. The Deputy however

was worried about the ability to maintain support for A-level modern languages in the future. A constricting budget might mean that 'having small A-level groups has been a luxury of the past which was great for the students but not affordable for the future'. She was aware of the broader impact of this for linguists locally, regionally and nationally. She felt more needed to be done to support schools:

> So perhaps there should be an incentive there for university places on languages and A-level places on languages. If they are really serious about it then someone has to look at the financial side because they are asking us to do something that is virtually impossible at the moment… I think that needs a national drive because it is too much for a school to do by itself. Somebody has got to think creatively about it from the top.

In addition to the formal curriculum described above, extra-curricular activities and trips abroad are an important aspect of the languages provision at Eastbridge. The MFL Performance Director outlined the wealth of opportunities available:

> We have a trip to Barcelona and a trip to Paris; we have an activities week; we do the business language champions competition; we do the two languages at work; we have language ambassadors... So, we do try and make it come alive in terms of cultural richness.

Looking forward, the Deputy explained that Eastbridge is moving towards ninety percent of the school population doing a ML GCSE and 'that is starting with the Year 7 that is just about to come in…It should be two years' time before that starts to come to fruition and then it should be the norm throughout the school'. These changes are considered in more detail below.

4.3.4 Towards modern languages for the 'vast majority' at KS4: enablers and challenges

The government announcement that the 'vast majority' of pupils should study a language from 11-16 was welcomed at Eastbridge. The Deputy considered it to be 'a strong statement to all communities that it is good to do languages' which 'takes away a lot of the battle'. She felt that this would help Eastbridge to continue to increase participation in languages at KS4 and add 'a little bit of kudos' to their curriculum plans. However, she had some reservations:

> I think most of our students should and could do a language and I am going to try and change the culture that languages shouldn't be side-lined because they are part of a good and healthy curriculum and a well-rounded student will experience a lot from doing a language that they can't experience elsewhere…
>
> But there will always be that difficult decision for someone who is really struggling in English and maths and science and they want to be a plumber

> so should they be spending their time on French? How do I make that decision for that child? I might feel that it would be lovely for them to learn French and all the cultural stuff but I know that if I don't help them get onto the next stage of their life here right now I might not be helping them.

The Head drew attention to what he perceived as a lack of clarity and confusion around national language education policy reflected in the 'multitude of different things that people are doing':

> We seem to be having discussions about languages nearly every year although I don't think there has been a clear view about the place of languages although the government may argue that they made it very clear about it but, on the ground, there has been mixed messages.

The Head thought that Eastbridge was now in a stronger position to move towards languages for the 'vast majority' than perhaps other schools who were 'struggling' to meet a range of other targets. He gave the following example:

> I was in a school yesterday and they were talking about their achievements across the board and I said what about your MFL and your EBacc and the head said, 'oh I'm not even looking at that; let's sort out the basics first'.

He outlined how the context at Eastbridge had changed. Although adamant that he did not want to be driven by performance measures his comments seem to suggest otherwise:

> I'm lucky because of the situation I find myself in my school although if I were to go back a few years I would find it very hard to be talking like I am because I'd have the pressures of Ofsted on my door and we were struggling to secure our English and our maths never mind languages.

The Head explained how following the introduction of the EBacc performance measure they recognised that 'it was the languages that were holding us back' so the school has gradually made languages compulsory for more pupils. Their goal was to move to 90% of pupils studying a modern language from 11-16.

4.3.4.1 No more 'dilly-dallying' in year 7

Whilst there was a strong commitment to extend participation in languages at KS4 the Head had concerns:

> I found myself having sleepless nights over this… I want youngsters to be successful and, with MFL, that hasn't been the case here. It's a bit of a curate's egg because when you look at the standards within the MFL department it is very strong and everything is done properly but if you look at the outcomes they are not as good as, say, if I take history or geography.

The Head was committed to realising the vision to extend participation in a measured way. He was adamant that 'we shouldn't be driven by this edict that everybody has got to do languages and, therefore, what is the quickest way of doing that?'. He gave an example of how this sometimes played out elsewhere:

> One head teacher said to me that they would get rid of some of the languages because they get their best results in Spanish.

The Deputy echoed these sentiments:

> We need achievement in languages to succeed because at the moment we are not doing very well and that helps to perpetuate this idea that languages are hard…We've got to get the structure right here to ensure that success comes and that the message gets out there that languages aren't the hardest subject…we have to stop this attitude that it is optional and only for the bright kids.

The Head strongly believed that one of the reasons youngsters did not achieve as well as they could in languages was because 'we dilly-dally a little bit in Year 7'.

> So, the youngsters come to us in Year 7 and we have a rotation system in languages and they do French, Spanish and German over the course of the year and then, in Year 8, they narrow that down to two subjects so they'll do half a year on each of their chosen language.

The Deputy also felt that while the current system offered diversity and choice it did not maximise progression. Therefore, in order to offer more time, provide greater continuity and to improve progress, Eastbridge now plans to remove the rotation. In this way the Head believed that they could give pupils 'a language that they can run with'. The MFL Performance Director explained how the disappointing GCSE outcomes had caused them to focus sharply on KS3:

> So, they will do a full year of either French, German or Spanish in Year 7 and they will continue with that language to GCSE because we do need that extra time now in terms of preparing them for the new exam…We're hoping that we will be able to offer an academy after school for dual linguists so they will still be able to take the exams.

The Deputy was mindful that they were going to lose what 'was special to our school' but believed that students needed to see that 'languages are doable'.

School leaders also voiced concerns about the 'limited amount of modern language learning happening at KS2'. The languages team found it difficult to build on prior learning as it was so disparate as the MFL Performance Director explained:

> When they came up, we had to do it all anyway because if it had been covered it was very patchy… Some of them have really good specialists

> who have degrees or A-levels in a language and some don't; many buy people in to do it in PPA time. But even though it is supposed to be statutory I don't think there is any consistent approach at all.

4.3.4.2 Getting to grips with the new modern languages GCSEs

For the Deputy the biggest challenge to moving towards languages for 90% of pupils at Eastbridge was the expectation that all pupils should take a GCSE qualification. She put it like this:

> I believe that every child should experience a language for five years but I don't think that every child should be expected to sit the GCSE in that language…The bit about policy that I don't like is the fact that they complete a full GCSE in that language and I feel a fairer approach would be that they do a language and that we are given enough alternatives to choose the right route for the right child.

She believed that a major constraint was the lack of availability of alternative language qualifications:

> It would be lovely if there was an alternative for them to do which was a bit more suitable… something that warrants five years of doing a language but perhaps not at GCSE level because they would just feel a failure.

The Deputy expressed concerns about the delayed arrival of GCSE specifications and guidance for teachers in preparation for the new GCSEs and the uncertainty over the new 1-9 grading. She worried about the additional pressure this placed upon the languages team.

The MFL Performance Director also voiced her concerns about the reformed modern languages GCSEs. She was keenly aware that GCSE results in languages were often lower than in other subjects but was determined to 'crack on'. She explained that she had 'lived through many versions of the ML GCSE' but was nevertheless apprehensive:

> Well Nicky Morgan with her ninety percent of children will study a language is very commendable in theory and the general principle behind wanting to improve the linguistic competence of the nation is to be commended but, in practice, for the lower ability students who will be expected to at least enter the GCSE the new specification will be extremely challenging.

She felt that the reformed GCSE brought constraints:

> So, there isn't really any freedom to go very far outside of it once you start the GCSE course…They always say on the spec that they've given us the freedom for them to be able to talk about whatever they like within these broad areas but that never really happens because there is a set vocabulary and a set grammatical system that you need to get through.

She saw the level of complexity in the reading and listening as a challenge:

> The extraction of the information is more difficult; the fact that you've got longer sentences and longer answers to give in French, German and Spanish is more difficult…and listening is similar to reading in terms of the challenge.

She was also concerned about the increased level of demand in the writing and speaking papers:

> Speaking is AS basically… they are going to have to be able to manipulate the language on their feet so that is going to be a lot more challenging… From a writing point of view, it's memory and the weakest students don't have those memory skills.

She thought that the level of demand in the writing papers was further compounded by 'rigidity' and the 'prescriptive' nature of the mark schemes for writing.

The Head acknowledged the difficult task ahead for the modern languages team:

> What I do know about the GCSEs is that they will be significantly harder and there is more expectation of rote learning and learning the vocabulary. I also think that some of the fun and enjoyment of learning languages has been taken out of it so there is a view that teachers will have to be very creative in order to make it work. But my view is very simple: nothing is that difficult if you put your mind to it and you are determined enough.

He felt that the school needed to 'spend significantly more time on how we get our youngsters more excited about languages' as 'the evidence suggests that when they get to Year 10 and 11 there are quite a few who would drop languages tomorrow if they could and it shouldn't be like that. So greater engagement within lessons'.

Eastbridge had already put several measures in place to 'make it work'. The structural changes at KS3 have been outlined above. The Deputy gave an example:

> We are teaching differently from Year 7 to 11 now in preparation for the new style of speaking exam where less is prepared and more has to be just a naturally good conversation…I observed a French lesson today where every child was kept on their toes in terms of their verbal contributions.

To prepare for the requirements of the GCSE reading paper a set literary text is built into lessons from year 9 this is supplemented by a weekly literary text lesson, when for example, pupils are engaged in 'the exploration of a text where they follow a group of children through Spain and solve a mystery'. The MFL Performance Director was keen to maintain their creative, cultural projects

> They do a project in French in Year 7; they do a film project in German and they do the apprentice challenge; in Spanish they do a food tasting one. So

> all of those projects are tied in with a cultural element with cross-curricular themes and that is fantastic. It is certainly something that we don't want to lose but there is going to have to be a switch from what we do in terms of grammar practice and vocabulary and translation.

The Deputy felt that harnessing technology in the teaching of languages was a valuable enabler, a way to engage pupils and to support them to learn languages beyond the classroom. She was not sure that these opportunities had yet been fully exploited:

> So, do the kids go home and listen to languages on the iPad? Is that part of homework? Is listening part of homework? I think we have to look at ways of them having more easy access to practising without having the expert in front of them.

4.3.4.3 No weak links in the MFL department

The Head voiced a strong concern about the national recruitment and retention of language teachers and felt there was a need for a 'national drive to develop future linguists'. He recognised the importance for Eastbridge of its close partnership with the local university. He put it like this:

> I used to say 'I want your best linguists'. I know I've appointed in the last four years three of your best linguists… there are no weak links in that department'.

He regards the retention of their high-quality languages team as a top priority to allow Eastbridge to realise their curriculum vision of languages for the 'vast majority' by 2020. The Deputy believed that the only way that they would be able to change the perception that 'languages are hard' would be to make it a success by having 'the best staff in front of the kids'. She outlined the approach they had adopted:

> We have some fantastic staff here and the university has been very proactive in making sure that we get top quality staff in. I worry about going down to just one language for the whole school but we are also worried about not being able to recruit for German if it gets much smaller. If we keep all three languages alive we feel we have the best opportunity to recruit quality expert staff without putting all our eggs into one basket.

I attended a modern languages department meeting towards the end of the field work which provided an opportunity to observe how the team is responding to some of the challenges outlined above. It had been difficult to find a date to attend the meeting, partly due to a change in personnel. The two experienced MFL Performance Directors had taken on new roles within the school and a new MFL Performance Director had been appointed (Appendix 7).

4.3.4.4 Changing the thinking about languages

School leaders believed that 'getting parents on board' would help them move to languages for the 'vast majority' at KS4. The Deputy suggested that because 'many of the parents didn't do languages when they were at school there is that perception that they aren't necessary'. The Head was adamant that 'we've got to change the paradigm of thinking in this school and in this community and we've got to move that on' through 'greater engagement with the parents'. He elaborated further:

> This community has always been a little bit insular in its thinking compared to similar schools in terms of achievement but not profile –many of my parents are very successful in terms of business and agriculture but it is more rural …many of their parents haven't been to university although they've been successful in other ways…here a parent will say 'I don't want my child to learn German because we don't go to Germany on holiday.

The Deputy was optimistic:

> They are very supportive and they do usually accept things. For example with our Year 8 we met with all the parents where we explained everything but most of the parents are afraid of languages because they feel that they can't help their children and so anything we can do to help break down those barriers is useful. I think one of the big things we have to do is to make children see that they are succeeding in languages... So we need to tackle that which is why we are making the changes that we are making and that will, hopefully, open up the idea that languages are accessible to all.

School leaders voiced concern about the vote to leave the European Union and the challenge this might present to their plan to extend language learning at KS4. I spoke to the Head before the referendum and he was anxious about the potential outcome:

> Let's say we came out of the EU does that mean people will think that we don't need to learn languages anymore because we are not part of the EU?

Speaking to the Deputy following the referendum she revealed her apprehension about the impact of 'Brexit' on attitudes towards language learning. She put it like this:

> So, in the short term, I don't think it has had an impact; in the long term I worry that it will have an impact. This area here can be quite insular and we work hard, from a student development point of view, trying to open their eyes to other parts of the world and to be less judgemental… I worry that this will now kind of compound some of those characteristics. I think, longer term, it will be more of a battle and it's always been a bit of a battle ground here as to whether students should do languages or not ...It depends on the aspects that the community wants to focus on as to the

> reasons why we have voted for Brexit and if that is about having a smaller world and protecting their own then that is not going to help us in the long run.

The Deputy explained how Eastbridge had staged their own European Referendum:

> In our school every child voted… In the morning we ran workshops with them about the different reasons why we might stay or come out… Seventy-four percent voted to remain in the EU.

While school leaders at Eastbridge felt that they had a clear plan for extending participation in modern languages at KS4 they felt that more needs to be done at a national level. The Deputy thought that:

> The whole spin on languages and the value of studying languages could be much more positively expressed rather than just saying ninety percent will do a language. There is a lack of positive PR around that which the children and their parents are not able to see.

The Head also believed that the government, business and universities could take a more proactive role in promoting and funding languages in schools:

> Maybe if there was a greater push on getting schools to understand the importance of languages and giving them additional funding in helping them to maintain languages on the curriculum even though that might seem very expensive.

Chapter 5 Cross Case Discussion: Patterns and Particularities

I now look across the three portraits presented in chapter 4 to explore the findings that emerged in relation to my overarching research question and to consider some of the emerging patterns and particularities. Firstly, I discuss what school leaders believed to be the benefits of learning an additional language for their students and their beliefs about the place of modern languages in the KS4 curriculum. I then explore some of the tensions and contradictions that emerged between school leaders' beliefs and practices as they endeavoured to make sense of the policy requirement to extend the learning of languages at KS4. In this chapter I combine a 'policy enactment' lens with elements of a 'vernacular change' lens (Hall and Thomson, 2017) to consider how schools interpret and translate policy into practice in their own particular local contexts. Hall and Thomson (2017: 27) suggest that:

> The notion of a vernacular making something local, everyday, familiar and ordinary – is helpful when trying to understand change in schools and classrooms. It points to the sources of difference in interpretation, translation and action: the ways in which schools and teachers understand and feel responsible for and commitment to their students and community, and the ways in which what they can do is always shaped by local/glocal events, networks, histories, relationships and materialities.

I 'take context seriously' and analyse how the schools' enactments of the KS4 policy requirement is influenced and shaped by 'school-specific factors which act as constraints, pressures and enablers of policy enactments' (Ball et al., 2012: 19). I draw predominantly on the voices of school leaders as the mediators of policy to compare and contrast how they relate policy to context and make it 'palatable and doable' (Ball et al., 2012: 16).

5.1 Beliefs: The benefits of learning an additional language

A number of common threads arose from the data as to why school leaders believed that learning languages mattered for their pupils. The participants suggested that their own experiences of language learning (formally and informally) had influenced their beliefs. Although not a focus of the interviews, all of the participants chose to define themselves as either a 'multi-linguist', 'linguist' or 'non-linguist' - perhaps a nod to language learning requiring a 'special gift'.

The Head and the Deputy at Eastbridge had both grown up with two languages and cultures. The Head identified himself as a 'multi-linguist' and articulated a strong

belief that languages ‘can take you wherever you want to go’. However, the Deputy at Eastbridge claimed not to be a ‘natural’ linguist. The Head and Deputy at Westfield were similarly invested in language learning. The Head had learned German at school and was learning Italian in his ‘spare’ time. In spite of his experiences he did not believe that he had ‘an ear for languages’. The Head at Midwood explained that he was ‘not a linguist’ but that was he was ‘in huge awe’ of people that could speak languages but considered this beyond his grasp and also beyond the grasp of many of his pupils.

The Heads of Languages at Eastbridge, Midwood and Westfield spoke an impressive range of languages, had all lived abroad and valued the exposure to different cultures. They all strongly believed in the importance of offering pupils a range of languages to study. They had dedicated significant time to professional development in order to maintain and add additional languages to their linguistic repertoire for the benefit of their pupils.

The data revealed much communality in their articulated beliefs as to why learning languages mattered. While economic benefits featured, all the participants foregrounded the contribution of language learning to the development of open mindedness, albeit with differences of inflection. The following key benefits of learning an additional language emerged from the data:

- **Encourages the understanding of other cultures and the ability to communicate with speakers of other languages**

In the view of school leaders learning an additional language mattered because it opened up the world to young people and introduced them to other cultures, other ways of thinking and doing. They believed that this helped to extend pupils’ intercultural awareness, helped them to value and respect diversity. For example, the Deputy at Eastbridge felt that learning a language was important as they had pupils ‘who don’t really think about anything beyond their own front door’. The Head at Eastbridge believed that learning languages enabled their students to become ‘confident, global citizens equipped to make positive contributions to society’ to ‘meet the demands of the 21st century ’which in turn would have a positive impact on what was perceived as an ‘inward-looking community’. The Head at Westfield believed that learning a modern language not only gave pupils the confidence and skills to travel or work in other parts of the world but that it also enabled pupils to ‘speak to people from other countries here’:

> Anybody who works for X now will be working with people from all over the world and there are a lot of people from Spain and France and Germany who are working in Westfield [town]now.

The multilingual nature of some of Westfield's communities meant that there was a shared belief that learning languages mattered. By learning languages such as Panjabi and Urdu pupils could also be supported to maintain 'their' languages and cultures. Participants at Midwood felt that learning a modern language mattered as it 'widened students' horizons' which the Head believed was especially important on account of 'the high levels of deprivation' and 'lack of mobility'. This was echoed by the Deputy who felt that a lot of the students 'were very rooted in their local community' so learning a language helped to counter a narrow world view.

- **Improves employability and mobility**

Learning a modern language was believed to extend pupils' employability and mobility. At Eastbridge and Westfield there was a strong sense that learning a language helped pupils to develop a particular skill which would enable them to succeed in a global jobs market. Learning a language would give pupils the confidence to 'operate' in different countries and communities by developing both their linguistic skills as well as their inter-cultural competences. In their option booklet Westfield highlighted 'the importance of foreign languages for communication in an increasingly globalised society and economy' while Eastbridge highlighted how learning a language put pupils 'one step ahead of other potential employees and students'. A common theme at Westfield and Eastbridge was that learning a language at KS4 mattered as it would give pupils 'the edge' over their peers who have not studied a language. It was suggested that because learning a language was regarded as 'challenging' and was associated with both academic rigour and resilience, a modern languages GCSE qualification would therefore impress employers and strengthen university applications. This is reflected in the 'academic' narrative in both schools. The Head at Midwood believed that gaining a language qualification mattered for the 'more academic' pupils due to an 'expectation from some universities that students should have a European language' but was not considered as a priority for the employability for the majority of 'his pupils' who were on vocational pathways. However, the Head of Languages at Midwood, locally educated himself, believed that learning languages had helped his own mobility and employability and he wanted to provide the same opportunities for his pupils.

- **Contributes to the development of literacy and communication skills**

A recurring theme which also revealed some illustrative contradictions was the contribution that learning a modern language made to pupils' literacies. For example, school leaders at Midwood expressed an ambivalent attitude towards language learning and literacy skills. On the one hand leaders believed that learning an additional language contributed to phonics, decoding skills, grammatical understanding and broader communication. However conversely the Head was concerned that 'high numbers of students enter the academy who have not yet acquired the literacy skills to cope with the demands of the National Curriculum in Languages'. At Westfield, the Head believed that the grammatical understanding acquired through becoming 'adept' in a second language improved students' use of English. The Head of Languages highlighted the interrelated nature of literacies by explaining how their bilingual pupils with EAL were 'used to the concept of language learning and the idea of structure and grammar'. The Deputy at Eastbridge believed that learning a second language made an important contribution to generic communication skills by supporting pupils to become 'confident public speakers' and honing their listening skills.

- **Develops a distinctive skill set for future language learning**

The Head at Eastbridge believed that 'youngsters who have done languages' were able 'to pick up another language quite quickly'. This viewed was shared by the Deputy at Midwood who believed that the language learning skills acquired at KS2 through learning an additional language were more important than the specific language they learned. At Westfield the findings revealed a shared belief that learning a language helped their pupils to develop a unique and particular skill. These language learning skills would enable them to become adaptable and flexible and give them the skills and confidence to pick up other languages as and when required for use locally or further afield.

While school leaders focused largely on why learning languages mattered for 'their' pupils, they also all spoke about the broader associated benefits for their communities to secure social community cohesion and support their linguistic and cultural identities of local communities. At Eastbridge and Westfield learning a language was also seen to support the development of global citizenship which would be of benefit to the local community. Participants at Eastbridge and Westfield also emphasised the importance for the UK's language capability of extending the

number of pupils learning a language at KS4. The Head at Eastbridge believed that there needed to be 'a national drive to develop future linguists' – a view echoed by the Head of Languages at Westfield who noted that the 'employers are constantly reiterating the fact that they don't have enough people with language skills'. There were some shared concerns about the impact of the referendum vote to leave the European Union on language learning. At Midwood the Deputy believed that having a modern languages qualification would become more important because of 'the way we are with Europe at the minute' a view shared by the Head at Eastbridge. The Deputy at Eastbridge also expressed concerns about the impact of Brexit on their communities' attitudes to language learning. In contrast, the Deputy at Westfield felt there would be little impact as there was a strong belief in the importance of language learning amongst their linguistically and culturally diverse communities.

While there was a clear commonality of beliefs about the broader benefits of learning a language, participants' views diverged in relation to their beliefs about the place of modern languages in the curriculum. What emerged from the data was a shared belief in the importance of a broad and balanced curriculum for all students, but this was understood and interpreted differently in each of the schools. The three schools were committed to the idea of a 'core' of subjects which should be compulsory for all at KS3 and KS4. However, the schools had different visions of what this core should comprise and whether languages should be a part of that core. The school leaders in all three schools believed that learning a modern language should be part of the core curriculum for all pupils at KS3. There was less consensus in relation to the place of languages in the KS4 curriculum. At Westfield languages were believed to be an essential part of a 'rounded education' and part of the core studied by all pupils at KS3 and KS4. At Eastbridge the Deputy believed that languages were part of 'a good and healthy curriculum' and should be part of the core for all of its pupils at KS3 and most at KS4.Midwood also presented a strong belief in a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which would equip pupils with the 'necessary academic and social skills for the future'. At Midwood English, Maths and Science were determined to be the essential core at KS4 to provide the 'necessary academic skills for the future' with languages part of an optional extended curriculum.

5.2 Enactment

In considering the patterns and particularities of how the schools interpreted and translated the policy requirement to extend the study of languages at KS4 into practice it is important to recognise their different contexts and starting points. It is also important to acknowledge the differing beliefs and dispositions of the school leaders as outlined above. The findings reveal three contrasting stories, recounted in depth in the portraits in chapter 4, which provide an illuminative sample of the many interpretations of the policy to extend participation in languages at KS4 which is to be found in schools across the country. Westfield's story was about maintaining their 'languages for all' curriculum at KS4, Eastbridge's story was of a school moving towards languages for the 'vast majority' at KS4. In contrast Midwood 's story was about extending participation, with languages as an option choice.

I now explore some of the tensions and contradictions that emerged between school leaders' beliefs and practices and the interrelated enablers and challenges. I have chosen to focus on four illuminative cross-case themes which emerged from the data to illustrate how the policy to extend languages provision at KS4 has been mediated and constructed locally in different ways

- The impact of systemic steerage
- Asset and deficit discourses around language learning
- Material contexts
- Making the ML GCSE 'doable'

5.2.1 The impact of systemic steerage

Hall and Thomson (2017: 26) point to the strong forms of 'systemic steerage' adopted by education policy makers such as the use of league tables and testing and inspection regimes, which can produce visible, measurable 'results'. In an education landscape dominated by a standards-based 'master discourse' (Ball et al., 2012) it is perhaps unsurprising that the way in which the three schools in my study interpreted the policy requirement for the 'vast majority of pupils' to study a language to GCSE level at KS4 was influenced by the 'systemic steerage' experienced by the schools and how this was mediated by school leaders. What emerged was the different ways in which the Progress 8 performance measure had influenced the ways in which schools had translated their visions for modern languages into practice. A common and shared pressure was how to balance the

expectation that the ‘vast majority’ of young people should study a language at KS4 with the need to achieve strong Progress 8 scores in the context of more rigorous modern languages GCSE qualifications.

For example, the Head at Westfield was uncertain whether the school would be able to maintain its strong performance in languages for all ‘faced’ with the new ML GCSE. Although since gaining an Ofsted ‘outstanding’ judgement in 2011 Westfield’s scrutiny has been ‘light touch’ the Head explained that, ‘I’m accountable for the overall performance of the school and I can’t damage that’. The Head at Eastbridge highlighted how they had worked hard to move their Ofsted category to ‘outstanding’. Having secured ‘the basics’ had put them in a stronger position and given them the confidence to extend languages provision at KS4. Although the Head at Eastbridge did not want the curriculum to be ‘driven by performance measures’, he admitted to having lost sleep about outcomes in languages. While he believed in languages for all at KS4 he was concerned that they had not yet achieved the success that they wanted. His aim was to support his languages team to build for the long-term not the short-term in order to improve outcomes. Nevertheless, a discourse of performativity pervaded the modern languages department meeting I attended where a large proportion of the meeting was dedicated to preparation for internal monitoring of teaching standards by senior leaders. The Head at Midwood felt that the curriculum was ‘driven by what is measured’. He believed that as an ‘underperforming school’ they were under constant scrutiny to improve and to provide evidence of successful outcomes. Midwood was particularly concerned about its Progress 8 scores and remaining above ‘the floor’. Research suggests that schools with lower-attaining intakes are more likely to fall below the floor in the context of the new GCSEs (D. Thomson, 2017). As one of the ‘lower performing subjects within school’ Spanish was therefore one of their ‘lines of enquiry’. The Deputy's words illustrate the impact of systemic steerage of her curriculum vision and enactment:

> I do always have an eye to balancing the needs of the students with the needs of the school and the fact that we are all judged by our outcomes.

5.2.2 Asset and deficit discourses around language learning

Prevalent asset and deficit discourses around language learning had a particular influence on how the three schools enacted the policy requirement to extend the learning of languages at KS4. At Eastbridge and Midwood, the school leaders felt that they had to work hard to counter a deficit discourse around language learning

in their different but somewhat inward-looking communities. This was considered to be an obstacle to extending participation at KS4. There was also a concern at both schools that the decision to leave the European Union might harden negative attitudes towards the learning of other languages. Midwood felt that making languages compulsory at KS4 for more pupils in this context could lead to a 'backlash' from some parents. However, an increase in the number of bilingual pupils attending Midwood had made 'mobility' visible and the establishment of the EAGLE Centre for bilingual pupils with 'English as a Growing Language' had helped to broaden their pupils' understanding of other cultures.

Eastbridge leaders also felt that their vision to extend language learning at KS4 would be 'more of a battle' and that the referendum outcome had 'come at a bad time'. Their priority was to gain the trust of parents who often had limited experience of learning other languages and were slightly 'afraid' of languages. They had held a meeting with the parents of year 8 pupils to explain the proposed changes to the modern languages curriculum.

This deficit discourse was in stark contrast to the prevailing asset discourse at Westfield. Here the linguistic and cultural skills of pupils were seen as an asset which could help them to build their linguistic repertoires and had assisted the school to secure languages for all at KS4. However, the case of the gradual disappearance of Panjabi and Urdu from the formal curriculum at Westfield also illuminates how structural issues can make it difficult for schools to put their ambitions into practice and sheds a light on the vulnerability of local responses to macro level pressures. It provides a telling example of how the range of world languages taught in schools is increasingly under threat at a time when the UK claims it needs to be more 'globally facing'.

A second prevalent and interrelated discourse which had a particular influence on how Eastbridge and Midwood interpreted and translated language education policy into practice was around the notions that 'we' are not good at languages and why should we bother when 'everyone speaks English'. This was further exacerbated by the belief that gaining a GCSE in a language was particularly challenging in comparison with other subjects. A prevalent assumption that some people are 'linguists' and others are not and that learning a language requires 'special powers', served to frame language learning as something for the more academic and able. School leaders at Midwood believed that there was a job to be done to convince parents and pupils of the value of learning languages and how it would benefit their

'next steps', although discussions seemed to suggest that school leaders themselves were not convinced about these benefits for 'their pupils'. The notion that it was harder to gain a good grade in a modern languages GCSE was in their view affecting the number of pupils who opted to study a language. The fact that pupils often gained their lowest GCSE grade in a language meant that at Eastbridge there was limited community confidence in the subject. In order to counter the narrative that 'languages are hard' and only for the 'brightest' Eastbridge had made languages compulsory for an increasing number of pupils at KS4.Whilst this notion of learning languages as 'hard' was not shared at Westfield, the theme of how difficult it was to gain a good grade at GCSE and A-level also surfaced.

5.2.3 Material contexts

All three schools regarded an educational landscape of reduced funding as a major obstacle to extending or maintaining the study of modern languages at KS4.

In order to build capacity and to maintain current provision Westfield had developed the role of the Modern Language Assistant. This brought with it concerns around pay and conditions and also quality assurance. As a small school Midwood felt that its ability to offer diverse language provision was limited by funding. However, the languages team at Midwood believed that they had the necessary staffing capacity to offer a broader range of languages, but that this was not being fully exploited. At Eastbridge funding cuts had a particular impact on the viability of languages at A-level. They were unsure whether they would be able to maintain small groups and thought they might have to combine with other schools in the Academy Trust.

In order to realise their visions and beliefs about languages in the curriculum and to the extend provision at KS4, all three schools had a keen focus on establishing and maintaining strong, collegiate and creative teams of ML teachers. They adopted a proactive approach to recruitment and retention through their links with universities and active involvement in teacher training and language networks. The national shortage of language teachers has not had an immediate impact on their ability to recruit in German, Spanish and French however at Westfield the recruitment of high quality teachers of Urdu and Panjabi proved to be problematic.

Westfield and Eastbridge placed particular importance on the recruitment of dual linguists in order to secure a range and choice of languages and to enable cost effective flexible timetabling. They recognised that the diversity of languages taught and A-level teaching was a draw for recruiting high quality language teachers.

Midwood meanwhile had to work hard to attract and 'hold on to' high quality teachers in an 11-16 school in 'challenging circumstances'. Midwood had appointed three dual linguists but at present only Spanish is taught in the school after a French pilot at KS3 was halted. Given the constant policy changes that teachers encounter the Head at Westfield was keen to appoint languages teachers who could see the bigger picture – 'who can reflect on and think about their practice and the practice of others'. Participants felt that a more strategic approach to recruitment and retention was required at a national level. Access to high quality professional development was considered to be important however constricting budgets made it more difficult to release staff during the day and centrally funded support provide by LAs had 'disappeared'. All three schools were proactive in this respect and took advantage of local networks, CPD opportunities through local universities and awarding organisations.

5.2.4 Making the ML GCSE 'doable'

The findings revealed that in each of the case study schools the Modern Foreign Languages GCSE Subject Content, translated into individual modern languages GCSE specifications (and sometimes text books) by the awarding organisations stood out as a key policy framework which shaped how schools enacted language education policy at KS4. The ML GCSE specifications, the sample papers and their mark schemes also shaped curriculum, pedagogy and assessment at KS3. For example, the modern foreign languages GCSE grade descriptors, the only existing national common assessment framework, have assumed an important influence across the two key stages in all three schools.

While at Eastbridge and Westfield there was a broad commitment to pupils studying a language at KS4, they were concerned about a modern language GCSE qualification for all in the context of the more rigorous ML GCSEs, as exemplified by the words of the Eastbridge Deputy:

> I believe that every child should experience a language and experience it for five years but I don't think that every child should be expected to sit the GCSE in that language.

The data from the two schools chimed with the view of the majority of respondents of the Call for Evidence of the National Curriculum in 2011 and the National Curriculum Expert Panel who suggested that a modern language should be part of a broad and balanced National Curriculum at KS4, but that GCSE should not be the sole assessment available. School leaders felt that an alternative languages

qualification should be available as they were concerned that the new ML GCSEs might not be accessible for all pupils and might lead to 'poor' outcomes which would be demotivating for pupils and would be problematic for schools in the context of accountability. They were however mindful that for many parents GCSE was regarded as the only 'worthwhile' qualification. School leaders wanted to demonstrate to parents and pupils that successful outcomes were possible and that languages were 'doable' and not just for the 'brightest'. Therefore, the schools were putting their energies into making the ML GCSE 'doable' for their pupils; to ensure success at GCSE at the same time as offering pupils an engaging and meaningful languages curriculum in line with their beliefs and visions for languages.

A key response from all three schools to make languages 'more doable' had been to review the time allocated for pupils to study languages within the curriculum. Eastbridge planned to move from a multilingual carousel in year 7 to one language through KS3 and KS4. At Eastbridge and at Midwood the ML GCSE course now commenced in year 9 and both schools had increased the time allocated to languages. At Westfield the GCSE remained a two-year course and time allocation had been maintained by extending the role of Modern Language Assistants.

As part of wider educational reforms (DfE, 2010) the modern languages GCSEs had been reformed 'to increase rigour' through external and linear assessments. The expectations set out by the DfE in the Modern Foreign Languages GCSE subject content (2015b) have been interpreted by the exam boards in slightly different ways in their specifications. In turn the specifications and requirements were interpreted differently and translated into schemes of learning in the case study schools. The changes to GCSE specifications were regarded as a challenge but also an opportunity. There was a shared concern about the late accreditation of the GCSE languages specifications and a lack of clarity about the grading system and what a grade 4 or 5 would 'look like'. What emerged was a picture of language teachers trying to complete a jigsaw puzzle piece by piece with some of the pieces missing.

Each of the schools had embarked on a revision of their schemes of learning at KS3 and KS4 in order to prepare for the increased demand at GCSE and the change in test types. Sometimes this sat uncomfortably with what school leaders believed about modern languages in the curriculum. For example, in order to prepare pupils for the move to external linear assessment at GCSE all schools planned to increase formal exams from KS3. The move to linear assessment was not regarded as positive step forward by all. The Head of Languages at Westfield thought this would

impact on the large good proportion of their students 'who like to get marks in the bag as they are going along'. She was also concerned about the loss of opportunities to embed assessment into day-to-day learning. She also had concerns about the removal of mixed tiering. This meant that pupils had to be entered at either Foundation or Higher tier in all four skills which she believed provided for a less differentiated qualification.

A new requirement of the modern languages GCSEs is that pupils at Foundation and Higher level will be able to understand and respond to a range of longer texts. In response, the three schools had placed a greater focus on working with text at KS3. All schools had responded to the new GCSE with a renewed focused on the development of speaking skills. The GCSE speaking examination was understood to require stronger speaking skills than had been required by the Controlled Assessments Speaking tasks in the former GCSE. Ironically the 'revised' GCSE Speaking exam is in fact a return to a previous GCSE format which had been rejected by teachers for relying too much on memorisation (Dearing and King, 2007). In order to prepare pupils for 'extended writing' a range of different tasks have been built into the Westfield schemes of learning; one example was a task which required pupils to write a film review after watching an excerpt from a film in French, German or Spanish. At Eastbridge there was an increased focused on extending memory skills through homework tasks. At Westfield emphasis was placed on longitudinal home work. This enabled pupils to take on greater independence in their learning with a greater emphasis placed on creative tasks which allowed them to apply their learning.

All school leaders believed that the development of intercultural understanding was an important aspect of language learning. There was some concern that the requirements of the GCSE might 'squeeze' opportunities to embed intercultural learning in the curriculum which might lead to it being located in extra-curricular activities. For example, the Head at Midwood was worried that the 'rich cultural opportunities' were not always harnessed 'because of the pressure of getting through the syllabus'. However, at Midwood the revised schemes of learning incorporated a wealth of opportunities to extend an understanding and awareness of the 'culture and identity of the countries and communities where the language is spoken' (DfE, 2015b: 3). At Eastbridge it appeared that some of the creative and cultural projects which had been a defining aspect of the languages curriculum at

KS3 might be scaled down to accommodate an increased focus on grammar and translation.

The Modern Foreign Languages GCSE grade descriptors now shaped assessment practices in all three schools. Westfield and Midwood had adapted the former National Curriculum progress descriptors and merged these with the new GCSE grade descriptors to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of progression from year 7 to year 11. At Eastbridge work was in progress to adapt the 'Pearson Descriptors' to support pupils' understanding of progression. This is a concrete example of how commercial organisations through specifications but also text books and assessment frameworks are increasingly shaping language education policy in some schools, since national public education bodies such as QCDA and CILT were closed by the Conservative - Liberal Democrat Administration in 2011.

5.3 Trade-offs

The participants welcomed the opportunity to take a step back to consider their beliefs about languages in the secondary curriculum and to begin to examine their assumptions and practices (Carr, 2004). They were acutely aware of the difficult task of aligning their vision and beliefs with their actions and practices and how this had necessitated a 'trade-off between values' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 72). This is exemplified in the words of the Deputy at Midwood who spoke about the 'tensions vying for priority against what is your vision'. The data illuminated the different ways in which the school leaders sometimes struggled to translate their beliefs about modern languages into practice in the context of constantly shifting education policy and master discourses of testing and measuring.

While the school leaders presented a proactive approach, their frequent references to 'struggles', 'sleepless nights' and 'battle grounds' suggested that the pressure to realise their vision for languages in the context of performativity required much agency, confidence and determination. Nevertheless, school leaders were keen to claim agency and ownership of their visions of a 'balanced and broadly-based curriculum' whilst acknowledging the performative contexts within which they operated. The data revealed how they worked 'to shape the agenda to particular situated circumstances, places and times' (Thomson, 2002: 163). At Eastbridge the Head explained that their goal was to become a 'great school', not to be driven by accountability measures and not to have a 'blinkered view'. The Deputy at Westfield explained how their policy of 'languages for all' had been in place for many years

and was not as a result of the EBacc policy so ‘when EBacc came in we didn’t have to change anything’. Meanwhile the Head at Midwood believed that schools should be able to exercise the curriculum autonomy they had been promised in the Academies Act (2010). He rejected the government policy that the ’vast majority’ of young people should study a language to GCSE at KS4. His response was to ignore the ‘flawed government mandate’.

The data reveals the agency of educators at a micro-level (Vidovich, 2007) and resonates with the view of Ball et al. (2012) that a top-down conceptualisation of enactment is limited and may not account for the agency exercised by other members of staff. For example, at Midwood the impetus for diversification of language provision came from a newly-appointed teacher with enthusiastic support from a trainee. The influence and tenacity of the Heads of Languages was a significant factor in how the policy was interpreted at Westfield and Eastbridge. At Westfield the Head of Languages was in a strong position to influence decision making as a governor and through frequent dialogue with the Head and Deputy. She felt that felt that she had ‘seen it all before’ and concluded that ’whatever the new GCSE format will be we’ll just tailor our teaching to deliver that’. Meanwhile at Eastbridge the Head of Languages had the ‘ear’ of the Head.

This cross-case analysis highlights some patterns and particularities in the way in which the three schools interpreted the policy to extend participation in languages to the ‘vast majority of pupils’ at KS4 and how it was translated into practice –how it was ‘contextually mediated and institutionally rendered’ (Ball et al., 2012: 142).

Chapter 6 The Field of Modern Languages at KS4

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I employ a number of Bourdieusian 'thinking tools', the trio of habitus, field and capital, to examine the contested and evolving field of modern languages at KS4. Using these tools has enabled me to illuminate the ongoing contradictions and tensions in the field and to make transparent the enablers and challenges to extending languages provision, often rendered invisible or inevitable elsewhere. I was drawn to Bourdieu because his dynamic 'theory of practice' evolved from and is grounded in his own empirical research. While Bourdieu perceived education to be 'heavily implicated' in the reproduction of society he also understood the field of education as a potential 'site for change' (Thomson, 2017: 21). Adopting a Bourdieusian lens for this cross-case analysis enables me to illustrate how inequalities in languages education are perpetuated but also to shed light on the practices of the case study schools which facilitate a more socially just and equitable place for modern languages in the KS4 curriculum.

6.2 Habitus, field and capital

Grenfell (2014: 2) suggests that in thinking with Bourdieu it is important that the concepts of habitus, field and capital should not be seen as independent entities as 'they are all interconnected, making up the structure and conditions of the social context that Bourdieu studied'.

Bourdieu (1990: 53) explained habitus as:

> Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of the conductor.

Maton (2014) refers to habitus as an 'engimatic concept', which is central to Bourdieu's field theory. He suggests that 'habitus focuses on our ways of acting,

feeling, thinking and being. It captures how we carry within us our history, how we bring this history into our present circumstances, and how we then make choices to act in certain ways and not others' (Maton, 2014: 51). Meanwhile James (2011: 3) notes that habitus should not be understood as another word for 'personality' but should be regarded as some 'more dynamic, fluid, and much less deterministic'.

> It is really a way of talking about the embodiment of previous social fields, whereby individuals acquire and carry ways of thinking and being and doing from one place to another. It is about how past social structures get into present action and how current actions confirm or reshape current structures.

Bourdieu understood the relationship between 'habitus and field' as fundamental. He defined field as:

> A network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions.
>
> (Bourdieu and Wacquant,1992: 97)

He proposed that a field is a bounded social space in which there are determined positions which:

a. are held in relation to others in the field;
b. are differentiated in a hierarchy of power and status;
c. produce in occupants and institutions particular ways of thinking, being and doing.

(Thomson, 2005: 742)

Bourdieu conceived of society 'as consisting of multiple interlocking and overlapping spaces that are at once social, cultural and material'. He called these spaces fields which when taken together, constitute an overall societal field of power. Each field functions according to its own set of rules but at the same time each field shapes and is shaped by the overarching field of power which is 'is geared to support the (re) production of national/global economic and social regimes'. Bourdieu suggested that there might be tensions between overlapping fields and that there was a hierarchy of fields. The education field in his view was a 'subordinate' field as it was subject to the pressures and actions of other fields. A field was made of positions occupied by institutions and people (agents) and was characterised by hierarchies

of status and power. For example, in the field of education this could be seen in the qualifications at stake at each level of education and the 'status and value' attached to them. Within the curriculum some subjects might be regarded as having higher status than others (Thomson, 2017).

Bourdieu believed that 'one's practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position in the field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)' (Maton, 2014: 50). Each social field of practices can therefore be understood as a competitive game or 'field of struggles' in which actors strategically improvise in their quest to maximise positions (Maton, 2014: 53). Thomson (2017: 107) suggests that 'in order to understand practice (and practices as strategies) it is imperative to look to the relationship between the habitus revealed by the agent, the social field in which that agent is operating and the capitals at stake within the field'.

Bourdieu (1986: 16) wrote that capital can present itself in three fundamental guises:

> As economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, in certain conditions into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of education qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations ('connections') which is convertible, in certain conditions into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the form of a title of nobility.

He conceived of capital as 'what is at stake in social spaces' (James, 2011: 3). Thomson (2002: 4) following Bourdieu suggests that the curriculum can be thought of as 'cultural capital' – the knowledges that are valued. Curriculum and assessment regimes are the means of creating a hierarchy of cultural capital, and cultural capital acquired through the processes of education and credentialing becomes 'symbolic capital'. Thomson (2017: 13) develops this further:

> Bourdieu proposed that the game in each field was to acquire the capitals that are specific to it. At stake in the field of education are institutionalised symbolic capitals, specific knowledges which take the form of hierarchically organised qualifications. School certificates and university degrees are a proxy for cultural capital, and they can be converted in markets into economic capital and in networks to social capital.

6.3 The field of modern languages at KS4: A game within a game

It is helpful to adopt Bourdieu's analogy of a game to map positions in the field, to consider the agents who occupy them and to explore the relationship between the

positions and the agency and practices of the players in order to gain a clearer picture of who and what controls and defines the field in question. I consider the data that emerged from the case study schools and use this to shed light on the relationship of the field of modern languages at KS4 to the broader education field. The data suggest that if change is to be effected it is essential to understand the relations between the fields and power and hierarchies which characterise the fields. I therefore draw on Bourdieu's metaphor to explore modern languages at KS4, as a game within a game.

As outlined in depth in the literature review the place of modern languages in the KS4 curriculum is contested. Nationally, less than 50% of pupils gained a modern languages GCSE in 2016. The case study schools provide a mixed picture of participation in languages at KS4. During the research process national education policy expectations, or the rules of the game relating to modern languages provision in the KS4 curriculum, changed. At the start of the research study the government professed a commitment to extending participation in languages at KS4. It announced that all pupils commencing year 7 in September 2015 would be expected to study a language through to GCSE level as part of the EBacc suite of 'academic' qualifications (Morgan, 2015). This was later modified to the 'vast majority' (DfE, 2015a). This policy announcement was followed by a consultation which opened in November 2015 and closed in January 2016. It then took the government a further 18 months to publish a response (DfE, 2017). This served to perpetuate the confusion in schools about policy expectations – the rules of the game. Paradoxically the key headline accountability measures of Progress 8 and Attainment 8 do not require the inclusion of a language. Simultaneously another significant change to the field was the 'reform' of GCSEs, including the modern languages GCSEs, with an emphasis on 'increased rigour' and a return to externally assessed 'linear' examinations.

Another change in the condition of the field was the reduction of school budgets. Furthermore, the referees in the guise of Ofsted and academy trusts or, in the case of Westfield, the Local Authority, who determine if the game is played according to the rules, have evolved. The findings also revealed the changing nature of the role of the captains - headteachers in the education game, with some headteachers increasingly answerable to academy trusts who have a significant role to play in curriculum decisions. The findings suggest considerable uncertainty and anxiety about the rules of the game amongst players and the inconsistent approaches

adopted by the referees. These changes played out within a broader societal context characterised by the uncertainty and division emanating from the UK referendum vote to leave the European Union.

6.3.1 The capitals that count in the field of modern languages at KS4

It is helpful when considering the capitals that count in the field of modern languages at KS4 to revisit the stated purposes of secondary state education in England, namely to offer a curriculum which is 'balanced and broadly based' and to prepare pupils for the 'the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life' (Education Act, 2002: Section 78). In this context I consider a number of the doxa prevalent in the field which exert a particular influence on schools' interpretations of these requirements. I reflect on how the notion of vocational/academic pathways and the framing of languages as an 'academic', 'difficult' subject for the 'more able' at KS4 impact on the field and restrict access to the languages curriculum for some pupils. I also consider the taken-for-granted assumption that 'everyone speaks English' along with the notion that 'we' as a nation are 'no good at languages' or 'linguistically hopeless' (Lamb, 2015: 5), which lead to particular tensions in the field.

The case study schools exemplify how the interplay of habitus, field and capital resulted in different ways of playing the game, which led to the perpetuation of inequality in some cases but also to a challenge of the status quo and change in other cases. The data also illuminate what drives and who decides and defines the capitals at stake in the different schools. Through the interviews and participant observation I was able to gain a view of the capitals that school leaders believed should count in the field and those that were afforded the greatest importance in practice in the three case study schools. What became evident from the interviews and discussions was that the way in which the school leaders conceived of the capitals at stake in the field was bound up with their own habitus, the habitus of their communities and histories and contexts of the schools and the broader rules of the education game.

School leaders in each of the schools aspired to offer a 'balanced and broadly-based curriculum'. The assumptions of school leaders about what this might look like for their pupils were intertwined with the capitals which the school leaders believed counted most for 'their' pupils. Discussion with school leaders revealed nuanced assumptions and expectations (sometimes unspoken but inferred) and a tacit understanding of their pupils' future needs and the capitals that count. Here

school leaders' individual habitus, their perceptions of the global and the local, the here and now and the future came into play and proved to have a significant impact on their thinking and practices. The way in which leaders structured the curriculum sometimes challenged and sometimes reinforced educational inequalities. The research brought to the fore the tensions between thinking about this bigger picture of a futures-orientated education, the place of modern languages education within it and maintaining a focus on the day-to-day realities of school within the context of a performance-driven educational landscape which demands 'quick wins' and often leads to short term solutions.

School leaders' comments revealed how they believed that language learning at KS4 enabled pupils to acquire particular cultural and social capitals. Greater or lesser importance was afforded to different capitals in each of the schools. These are discussed in more detail below.

6.3.2 The linguistic market place

Before exploring the cultural and social capitals that count in the field of modern languages at KS4 in more depth I propose to draw on Bourdieu's notion of the linguistic market place to situate the three schools. The portraits in Chapter 4 illustrate that ML at KS4 is not a level playing field. As Thomson (2005: 742) puts it:

> Players who begin with particular forms of capital are advantaged in the outset because the field depends on, as well as produces more of, that capital. Such lucky players are able to use their capital advantage to accumulate more and advance further (be more successful) than others.

The contexts of the schools described in detail in the portraits highlight the different 'conditions' of the field in relation to their broader context and in relation to ML at KS4. The findings also reveal the monolingual or plurilingual linguistic habitus which was prevalent in the schools and their communities. This was evolving and pointed to possibilities and opportunities for change and is perhaps better conceived as an evolving position on a monolingual/plurilingual continuum.

In his seminal work, Language and Symbolic Power (1991) Bourdieu argued that specific languages possessed symbolic power which were dependent on the field. These could be converted into cultural and social capital which enabled pupils to gain access to higher education, particular jobs and supported social mobility. Building on Bourdieu's conceptualisation of a 'linguistic market place' Grenfell (2011: 51) suggests that 'any particular language use consequently always has an anticipated 'profit' according to the dominant forms within a particular field'.

Duchêne and Heller (2012: 371) note how Bourdieu maintained that 'linguistic expressions can be understood as the product of the relationship between a linguistic market and the linguistic habitus'. He argued that 'the most valuable forms of symbolic capital were those that were legitimated by the social groups who dominated particular linguistic markets' (Martin-Jones et al., 2012: 5).

In this context, it is important to recognise the dominance of the symbolic power of English as a global language, to acknowledge the doxa that 'everyone speaks English' inherent in public perceptions and policy in relation to the conceptualization of capitals that count by school leaders, communities and society in general. Lamb (2015: 156) suggests that:

> The positioning of plurilingualism as a problem continues to have a tight hold in predominantly Anglophone countries and is indeed endemic throughout all aspects of society, persistent and self-sustaining. If anything is pathological, in need of "treatment," it is this assumption that everyone should speak English.

The notion of a linguistic market place is exemplified in the findings from the study which illustrate the value attached to the development of particular linguistic repertoires in the different schools. It is helpful to commence by considering the linguistic habitus of the schools and their communities.

Westfield was characterised by its plurilingual linguistic habitus. The school built on the linguistic skills in pupils' 'virtual school bags' (Thomson, 2002) in order to broaden their linguistic repertoires and prepare pupils for life in a globalised world locally and further afield, here and now and in the future. At Westfield, learning a second language and sometimes a third to GCSE was the norm, a taken-for-granted, well-established part of the curriculum. The languages of the schools' communities, in particular Urdu and Panjabi, enjoyed important symbolic value in the linguistic marketplace of the local communities alongside French, German and Spanish. However, due to recruitment difficulties the school planned to remove Panjabi and Urdu from the curriculum. While the opportunity to study Panjabi and Urdu was regarded as important to help pupils to maintain and build their diverse linguistic and cultural identities, greater linguistic capital was attached to Spanish, German and French by the school. This was a cause of tension with the local community and governing body and seemed at odds with a futures orientated curriculum, particularly in the context of the emerging markets, strong community links with India and Pakistan and the increasing global importance of world languages (British Council, 2017).

Eastbridge on the other hand served a largely rural, monolingual community where the doxa that 'English is enough' prevailed. School leaders wanted to improve the future life chances of their pupils, many of whom came from 'successful' local families but from communities who had not yet embraced the mobility and diversity of the 21st century and had a narrow conceptualisation of the purpose of language learning. As the Head explained:

> Here a parent will say 'I don't want my child to learn German because we don't go to Germany on holiday'.

School leaders wanted to challenge this thinking, which they believed held pupils back. They wanted to develop their pupils to meet the demands of the 21st century by providing them with the cultural and linguistic capital, which their families did not yet possess. Eastbridge was proud that pupils could chose to study French, German or Spanish.

At Midwood a largely monolingual habitus characterised the school and its communities. Here the doxa that 'English is enough' also prevailed but the response of the school differed to Eastbridge. Gaining an English GCSE was considered the key capital at stake for the pupils at Midwood, an urban school in an area of social deprivation. Here school leaders prioritised the improvement of English literacy which was regarded as essential 'linguistic capital' and essential for pupils' future lives. The data revealed a number of contradictions in the school leaders' understanding of the notion of literacies and how learning an additional language helped or hindered the development of English literacy, as outlined in the previous chapter. However, this monolingual habitus had been disrupted by a small but an increasing number of economic migrants from Eastern Europe and also Syrian refugees attending the school. These young people provided tangible examples of the benefits of plurilingualism. As the Head of Languages explained:

> We've have a girl in Year 11 who joined us in May 2010 from – I can't remember where from now – but she didn't know a word of Spanish when she started in Year 10 and I've had her in Year 11 and she has been put in the lower set but she is flying and she is predicted a B.

There was a tension between conceptualizing these pupils' linguistic repertoires as a 'problem' due to the support needed to develop English skills but also as a 'valuable asset' for the school and local community and a 'capital advantage' for the pupils themselves.

6.3.3 A modern languages GCSE as cultural capital

School leaders believed that learning a modern language at KS4 enabled pupils to acquire particular cultural and social capitals. Following Bourdieu (1986; 1991) I suggest that it is possible to conceptualise a modern languages GCSE qualification (a foundational level of fluency at B1 or B2 on the CEFR), as institutionalised cultural capital. Prior to the Wolf Review (2011) a number of alternative modern language qualifications 'counted' in the league tables. The removal of these qualifications was seen as a backwards step by all three of the case study schools, with credentialing of cultural capital for modern languages at KS4 now more narrowly defined. School leaders acknowledged that in the eyes of parents, GCSEs were the capital that counted the most. The Head at Westfield explained:

> One justification or selling point for it [ML GCSE] is this gives them a valuable and credible qualification. There is a difficulty in selling non GCSE qualifications for a school like this because we've got very highly aspirational parents and pupils.

Learning a language to GCSE level and developing the skills to build a broad linguistic repertoire was regarded by Westfield as important cultural capital which would enable pupils to succeed 'in the adult world now and in the foreseeable future'. The study of one or two languages to GCSE level was a core element of the KS4 curriculum in a school characterised by a plurilingual linguistic habitus.

Nevertheless, conversations with school leaders revealed how the cultural capitals embodied in Progress 8 and Attainment 8 performance measures mattered the most. The Head was clear that in playing the 'ML at KS4' game he had to demonstrate 'good' results. He was acutely aware that he would be judged on his ability to 'deliver' this symbolic capital in a 'high performing' school. While the EBacc measure was considered an indicator of curriculum breadth, the capitals deemed to be most at stake (for the school) were the Progress 8/Attainment 8 outcomes which underpinned Ofsted judgements. As the Head explained:

> What I can't do is have a position whereby we're making everybody do a language and I know that they are going to get lower grades.

Here the tension between providing an appropriate language learning experience for all at KS4 and the changing rules of the game in the guise of the more challenging modern languages GCSE specifications came to the fore. This was exacerbated by changes in the condition of the field, as manifested in a reduction in school funding.

Nevertheless, the school leaders at Westfield exercised agency in maintaining breadth of modern languages provision at KS4. The school had also demonstrated considerable agency in making decisions about structural reform and had challenged the taken-for-granted assumption that all schools would become academies. They had chosen not to opt out of the Local Authority and to remain as a Community School. They believed this had enabled them to focus on the capitals that count and to avoid the 'distraction' of structural change. It also afforded them sufficient autonomy to design a balanced and broadly-based curriculum. When national education policy removed languages from the compulsory core in 2004 Westfield had maintained languages for all within their KS4 curriculum.

Here the interplay of habitus was significant. Discussions with the Head revealed a well-informed understanding of the languages curriculum and a strong commitment to languages for all at KS4. This was reinforced by his own bi-cultural background and experiences of language learning. The 'moves' of the Head of Languages at Westfield were an important contributing factor. As a school governor she ensured that languages remained high on the agenda and that senior leaders were well informed about the benefits, possibilities and constraints. In order to retain this cultural capital for all in the context of funding constraints a decision had been taken to 'extend' the role of the experienced, bilingual Modern Languages Assistant. On the one hand this could be understood as using 'unqualified' staff to teach groups of students while on the other hand it could be regarded as a pragmatic approach to securing important cultural capital.

The Head of Modern Language's relationship with her languages team illustrated an ability to balance the tensions and support her team to interpret the GCSE specification in a pragmatic and creative manner. She was able to draw on her previous lived experience of putting four different versions of the ML GCSE into practice and to build on previous schemes of learning to ensure breadth and depth. In this way she was able and confident to counteract the dichotomy often found in the field of modern languages at KS4 in which schools feel constrained by the GCSE specification and teach to the 'test'. She took responsibility for ensuring that the curriculum retained interest and imagination at the same time as preparing for the GCSE examination. For them a particular barrier to enabling pupils to acquire the capitals that count the most (GCSEs) was the fragmented language learning experience of pupils at KS2. They were conscious that in relation to the capitals that count at KS2 learning a language was not one of them, in particular in year 6 where

the curriculum is often focused on preparation for statutory literacy and numeracy assessment tasks. This in their view had a detrimental impact on pupils' starting points in KS3. However less emphasis was placed on their responsibilities to build on prior learning.

Eastbridge placed particular importance on building pupils' cultural capital to enable them to operate and communicate confidently locally and globally in the future. This was translated into a curriculum in which most pupils studied a language in KS3 and KS4.The Head saw both challenges and opportunities in meeting the evolving demands of the 21st century and balancing this against the performativity inherent within the education system. Almost half of the current year 11 cohort studied a language to GCSE and there was a strong commitment to extend provision to at least the 'vast majority of pupils' at KS4. Gaining a 'good' GCSE pass was regarded as important symbolic capital – a passport to a more mobile and international future and an essential component of being 'well-equipped' for the global 21st century.

This recognition of a modern languages GCSE as important cultural capital was not shared by parents or all pupils in its communities characterised by a monolingual linguistic habitus. The school was recognised for the improvements it had made in respect of its GCSE and A-level outcomes and was now the lead school in the academy chain. The Head was keenly aware that he would be judged by Ofsted and parents on how well he could deliver the premier 'cultural capital' in the form of GCSE grades and qualifications as reported in Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures. However, he was also mindful of the need to improve the school's Ebacc performance and was aware that participation in languages at KS4 needed to increase in order to do this. In line with 'the rules of the game' the school was on a trajectory to improve their EBacc figure and they felt that government policy announcements relating to extending the number of pupils taking a language to GCSE as part of the EBacc had been helpful, if somewhat confusing. They believed this change in the 'rules' would help them to foreground the value of learning a language to GCSE level to parents and pupils.

Interviews with the Eastbridge school leaders revealed a strong plurilingual linguistic habitus which was reflected in their conceptualisation of the 'bigger picture'. Language skills featured as a key competence for a global future both within their languages curriculum and in their citizenship programme as described in the portrait in Chapter 4. School leaders considered a ML GCSE to be important cultural capital which would enable pupils to stand out in a crowd and support their employability

and mobility. However, the notion of languages for the 'more able' and distinct academic and vocational pathways underpinned some of their thinking in relation to which capitals count for which pupils, as the words of the Deputy illustrate:

> But there will always be that difficult decision for someone who is really struggling in English and maths and science and they want to be a plumber so should they be spending their time on French?

Eastbridge had adopted a strategic approach to enable pupils to acquire this cultural capital. In order to secure the capitals that count - improved outcomes at GCSE and therefore improved EBacc scores. They planned to redesign the languages curriculum to provide more time for in-depth study and progress to be made in one language in order to maximize performance and outcomes at GCSE – the ultimate aim of the game.

The tension between 'what matters in language learning' and improved GCSE outcomes was palpable amongst the ML team at Eastbridge. There was considerable pressure on the team to deliver the capitals that count in the form of good GCSE results. During the course of the research the players in the field changed positions and a new Head of Languages was appointed. The new incumbent found himself as a key player in the field, tasked with extending provision at KS4 at the same time as getting to grips with a more 'rigorous' GCSE. Here an observation of a languages department meeting revealed anxiety about getting to grips with a new GCSE grading system - the new rules of the game - in order to secure capitals that count.

In contrast to Westfield and Eastbridge, a modern languages GCSE was not regarded as important cultural capital for the majority of pupils at Midwood. The capitals that counted the most at Midwood were GCSEs in Maths, English and Science. The pressure to improve GCSE results dominated and the ability to envisage a different and less disadvantaged future more constrained. The words of the Deputy illustrate how their espoused focus on 'inclusion' and on meeting 'their' pupils' distinct needs vied with the pressure on the school as an institution to focus on examination outcomes and perform well in the league tables and gain the capitals that counted for the school:

> So I do always have an eye to balancing the needs of the students with the needs of the school and the fact that we are all judged by our outcomes.

The Head saw his role as preparing pupils to 'deal with the challenges of life'. Here, as elsewhere in the data, the themes of disadvantage, low aspirations and the

predominantly monolingual linguistic habitus of the communities surfaced. This influenced how school leaders perceived the 'opportunities, experiences or responsibilities' of later life for their pupils and how the school responded in its conceptualisation of a balanced and broadly-based curriculum and the place of languages within it. This deficit approach is illustrated in the Head's comments below:

> I work in a community which is a white working-class community and we understand, academically, that their aspirations are low.

The school leaders believed that they had an important role to play in raising pupils' aspirations for later life. A top priority was to provide an education which enabled pupils to find a job and to break the cycle of poverty and worklessness. Learning a modern language was not regarded as important cultural capital for most of their pupils.

It was at Midwood that the doxa of language learning as an 'academic pursuit' for some was particularly apparent which resulted in a strong vocational and academic divide. At the beginning of the research study Midwood Academy had a vocational sponsor which was reflected in their curriculum model. An emphasis on 'choice' alongside an 'individualised' curriculum was the institutional narrative. This meant that teachers played a significant role in envisaging pupils' needs for later life and defining and determining the capitals that counted at KS4. The Head suggested that young people placed more value on 'the idea of a vocational pathway that would take them straight into the workplace'. At Midwood a vocational pathway did not include the ability to communicate in a second language; this was a capital that counted for 'academically minded' students destined for Higher Education. Here the conceptualisation of a vocational/academic divide served to narrow the curriculum for a large number of pupils. Furthermore, when pupils had opted for languages but were unlikely to get a C grade or above they were encouraged to drop the language in order to secure their performance in capitals that counted more.

The Head's linguistic habitus is worth revisiting in this context. His own experience of language learning had been limited and he did not consider himself to be a 'linguist'. He also attached little value – linguistic capital – to a ML GCSE which in his view required limited spoken competence. As a school under scrutiny in an area of disadvantage school leaders rejected the rules of the game as expressed in an expectation that more pupils would study a language through to GCSE by extending those taking EBacc subjects. The 'poor outcomes' in languages meant that the

modern languages department had been given a 'yellow card' – and the diversification French pilot in year 8 had been 'relegated to the bench'.

For the majority of pupils at Midwood their second language edifice was based on the skills acquired in the two year KS3. The opportunities for pupils to learn languages were constrained due to the narrowness of the curriculum at KS4 which restricted their linguistic capital. A small number of pupils were encouraged to take a languages GCSE. In this way the predominantly monolingual habitus of the community was perpetuated. The school leaders articulated a commitment to promoting social inclusion and challenging low aspirations. However, the picture that emerged from the data was in fact that of a school preparing their young people for a later life which potentially perpetuated a cycle of disadvantage by limiting pupils' opportunities through a narrowly conceived curriculum.

At Midwood there were dissenting voices amongst the players. Although the Head of Languages acknowledged that it was 'a battle' to challenge the status quo, his own experience of growing up locally and the economic, cultural and social capitals he had been afforded through the study of languages led him to question the position of languages within the KS4 curriculum. In this he was supported by his team who displayed tenacity and confidence in questioning the actions of school leaders and challenging the narrowness of the KS4 curriculum which in their view did not prepare pupils for the future or offer them the cultural capital they deserved. Their own lived experiences led them to conceptualise a future for their pupils in which language learning skills and intercultural competence would help them 'get on' both locally and further afield and offered new possibilities. In addition, significant work had been undertaken with local primary schools to develop a more coherent transition process and questions had been raised about opportunities to restructure year seven in order to build on prior learning. The Head of Languages had a clear understanding of what needed to be done in this respect but required the support of his 'captain' to make this happen.

6.3.4 Modern languages as social capital

I now move on to consider the notion of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and how the three case study schools believed that learning a language enabled their pupils to gain social capital. Following Bourdieu, Thomson (2017: 13) suggests that:

> There is more at stake in education than just qualifications. Educational institutions do more than impart knowledge. They offer various opportunities for students to be and become particular kinds of people,

> agents possessed of embodied cultural capital and immersed in particular social settings. The kinds of institutionalised and embodied cultural and social capital accrued in the field of education are, of course, not evenly or equitably distributed.

Bourdieu considered social capital to mean 'a network of social relations or a sphere of contacts for a group or an individual' (James, 2011: 3) or 'the use and exchange of associational ties between positions in fields'. Bourdieu (1986) proposed that cultural capital, in the form of qualifications, could be converted in networks to social capital. It is therefore problematic to distinguish neatly between the social and cultural capital that learning languages affords as the two were intertwined in the visions and practices of the schools. Learning a modern language was regarded as more than gaining a GCSE qualification, it was regarded as important social capital which would benefit pupils and their communities as it would enable pupils to develop intercultural skills and a more open-minded and international perspective and assist them to extend their networks and contacts.

At Westfield learning a language was conceived of as an important social asset which would enable students to communicate across languages and cultures and operate in diverse networks locally and globally. In the plurilingual habitus of Westfield, learning languages was seen as important social capital for the here and now and for the future, both locally and further afield. Here the ability to speak a second language was regarded as important social capital which would enable pupils to communicate with their relatives and the local community. In this context the opportunity to extend and develop their skills in their home languages was important and advantageous. Learning a second language to GCSE also enabled them to 'get on', be mobile and access valuable places at the 'best' universities. Participation in trips and visits abroad was seen as an important aspect of developing this social capital.

At Eastbridge although learning a language was not regarded as essential cultural or social capital by parents the plurilingual habitus of the school leaders acquired through their own lived experiences led them to foreground language learning as important social capital. As a school which projected high aspirations for pupils and placed great store on them standing out in a crowd and social mobility, learning a language was seen as an important addition to their capitals. The Head felt that his language skills had given him 'an edge' and he saw languages as key to mobility as they could 'take you wherever you want to go'. Here, as at Westfield, particular emphasis was also placed on the development of global citizenship and social

responsibility. School leaders believed that in order for their pupils to make 'positive contributions to society' learning a modern language also helped them to be less judgmental which would support social cohesion.

At Midwood learning a second language was considered to offer social capital as it enabled pupils to broaden their horizons and to experience and consider diversity and otherness and 'build their social competence' The school leaders felt this was important as they were aware of growing diversity in the communities and they were keen to foster this intercultural understanding through the languages curriculum at KS3 to give pupils access to other networks beyond their immediate community. The well-established exchange with a school in Spain was an important aspect of the curriculum and the opportunity to meet and talk to Spanish peers was seen to provide invaluable social capital not just for those participating in exchanges but for pupils in school when the Spanish students visited.

6.3.5 Modern languages as an economic asset

The important economic capital in the hands of modern language teachers also emerged from the findings. This linguistic capital is a valuable economic asset which has important implications for recruitment and retention. The economic capital attached to English as a global language also has an influence on the recruitment and retention of teachers of modern languages as the data revealed. Teachers who train to teach modern languages in English schools are often drawn to teach English in Spanish, French or German speaking countries after they qualify. Sometimes this is motivated by a desire to improve and maintain their language skills but also to travel and experience other cultures and lifestyles and sometimes by a desire to 'escape' the accountability pressures of the English state system. The Head at Westbridge had considered the possibility of offering ML teachers a sabbatical as a strategy to support recruitment and retention at the same time as providing an opportunity for teachers to develop and maintain their language skills.

6.4 Gaining a feel for the game

The findings reveal a number of overarching patterns and illustrate how the complex interplay of habitus, capital and field influenced the importance afforded to particular capitals and how this served to both challenge and/or perpetuate inequalities in the field of modern languages at KS4. School leaders had to balance the capitals that counted for pupils with the capitals that counted for the school when playing the ML

at KS4 game. The data suggest that the field of modern languages at KS4 is subservient to the broader, more powerful education field and that the contested field of ML at KS4 is in fact a game within a game.

However, the findings reveal that it is insufficient to conclude that the capitals that count are solely determined by national education policy, headline accountability measures or Ofsted. These structural factors play an important role in each of the case study schools but the agency and practices of the players in schools also determined the different opportunities for pupils to learn a language at KS4. In order to make changes in the field it is essential to acknowledge this interrelationship and to ensure that the players understand the rules of both fields and develop strategies to play across and in both fields.

The findings illustrate that there are spaces and opportunities for school leaders and language educators to exercise agency and to challenge the status quo and prevailing doxa in order to provide a more equitable place for ML in the KS4 curriculum. This however demands a 'feel for the game' or sens du jeu (Bourdieu,1990: 82) This 'feel' 'is a reflection of the subtle adjustment of the habitus to the objective conditions of the specific field in which the actor is operating' (Jackson, 2009: 110). This demands reflexivity, for school leaders and language educators to be critical of their own ideas and practices. In this way opportunities to challenge the taken-for-granted and the status quo become possible.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

My purpose in conducting this research was to investigate how schools understand and enact the education policy requirement that the 'vast majority' of young people should study a language to GCSE level and to shed light on what helps and hinders them to extend the study of languages at KS4. In this concluding chapter I set out the implications of the research and the associated recommendations for action. I suggest that these recommendations would help schools to move towards a fairer and more equitable place for modern languages in the KS4 curriculum in order to equip young people with the linguistic and intercultural skills, knowledge and understanding to thrive in an increasingly diverse 21st century.

The case study schools provide a mixed picture of provision and participation in modern languages at KS4 and an illuminative sample of different interpretations of language education policy in a changing policy context in which a discourse of curriculum autonomy sits uneasily alongside punitive accountability measures. I found that the evolving policy requirement for pupils to study a language at KS4 is understood and enacted in different ways according to a complex interplay of habitus, capital and field; the interplay of school specific factors, contexts, histories and the dispositions of school leaders.

I conclude that, given this complex interplay of factors, sustainable change cannot be effected by language educators or schools alone and that action is required at all levels to address the inequalities that persist in modern languages education at KS4. The findings demonstrate how schools 'can make a difference but not all the difference' (Wrigley et al., 2012: 105). While individual schools and educators may exercise considerable agency and work hard to meet the language policy expectations at a local level, the multiplicity of factors and the tensions and contradictions made transparent in this research illuminate how these interrelated aspects need to be recognised and addressed at national and regional levels as well as locally.

The findings also shed light on opportunities for change and spaces for action and on some positive examples of how schools strive to offer more equitable language learning opportunities for young people. They illustrate that there is much that can be done to improve matters if there is commitment at all levels to recognise and

remove obstacles and barriers. I point to strategies for change which challenge both the practices and structures which perpetuate curriculum inequality in the field of modern languages at KS4.

I suggest that there is a need to re-visit and clarify the purposes and benefits of modern languages education in the context of globalisation and superdiversity and to ensure that there is an alignment of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. I argue that another 'social imaginary' of language education at KS4 is possible (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).

A prerequisite for this is for educators to keep an eye on the 'bigger picture' as to why language learning matters in an era of globalisation and superdiversity and to develop a feel for the game(s) in order to offer all young people an inclusive and high-quality modern languages education at KS4 which meets the realities and needs of individuals and communities in the 21st century.

7.2 Implications and recommendations

A A game within a game

The findings suggest that it is insufficient and problematic to consider the field of modern languages at KS4 in isolation from the broader education field which has a significant impact on the way in which language education policy is shaped in the case study schools. These overlapping fields are constantly in tension with one another. The data reveal an ongoing struggle for schools to balance their beliefs as to why learning an additional language matters for pupils with wider conflicting and competing accountability pressures. A shared concern was how to reconcile the expectation that the 'vast majority' of young people should study a language to GCSE level with the need to demonstrate successful outcomes in the context of the introduction of more challenging, linear modern languages GCSE qualifications. The data suggest that the field of modern languages at KS4 is dominated by the wider, more powerful education field and that it is in fact 'a game within a game'. The study confirms my own lived experiences and the concerns raised in the literatures of a potential link between the contested place of languages within the KS4 curriculum and the way in which schools are held to account through a range of performance measures (Mitchell, 2011). This research exemplifies how particular policies 'can empower some and displace others' (Ball et al., 2012: 7) and illustrates the importance of agency and the practices of school leaders in mediating these

tensions. It calls into question the view of the HM Chief Inspector of Education that 'there need be no tension' between success in the revised and more rigorous GCSEs and 'a good curriculum' (Spielman, 2017: 1). The findings clearly illustrate how action is required at a national as well as a school level to address these tensions which impact on pupils' participation in languages at KS4.

Recommendation

- **Streamline and align contradictory accountability measures which impact negatively on modern languages at KS4**

Ministers and policy makers need to recognise the ways in which policies overlap, the impact of contradictions, short-termism and how the constant change of policy position can act as a constraint to extending participation in languages at KS4. At a national level there needs to be a more coherent approach to accountability which reflects the aims and purposes of education as set out in the Education Act (2002). There is a need to establish coherence between language education policy and other accountability measures so that they make sense for the school system.

B Keeping an eye on the bigger picture

My findings reveal the complexities and nuances of enacting language education policy in a fragmented, volatile educational landscape in the absence of an overarching strategic long-term national languages strategy. There is a need to step beyond a decontextualized 'best practice' notion of school improvement and to adopt a more nuanced approach in the context of intensifying inequalities (Dorling, 2015; Eurydice, 2017; Smyth and Wrigley, 2013; Sutton Trust, 2015). This requires an approach which pays attention to glocal contexts, the contexts of the schools and the context of the communities in which the schools are situated.

Recommendations

- **Create a coherent national languages strategy**

The insights from the research suggest that there is a need to develop a national languages strategy which sets out a coherent, funded plan for languages education to counteract the short-termism and contradictory nature of policy which schools struggle to make sense of. This needs to be underpinned by a coherent long-term vision for the development of the country's language skills that values and builds on the intercultural and linguistic skills of all young people and secures a meaningful and productive place for modern languages in the KS4 curriculum. A strategic

approach is essential to maintain and encourage the teaching and accreditation of a range of world languages at KS4.

- **Address the lack of coherence between the purposes of learning languages, the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment**

There is a need at school, regional and national level to reconsider and to address the fundamental purposes of learning languages and the problematic alignment of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. This lack of alignment points to the need for greater transparency to ensure that those commissioned at a national level to steer language policy have the necessary expertise, experience and successful track record in teaching languages across the age and ability range as well as experience of designing and teaching a range of modern languages qualifications.

C Responding to the evolving linguistic communities of the school

The research demonstrates how the monolingual/plurilingual habitus of communities and the related deficit and asset discourses surrounding the learning of languages had an important impact on how the three schools interpreted language education policy. The evolving linguistic and cultural identities of the schools' local communities and the actions of schools in response to their communities acted as both enablers and/or challenges to extending the modern study of languages within the KS4 curriculum. There was a common perception of increased linguistic and cultural diversity in communities, brought about by mobility in all three schools, and a recognition in some, that advances in technology had changed the notion of community and offered an important enabler for world-wide online interaction and communication.

However, the findings reveal a mixed picture of how schools understand and build on the 'funds of knowledge' of their pupils (Moll et al., 1992). Their understanding of the diversity and nuances of languages and cultures in their communities was sometimes limited, as was their knowledge of prior learning of languages at KS2. This chimes with Evans and Fisher (2012) who suggest that secondary schools are not yet building on the prior language learning experiences of year 7 pupils. My research reveals that where schools have a good understanding of prior language learning and do collaborate locally this can lead to improved curriculum coherence, a valuing of the knowledge and skills that reside within the communities and the building of positive linguistic identities for pupils.

The study also illustrates how centralisation can restrict opportunities for schools to be locally responsive or to 'reflect the distinctive social and cultural aspects of the communities they serve' (Hall and Thomson, 2017: 4 - 5). While governments have argued that academisation brings greater autonomy (DfE, 2010) my research illustrates how a LA maintained school (Westfield) working in close partnership with a local governing body built on the strengths of the local communities and exercised considerable autonomy. Midwood, in contrast, provides an example of 'academisation' that has resulted in constant structural and curriculum churn over the past five years as illustrated by the changing and fragile place of languages in the KS4 curriculum.

Recommendations

- **Build on funds of knowledge to develop a locally responsive languages curriculum**

The research findings suggest that schools need to recognise and build on the funds of knowledge in increasingly diverse classrooms by working closely with their local communities, parents and other key stakeholders to develop a more locally responsive curriculum which takes account of the evolving linguistic and cultural identities of their pupils. This will enable schools to build communities of practice, to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning and allow pupils to make better progress. Secondary schools need to improve their systems and structures for building on prior learning at KS2/3.

- **Challenge the notion of modern foreign languages (MFL)**

The study supports the notion that 'foreign' needs to be removed from 'MFL' (Lo Bianco, 2014) to reflect the changing nature of language use in glocal communities and encourage an approach that is glocally responsive and values the benefits of linguistic diversity on our doorstep, at a click, as well as further afield (UNESCO, 2015). Schools should look for ways in which pupils can develop and apply their linguistic skills and intercultural competences in local contexts as well as further afield.

D Equity and quality in modern languages education at KS4

The findings suggest that the dominance of English as the global lingua franca, reflected in the taken-for-granted assumptions that 'English is enough' (Nuffield, 2000) and that 'we are no good at languages' (Coleman, 2009) has a profound influence on policy enactment. These taken-for-granteds, combined with concerns

about severe grading, exacerbated by an on-going 'struggle', 'battle' and 'challenge' to demonstrate 'good' GCSE outcomes in the context of the reformed linear GCSE examinations can perpetuate inequalities in modern languages education at KS4. The research demonstrates that an educational discourse which frames languages as an 'academic subject' for some, alongside a vocational/academic divide can serve to narrow the curriculum and potential pathways for pupils and potentially exacerbate a social divide.

The research also points to the influence of school structures and curriculum/qualification hierarchies on the place of modern languages in the KS4 curriculum. The interpretation of key accountability measures in the guise of Progress 8 and the EBacc, combined with ongoing concerns about severe grading in modern languages (ASCL et al., 2017) have led to distinct curriculum hierarchies. This has been exacerbated by the reduction of education budgets which has led to a narrowing of the range of languages on offer in all three case study schools. The Progress 8 measure, which denotes the qualifications that count the most, exerts a strong influence on how schools conceive of a 'balanced and broadly-based curriculum' at KS4.

The findings also reveal how the narrowing of the range of language qualifications available to schools since the Wolf Review (2011) and the prevalent discourse that the ML GCSE is the only credible qualification, alongside the increased rigour of the GCSE was considered to be a barrier to extending participation in languages at KS4. It was the Modern Foreign Languages GCSE subject content (DfE, 2015b), interpreted by the three main awarding organisations in the modern languages GCSE specifications (and associated text books), which appeared to provide the main policy framework for languages and acted as a de facto languages policy (Shohamy, 2006). Furthermore, professional development was often also provided by awarding organisations and thus fostered a qualifications-led curriculum. In some cases, this resulted in the neglect of intercultural learning (Pachler et al., 2014) which was sometimes relegated to 'extra-curricular' opportunities rather than being part and parcel of the day-to-day teaching of languages.

Recommendations

- **Promote a plurilingual approach to languages education**

In the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2015) there is a need to for all schools to provide an inclusive and equitable quality languages education for all at KS4. One which promotes a plurilingual approach and equips learners with the transferable second language learning skills to learn of other languages throughout life.

- **Challenge the deficit discourses around language learning and the idea that learning an additional language requires 'special powers'**

Schools need to challenge the deficit discourses and the taken-for-granteds relating to learning a second language that have a negative impact on participation in languages at KS4; that just speaking English is enough, that learning a language is 'hard' and an 'academic pursuit' for some. They need to show that learning a modern language at KS4 is 'doable' and a 'creative pursuit' for all which equips young people with important communication and intercultural skills for the here and now and for the future.

- **Address the ongoing concerns around severe grading**

There is a need to acknowledge and address the ongoing concerns about the 'severe grading' of modern languages at a national level through further discussions with Ofqual, awarding organisations and other key stakeholders. It is important to secure the confidence of school leaders and the public at large that languages are 'doable' in order to challenge and support schools that are reluctant to enter pupils for GCSE due to concerns about severe grading. This is interlinked with national decisions about assessment and performance measures discussed above.

- **Challenge a qualifications-led modern languages curriculum**

There is a need to challenge a narrow qualifications-led languages curriculum and to support school leaders and language educators to foreground a futures-orientated languages curriculum which prepares pupils for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of later life. Academy Trusts and LAs should support school leaders to reconcile the tension between why they believe language learning matters and how they enact language education policy in their schools in the context of competing accountability pressures.

- **Diversify the range of modern language qualifications recognised at KS4 and link these to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages**

The findings suggest that the modern languages GCSEs (in their current format) as the sole qualification at KS4 is a constraint to extending the study of languages at KS4. There is a need to diversify the range of recognised languages qualifications in order to support schools to extend participation at KS4. Models of assessment (at all key stages) should evolve to meet the diverse needs of young people and provide a pathway for lifelong language learning. These could be linked to the revised Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2017) which is widely recognised across the world. At a national level there is a pressing need to develop alternative language qualifications. The archived developmental work for the Diploma in Languages and International Communication (Ofqual, 2009) with its emphasis on intercultural communication and transferable language learning strategies, underpinned by evidence portfolios would provide a good starting point. Furthermore, a reworked Languages Ladder (DCSF, 2007) linked to CEFR would support and facilitate curriculum continuity across all key stages, provide an overarching coherent progression framework and a common meta language for schools throughout compulsory schooling and beyond. Language educators would also benefit from working in collaboration with teachers internationally through the ECML on assessment frameworks which support rather than drive language learning.

- **Promote a more holistic, integrated, interdisciplinary approach to languages education**

Schools should bring together all teachers involved in languages education (English, modern languages, EAL) who are often 'barricaded behind walls of professional identity' (Lo Bianco, 2014: 312) to contribute to a coherent and integrated languages curriculum underpinned by a broader and holistic conceptualisation of literacies to support the realities of the 21st century. School leaders have an important role to play in facilitating a more coherent and integrated approach to languages education in their schools. In order to extend the study of modern languages at KS4 in a meaningful way for young people curriculum leaders also need to be more closely involved in a professional dialogue about language education. It is therefore important that language educators step out of their 'silos' and engage more effectively in constructive dialogue with curriculum leaders to

draw on research to articulate how learning an additional language contributes to a balanced and broadly-based curriculum.

- **Devise a national strategy for the recruitment and retention of modern language teachers**

A national strategy for the recruitment and retention of language teachers in a range of languages is urgently required to support schools to extend participation and provision at KS4. The insights from the research suggest that the number of pupils studying two languages and the range of languages on offer may be vulnerable to funding pressures. Without a strategic funded diversification strategy, the range of world languages taught in schools may decline rather than be extended at a time when UK is looking to widen collaborations across the world.

- **Develop models of professional development which support schools with curriculum design and leadership in modern languages**

It is necessary to develop models of professional development which support schools with curriculum design and leadership in modern languages. The fragmentation of the education system and reduction in budgets means that schools are often reliant on awarding organisations for professional development leading to a qualifications-led, rather than a curriculum-led system which encourages lifelong language learning. Opportunities to collaborate with teachers nationally and internationally should be encouraged through a renewed contribution to the European Centre for modern languages and ongoing participation in Erasmus+ to secure the future pipeline of language teachers. Schools of Education in universities have an important role to play in encouraging research informed communities of practice for language educators which enables them to make links between research, policy and practice.

- **Establish a National Education Centre for Curriculum and Research**

Curriculum leadership is a core aspect of the role of school leaders. There needs to be a renewed emphasis on the notion of curriculum development and a greater focus on and support for curriculum leadership in training and CPD. My recommendation would be for the establishment of a publicly funded National Education Centre for Curriculum and Research which places an emphasis on curriculum design and provides research informed support for schools who are currently reliant on commercial materials and CPD provided by the three main awarding organisations for a modern languages GCSE.

E Agency is possible: Opportunities for action

The evidence from my research illustrates how school structures can intensify the divide between the enacted curriculum and what a school wants to create as a set of values, which results in compromises and 'trade-off between values' and the 'privileging of some values ahead of others' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 72). My research has led me to conclude that while national accountability measures exert a strong influence on schools' enactment of language education policy, school leaders' individual habitus, their perceptions of the global and the local, the here and now and the future, also have an important impact on the agency they exercise, their interpretations of policy and their actions and practices in relation to modern languages at KS4. While Ball et al. (2012:10) have argued that 'ethical-democratic concerns come into play weakly over and against and within the interpretation and enactment of policy' my research provides a more hopeful picture. Many of the voices in the study articulated a strong commitment to democratic principles and demonstrated significant agency in their approach to providing more equitable language learning opportunities for young people at KS4.

The findings demonstrate that there are spaces to take action. The study provides encouraging examples of how schools exercise considerable agency to promote a more socially just and equitable place for modern languages in the KS4 curriculum. The evidence suggests that while in some schools and communities an assumption that 'English is enough' prevails, other schools are challenging this notion and building on young peoples' funds of knowledge to expand plurilingual repertoires and extend the study of languages to all pupils at KS4. The findings also contribute to a more hopeful and critical discourse than the one that currently characterizes languages education by challenging taken-for-granted binaries and illuminating how educators are 'key actors' rather than merely subjects in the language education policy process (Braun et al., 2010). While current discourse refers to a 'crisis in language education' this study reveals the important part that school leaders play, as leaders of the curriculum in interpreting and translating policy into practice and illustrates the action and practices that schools are taking in different contexts to extend participation in modern languages at KS4.

Recommendations

- **Exercise critical agency and play the game in a different way.**

The research points to the need for school leaders and language educators to maintain a focus on why language learning matters in the 21st century, to exercise critical agency, to develop a 'sens du jeu' – 'a feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990: 82) and play the game in a different way.

- **Challenge the notion that the reformed ML GCSE prevents good languages teaching**

There is a need at school level to challenge the unproductive dichotomy that the reformed ML GCSEs prevent good languages teaching but also to acknowledge and address the pressures of time and accountability on the languages curriculum. School leaders should proactively support the development of a coherent languages curriculum which builds on prior learning. Schools should devise schemes of learning to encourage engaging language learning experiences at KS4 and employ effective pedagogical approaches which enable pupils to apply language in meaningful contexts.

- **Secure intercultural learning within day-to-day teaching at KS4**

The findings challenge the notion that teaching intercultural understanding and preparing pupils for the ML GCSEs are mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, schools need to ensure that intercultural learning is built into schemes of learning and features in day-to-day teaching and learning. For example, by drawing on an arts-based-approach, schools could engage and motivate pupils, provide a stimulus for pupils' own creativity and enable them to apply grammar to create and communicate meanings that matter.

7.3 Final thoughts

Responses to the decline in the number of young people studying modern languages at KS4 are often piecemeal, short-term and fail to build on what has gone before or take account of the plethora of advice or research that exists in the field. I am therefore mindful that the recommendations above may become lost or indeed ignored along with the other numerous reports and consultations outlined in this study. The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of what helps and hinders schools to extend the study of modern languages at KS4, to add

to the conversation in order to effect change and to move towards a more socially just languages education for all at KS4.

My ambition therefore is to take action and encourage action - to use my local, regional and national networks to bring the findings and recommendations of this study to the fore. I plan to disseminate my findings through the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages and to continue to work with the National Association of Language Advisors to promote the recommendations. I also aim to publish my findings in the Journal of Education Policy or the Curriculum Journal. In my role as an ITE educator I am well placed to work with our local partnership of schools on the school-based recommendations and to develop their confidence to challenge taken-for-granteds and play the game differently. Following the completion of this study I also plan to work with colleagues to lobby for the development of and recognition of alternative language qualifications.

The findings of this small study concur with Thomson, Hall and Jones' view (2010) that policy analysis at a smaller scale does reveal patterns of how schools make sense of education policy. However, I acknowledge that there are both 'blank and blind spots' in my research (Thomson, 2012), that this research provides just a small snapshot of three schools located in a specific timeframe and socio-political context. More time spent in the schools with a broader range of participants would have enabled me to have gained a more in-depth understanding and to ask the questions that arose as part of my analysis. Nevertheless, I believe that by 'attending closely' (Back, 2007) to school leaders, the nuances of their beliefs and practices have been brought to the fore, providing illuminative examples of how schools understand and enact education policy in a specific socio-political context. My study provides a springboard to raise further questions in particular in relation to the alignment of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in the field of language education. This small study suggests that further research is needed which investigates the relationship between the stated purposes of language education and how this is translated into day-to-day practices in language classrooms. A longitudinal study of the impact of the 'reformed' ML GCSEs on language learning would build on this research and bring important knowledge to the field.

During the course of this research I have gained a greater critical awareness of myself as an educator and as an advocate for languages education. The research has required me to continually address my own assumptions and perceptions and to acknowledge the lens I bring to the study. I have gained a deeper and more

informed insight into the complex and multifaceted way in which policy is understood and interpreted, and how this impacts on the opportunities for young people to learn modern languages at KS4. I believe that if we are committed to sustainable education for a better and more just and equal world then being plurilingual is essential - listening and understanding as well as speaking to others across different cultures and communities locally and globally has a crucial part to play. For this reason, I believe that the ability to communicate effectively across cultures and in different languages should not be regarded as an academic pursuit for some but rather as an essential, enriching, creative life skill for all regardless of background or ability. To call on words of the Deputy at Eastbridge:

> If, at school level, we don't open the opportunity that includes a language for young people then I believe we are narrowing them for life.

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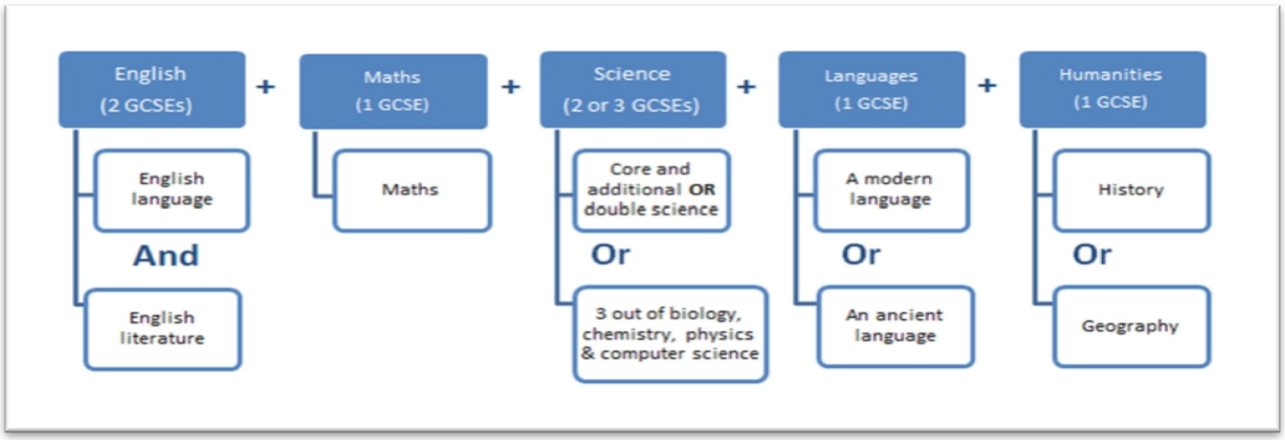
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Appendices

Appendix 1 What is the EBacc?

The EBacc brings together the core academic subjects that the vast majority of young people should study to age 16. To enter the EBacc, pupils must take up to eight GCSE qualifications across five subject 'pillars':



Currently, to achieve the EBacc pupils need to attain:

- grade A*-C in English language GCSE and any grade in English literature GCSE;
- grade A*-C in mathematics GCSE;
- grade A*-C in either history or geography GCSE;
- grade A*-C in a language GCSE; and
- grade A*-C in core and additional science GCSEs; or grade A*-C in GCSE double science award; or pupils need to enter three single sciences and achieve grade A*-C in at least two of them (the single sciences are biology, chemistry, computer science and physics).

(DfE, 2015b: 13)

Appendix 2 Ethical Approval Documentation

Approach Letter

My Reference: LERP/LHV

The Head Teacher

X Academy/School

10th December 2015

Dear X

Modern languages education research project

I am writing to ask whether you would give permission for your school to participate in a modern languages education research study, which will investigate the enablers, benefits and challenges for schools of including the study of languages for the majority pupils in the key stage 4 curriculum, in light of the new education policy requirements.

This research is for my professional doctorate, which I am undertaking part-time alongside teaching in the School of Education at the University of X I have thirty years of experience working in education as a modern languages teacher, Head of Languages, Assistant Head and Deputy Head, in addition to working nationally on language education policy and qualifications.

I am approaching your school as a University of X Partnership school and because your modern languages department is regularly involved in mentoring trainee teachers and contributing to the Language Education Research Group seminars at the university. I would be keen to conduct interviews with you, your curriculum deputy and head of modern languages, and very much hope that you will agree to participate in what seems to me to be very important research at a time of considerable curriculum change. My aim is to use the findings of the research to inform and strengthen language education policy and practice by gaining an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of school leaders tasked with extending modern languages provision within the curriculum. I am attaching a Research Project Information Sheet outlining the purpose of the proposed study and what participation would involve.

I would be really grateful for your help with the research; I fully understand the diverse and varied demands on schools and appreciate your time in considering this request. I am keen to ensure that the research process should be of benefit to your school and am committed to establishing an open professional dialogue which will inform language education policy and practice both locally and nationally. I would be happy to discuss this on the phone or to call at a time convenient to you to answer any questions and explain the study in further detail.

Yours sincerely

Information sheet for participants: modern languages Research Project
The place of modern languages in a 'balanced and broadly-based curriculum' at key stage 4 – the benefits, enablers and challenges

What is the research about?
At a time when school leaders are tasked with extending language provision within the curriculum in line with government education policy the study aims to:

- gain a better understanding of the relationship between language education policy and practice in English schools
- gain an in-depth and nuanced understanding of school leaders' perceptions of the benefits, enablers and challenges of including the study of a language for the majority of pupils in the key stage 4 curriculum

Why does this matter?
There is a concern that whilst learning a second language throughout compulsory schooling is increasingly the norm in education systems across the world, fewer than 50% of 14 - 16-year olds gained a modern language GCSE in 2015. Research suggests that those studying languages post 14 tend to be educated in the independent sector or are high attainers in state secondary schools. It would appear that a large proportion of young people do not have the opportunity to develop the necessary language skills and intercultural competence with which to embrace mobility and diversity in the global 21st century. Recent government education policy states that 'the vast majority' of pupils commencing secondary school in 2015 will be expected to study a language through to GCSE level. This study aims to investigate the views of school leaders of achieving this policy goal in order to bring perceived challenges and drivers to the fore and strengthen language education.

How has the project come about?
This research is part of a professional doctorate, which I am undertaking part-time alongside teaching in the School of Education at the University of X. I have thirty years of experience working in education as a modern languages teacher, head of languages, assistant head and deputy head in addition to working nationally on language education policy and qualifications. Language education research is frequently based on findings of language teacher surveys, but limited research exists into school leaders' perceptions of the place of languages within a 'balanced and broadly-based curriculum'. Through this research I am committed to investigating the factors which help and hinder schools tasked with including the study of languages for the 'majority' within the key stage 4 curriculum.

What does the research consist of?
There will be three case studies and I hope that your school will agree to be one of them. I would like to:

- conduct individual 45-minute interviews with the headteacher, curriculum deputy and head of modern languages
- look at school policies and curriculum plans which relate to modern languages
- attend where possible relevant curriculum or SLT meetings as an observer

Once interviews have been transcribed there will be an opportunity to read the transcripts for accuracy, results will be made available at the end of the study.

How will I work with schools?
I am committed to maintaining an open and inclusive approach with all participants, sharing findings, maintaining anonymity and ensuring that the research process contributes to supporting the development of language education in schools. The research follows the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association and full ethical approval has been gained from the University of X. All participants will be asked to sign a consent form (example attached) setting out the voluntary nature of participation and the measures taken to protect anonymity.

Example participant consent form
Project title:

The place of modern languages in a 'balanced and broadly-based curriculum' at Key Stage 4 – the benefits, the enablers and the challenges

Researcher's name:

Supervisor's name:

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be recorded during the interview.
- I understand that data will be stored on audiotapes, and hard and electronic copies will be kept on the researcher's computer and in her desk in a locked room and will only be accessible by the researcher and her supervisor. Pseudonyms will be used to protect confidentiality. Data will be stored in a secure place for no longer than seven years after the publication of the findings as required by the University of X's Code of Conduct.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of X, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed …… (research participant)

Print name ……Date ……..

Contact details

Researcher:

Supervisor:

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:

Appendix 3 Reflections from Research Journal: Extract 1

Getting into the Schools

After I had gained initial agreement for all three schools to participate in the study my next task was to arrange an interview schedule. This proved to be more complicated. When I did not get an immediate response from a school, I suggested a time and date which coincided with an ITE observation of a trainee teacher thus locating the visit within the notion of partnership. The deputy headteachers in all three schools acted as gatekeepers and helped to arrange the first set of interviews with the Headteacher and the Head of modern languages. I consciously encouraged this, cognisant of the fact as a former deputy head myself, that the interrelationship between the curriculum deputy and the headteacher and with the head of subject is strategically important. Once the interviews had been agreed with the deputy head I sent a follow-up email to the head of modern languages, in order to establish initial contact and to begin to build a relationship.

At Midwood I conducted the initial interviews with the Deputy Head, the Head of modern languages and the Headteacher on the same day while at Westfield and Eastbridge the interviews were more spread out. In fact, a time gap between interviews gave me more time to begin to analyse the interviews in preparation for subsequent interviews in the school and I became more adept at this. During the interview process I was also able to request additional documentation to help me build a more rounded picture. Once I had established initial trust and rapport with participants, I was then in a good position to ask to observe a modern languages department meeting.

I set up these visits with the Head of Modern Languages in each school after I had completed the first set of interviews. Finding a date was straightforward at Westfield and Midwood but took longer at Eastbridge where I sensed some nervousness as regards my attendance. Once a date had been agreed I was then asked to give a presentation at the meeting on the new ML GCSE. I explained that I was not in a position to do this in my role as researcher and whilst collecting data. Having established a date this was then cancelled at short notice and a subsequent date set. Prior to my attendance at the meeting the Head of ML role also changed. A date was arranged for my attendance at an ML meeting but this was again subsequently cancelled and rescheduled at the end of my fieldwork.

Follow up interviews were conducted six or seven months after the first interview with Deputy headteachers. The Deputy Head (VP) at Eastbridge had by this stage become the Principal, while the Principal had taken on an Executive Principal role across the Academy Trust. This change in personnel in the participating schools mirrors the everyday context in schools as staffing changes, teachers leave, get promoted or change roles. Indeed, at the very end of the research period, following an Ofsted inspection the headteacher at Midwood 'stepped down' and was replaced by a Senior Leader from the Multi Academy Trust. An important concern for all participants was confidentiality and I received an email following the interviews from two of the headteachers asking me to confirm that confidentiality would be maintained. This illustrated perhaps the atmosphere of performativity and mistrust that characterises the current education landscape.

Appendix 4 Interview Questions

Interview 1: Headteacher, Curriculum Deputy and Head of Languages

Q1: Could you please tell me a little about the current place of modern languages in the curriculum at X?

Q2. Could you please tell me what you perceive as the benefits for the 'vast majority of pupils' having an opportunity to study a language in the key stage 4 curriculum?

Q3. Could you please tell me what you regard as the enablers and challenges to meeting this policy goal?

Q4. What would help to make this possible at a school/regional/national level?

Q5. What changes, if any, do you propose to make to the curriculum to extend languages provision at key stage 4 in relation to the English Baccalaureate performance measure?

Q6. What would help you as a school leader to develop the capacity and capability to put this into practice? Locally, regionally, nationally?

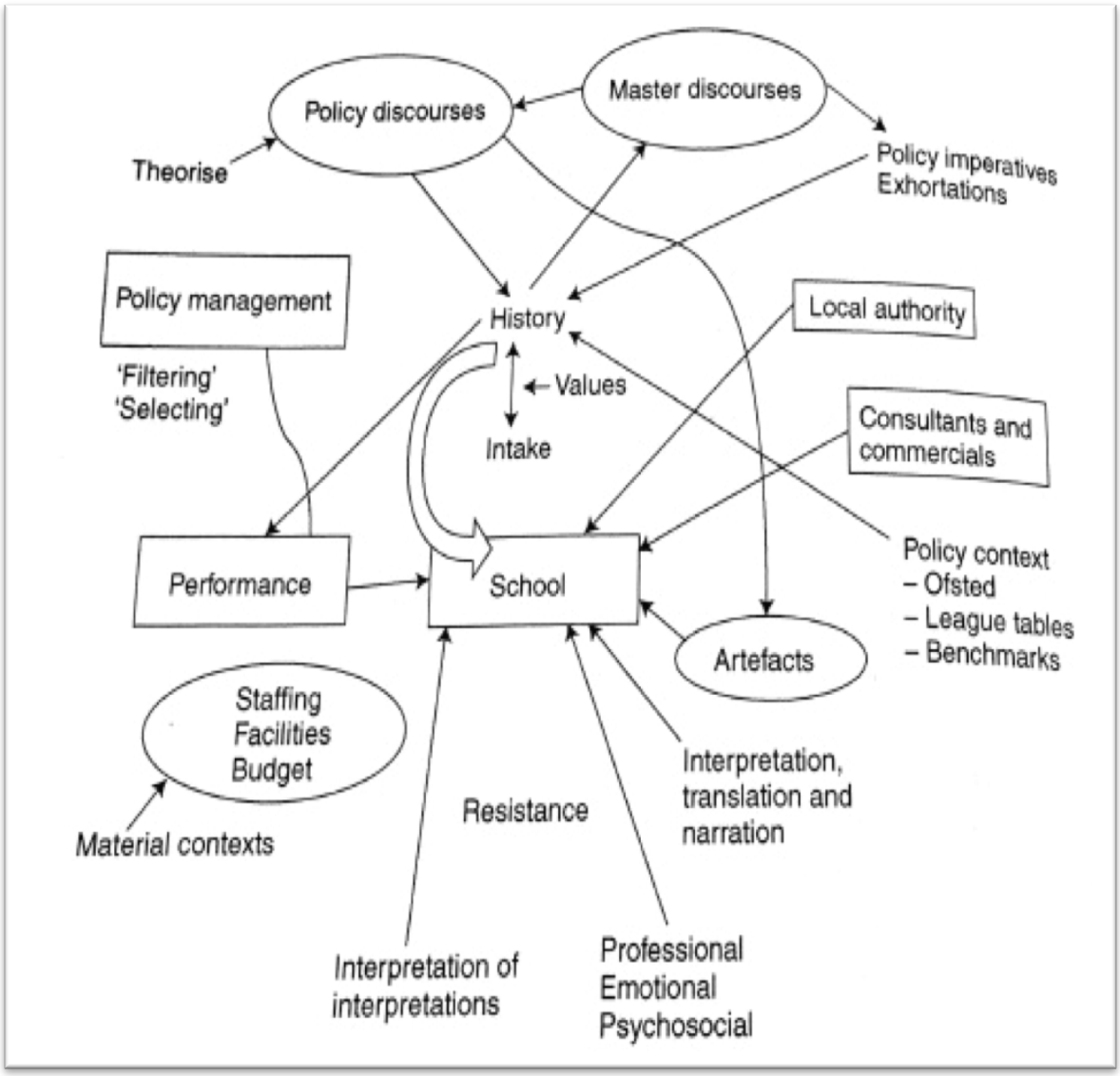
Q7: Is the school in a local partnership/academy chain/MAT – how does governance impact on these issues – is there support via the academy chain or local authority?

Q8: Which languages do you speak/would you like to learn and why?

Q9: What was your experience of learning languages at school?

Q10: Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix 5 Thinking about Policy Enactment



(Ball et al., 2012: 143)

Appendix 6 Reflections from Research Journal: Extract 2

Dealing with the Data

I began by immersing myself in the data re-reading and re-listening to the interviews. I colour coded the data line by line initially using highlighters on paper and then moved to highlighting online. Seidman (2012: 119) takes the view that the research should approach the transcripts with an open mind in order to seek 'what emerges as important and of interest from the text'. I coded anything of interest in order to 'preserve the voice of the speaker' and to let the interview 'breathe and speak for itself ' (Seidman, 2012: 120). I then coded field notes, observations and brought this coding together into emerging categories. I moved from single words to short sentences and quotations as I felt this best captured voices and meanings. In the spirit of inductive analysis, I once again coded anything of interest and avoided attempting to fit the data into preconceived categories and then made a note of emerging categories based on individuals and so that the data drove the emergence of specific themes. I was able to cross-reference the data from individual interviews, document analysis and formal and informal observations from my field notes of each school to build a picture of the individual schools, to narrow my focus and to highlight emerging themes by bringing together points of view, opinions and actions from different individuals and explore the relationship between ideas.

Example 1: Attempt to diversify range of languages

MHT4	Pressure from small groups of pupils for French in addition to Spanish
MADH2	Lost French due to lack of teacher (now a pilot) – determined by staffing
MAML33	Dual linguists – piloting at KS3 – first time in 5 years could have dual linguists
MAML34	Student voice led to French pilot – as part of Accelerate Programme
MAML35	Visit to another school– saw Fristory in action – inspiring
MADH31F	Had to stop pilot due to poor outcomes in core provision (Spanish)

Example 2: Accountability/outcomes in modern languages

EHT6	We were under pressure from Ofsted to move from satisfactory into good
EHT7	Accountability: driven by performance tables – needed to secure more GCSEs
EHT8	Did this by using voc quals rather than putting youngsters through languages when they did not want to be doing them
EHT12	Languages were holding us back
EHT14	Headline figure was strong – not languages (attainment significantly depressed)
EHT15	What was this about – what should be done?
EHT19	I found myself having sleepless nights –
EHT20	First and foremost, I want youngsters to be successful
EHT21	Languages not as strong as they could be at Eastbridge
EHT22	Curates egg: everything done properly -outcomes not as good as geography
EDH53	Need achievement in ML to succeed
EDH54	Got to get structure right to ensure success comes
EDH124	Make children see that they are succeeding in languages
EDH125	We need to change perception of languages
EDH126	Open up idea that languages are accessible to all
EML58	Results were not great
EML59	More to do with outside factors than curriculum design
EML63	Staff disappointed with 2015 results
EML61	Felt grade boundaries were raised for writing
EML68	Students often perform lower than in other subjects

In the follow up interviews I was then able to explore and probe some of the emerging themes in more depth. Braun and Clarke (2013: 4) regard searching for themes is an ‘active process’. They note that ‘themes are not hidden in the data waiting to be discovered by the intrepid researcher, rather the researcher constructs them’. The next phase was to look across the categories and cross-reference common patterns and categories that were distinct to particular schools. I then moved on to pick out key quotations from across the three schools to build a picture of the commonalities, differences and the patterns that emerged from the data sets.

Appendix 7 Record of ML Department Meetings

1. Modern Languages Department Meeting at Westfield

As is often the case in modern languages meetings, coffee and an array of international snacks featured and there was a purposeful buzz from the team sitting around a large table in one of the teaching rooms. The walls were covered with examples of pupils' work, posters from TL countries and prompts in the target language to support pupils' learning. The meeting focused on day-to-day organisational issues but largely on aspects of ML practice. This included a peer book review and lively discussion about meaningful assessment and feedback. Westfield has developed their own assessment framework at KS3 which builds on the former ML National Curriculum 'levels' and is therefore linked with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Other discussion items included how to integrate films into the KS3 curriculum and opportunities for 'authentic' extended writing through the creation of a film review. Strategies for developing a more creative approach to homework tasks were also discussed, once more with a focus in particular on opportunities for developing productive skills and enabling pupils to apply their learning. The conversation moved to the latest 'foreign films' showing locally and further opportunities for staff to maintain subject knowledge. Another discussion revolved around the temporary teacher of Urdu who had been visited as part of internal quality assurance procedures. The team discussed how she could be supported to improve 'pupil progress' which has been identified as an area for development. The Urdu teacher, who works part-time, was not present but would undoubtedly have benefitted from participating in such a lively and productive professional discussion.

2. Modern Languages Department Meeting at Midwood

The team meeting was held in one of the teaching rooms. The walls were covered with students' work and realia from Spain and South America together with key grammar and phrases prompt posters. A few pupils were still in the room– they explained to me that they were clearing up after a 'food tasting' lesson in which they had tried a number of specialities, including tortilla, and had talked about their opinions of Spanish food. Clustered around a table with his team, the Head of Languages led a meeting with a particular focus on developing shared strategies and approaches. The meeting commenced with a discussion about the end of year exams, newly established to prepare pupils for the new linear GCSEs. The team spent some time discussing how best to capture progress in speaking. They

decided to devise two exams, one at Foundation and one at Higher levels to mirror the GCSE for year 9 pupils. Pupils would be able to choose which one to complete. They wanted to raise aspirations, provide challenge and ensure that pupils ended the year on a 'high'. They also discussed a cross-curricular Spanish and Art programme (SPART) which they were developing as part of the new schemes of learning at KS3.The scheme of learning has been devised to meet the requirements of the new ML programme of study and to provide a foundation for Key Stage 4. For example, year 8 were to start the year with the theme 'tiempo libre' and a particular focus on music and dance in Spanish speaking countries. Grammar points for development included revision of the present tense, adjectives and opinions. Pupils would write their own poems and song lyrics as part of an in-house competition. The focus in year 9 would be on "El cine". Pupils would have an opportunity to watch a Spanish film and then write a film review.

The conversation then turned to a forthcoming training for the 'reformed' AQA GCSE which one of the members of the department was due to attend. The team expressed concerns and some frustration about having to get to grips with the new specification in a limited time-frame. The Teach First trainee reported back from a modern language conference that he had attended. He shared approaches from workshops on the teaching of grammar, translation and literacy. The team decided to build a number of the grammar strategies into the schemes of learning. This led to a discussion about how literacy in LI could be improved through learning an L2. Some observation of English lessons had already taken place with a particular focus on creativity in English teaching.

3. Modern Languages Department Meeting at Eastbridge

The departmental meeting took place in one of the language classrooms at the end of the school day. It took a while for the meeting to start as staff were busy talking to pupils about a variety of matters including homework, controlled assessments and trips. The MFL Performance Director had prepared a presentation which he used to structure the meeting and to provide a check list for staff. The team of 10 adopted a 'traditional' classroom approach for the meeting and sat in desks facing the MFL Performance Director at the front. Key information points included monitoring of progress, homework, pupil behaviour and consequences. The major discussion item revolved around the forthcoming observations of language lessons by the senior leadership team, which is known as Verification of Internal Teaching Standards. The MFL Performance Director highlighted some key areas that the

team needed to be mindful of in their observations such as the use of target language instructions and Assessment for Learning. It was agreed that it was important to make the observer aware that progress is happening at regular points during the observation as they may understand the target language. This formal part of the meeting finished with some items from team members. Staff were reminded about a Culture Club for Years 7/8 which offered pupils an opportunity to watch film clips and use iPads to access authentic materials. Plans were also made for a Languages meal to be held at a local Italian restaurant.

The remainder of the meeting was given over to preparation for the forthcoming observations. Members of the team were encouraged to provide peer support by discussing each other's planned lessons. The Lead Teacher for French (a former trainee) took me through the lesson she had devised for the observation. It had been meticulously planned to encourage pupils to build on prior learning and to enable them to apply a range of grammatical structures in the context of a dream holiday on a French speaking island. The MFL Performance Director showed me the new assessment system that they were developing: an adaption the 'Pearson's Progression Map' in line with a whole school move to a points-based system.