

Latin for Language Learners  
Opening opportunity for primary pupils

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## **Foreword: An open message to the Secretary of State for Education**

In these pages, two distinguished Oxford Classicists explain why the teaching of Latin at school should be encouraged. They suggest that the official plan for foreign language teaching at primary school should be broadened to allow Latin. They discuss some of the advantages which Latin brings and show that it could be included within the current teaching scheme.

We welcome and support the call of Professor Pelling and Dr Morgan. We ask that the new Secretary of State for Education gives Latin the same opportunity and official blessing as other foreign languages in the curriculum for primary, and by natural extension, secondary schools.

### **Signed:**

Mary Beard (Professor of Classics, Newnham College, Cambridge)

B.M. Bell (Minimus Project)

Colin Dexter (Author, Inspector Morse series)

Ian Hislop (Editor, *Private Eye*)

Tom Holland (Author, *Rubicon* and *Persian Fire*)

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Llewelyn Morgan is Fellow and Tutor in Classics at Brasenose College, Oxford. He is the author of *Patterns of Redemption in Virgil's Georgics* and *Musa Pedestris: Metre and Meaning in Roman Verse*, and numerous articles. As well as Greek and Roman literature he has interests in Afghanistan, ancient and modern: his next book will be about the Buddhas of Bamiyan. He is a regular contributor to the TLS.

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## I

# An ‘Entitlement’ to Modern Languages – But Not Latin

Sheila Lawlor

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**The Background.** Over the past decade the DfE (Department for Education) has been preparing for an obligation on primary schools to teach a foreign language. As had already happened with secondary schools, it insisted that the foreign language be a modern one. Latin was as a result excluded. Although the recent Labour government planned to make this a matter of law, objections to the clause in the *Children Schools and Families Bill 2009-10* meant that it did not become statutory. Yet, in practice, the position for Latin has not changed. The DfE’s work, which began on a non-statutory basis, has led to most schools now offering a modern foreign language, but not Latin. How has this happened?

This introduction outlines developments over the decade.

**Politicians and Officials – Excluding Latin** Over recent decades Latin has disappeared from the curriculum of most secondary schools, following the initiatives of successive governments and their officials. Squeezed out in the 1980s by the national curriculum to make room for more favoured subjects, it is now in danger of suffering another squeeze – this time from the foreign language teaching planned for primary school, to include potentially any tongue from Amharic to Urdu, but not Latin. The plan for a primary modern language took shape in the last decade in twin incubators, political and departmental, under the aegis of the Schools Department, now the DfE (previously the DCSF and DfES).

Political backing had a recent setback, when the last Schools Secretary, Ed Balls, was obliged to give up the curriculum clause in Labour’s 2010 Schools Bill, giving legal effect to a new curriculum (including a modern language). Conservative objections to the prescriptive, and academically dubious, approach culminated in the clause being dropped when the political parties finally agreed on what parts of the bill to let through before the dissolution. So, in law at least, a new primary curriculum with six ‘areas’ of learning, one of which includes a modern foreign language, but not Latin, is unlikely to return for some time. This study will urge that Latin is not excluded from any new law, if legislation goes ahead under the new government to make foreign language teaching obligatory.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The curriculum clause had included as one of six areas of learning, understanding *English*,

But the plan for primary schools does not rest with the politicians or the law alone. Over the past decade the education department, (the DfES, then DCSF) has also worked towards a primary entitlement to modern foreign languages. Plans are now so far advanced that Latin is in danger of a further squeeze. If, therefore, the new government wants to ensure that schools *may* offer Latin or another ancient language, the first step will be to reconsider the departmental, non-statutory guidance on foreign languages to schools, currently in limbo pending an announcement by the new education ministers. It would also leave the way open for ministerial plans to liberalise the curriculum for secondary schools as well as primary.

**The Schools Department and Foreign Language Teaching** Since 2000, a series of initiatives under the aegis of first the DfES and then the DCSF aimed to promote the teaching of foreign languages, though initially official documents did not specify ‘modern’. A ‘National Languages Strategy’, which aimed ‘to foster public acceptance of language competence and intercultural understanding’, was seen as ‘essential...[to] an informed international citizen’ and backed by a series of DfES and DCSF publications, from the 2002 Green Paper, *Languages for All: Languages for Life*, to last year’s *Rose Review of the Primary Curriculum*.<sup>2</sup>

The 2002 *Green Paper* anticipated the agenda for the decade: how the ‘step change’ in language competence would be achieved in the country. For primary schools it reiterated the plan for an entitlement ‘throughout key Stage 2 to study a foreign language and develop an interest in the culture of other nations’ for which the date was later set as 2010 for primary pupils.<sup>3</sup> To this end the DCSF gave detailed guidance for teachers, the *Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages - Parts 1, 2 and 3* in 2005.<sup>4</sup> This sets out the key stages, attainment targets and key skills for the main modern foreign languages in the apparatus to which today’s classroom teachers are expected to gear teaching. It is supported by the Department’s advice, resources and rudimentary training ‘packages’ and those prepared by the agencies to which modern foreign language training has been sub-contracted.

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*communication and languages* (10:3 (a)). During the debates the Conservatives objected to the ‘six areas of learning, each with a multitude of objectives as ‘highly prescriptive’, 3<sup>rd</sup> reading, CSF Bill, 23 Feb 2010; Clause 10: 3-5, *Children, Schools and Families Bill*, 2009-10 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/008/10008.i-iii.html>

<sup>2</sup> These include: *Languages for All: Languages for Life*, DfES, 2002; *Languages Review* DfES, 2007 <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/11124/LanguageReview.pdf> and *Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum: Final Report*, 2009 <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/primarycurriculumreview>.

<sup>3</sup> *Languages for All* (2002)

<sup>4</sup> *Key Stage 2 Framework for languages – Parts 1, 2 and 3*, Publication date: Oct 2005 ;DCSF.

Schools have therefore been systematically groomed to meet the official, non-statutory ‘target’ to extend the ‘entitlement’ to modern foreign language teaching in class time in KS2 by the 2010 ‘target’.

**2010 – The DCSF ‘target’ time** Already, the DCSF’s research suggests, the non-statutory ‘target’ for primary pupils’ ‘entitlement’ to modern foreign language teaching in class time by 2010 has been met. The department’s official research confirmed that by 2008 almost all schools were offering language teaching (92 per cent) with 69 per cent doing so for all year groups. Most schools (90 per cent) thought current arrangements could be sustained; only one fifth (18 per cent) might not be able to offer the full entitlement by this year, 2010, though most felt they would meet what was planned to be the statutory obligation for foreign language teaching in primary school by 2011. French was the most common language, with some Spanish and some German also offered. Lessons occupied 45 minutes per week.<sup>5</sup>

**Extending entitlement - permitting Latin** As the new Government takes office, it is faced with a *fait accompli*: the introduction of modern foreign language teaching in primary schools is well advanced due to the preparations by the education department (DfE), rather than on account of the obligation of the law. It may well be that the government is content to leave things as they are. In this case, there is good reason to amend the non-statutory guidance so Latin has a place equal to other foreign languages as a permissible option.

If the government decides to reconsider foreign language teaching as part of a wider curriculum review pending the promised liberalisation of the curriculum, then there is

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<sup>5</sup>This longitudinal study aimed to assess the nature and extent of language learning provision at primary schools in England. It also assesses progress towards implementation of the non-statutory target that all children should have an entitlement to language learning in class time in KS2 by 2010. *Primary Modern Foreign Languages: Survey Of National Implementation Of Full Entitlement To Language Learning At Key Stage 2* DCSF-RR127 <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSFRR127.pdf>

- 92 per cent of schools were offering pupils in KS2 the opportunity to learn a language within class time
- 69 per cent of schools meeting the entitlement for all year groups.
- Almost nine out of ten schools that provided languages within class time in 2008 were confident that their current arrangements were sustainable.
- A maximum of 18 per cent of all schools may not be able to offer the full entitlement by 2010.
- The majority of schools teaching languages felt that they would be ready to meet the requirement for statutory language teaching in KS2 by 2011. However, it is possible that up to a quarter of all schools may not be ready for the statutory requirement.
- French remained the most common language offered (in nine out of ten of those schools providing a language). Spanish was offered in 25 per cent of schools and German in 10 percent of schools.
- The typical model used is for discrete lessons each week, the most common pattern being one lesson of around 40 minutes per week.

good reason to ensure that such liberalisation *permits* the option of teaching Latin from an early age, but government would not, of course, impose it.

This pamphlet explains why *the option* of primary schools offering Latin should be included in any requirement, statutory or non-statutory. The authors discuss the academic, cultural and social advantages to pupils. They suggest how such a change could be made with minimum disruption to the official framework and within the boundaries of the existing guidance. They anticipate possible obstacles and show how these might be overcome.

In terms of the existing official framework, the authors have set out their proposal to accommodate the format proposed for other languages. They show how Latin would fit the three main types of Learning Objective proposed – Literacy, Oracy and Intercultural Understanding – and how it could be taught under these headings. The study shows that the various skills and targets set out already could be used to cover Latin teaching, and so no new blueprint is needed. That does not however mean that the official tendency to prescribe the content and method of teaching is endorsed

*What the pamphlet does not do* The authors do *not* comment on the general proposal for foreign language teaching at primary level, on how such modern language teaching is provided and by whom, nor on the department's official blueprint for the content and organisation of teaching. Other questions such as the availability of time or qualified teachers to teach for languages other than Latin are beyond this study's remit, though the DCSF research has found that schools have had difficulty in finding time, budget and adequately qualified teachers for modern language teaching.

## II

### Why Teach Latin?

Llewelyn Morgan

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‘Children love the story of Icarus, whose father Daedalus warned him not to fly too near the sun,’ says Lorna Robinson. ‘They say it reminds them of not listening to their dads, too.’ Lorna runs the Iris Project, which has brought Latin into inner-city schools, including primary schools, to great acclaim and impressive column inches and radio time. As far as the head teachers are concerned, Latin’s greatest strength is how perfectly it supports the wider curriculum: to English it contributes a deep understanding of the structure of language, and to History direct access to the ancient world. But the plans for languages in primary education are an opportunity to value Latin on its own terms, and Lorna puts her finger on it. Latin offers kids a brilliant education, but Latin is also fun.

The word ‘fun’ isn’t used often enough with ‘Latin’; the word ‘fun’ isn’t used often enough with ‘education’, for that matter. But we all know that what we like we learn, and what Latin represents is a set of skills immensely valuable for every child, wrapped up in a package that they all find fascinating, the Romans. The valuable stuff is the analysis of language that composing a Latin sentence involves. Those kids in Hackney are learning through Latin what I did: what verbs and nouns are, how to coordinate ideas in speech and writing, all the varieties of ways of saying the same thing. I did not and could not have learned that through English because English was too familiar to me. It was through Latin that I learned how to express myself fluently in my native language. On the radio recently Fay Weldon chose *Kennedy’s Latin Primer* as the special book she would take to her desert island. ‘I loved learning Latin,’ she said, and the link between her career as a novelist and the linguistic exercises of her Latin class was clear.

Note here that no one, at least no one who knows what they’re talking about, is calling Latin ‘exclusive’ or ‘elitist’ anymore. Latin is classless. Our local experience, in a Latin Teaching Scheme run out of the Oxford Classics Faculty in collaboration with local state schools, is of a subject school children find entirely accessible, and enjoyable: the drop-out rate for sessions that take place on a Saturday is surprisingly low, and the demand growing. Latin is, as a Polish friend put it to me recently, ‘the Maths of the Humanities’: a training in analytical thought for which no preparation is required. But Latin also has something that Mathematics does not, and that is the

history and mythology of the ancient world. Latin is Maths with goddesses, gladiators and flying horses, or flying children. What makes Latin the perfect fit with the primary-school curriculum is that it shows children how their language is constructed, and does so in the context of a culture that has everything that appeals to a primary-school child.

A principle which is self-evident to teachers, but which continues to escape the decision makers, is that education is an end in itself, not a fancy way of saying ‘training’. To put that another way, if education is training of any kind, it trains children to be trainable, gives to children and young adults the skills to engage in an adaptable way with the unpredictable world they are going to encounter as adults. To apply this to the language question, it’s great to learn French or German or Mandarin, but it’s better still to provide children with a lifelong foundation for *whatever* language learning they may require at a later date. That has surely always been Latin’s greatest educational value. A child who has been introduced to Latin has the tools and (just as importantly) the confidence and interest to take on other languages. And we are not just talking about the Romance languages that derive from Latin. German is not a Romance language, but it is, like Latin, an ‘inflected’ language, and the difference between *der*, *den* and *das* is self-explanatory when a child has already played ‘declension cricket’ with *bellum* or *mensa*. The Persian spoken by Afghans, as an Indo-European language, shares vocabulary and grammatical structures with Latin. But it doesn’t stop there. Slay the fear of language learning, and it stays dead. I’m learning Persian, a number of my ex-students are learning Mandarin, and a very large number are learning Arabic. The deep understanding of the structure of language that learning Latin involves means the child is equipped to tackle *any* language; I repeat, not only equipped, but enthusiastic and unfazed in the face of this great British phobia.

Language acquisition at primary school is also about discovering other cultures, of course. A valuable ambition, but how different are we from the French, really? With Latin, there’s no question. Understanding the language properly is all about that imaginative leap into a culture operating on fundamentally different assumptions. The big growth area in recent years (and who could have predicted it a decade ago?) is Arabic, to which my Classics students are turning in their droves after graduation. They know they can crack the language, and they relish the prospect of getting to understand Arab culture. Why? Because it is exactly what they have been doing ever since they started learning Latin. This has to be something we want to encourage.

## *Latin for Language Learners*

That said, the Romans were here, too, and they left their mark. If you're a teacher wanting to bring a subject alive, there aren't many better resources than the Roman remains in this country. That doesn't just mean the big sites like Bath or Hadrian's Wall or Caerleon, though one trip there is worth thirty lessons, but also the Roman artefacts—coins, jewellery, inscriptions—to be found in every local museum. I once spent a couple of hours with schoolchildren in front of a tombstone of a legionary found just a few miles north of Oxford. We could reconstruct from its fifty or so letters that Roman's entire life, from a childhood in the foothills of the Alps to a military career on the Rhine frontier, the invasion of Britain, and then retirement in a veterans' colony in Oxfordshire. We could even tell that Vespasian, the future emperor (quite an appealing one, who allegedly died saying *Vae, puto deus fio*, 'Alas, I think I'm becoming a god', and defended a tax on toilets by insisting *Pecunia non olet*, 'Money doesn't smell') spent a couple of campaign seasons here. Personally, I don't think language acquisition or indeed education gets much more exciting than that. Teaching certainly doesn't.

But there's a flipside to this argument. Learning Latin opens up opportunities. What upsets me most about the decline of Latin in this country is how it deprives children and adults of access to a whole swathe of their history. You don't have to go to Museums to find Latin. It is all around us, on monuments and public buildings, and in authors writing more than fifty years ago, who generally take for granted a familiarity with the language. There is a stunning inscription on the portico of the Chelsea Hospital, facing the Thames: in bold black lettering on the white frieze, IN SUBSIDIUM ET LEVAMEN EMERITORUM SENIO BELLOQUE FRACTORUM CONDIDIT CAROLUS SECUNDUS AUXIT JACOBUS SECUNDUS PERFECERE GUILIELMUS ET MARIA REX ET REGINA ANNO DOMINI MDCXCII, 'For the assistance and alleviation of veterans broken by age and war, founded by Charles the Second, enlarged by James the Second, completed by William and Mary, King and Queen, in the year of our Lord 1692.' So much of our past is preserved in Latin. Is it anything less than a cultural catastrophe that fewer and fewer children every year can appreciate how superbly eloquent the last words are on Christopher Wren's tomb in St Paul's: LECTOR, SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS, CIRCUMSPICE, 'Reader, if you seek his memorial, look around you'?

To bring this back to Daedalus and Icarus, this strand of an argument for Latin is the Breugel bit. What has happened to us when we do not share to any degree the cultural reference points underlying a masterpiece like *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*? More urgently, though, our literary heritage has for most of its history assumed a

knowledge of Latin and a basic familiarity with classical history and mythology. We lose communication with Shakespeare when we lose Latin, with Milton, with Wilde; not to mention with W. H. Auden and William Carlos Williams writing about Icarus. On the other hand, by making Latin available to our children again we are reacquainting them with their own heritage.

On the far side of a Latin education is the literature which I personally think knocks even Shakespeare and friends into a cocked hat. Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Cicero and Tacitus are all just the best in the class. We can't expect all the children who learn Latin and primary school to end up reading Horace encapsulating the human condition in five perfectly chosen words, or Cicero outrageously exploiting the prejudices of his jurors to get a blatantly guilty Roman toff acquitted; or to see that in the story of Icarus Ovid is really talking about his own poetry, the mischievous determination to flout convention which eventually saw him exiled by the emperor Augustus.

But the point is that offering to primary-school children the opportunity to experience what the poet Derek Walcott calls 'the lovely Latin lost to all our schools' is an educational and cultural gift at every level. We want our children to be confident in their ability to speak to British and non-British people, and to feel comfortable in a diverse and evolving world, and at the heart of that aspiration is linguistic sophistication. We want them to be alive to the significance of our country's past, and motivated to study the literature which preserves and celebrates that past. We also want our kids to be taught by a highly qualified and passionate cadre of educators. We want them to fly high. To all of that Latin is the key.

### III

## Latin at School: Primary practicalities

Christopher Pelling

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Can, then, Latin be accommodated within the terms proposed by the last government, and which in practice have been introduced into schools, though they await a formal decision by the new government? We will argue that it can; but the first question might be one of the principles underlying these moves.

The aim, of course, is to improve young people's acquaintance with foreign languages and ability to learn them; the need for this is acknowledged, and was forcefully argued by Baroness Coussins in a recent letter to *The Times* (18 May)<sup>6</sup>. The younger they can begin, the better – but the advantages of learning one language at primary level are not so much any skills acquired in that particular language, more the basic understanding of how a language may work and a preliminary development of an aptitude and enthusiasm for learning more. (I speak from experience here; I was taught Welsh at primary level in Cardiff, and do not doubt that the experience primed me to pick up other languages more effectively at secondary level, but now to my shame retain only a smattering of Welsh itself.) Whatever particular language is learned at primary school, language teaching at secondary level will almost always have to start from scratch, as not all the children in any class will have learned the same language before and those who have will have been taught in different ways. But an early exposure to Urdu or German may help children later to pick up French or Chinese, and particularly to remove any psychological barrier or unthinking assumption that other languages are for other people.

The suitability of Latin as a starting-point for learning other languages is clear. It instills an understanding of how inflected languages work; it encourages attention to grammar and a firmer grasp of sentence structure; a knowledge of its basic vocabulary is a great help when learning any modern Romance language. The difference between *qui* and *que* in French puzzled me until I began Latin a year later; I then grasped it in a trice. But one does not need to rely on anecdotal evidence: surveys demonstrate that those with a background in Latin pick up other languages more quickly and securely. (Much of the evidence is American, but that is in some ways an advantage; British evidence would be more open to the objection that we are likely to be dealing with independent school pupils with the other advantages that a professional home

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/letters/article7128935.ece>

background may give). There are similar advantages to be gained in grasp and proficiency in English, for similar reasons: surveys have similarly shown improvement in writing style (more elaborate sentence-structure, more accomplished idioms, fewer grammatical mistakes) and extension of vocabulary. These improvements are particularly clear with children from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, building social along with linguistic confidence as well as enhancing oral and written performance.

**Literacy** There can be little doubt that Latin scores heavily in promoting literacy. The American evidence is here unequivocal. (Some of the following is drawn from a helpful overview.<sup>7</sup>)

- Children who have studied Latin at elementary school have higher scores for reading, reading comprehension and vocabulary than either those who did not take a foreign language or those who took another foreign language (who also make better progress than non-language-learners, but to a lower degree and more slowly).<sup>8</sup> This was borne out by results from research in Washington DC, Pennsylvania and New York schools. They do better on phonological measures over those not taking Latin (or Greek). Poor readers, including the lowest level, have gone from bottom to top, far more rapidly than those studying modern foreign languages (this was the conclusion from evidence for Worcester, MA, Los Angeles and from the Philadelphia school system's programme for Latin). One survey found that such pupils 'climbed from the lowest level of reading ability to the highest level for their grade, equalling the achievements of pupils who had studied French or Spanish for thirty-eight months'.
- The effect on vocabulary deserves special stress. The Philadelphia School Program in the 1970s gave 15-20 minutes Latin teaching a day to large numbers (14,000) of fourth to sixth-graders by 1976. On the (standard) Iowa Test of Basic Skills the evidence for one school year, 1971, showed that the performance of 5<sup>th</sup> graders was 'one full year higher than the performance of the control group who had not studied Latin'.<sup>9</sup> Similar results are reported from

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7 A.K. De Vane, 'Efficacy of Latin Studies in the Information Age'  
<http://teach.valdosta.edu/whuitt/files/latin.html>.

8 N.A. Mavrogenes, *Elementary School Journal*, 77 (1977), 268-273, L.A. Sussman, *Classical Journal*, 73 (1978), 346-352.

9 N. Mavrogenes, 'Latin in the Elementary Schools A Help for Reading and the Language Arts'  
<http://www.jstor.org/pss/20299547> and summary in *Phi Delta Kappa International* 1979.

Indianapolis, Worcester, and Easthampton Massachusetts.<sup>10</sup> The improvement was not only in recognition of words with Latin roots, but also ‘in fostering a more general word-awareness’.<sup>11</sup>

- Their intellectual grasp of conceptual activities (‘higher order thinking’) is superior to that of non-Latin learners. One study (for Indianapolis) suggests that not only are they better at vocabulary, spelling and reading, but also in the three areas of maths (computation, concepts and problem solving) and therefore at logical thinking. The findings were backed up by research in Pennsylvania schools which showed higher grades overall.
- They achieve higher than the national average scores for SATS (US standardized tests). For instance the SAT Verbal Average and the SAT Math average was higher in a 1980 survey for those taking the Latin Achievement Test. Another survey comparing Latin with other foreign language learners suggested a higher score for Latin-learners than for those who learn a modern foreign language. In 1981 the average verbal SAT score for those taking the Latin achievement test was higher than the average for those taking other foreign languages. Other research suggested that Latin students outscored other students by nearly 150 points on the SAT. In addition SAT scores for Latin students were higher than scores for students of other foreign languages (except students of Russian) on both verbal and maths sections of the SAT.<sup>12</sup>
- They gain additional benefits, including being helped with a second language, with motivation and intellectual curiosity. One study showed a greater facility in the acquisition of a second foreign language by hearing-impaired students for whom English was not a native language.<sup>13</sup> These students for whom American sign-language was a first language, learned Latin as a first language and English as a second. They advanced a year above those not taking Latin. The same pupils showed above-average motivation and this was found in two other studies.<sup>14</sup> ‘Self-image’ and ‘curiosity’ benefited, with some evidence suggesting that inner-city minority students benefited from

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<sup>10</sup> Mavrogenes and Sussman, as cited in n. 8.

<sup>11</sup> R. Bowker, cit. Mavrogenes (n. 8), 271.

<sup>12</sup> de Vane (n. 7); K. F. Kitchell, in B. Lister (ed.), *Meeting the Challenge: International Perspectives on the Teaching of Latin* (2008), 155.

<sup>13</sup> L. Townsley, ‘Latin as a vocabulary builder for hearing-impaired and second-language students of English’ *Teaching English to Deaf and Second-Language Students* 3 (1985), 4-8

<sup>14</sup> Sussman (n. 8), R. Masciantonio, *Foreign Language Annals*, 10 (1978), 375-382.

learning Latin at a Saturday programme in a neighbouring school, and were more interested in studying a foreign language and had higher concepts of themselves than those who did not participate.

America has learned from these studies: ‘one of the fastest growing elements of Latin instruction in the United States lies in what we [i.e. Americans] call elementary and middle school Latin (grades K to 8, or roughly ages 6 to 14)’.<sup>15</sup>

**Oracy** This would seem to be the obvious area where Latin fits less comfortably; however, one should not prejudge that issue. Modern teaching methods often use conversational techniques in the classroom, and spoken Latin is easier to mimic than spoken French: a pupil who puts some words of Latin together orally is usually understood by others, whereas it is notoriously difficult for those learning French to utter sounds that are recognisable by a native French-speaker and *vice versa*. There is a spoken Latin radio station, ‘Nuntii Latini’ (<http://yleradio1.fi/nuntii>). The more important point is the value of Latin as providing a base for further development of oral skills, and the boost it gives to children’s confidence in oral communication in any language including their own: the evidence is cited above.

**Intercultural understanding** The boost given to motivation and intellectual curiosity (above) is relevant here, and Llewelyn Morgan’s comments above show the excitement that children feel when discovering about Roman culture. Teaching materials in Latin (see below) have for a long time integrated material on Roman social life with their introduction to the language, often (as with the Cambridge Latin Course) exploiting the vivid snapshot of contemporary life afforded by Pompeii; TV programmes like *Time Team* often fire the young imagination, local museums almost always have material on the Roman occupation, and in many ways exposure to the material realities of another culture comes more readily with Rome than it does, say, with France, in communities where foreign travel is not frequent. Imaginative teachers have staged, for instance, slave-auctions in which adults present outline their specialist skills and children bid for each. ‘Recognising and learning to respect the similarities and differences between other people are vital elements of citizenship; the ancient world provides material that is stimulating, controversial, and unlikely to cause any individual offence.’<sup>16</sup> As we rightly combat parochialism in space, it is important to take on parochialism in time as well, and the excitement of realising how different life once was on one’s own ground is a good preparation for developing historical as well as social empathy.

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<sup>15</sup> Kitchell (n. 12), *ibid.* 157–8.

<sup>16</sup> J. Affleck, in J. Morwood (ed.), *The Teaching of Classics* (2003), 162.

**Teaching materials** Here Latin is particularly well-placed. *Minimus* (<http://www.minimus-etc.co.uk/>) is an established and extremely developed course targeted specifically at the primary level and making extensive use of cartoons; its course-books are supplemented by a series of minibook readers ('Candidus et dies horribilis', 'Lepidina et Claudia furem capiunt', and eighteen more), on-line exercises ('subject and object') and resources ('send an e-card'), songs and pictures, finger puppets and lots more. The books themselves have been extensively trialled, and have sold more than 100,000 copies since the first publication in 1999. The Joint Association of Classical Teachers (JACT) Primary Latin Project arranges INSET days for schools taking up Latin teaching, with special training for the use of *Minimus* material. The BBC also has good on-line materials.

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/romans>)

This is also an area where University departments are particularly involved with local schools and can help: to take just a few examples, Oxford has been offering free Saturday-morning tuition to GCSE level to local children who do not have the opportunity to take Latin at their schools (with good take-up, and very few drop-outs), and both Durham and Nottingham have involved students in offering teaching to local schools and awarded course-credit for it. Cambridge was doing something similar as early as 2000 in support of the Cambridge Schools Classics Project.<sup>17</sup> King's College London's department of education also offers preparation to students who visit schools to give taster sessions as part of the Iris project.

([http://www.irismagazine.org/key\\_stage2.html](http://www.irismagazine.org/key_stage2.html))

**Availability of teachers** The difficulties here are not great (though there is a strong broader case for training more Classics teachers). Evidence shows that most 'non-specialist' Latin teachers are not totally untrained; a recent survey of non-specialist teachers<sup>18</sup> showed that 15% had Latin to university level, 33% to A-level, 28% to GCSE, and 4% held a non-UK qualification, so that four out of five had a formal qualification at Level 2 or above. It also commented on the strong results achieved by those taught by non-specialists. Those currently teaching without Latin to degree level do not count lack of formal training among the main difficulties: lack of timetable provision and insufficient support from above rated higher.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> W. Griffiths, in B. Lister (ed.), *Meeting the Challenge: International Perspectives on the Teaching of Latin* (2008), 73–4.

<sup>18</sup> W. Griffiths, 'Latin levels among non-specialist Latin teachers', *Journal of Classics Teaching* 20 (2010), 3–4.

<sup>19</sup> R. Darby, focus-group evidence presented at Classical Association meeting in Cardiff, 9 April 2010.

## IV

### First Steps in Latin: How the government can help

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#### **We propose that:**

**If the new Government decides to accept the *status quo*** pending a review of the curriculum, i.e. most primary schools are already teaching a foreign language, the Secretary of State should ensure that Latin is given the same status as other foreign language options. This would mean including Latin as a primary foreign language option in statutory measures or non-statutory guidance. In particular:

- The DfE’s previous non-statutory guidance for foreign language teaching for primary schools should be changed so that Latin is treated in the same way as other foreign languages.
- The DfE should make clear that Latin is a permissible option and give Latin the same prominence and support as given to the modern language options.

The simplest course might be to change the official documents or guidance to read ‘foreign language’ teaching (not ‘modern foreign language’) and make consequential changes in departmental papers and instructions for such teaching in schools.

**If the Government intends to reverse the *obligation to teach a foreign language*,** pending a review of the entire curriculum and fresh legislation, it should nonetheless ensure that schools which do voluntarily offer a foreign language have the same official encouragement to offer Latin as a modern foreign language.

## **Resources for Primary Teachers of Latin**

1. The Iris Project. See: <http://www.irismagazine.org/>

2. The Minimus Project. See: <http://www.minimus-etc.co.uk/>

3. Grants for purchasing books etc. are available from the following bodies:

The Classical Association: <http://www.classicalassociation.org/>

The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies: <http://www.romansociety.org/>

Friends of Classics: <http://www.friends-classics.demon.co.uk/>