



**Ministère de l'Éducation nationale,
de l'Enseignement supérieur
et de la Recherche**

110, rue de Grenelle - 75357 Paris SP 07

T. 01 55 55 30 10

spresse@education.gouv.fr

www.education.gouv.fr

DECEMBER 21, 2015

A NEW STRATEGY FOR LANGUAGES

- **Compulsory foreign languages for all pupils aged from six to 18**
- **Greater choice of languages with a specific emphasis on German**
- **High school students have a choice of nearly 60 languages for their *baccalauréat* examination**
- **Online resources include access to broadcasts in other languages**
- **Updated and improved continuing training for teachers and other educational personnel**

Stated aims

France is remodelling its system of teaching modern languages, which are increasingly vital for pupils growing up in a multilingual world and for success in their future careers. From September 2016 all pupils will learn at least two languages while they are at school.

Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister of National Education, Higher Education and Research, said: "In a time marked by globalisation, understanding other languages is essential not only for securing employment and for the necessary skills for understanding the world today, but also for being part of a collective vision which goes beyond geographical and national borders."

"Learning another language opens our pupils to other cultures and other horizons while providing them with a considerable asset for their future employment," she said.

According to a survey by the *Langues et employabilité* [<http://www.ciep.fr/expertise-audit-langues/langues-etrangeres-et-mobilite/langues-employabilite>] EU project, many French

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companies recognise the value of language skills in the selection of job applicants. While English is essential, linguistic diversity is an added advantage.

So there will be greater diversity in the languages on offer, with more than 5,500 primary schools offering a language other than English (1,200 more schools than today). The new measures place greater emphasis on German, with an extra 3,800 primary schools (1,000 more than now) and nearly 4,700 lower secondaries (*collèges*) - almost 700 more - offering it as a second language.

“In 2001-02, over 20% of pupils studied a modern language other than English at primary school – but they were only 8% last year. It’s not to question the importance of English, but to encourage other languages, all of them valuable, like our regional languages,... or German, teaching of which I hope to develop further at primary and lower secondary school,” said the minister.

A new curriculum for teaching modern and regional languages, will be introduced in September 2016. The goals to be attained are in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp] (CEFR)

How we are delivering

- **Starting younger:** From September 2016 all pupils will learn at least two modern languages during their schooling, starting the first in Year 1 of primary school, when pupils are six; and the second from the first or second year of *collège* at age 11 or 12.

- **Improving language teaching**

- **Continuing training** courses are organised for education authority primary and secondary trainers and inspectors, combining classroom and distance sessions. Also, priority for modern language teaching in continuing training for primary school teachers in the 2016-17 ‘Reorganisation of the School of the Republic’ which introduces languages from year 1 of primary school. All primary school teachers and secondary teachers of all subjects must reach level B2 of the CEFR (“The capacity to achieve most goals and express oneself on a range of topics”).

- **Targeted educational resources** for primary and secondary teachers:

- *Examples of practical language teaching methods are featured, including videos, around nine themes by [Éduscol](#), with material for teachers who are initiating language learning for pupils in their first primary school year.

- *38 online video resources – classes, teacher interviews – carried out with teachers from four education authorities.

- *The Web portal [Langues vivantes](#) for language teachers giving access to more than 1,100 pedagogical scenarios shared between educational authorities, as well as newsletters on educational digital technology.

- *[Éduthèque](#), for primary and secondary teachers and their pupils, brings together educational resources from cultural and scientific institutions. In languages other than French, they include programmes from foreign broadcasters – Arte (German), BBC Worldwide Learning (English), RTVE (Spanish) as well as France’s Institut du Monde Arabe, Météo France Education (weather centre), the Louvre museum and the BNF (National Library of France).

- **For pupils**

- *Classes can be organised by ability with modular timetables allowing periods of intensive learning;

- *Subjects taught in a modern foreign language;

- *Choice of foreign and regional languages in primary schools;

- *33 languages taught at lower and upper secondary level;
- *60 languages (or groups of languages) assessed at the general and technological *baccalauréat*;
- *Free English classes option for upper secondary pupils in school holidays;
- *A new literary pathway focusing on promoting an international perspective and proficiency in languages, offering foreign literature in a foreign language with option of learning a third modern language.
- *A second compulsory modern foreign language for all vocational *baccalauréat* students in the service sector (hospitality, catering, etc);
- *A technological class in modern foreign language in some technological pathways.

•**International mobility of pupils**

- As pupils increasingly spend time abroad individually or in groups, the aim by 2017 is for all secondary schools to be partnered with schools in other countries, and for 50% of primary schools to be involved in European or international educational and cultural projects. The skills and other benefits pupils acquire from time spent abroad will be officially recognised.
- Following a European recommendation, since 2014 the education ministry has recognised learning experiences in the vocational school-leaving examination, the *baccalauréat professionnel*, with the ‘mobility’ option which nearly 4,000 candidates have since taken, with those who pass qualifying for the *EuroMobipro* certificate from the 2017 exam session.

•**Diversity of linguistic routes**

- **International sections (IS):** These are programmes of bilateral cooperation with the education authorities of 19 partner countries, offering their pupils, both French and foreign, not only another language but also the partner country’s culture and teaching methods within the French education system. There are 463 sections in 273 schools in France and French schools abroad, from first primary year to final secondary year in German, British English, American English, Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese (separate Portuguese and Brazilian sections), Russian and Swedish. Pupils in the IS take special versions of the end-of-school diploma and *baccalauréat* exams – the international option of the *diplôme national du brevet* and the international option of the *baccalauréat* (OIB).
- **European Sections** are available in German, English, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese and Russian; and **Oriental Language Sections** are offered in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese. Pupils aged 16 and over are taught a general, technological or vocational subject in a foreign language.
- **Bi-national Sections** award two end-of-secondary diplomas at the same time – the French *baccalauréat* and the German *Abitur* – *Abibac*; Spanish *bachillerato* – *Bachibac*; or Italian *esame di Stato* – *Esabac*. Pupils follow a specific course developed jointly with the partner from the country whose language they learn, with the joint qualification giving equal access to higher education in both countries.

•**Online educational resources and projects:**

- The National Centre for Distance Education, CNED, has devised digital education resource services [English for Schools](#) for 8-11-year-olds; and, from September 2016, [Deutsch für Schulen](#) for primary and *collège* pupils.
- eTwinning, a collaborative online project available in 28 languages, unites 35 European countries and more than 350,000 primary and secondary teachers in 15,431 schools under the [Erasmus+](#) programme, and with six other partner countries through eTwinning Plus.