

# Language Horizons Year 2 Evaluation Report

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# 1. Introduction to Language Horizons

By Lucy Jenkins, Project Manager

*Language Horizons* (LH) was an ambitious and innovative project that harnessed the power of mentoring to inspire curiosity for languages and cultures in pupils aged 12-14 (Year 8 and Year 9). The key aim was to translate that seed of curiosity and enthusiasm into a desire to take languages at GCSE. The idea for the project draws on the hugely successful *MFL Student Mentoring Project* ([www.mflmentoring.co.uk](http://www.mflmentoring.co.uk)) which has been running in Wales since 2015.

*Language Horizons* itself began in 2018 in South Yorkshire working with ten local schools and two hundred pupils. It was led by Cardiff University and established partnership with The University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University. Of the 200 pupils that participated, all of these pupils had previously decided against languages but taking part in the mentoring sessions led to 53% of pupils changing their mind and opting for a language GCSE. The success of the pilot led to it being refunded by the Department for Education to expand its reach in South Yorkshire (SY) and to establish a new hub in the West Midlands (WM).

This phase of *Language Horizons* was a partnership between five universities in England and led by Cardiff University, Wales. The project team at Cardiff University led the project in collaboration with The University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, The University of Warwick and Coventry University. In 2019-2020, a total of 70 mentors mentored in 38 schools across both hubs, with mentors recruited from all four partner universities.

The following section discusses the project's mission and vision.





## **Project Mission**

The purpose of the *Language Horizons* project was to increase the number of pupils opting to study a language at GCSE Level. The project sought to achieve this by:

- highlighting the benefits of learning a language at GCSE, A-level and degree level.
- raising expectations, improving motivation and strengthening the persistence and personal resilience of learners studying languages.
- creating sustainable links between higher education modern languages departments and partner secondary schools.
- offering classroom experiences and opportunities to language undergraduate and postgraduate students, with a view to encouraging a greater number to consider teaching and education, and to mobilise near-peer role-modelling to inspire pupils.
- broadening the horizons and aspirations of learners by highlighting the wellbeing, career and mobility opportunities available to those with language skills.

## **Project Vision**

The programme did not target pupils studying a specified language but rather encouraged pupils to be curious about all languages and cultures. It asked pupils to challenge and question their perspectives and assumptions about others by validating a sense of multiplicity and multilingualism in the individual and in society. It endorsed the idea that everyone is part of a global community since no society is mono-lingual nor mono-cultural. It problematised the notion of a fixed identity and encouraged a view that being influenced by others, other languages and other cultures, is additive not subtractive. Ultimately, it demonstrated that globality is a mindset, an outlook and an attitude, as such it is not dependent on actual mobility and so is open to all, regardless of which language they are learning or of their proficiency. By approaching MFL in this way, the project aimed to give pupils agency over their language learning and their sense of who they are by creating an intrinsic motivation for language learning.



## **Impact of Covid-19**

The escalation of the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of schools across England had a significant impact on the completion of the mentoring cycle across both hubs. University closures, restrictions on visitors to schools and eventual school closures interrupted the project at all levels, from mentors and teachers to the LH project team.

### **Mentoring Cycle:**

Completion of the mentoring cycle was significantly disrupted by the national closure of schools that came into effect on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. This was preceded by nearly 2 weeks of uncertainty and changing situations in schools which had substantial impact on a core period of the mentoring engagement between mentors and mentees. As a result, most schools were not able to complete all the weeks scheduled or complete the pupil exit survey for the evaluation. The overview amount of the cycle completed by the schools is as follows:

- 10 schools completed the mentoring cycle (8 in WM and 2 in SY)
- 15 schools were one week short of completion (4 in WM and 11 in SY)
- 8 schools were two weeks short of completion (3 in WM and 5 in SY)
- 5 schools were only one or two weeks into the cycle (1 in WM and 4 in SY)

### **Award and Recognition:**

Due to the escalating public health crisis the Award and Recognition ceremonies planned to take place across both hubs were cancelled. This was very unfortunate as the ceremonies are the final piece of the mentoring cycle and a key opportunity for mentees to see the wider MFL community as well as a HEI. For most this is the first time they go to a university campus and is crucial for raising aspirations. In its stead, mentors were asked to create videos rounding up the mentoring cycle so that they could be shared with the mentees. Additionally, the content for the workshops that were planned to take place were sent to teachers for them to use in their own way. It is worth noting that many teachers have anecdotally commented on how much pupils were looking forward to this aspect of this project. This is indicative of the potential impact this element can have, and as has been experienced in Wales.



## 2. Introduction to the Evaluation Report

*Language Horizons* is a mentoring project bringing together university undergraduates with groups of Year 8 and Year 9 school pupils with the aim of encouraging them to continue studying Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) at GCSE. The focus was not on teaching the pupils languages but instead concentrated on encouraging pupils to take an interest in culture and the world around them. In summary, the aims were to:

- Increase uptake of MFL at GCSE.
- Raise mentees aspirations.
- Challenge assumptions about cultures and languages.
- Provide professional development for university students.
- Provide support to MFL departments in schools by increasing their visibility.

The project operated in two areas of England: South Yorkshire and the West Midlands. The project team was based at Cardiff University and they worked in partnership with The University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, The University of Warwick and Coventry University.

The project team based at Cardiff University was made up of the following:

- Academic Lead: strategic leadership with responsibilities relating to partnership development between the project, the MFL community and other stakeholders.
- Project Development Manager: responsible for the management and delivery of the project.
- Operations Manager: oversaw the delivery of the project in terms of resource working with schools, mentors and universities. Reported to the Project Development Manager.
- Hub Manager: focussed on administering the project in partnership with the schools and mentors. Reported to the Operations Manager.
- Regional Co-ordinator (one each for South Yorkshire and the West Midlands): assisted in administering the project. Reported to the Regional Co-ordinator.

Further details on the roles of the team can be found in Appendix C.

In addition to the roles outlined above, each partner university had a University Lead. They contributed to the recruitment of schools and undergraduates to the project, along with being available as a support to mentors following training and the commencement of the sessions with mentees.





Schools were recruited to the project through existing links with partner universities or by promoting the project more widely in South Yorkshire and the West Midlands. Pupil selection was carried out by the schools but teachers were supported in decision-making by the Regional Co-ordinators. Pupils completed a pupil census survey for the project and the results were shared with teachers. The project team recommended selection of pupils who were from under-represented groups in MFL (including boys, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is not their first language) and those who teachers thought would do well if they continued their MFL studies but perhaps do not see the value of languages.

There were two models of mentoring, blended and face-to-face:

- The blended model was made up of two face-to-face sessions. Mentors attended schools for one session at the beginning and one at the end. The three sessions in the middle were online. South Yorkshire schools participated in this model.
- The face-to-face model saw mentors visit schools on at least three occasions for 1 - 1.5 hours per session. Schools in the West Midlands took part in this model.

The original intention was for all schools to participate in a blended programme but due to the delayed roll-out of the digital platform this wasn't possible. Training for mentors took place over two weekends in February 2020 (one for each hub). Mentoring began in schools in February 2020 and was due to complete in April 2020 but unfortunately the project had to suspend activities in March 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Full details on the completion status can be found in Figure 1 on page 19. The project was due to conclude with Awards and Recognition ceremonies at partner universities, however these were all cancelled due to the school and university closures.

This evaluation was carried out by Ondata Research and the report was written by Laura Thomas and Dr Lizzie Rushton. Ondata Research collaborates with clients to help them understand project impact, whilst also providing mentoring and support through the phases of project development and delivery.

This evaluation report examines the impact of the *Language Horizons* project in 2019-2020 on mentees, schools and mentors.



### 3. Executive Summary

#### Findings and Impact

- Those participating in *Language Horizons* (year 2, 2019-2020) have reported a higher uptake at GCSE, compared with pupils who were not selected to participate but who had similar attitudes to languages based on responses to an initial pupil census survey (established as a pupil 'control group'). **56% of the mentees (73 pupils) responding to the second pupil census survey indicated they were intending to take a modern foreign language (MFL) at GCSE compared with 47% of the control group.** This is consistent with the initial findings reported from three schools in the interim report (Rushton & Thomas, 2020b) who all saw growth in GCSE uptake. A full outline of these findings can be found in Section 5.
- **The two approaches used by Language Horizons of blended (mixture of face-to-face and online sessions) and face-to-face only, have been found to have equal impact.** Whilst teachers, mentors and pupils have expressed a preference for the face-to-face sessions, the intentions around taking an MFL GCSE and the levels of confidence built up by the mentees are consistent across both programmes.
- Mentees and mentors participating in *Language Horizons* reported an increased enjoyment of languages at the conclusion of the programme along with showing an understanding of the benefits of languages to their futures. This was clear in stated career intentions where **there was an increase of 21% amongst the mentee group who were considering a career using languages, compared with just a 3% increase amongst the control group pupils.** There was evidence from teachers of a wider school impact, beyond just those participating. Teachers were approached by pupils who had heard about the project who wanted to take part. They also used the project to raise the profile of languages within the school community.
- Although a subsidiary aspect of the *Language Horizons* project, understanding the potential impact of *Language Horizons* on mentor attitudes and aspirations towards a career in teaching is important as the recruitment and retention of teachers in England, including MFL teachers, continues to be highly challenging (DfE, 2019). The mentor survey results suggest that **there was an increase in mentors' reported intentions towards pursuing careers in teaching having completed Language Horizons, with 37% of mentors suggesting they were "probably" or "definitely" considering a career in teaching, increasing to 46% once having completed Language Horizons.** Relatedly, far fewer mentors suggested that they 'definitely



would not' consider a career in teaching having participated in *Language Horizons*, decreasing from 22% to 7% of mentors.

- Over the course of the *Language Horizons* project (2018-2020) and, building on understandings drawn from the five-year long MFL Student Mentoring Project, based in Wales (2015-ongoing), it has been possible to identify four areas of academic research and policy-focused work: (1) Understanding trends in attitudes and aspirations towards MFL, (2) Understanding the role of mentoring and MFL teacher recruitment, (3) Mentoring as an approach to widening participation in higher education and, (4) Mentoring as an approach to developing graduate attributes.

## Recommendations

The scope of this report is limited to the impact of the project on the participants and stakeholders. The interim report (Rushton & Thomas, 2020b) provides recommendations relating to the operation and logistics of the project, these are not repeated here.

In terms of enhancing impact, the following aspects are recommended for review:

1. Project structure and cycle.
2. Role of the teacher.
3. Role of the mentor.
4. Leveraging project insights to inform wider education policy

Project structure and cycle:

- It was apparent that having at least a three-month planning/lead-in time ahead of the school recruitment and mentoring cycle starting would be advantageous. For example, this could be done in the Spring and Summer period with the aim of mentor training commencing in October and the mentoring cycle beginning before Christmas.
- In particular this would allow for recruitment of staff, training and professional development. *Language Horizons* was affected by the recruitment processes of Cardiff University which meant a 3-month delay in appointing two key members of the project team.
- The team structure consisted of:
  - Two project co-ordinators (each managing a geographical area) working directly with schools and mentors, supported by the hub manager. The hub manager line-managed the two Regional co-ordinators and worked closely with



the academic partners on events and activities such as the awards and recognition ceremonies.

- The contract was led by the Project Development Manager and Operations Manager, with their focus on the strategic side, working with stakeholders and managing contracts.

This structure was reported to work well once all staff were in place and it allows the opportunity for scaling up to work with larger numbers of schools. For example, in the MFL Student Mentoring Project in Wales there is one co-ordinator for over fifty schools.

#### Role of the teacher

As has been noted in evaluations of the MFL Student Mentoring Project (Rushton & Thomas, 2020a) the role of the teacher could be given more prominence in future iterations of *Language Horizons*. For example, teachers described their role in mainly transactional and logistical terms, where their role was predominantly supporting the selection of pupils. In order to further develop the impact of the project the following could be considered:

- Providing ways for teachers to interact with the project team, mentors and other teachers via in person or online events, perhaps through specific events during the life cycle of the project and in addition to the initial one-to-one briefing session already incorporated in the project timeline. This would encourage teachers to be a part of the *Language Horizons* community and would provide a forum to discuss experiences, ask questions and troubleshoot any issues that arise.
- Teachers could have an online or face-to-face meeting at the beginning and end of the project with the mentors to discuss the experiences of the mentor in school and to share ideas and learning around pupil's engagement with MFL. This would provide teachers with an additional opportunity to gain insights into MFL culture amongst mentees but may also provide mentors with further experience of what it is like to work with young people and may better prepare mentors for working with their particular group of mentees.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to engage with and contribute to materials that explain the intentions of the project – for example some mentees felt that they had been selected for *Language Horizons* as part of a negative or remedial intervention but once the mentor had explained the aims, they were more positive about their participation.



#### Role of the mentor:

- It is widely recognised by mentors and teachers that the project is very successful in preparing the mentors for their experiences in school and the training sessions are highly regarded. The project provides ongoing opportunities for mentors to be involved in developing sessions, for example workshops for the awards and recognition ceremonies. In previous years these events have also incorporated feedback sessions for mentors and this is something that is important to continue, when circumstances allow, with a particular emphasis on how mentors can best use their experience on *Language Horizons* regardless of where they go in terms of their future careers.
- A further enhancement of the relationship between teachers and mentors should be considered. Mentors reported this to be, in the main, transactional in nature. This would further support the development of longer-term relationships between schools and universities and offer mentors further opportunities within a school where they have begun to build relationships. Mentors would benefit from closer collaboration with teachers, especially at the outset of the project where teachers can provide useful contextual information about the mentees and then as the project progresses, teachers and mentors can reflect together on how the project is impacting pupils. We note that the project team have encouraged this approach and recognise the benefits but have found that it is logistically challenging to find a time that is suitable for teachers, even as teachers have expressed a desire for this type of opportunity. Nevertheless, we suggest that, where possible, closer collaboration between mentors and teachers could have the added benefit of giving mentors a further opportunity to find out more about teaching as a potential profession.

#### Leveraging project insights to inform wider education policy:

As is discussed in detail in Section 11, the comprehensive data set collected by the project team throughout two cycles of *Language Horizons* provides a significant opportunity to better understand key areas relating to MFL education in schools and universities. These include:

- Understanding the context of language learning in schools for example, the range and expertise and availability of MFL teachers, the alignment between MFL learning between primary, secondary and university phases of education and, the prevailing culture of language learning in different regions of England.
- Understanding trends in attitudes and aspirations towards MFL from a range of stakeholders including pupils, teachers, school senior leaders, undergraduate students and university lecturers as well as exploring the links between confidence and uptake.
- Understanding MFL teacher recruitment challenges and opportunities.



- Exploring mentoring as an approach to widening participation in higher education, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged contexts.
- Exploring mentoring as a pathway towards developing a range of skills and experiences that promote graduate attributes.
- Furthermore, if data from this project was used in combination with datasets from Wales, it could provide comparative insights which might inform UK-wide policy.

As was noted in the Interim Report (Rushton and Thomas, 2020b), there continue to be a range of structural issues that mean, even when pupil attitudes are changed, they are not able to alter their options choices. These issues are not consistent across participating schools and are related to the restriction of GCSE options, the lack of teaching time allocated to MFL in comparison to other 'core' subjects and, the lack of preferred language availability and conditions placed on previous language study. We continue to highlight these structural challenges that limit pupil's ability to engage with and access MFL that are beyond the scope of a single mentoring project.



## 4. Methodology

The evaluation methodology was designed to address the main aims of the project. Those were to:

1. Increase uptake of MFL at GCSE.
2. Raise aspirations of mentees.
3. Challenge assumptions about cultures and languages.
4. Provide support to MFL departments in schools by increasing their visibility.
5. Provide professional development for university students.

A broad range of data collection methods have been used across the project, resulting in a Mixed Methods approach. Quantitative data from surveys can provide valuable information relating to impact and qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups can provide insight into any impact and help us to make sense of the world (Cohen et al., 2018). The evaluation approach was agreed in consultation with the project team and submitted for approval by the Department for Education (DfE) at the beginning of the project with regular communication taking place between stakeholders, for example, surveys were reviewed by the DfE before being deployed.

This evaluation methodology was designed to maximise the richness of information on the operation and ultimate impact of the project. This approach was particularly robust, as meaningful and evidenced conclusions on impact and recommendations for future iterations of the project were still possible, even though the project was truncated as a result of COVID-19. The impact of the school closure on the evaluation is discussed later in this section.

Individual methods are summarised below according to the participant group (mentees/pupils, schools, mentors/universities) whilst an overview of the methods and the aims they address can be found in table 1.

| Aims                               | Methods  |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
|                                    | Quantitative   | Qualitative   |
| 1. Increase uptake of MFL at GCSE. | Pupil census survey 1<br>Pupil census survey 2<br>GCSE uptake data provided by schools | Interviews with mentors.<br>Interviews with teachers.   |
| 2. Raise aspirations of mentees.   | Pupil census survey 1<br>Pupil census survey 2   | Focus groups with mentees.<br>Interviews with teachers. |



|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 3. Challenge assumptions about cultures and languages.                           | Pupil census survey 1<br>Pupil census survey 2                                  | Analysis of feedback sheets following mentoring sessions: completed by mentors and mentees.<br>Interviews with mentors.<br>Interviews with teachers |
| 4. Provide support to MFL departments in schools by increasing their visibility. | Teacher project survey<br>Teacher exit survey                                   | Interviews with teachers.<br>School fact files.   |
| 5. Provide professional development for university students.                     | Mentor training surveys<br>Mentor exit survey<br>Mentor 'Into teaching?' survey | Interviews with mentors.<br>Interviews with university leads.<br>Evaluator observations of training.  |

*Table 1. Summary of project aims and the evaluation methods used*

## Mentees/pupils

### Quantitative methods:

Two pupil surveys were carried out before the mentoring programme began in school (pupil census survey 1) and another following its conclusion (pupil census survey 2).

Pupil census survey 1 was completed by the whole year group in participating schools before the mentoring programme began and the data was used in two ways:

- i. In selecting pupils to participate.
- ii. To provide a baseline summarising attitudes and intentions in relation to MFL.

There were discussions between the project team, the evaluators and the DfE about pupil selection. Many recent education interventions (e.g. The Education Endowment Foundation) have followed a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) approach (Dawson et al., 2018), with projects recruiting two sets of schools, with the first group receiving the intervention and the second group providing a 'control', and potentially receiving resources or other compensation for their participation at the end of the intervention period. Although RCTs are widely seen as the 'gold standard' in research, it is important to remember the 'real world' nature of education and, that in order to effect change, it is important to understand the reasons why things are the way they are, to establish not just 'what works' but also where it might work, for whom and under what conditions (Wrigley, 2018).





It was beyond the logistical and financial scope of the current project to provide a control group of schools, where schools participating in the mentoring programme are 'matched' with schools with similar profiles (e.g. demographics, school type, geographical location) and pupils from the 'control' group provide the same information as participating schools, thus allowing the outcomes for students schools participating in the intervention to be compared with similar schools who have not. Instead, within each participating school two different groups of pupils were identified: mentees and a 'control group'. This 'control group' was made up of other non-participating pupils who had indicated they were not interested in taking an MFL GCSE.

All 40 participating schools completed this survey.

Pupil census survey 2 was completed by mentees and a control group. This allowed a comparison of the responses between the two groups. This control group had similar school-based experiences of MFL, and were likely to have similar socio-economic profiles within the variance of an individual school, therefore any measured positive impact seen within the mentee group can be more confidently ascribed to the efficacy of the mentoring programme rather than linked to differences in school-based experiences of MFL.

However, due to the school closures only 11 schools were able to return survey results.

Qualitative methods:

Feedback sheets were completed by all mentees (and mentors) at the end of each session. This encouraged mentees to reflect on the session in terms of what they had enjoyed about it and how it made them feel about languages. This feedback has been an important part of the MFL Student Mentoring programme (the sister project to *Language Horizons*) for some time. In this project it was reviewed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) to identify themes relating to the project's aims.

The project team undertook visits to two of the participating schools (one in South Yorkshire and one in the West Midlands) to observe the mentoring programme in operation. We provided them with a focus group schedule which they used in each school. This was aimed at understanding more about their experiences of the mentoring sessions and the impact on their intentions around the study of MFL and their attitudes and aspirations.

## Schools

Quantitative methods:

There were two surveys for participating teachers. The teacher surveys were carried out early on in the project by all teachers and again following the conclusion of the mentoring programme. Their purpose was to gather feedback on their experiences of the project and to



provide the opportunity for suggesting improvements. Not all teachers were able to complete the exit survey due to the programme not being complete or not having time available due to the school closures in March 2020 and the subsequent switch to online teaching.

Once a school had completed the programme the *Language Horizons* project team requested the GCSE uptake data for the mentees and those in the 'control group'. Due to the school closures and the subsequent disruption this information was only provided by three schools but it had been the intention for every school to provide this information. However, data on GCSE uptake following participation was captured in pupil census survey 2.

Qualitative methods:

The project team collated a set of contextual information about each participating school via a fact file. The questions making up this fact file can be found in the accompanying technical report along with details of all the methods outlined in this report (Thomas and Rushton, 2020).

We carried out semi-structured interviewed teachers from six different schools, three in South Yorkshire and three in the West Midlands. This provided an opportunity to talk further about their experiences of the project and the impact participation had on them, their pupils and the wider school. Due to the different models of mentoring in each area, the same number of schools in each of South Yorkshire and the West Midlands were selected for balance. The project team worked with the evaluators to identify suitable schools. Ultimately, it was about availability of teachers whose schools had completed or almost completed the programme of mentoring. Due to the school closures this severely restricted the group we were able to draw from.

## Mentors/universities

Quantitative methods:

Mentors completed a series of three short training surveys over the training weekend. This was supplemented by an exit survey summarising their experiences of the project overall and one targeted to their interest in teaching as a career.

Qualitative methods:

Semi-structured interviews with two university leads took place. These focussed on their experiences working with the project team and the impact participation has had on them, their students and their university.

A further set of semi-structured interviews took place with mentors, with three from each of South Yorkshire and the West Midlands. This focussed on their experiences of mentoring in



schools. Similarly, the mentors were drawn from the group who had completed or were about to complete the mentoring programme.

As with the mentee feedback, the sheets completed by the mentors was also reviewed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

### Impact of school closures on the evaluation

Schools were unable to complete the mentoring programme due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools initially closed to external visitors, before closing completely in March 2020 for an indefinite period. A summary of the school status is below:

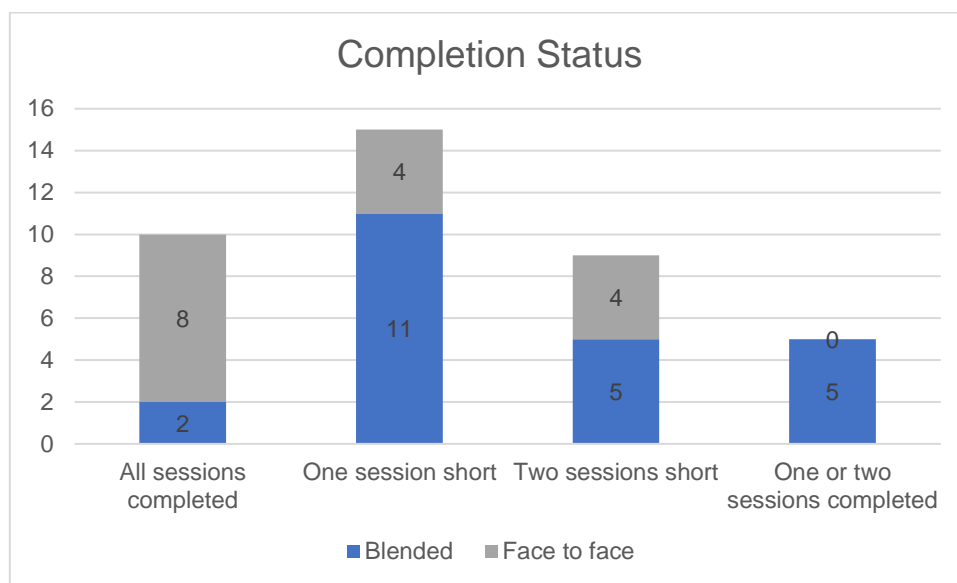


Figure 1. Summary of completion status for the 39 participating schools.

No additional GCSE uptake figures have been provided by schools beyond those that were summarised in the interim report (Rushton & Thomas, 2020b). In the teacher exit survey some commented that they did not feel able to make a full assessment of the impact on their pupils due to the abrupt finish and lack of subsequent contact with pupils. However, despite the school closures there was a good set of responses to the pupil census survey 2 from a range of schools which has allowed an assessment of the project impact on GCSE uptake (see Section 5).

Whilst a number of schools were unable to complete the full programme of sessions, teachers and mentors highlighted that due to the nature of the project, there will still have been a positive impact on the mentees. This is based on observations of teachers and mentors on the cumulative effect of the project in building confidence and changing attitudes towards language learning. This is discussed further in Section 5.



## Data collection, analysis, reporting and GDPR

Ondata Research is registered with the Information Commissioner's Officer and carries out education research in accordance with BERA's code of ethics (BERA 2018). Informed consent was sought from all participants. The project team communicated with teachers and parents over the aims of the project and the reasons for data collection.

Due to the school closures both data collection and reporting were affected. Initially the evaluation plan had outlined a period of data collection after schools had completed the mentoring programme in April with analysis continuing into May and reporting in June. The planned qualitative data collection was moved up into March (for example, telephone interviews took place instead of them being conducted in-person). In terms of quantitative data, the response rates from schools were lower than expected but there was a high completion rate amongst mentors. Data analysis and reporting was then concentrated into March and April 2020. Due to the range of data available it was still possible to report on the impact of the project, even with a smaller than expected number of schools completing the programme by the end of March. The following section highlights the key project findings around the uptake of MFL at GCSE.



## 5. Uptake of MFL at GCSE

This section discusses the analysis of data from pupil census survey 2 (responses were received from 11 schools) along with a range of other sources such as teacher and mentor surveys and interviews. As indicated in Section 4, following the interim report (Rushton & Thomas, 2020b) there have been no further submissions from teachers on GCSE uptake in schools.

Pupil census survey 2 was issued to schools at the conclusion of the programme of sessions. The respondents were a mixture of mentees and a control group of pupils who were also originally available for selection but who weren't chosen. There were sufficient numbers in each group (131 mentee responses and 90 control group pupils) to allow for a comparison between them.

The three schools discussed in the interim report (Rushton & Thomas, 2020b) saw a positive impact on the numbers opting for MFL at GCSE amongst mentees:

- School 1: 54% of mentees have reported they will choose MFL at GCSE (based on pupil census survey 2). Existing uptake in the school is 45% at Y11, 10% at Y10 and 35% at Y9.
- School 2: 33% of mentees responding to pupil census survey 2 indicated that they intend to choose an MFL at GCSE. This school had reported a decline in the numbers taking MFL from year to year (52% at Y11, 42% at Y10 and 31% at Y9), something that seems to have been halted following participation in the project.
- School 3: 43% of the mentees reported to their teacher that they intend to take an MFL GCSE as part of their GCSE options selection. This is compared with just 4% of the control group pupils.



## Choosing a Modern Foreign Language at GCSE

The following section focusses on specific questions in pupil census survey 2. The analysis was of responses received from 11 schools.

When asked “Have you chosen or will you be choosing a Modern Foreign Language for GCSE?”, 56% of mentees said yes compared with 47% of the control group pupils (these control group pupils had identified as being “unsure” as to whether they were going to take an MFL at GCSE).

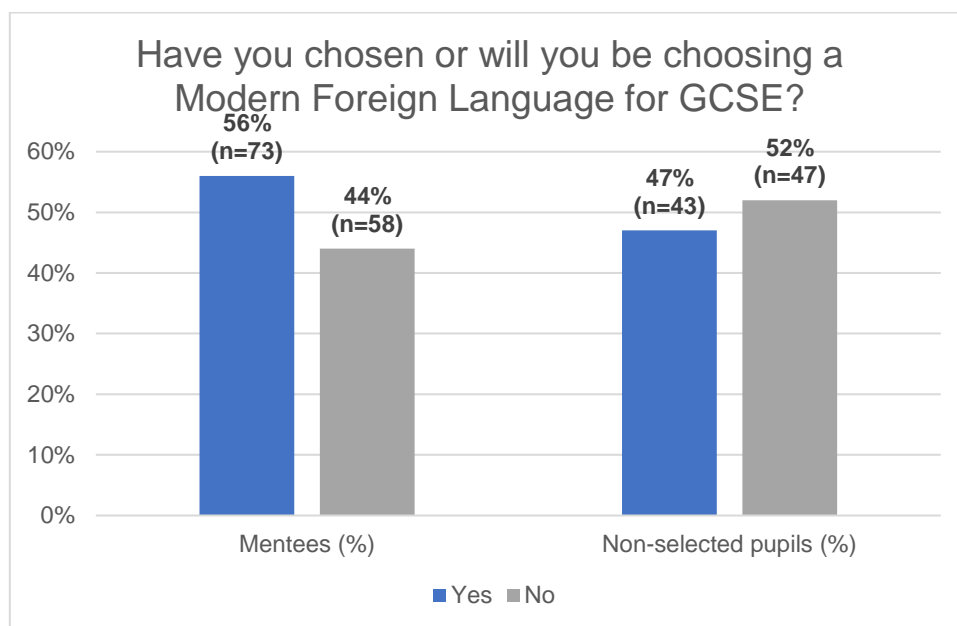


Figure 2. Responses to pupil exit survey question: “Have you chosen or will you be choosing a Modern Foreign Language for GCSE?”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mentee responses = 131, ‘control group’ pupil responses = 90



When asked “Has mentoring made you more likely to take a language for GCSE?”, with 44% responding yes.

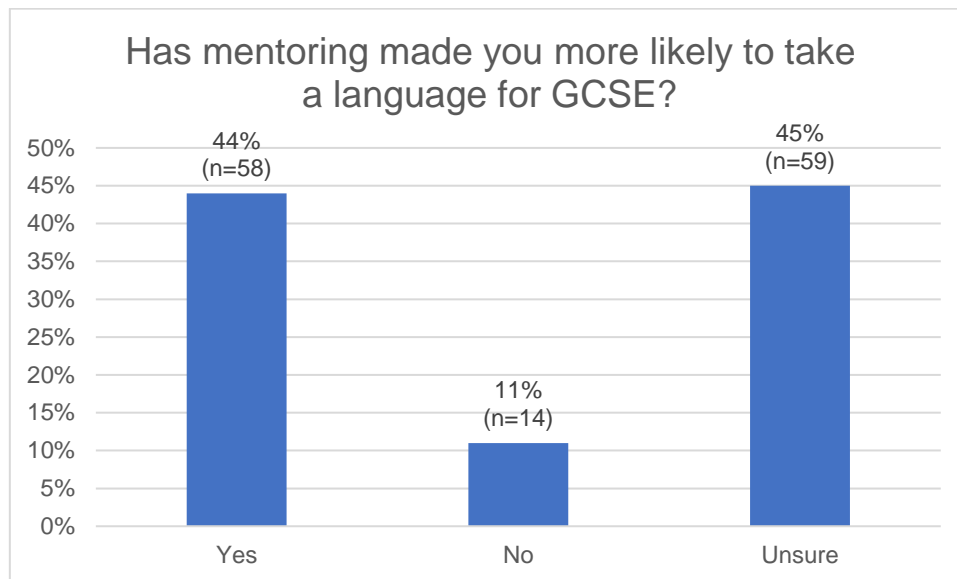


Figure 3. Responses to pupil exit survey question: “Has mentoring made you more likely to take a language for GCSE?”<sup>2</sup>

In addition, during in an exit survey, teachers were asked whether they felt mentoring had been effective at improving pupils’ intentions to take MFL at GCSE. 71% said that they thought it was effective or very effective. One teacher<sup>3</sup> describes their experience:

*“Pupils have been discussing their options more over the past few weeks and have been able to see how more clearly how languages are used around the world. Many have already said after the mentoring process they are sure they would like to choose Spanish when it comes to the options. Even those that are still having a few doubts e.g. difficulty of exams are now leaning more towards languages as an option than prior to the mentoring.”*

The success can perhaps be linked to improved confidence levels amongst the pupils. This was a recurring theme in the responses teachers gave in the series of interviews conducted by Ondata Research. Teachers reported that following participation in the project, pupils have been more confident in classes and as a result of this increased confidence have opted for an MFL GCSE. One teacher felt that this wasn’t just about the impact of the project, but also about the teacher being able to demonstrate their own confidence in the pupil by selecting them for consideration in the project, something that was then received positively by the pupil.

As part of the teacher exit survey, they were asked about the impact on pupil confidence: 65% of teachers felt that the project was effective or very effective in improving pupils’ confidence.

<sup>2</sup> Mentee responses = 131

<sup>3</sup> This school currently offers one MFL (Spanish). Information on current and previous uptake at GCSE was not supplied but the school did not offer an MFL A-level.

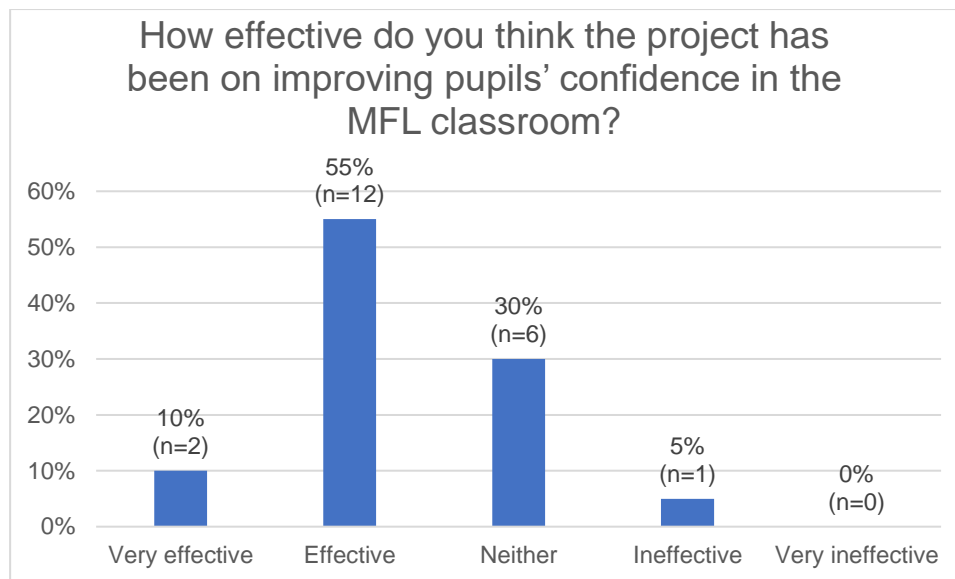


Figure 4. How effective do you think the project has been on improving pupils' confidence in the MFL classroom?<sup>4</sup>

There were various comments from teachers to illustrate this, including:

- *"I have definitely noticed pupils putting their hands up more and being more engaged in the lesson as a whole."*<sup>5</sup>
- *"All showed more willingness to participate and effort to go beyond the basics."*<sup>6</sup>

As can be seen in the following section, the mentee groups did have more positive views of their teachers and lessons than the control group pupils so the show of confidence by the teacher could in itself have had an impact.

Mentees themselves reported increased confidence levels, with 56% saying that mentoring made them feel more confident in MFL lessons.

More generally, teachers were asked about the impact of the project in combatting the decline of MFL in England. 95% of teachers said the approach was useful or very useful. One teacher in particular<sup>5</sup> commented on how the project opens MFL to all students:

*"Pupils who had previously disengaged with the subject are given a way to reconnect with it - so in the lesson, the pupils who are enjoying it and are already engaged probably become in a way a self-fulfilling prophecy of getting better and better and leaving the other pupils behind - whereas here I believe it will break that cycle and give other pupils a way of getting back involved with the subject."*

<sup>4</sup> Teacher responses = 21

<sup>5</sup> Y11 uptake of MFL was 25% in 2020. Three languages (German, Spanish and French) are available at GCSE. No current A-level provision for MFL.

<sup>6</sup> Y11 uptake of MFL was 13% in 2020. One option for MFL at GCSE: French.





## Reasons for Choosing or Not Choosing MFL at GCSE

Responses to pupil census surveys 1 and 2. Schools asked full year groups to complete the pupil census survey 1, whilst survey 2 was disseminated to mentees and the control group. Respondents were asked to give their reasons for choosing an MFL GCSE as either “yes” or “no”. There was no difference in the top five reasons given by both groups (mentees and control group) who had chosen to go ahead with taking an MFL GCSE, this can be seen alongside the responses from these eleven schools to the first pupil survey:

|    | Pupil census survey 1                                |               | Pupil census survey 2                             |                  |                                     |
|----|--|---------------|---|------------------|-------------------------------------|
|    | All pupils   | N (%)         |   | Mentees<br>N (%) | Control<br>group<br>pupils<br>N (%) |
| 1. | It's useful.   | 1050<br>(22%) | It's useful.                                      | 50 (22%)         | 34 (22%)                            |
| 2. | I'm good at it.                                      | 742<br>(15%)  | It will help me get a<br>job.                     | 34 (15%)         | 26 (17%)                            |
| 3. | It will help me get<br>a job.                        | 692<br>(14%)  | It's fun.   | 30 (13%)         | 21 (14%)                            |
| 4. | It's fun.  | 656<br>(14%)  | My parents/guardian<br>think it's a good<br>idea. | 26 (11%)         | 19 (13%)                            |
| 5. | My<br>parents/guardian<br>think it's a good<br>idea. | 570<br>(12%)  | I'm good at it.                                   | 21 (9%)          | 18 (12%)                            |

*Table 2. Reasons for choosing MFL at GCSE. Respondents were allowed to make multiple responses to this question*

The main difference between the pupil census surveys 1 and 2 in terms of reasons for wanting to take an MFL GCSE was that “I’m good at it” moved up the list, indicating an increased level of confidence. This has been further documented in by teachers’ responses in their exit survey responses and in interviews.

When considering the full set of reasons, those in the mentee group were more positive about their teacher: 8% of mentee responses cited as a reason for taking an MFL GCSE that they liked their teacher, compared with 4% of the control group pupils. The following table considers those who have stated they are not choosing MFL at GCSE. Comparing the set of responses from the pre-participation survey to the pupil exit survey, the main difference is that the reason “I want to take something else more” is promoted to the top by both mentees and control group pupils. Both of these groups had the same five reasons, but “It’s boring” ranked lower for mentees than for the control group pupils. This could indicate that whilst 44% of the mentee group chose not to take MFL, their enjoyment of the subject had perhaps increased. This is reinforced when considering some of the answers outside of the top five for both groups. For example, only 2% of the mentee group responses were “I don’t like my lessons” whilst 11% of



the control group pupils made this choice. The full set of responses to this question can be found in Appendix B.

|    | Pupil census survey 1                     |               | Pupil census survey 2                     |             |   |             |
|----|---|---------------|---|-------------|---|-------------|
|    | All pupils                                | N (%)         | Mentees                                   | N (%)       | Control group pupils                      | N (%)       |
| 1. | I'm not good at it.                       | 1753<br>(16%) | I want to take something else more.       | 32<br>(25%) | I want to take something else more.       | 21<br>(16%) |
| 2. | I don't need it for the job I want to do. | 1738<br>(15%) | I'm not good at it.                       | 22<br>(17%) | I'm not good at it.                       | 19<br>(15%) |
| 3. | It's boring.                              | 1659<br>(15%) | It's too difficult.                       | 21<br>(16%) | It's boring.                              | 18<br>(14%) |
| 4. | It's too difficult.                       | 1514<br>(14%) | I don't need it for the job I want to do. | 17<br>(13%) | I don't need it for the job I want to do. | 18<br>(14%) |
| 5. | I want to take something else more.       | 1257<br>(11%) | It's boring.                              | 16<br>(13%) | It's too difficult.                       | 17<br>(13%) |

*Table 3. Reasons from pupils for not selecting an MFL GCSE in pupil census survey 1 and pupil census survey 2<sup>7</sup>. Respondents were allowed to make multiple responses.*

Further context to the GCSE uptake can be found in the following section where the wider attitudes to MFL of pupils, teachers and the wider community is discussed.

<sup>7</sup> Mentee responses = 131, 'Control group' responses = 92



## 6. Attitudes towards MFL

The broad and detailed nature of the data collected throughout the course of the project offers an excellent opportunity for an insight into attitudes towards MFL in secondary education in England. This section addresses pupil, teacher and wider school attitudes and supplements the information on the school context that can be found in the *Language Horizons* interim report on GCSE options timings, percentage uptake at GCSE and A-level, the number of languages available, staffing levels in school and time made available to MFL on the school timetable (Rushton & Thomas, 2020b).

### Pupil Attitudes to MFL

The pupil census surveys offer an excellent insight into the attitudes of pupils towards MFL. This includes their enjoyment of lessons, the level of difficulty, and how helpful languages will be to them in the future. The responses discussed in this section are broken down into different groups to be able to observe differences between those who took part in *Language Horizons* and those who didn't but, were in the same school as those who did.



Pupils were asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements:

| Statement  | Pupil census survey 1   |  |   | Pupil census survey 2   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|
|  | All pupils who Agree or Strongly Agree<br>N<br>%<br>[Total N] | Mentees who Agree or Strongly Agree<br>N<br>%<br>[Total N] | Control group pupils who Agree or Strongly Agree<br>[Total N] | Mentees who Agree or Strongly Agree<br>N<br>%<br>(change from survey 1)<br>Total N =131 | Control group pupils who Agree or Strongly Agree<br>N<br>%<br>(change from survey 1)<br>Total N =89 |
| I enjoy learning Modern Foreign Languages at school                                      | 2181<br>37%<br>[5832]   | 51<br>42%<br>[121]   | 35<br>46%<br>[76]   | 78<br>61%<br>(+19%)   | 34<br>40%<br>(-6%)  |
| I find learning Modern Foreign Languages at school easy                                  | 1450<br>24%<br>[5971]   | 28<br>23%<br>[123]   | 18<br>24%<br>[76]   | 53<br>41%<br>(+18%)   | 25<br>28%<br>(+4%)  |
| I think learning Modern Foreign Languages will be helpful in my life when I leave school | 2562<br>70%<br>[5971]   | 46<br>38%<br>[123]   | 49<br>64%<br>[77]   | 94<br>72%<br>(+34%)   | 60<br>68%<br>(+4%)  |

Table 4. Pupil responses to various statements in in pupil census survey 1 and pupil census survey 2<sup>8</sup>. Respondents were allowed to make multiple responses to this question.

For each of these statements, it can be seen that the mentee group showed a more positive change in attitude, in comparison with the non-selected pupil group. The slight decline in reported positive attitude towards MFL among the non-selected participants could be attributed to de-motivation as they were not selected, but it could also be due to other unrelated factors and no information from teachers or mentors was provided to explore the reasons for this observed decline.

<sup>8</sup> Mentee responses = 131, 'Control group' responses = 92



In addition to their attitudes towards MFL, pupils were asked about their intentions of going into a career where an MFL would be useful.

| Statement   | Pupil census survey 1  |   |  | Pupil census survey 2  |  |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|
|   | All pupils who said they were Likely or Very Likely<br>N<br>%<br>[Total N] | Mentees who said they were Likely or Very Likely<br>N<br>%<br>[Total N] | Control group pupils who said they were Likely or Very Likely<br>N<br>%<br>[Total N] | Mentees who said they were Likely or Very Likely<br>N<br>%<br>(change from survey 1)<br>Total N =131 | Control group pupils who said they were Likely or Very Likely<br>N<br>%<br>(change from survey 1)<br>Total N =89 |
| How likely are you to choose a career where speaking a Modern Foreign Language would be useful? | 1025<br>17%<br>[5971]  | 21<br>17%<br>[123]  | 20<br>26%<br>[76]  | 50<br>38%<br>(+21%)  | 26<br>29%<br>(+3%)   |

Table 5. Pupil responses around career intentions in pupil census survey 1 and pupil census survey 2<sup>9</sup>. Respondents were allowed to make multiple responses to this question.

<sup>9</sup> Mentee responses = 131, 'Control group' responses = 92



Other contextual information was gathered in the second survey about the pupils' plans, including whether they wanted to go abroad after they left school:

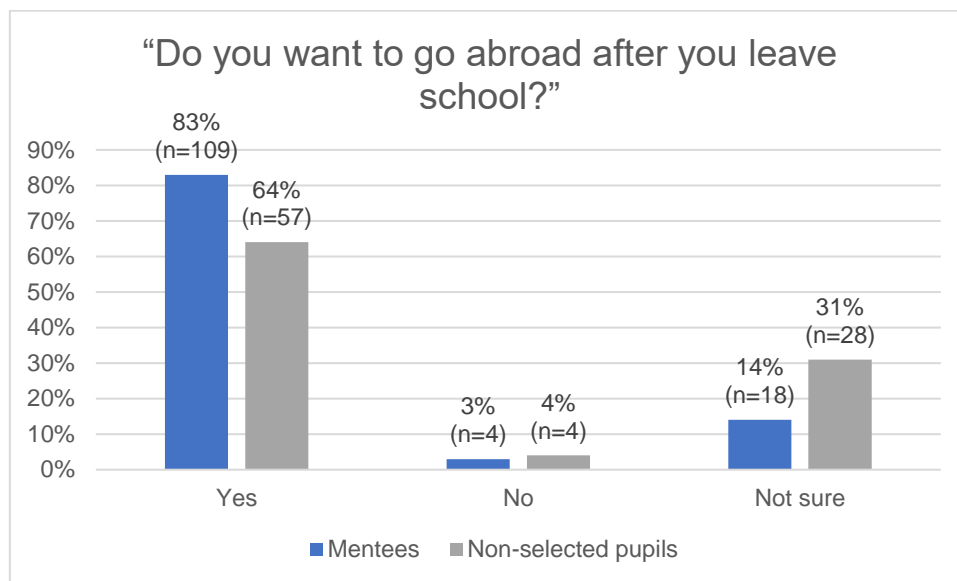


Figure 5. Responses to the question “Do you want to go abroad after you leave school?” in pupil census survey 2<sup>10</sup>

This too shows a clear difference in intentions between mentees and those who did not participate in the project.

The question responses highlighted in this section show the general benefits participation in *Language Horizons* can bring to a school population. One pupil<sup>11</sup> summed this up as:

*“It was really fun and was a great experience and made me think about the world around me its origin and how everything is somehow related to languages”.*

One of the aims of the project is to instil a motivation for language learning and it is clear that it has made a difference to the mentees, whether or not they choose an MFL GCSE or not, they go on into the rest of their secondary school career with a greater enjoyment of languages and a better understanding of why the study of languages is so important.

Further evidence for this comes from the teacher interviews where it was reported that pupils were more open to experimenting with languages and have started to think differently about them. In the teacher exit survey, 100% of teachers responded that the project was effective or very effective in improving pupils' awareness of the value of language learning. One teacher<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Mentee responses = 131, ‘Control group’ responses = 92

<sup>11</sup> School has low uptake at GCSE (20% for Y11). French and Spanish are available as GCSE options. Teacher commented that school has outstanding results but that pupils are not opting for MFL.

<sup>12</sup> School has uptake of 45% at GCSE for current Y11. French and Spanish are available at GCSE. No A-levels but uptake is increasing.



in particular observed: “*Students have become more inquisitive and therefore more enthused in their learning.*”

One commonly referenced benefit of *Language Horizons* is the personalisation of sessions so that they are oriented towards the pupils’ interests. This was easier to achieve on the face-to-face programme, but mentors on the blended programme were still able to target pupils’ interests based on their initial face-to-face session. This was demonstrated by the mentors’ response to the question “Do you think that tailoring your activities to the mentees’ interests improved their experience?” where 87% of those on the face-to-face programme said “Definitely yes” or “Probably yes”, along with 74% on the blended programme.

### Wider school attitudes to MFL

As part of the teacher exit surveys, they were asked about general attitudes within their school towards MFL and the impact participation in the project has had on this.

In general, teachers reported that the attitude towards to MFL was reasonably positive with 82% reporting that their school considers MFL important or very important. 38% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “Participation in the project has increased the importance placed on MFL within my school.”

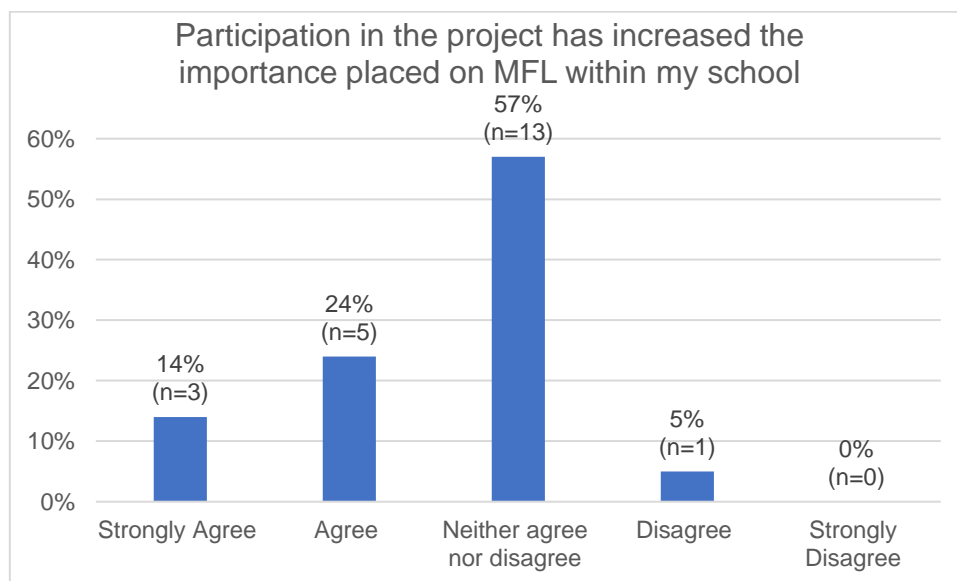


Figure 6. Teacher responses to the statement: “Participation in the project has increased the importance placed on MFL within my school.”<sup>13</sup>

Based on the follow-up comments to this question, the consensus amongst respondents is that the importance has increased significantly amongst pupils but hasn’t necessarily had the

<sup>13</sup> Teacher responses = 22



same impact on staff. In other cases, one teacher<sup>14</sup> comments that “*SLT were always supportive of MFL but pupils now seem to value it much higher.*” In the teacher interviews, it was reported that there was a ripple effect out from the mentees to their peers, as teachers would have other pupils approach them to ask if they could be involved next time. This therefore broadens the impact of the project beyond the mentees only. In several schools, teachers were planning on using the ethos of the project to reorient some of their own teaching materials, therefore the gains made by the project in introducing this approach in the school become more established.

Whilst the generally reported attitude towards MFL is positive, there are still barriers and challenges being faced by MFL teachers. This was apparent from the interviews with teachers when they were asked about their motivation for participating in the project. Raising the profile of languages was the aim, against a backdrop of reduced time available to MFL, increasing competition with other subjects, the perceived difficulty of the subject and a reduction of staff resulting in less variety of languages on offer.

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<sup>14</sup> School has low uptake at GCSE (20% for Y11). French and Spanish are available as GCSE options. Teacher commented that school has outstanding results but that pupils are not opting for MFL.





## 7. The impact of Language Horizons on wider school culture

In this section, the impact of the *Language Horizons* on wider school culture (distinct from changes in individual pupil's attitudes and intentions) in relation to MFL learning is explored. This aspect of impact has been explored through analysis of interviews with teachers and teachers' responses to their exit survey.

Telephone interviews with six teachers, three from each of the two hubs (South Yorkshire and the West Midlands) were carried out by Ondata Research during March 2020, to gather qualitative data regarding teacher perspectives of *Language Horizons*. In addition, 21 teachers completed an exit survey, 12 of whom participated in the face-to-face programme and the remaining 9 participated in the blended programme.

There is evidence from both the teacher interviews and the exit survey that *Language Horizons* had a positive impact on the wider school community. For example, teachers from both the face-to-face and blended approaches described that they had leveraged their school's involvement with the project as part of a wider communication and marketing strategy to raise the profile of MFL within their school. This included sharing information about the project via school social media, school newsletters and assemblies. This prompted pupils to request to be involved in the project and this grew once the project had begun in school and pupils had heard positive feedback about the project from their peers. Some teachers reported that in the future they would incorporate Language Horizon's approach of emphasising cultural aspects of languages in their Key Stage Three teaching.

In terms of the teacher exit survey, it is important to note that teachers who responded were overwhelmingly from schools where MFL is seen as "Important" or "Very important". Only 19% reported that they were working in school contexts where MFL was seen to be "Neither important nor unimportant". This suggests that any change in wider school culture is in the context of school that is likely to be already broadly supportive of MFL. Indeed, teachers were asked whether their schools had already implemented other initiatives to encourage students to choose MFL at GCSE and teachers highlighted their use of a range of initiatives, with (1) trips abroad, (2) language clubs and (3) careers talks as the most popular. In terms of the effectiveness of these prior initiatives, 95% of teachers described these as "Effective" or "Very effective".



Over a third of teachers suggested that participation in the project had increased the importance of MFL within their schools:

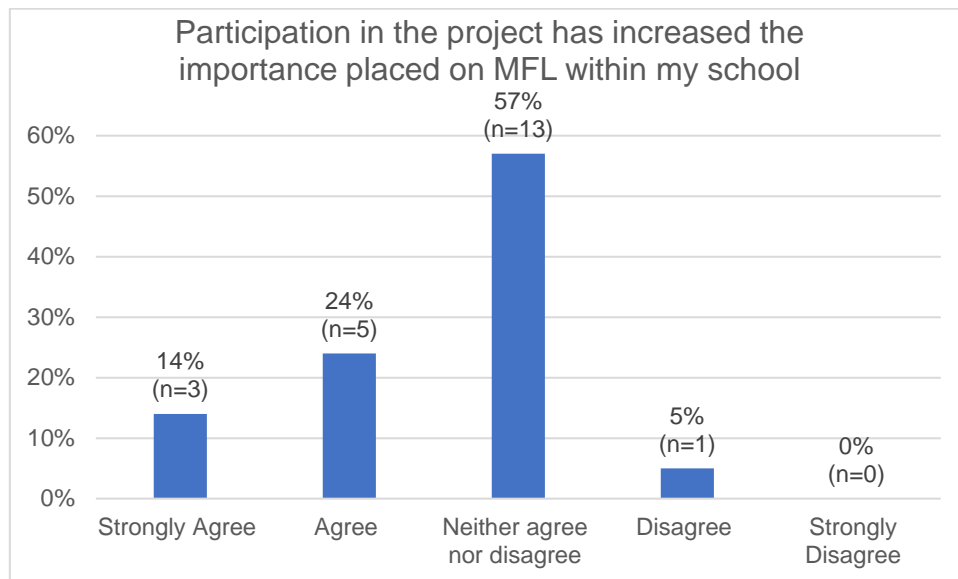


Figure 7. Teacher response to the statement: "Participation in the project has increased the importance placed on MFL within my school."<sup>15</sup>

Based upon the responses to the teacher exit survey, there appears to be a consensus that there has been a noticeable increase in the value attached to MFL learning amongst pupils but not staff. This is especially apparent in the wider context of reducing the availability of languages options both in Key Stage 3 and 4.

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<sup>15</sup> Teacher responses = 22



When asked about the utility of the mentoring approach in combating the decline of MFL learning in England, teachers were more positive about the ways in which the project enhanced the value of language learning with both pupils and school staff. Across both project delivery models, 95% of teachers described mentoring as a “Useful” or “Very useful” approach to supporting MFL learning:

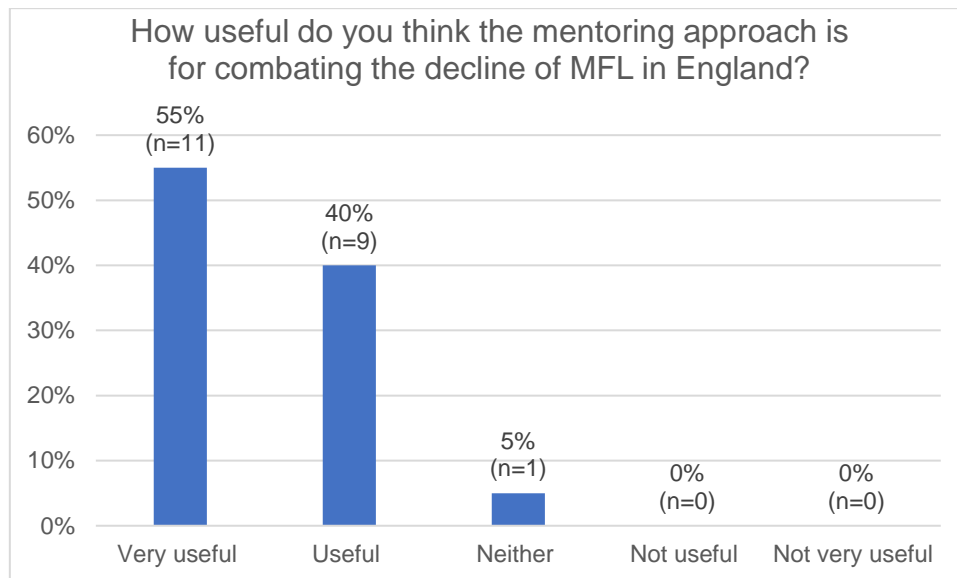


Figure 8. Teacher responses to the question: “How useful do you think the mentoring approach is for combating the decline of MFL in England?”<sup>16</sup>

Teachers described the positive impact mentoring had on both pupils, teachers and school SLT, “*this mentoring programme has enabled students, other teachers in the school and SLT to realise how important languages are and the place it should have in students’ curriculum and school life*” and “*SLT members have observed a few sessions and saw how languages could be easily linked to other subjects and reinforce values the school tries to promote.*”<sup>17</sup> When asked the same question, 98% of mentors suggested that mentoring was a ‘useful’ or ‘very useful’ approach for combating the decline of MFL in England. One mentor said, “*I was positively surprised by the reflection of the students both face-to-face and online when it came to talking about other languages, cultures and countries.*” Another mentor highlighted the value of project in that it was a way of “*widening horizons*” for GCSE students.

It is important to note and capture the impact of *Language Horizons* on wider school culture as this increases the impact that this project has had on promoting MFL. We suggest that *Language Horizons* has not only had a positive impact on the cohort of mentees but has also reinforced and positively shaped the attitudes of teachers across the year groups they teach

<sup>16</sup> Teacher responses = 21

<sup>17</sup> School has uptake of 45% at GCSE for current Y11. French and Spanish are available at GCSE. No A-levels but uptake is increasing.



as well as and supporting SLT teaching and learning strategies that encourage and promote MFL learning over a number of years.

However, the cancellation of the Awards and Recognition ceremonies due to the COVID-19 pandemic was reported by teachers to be particularly disappointing. They felt that these events and visits would further cement the impact of the project on pupils, particularly around university aspirations. A further consequence of cancellation has been that teachers were intending to use these events to further promote the project to the wider school community, including parents, which they are now no longer able to do. The project team responded to this challenge by making the workshops from the Awards and Recognition Ceremonies available to schools, which they had amended to make suitable for online delivery.



## 8. Mentors into Teaching

A high proportion of the 78 mentors were considering teaching as a career at the outset of their involvement with *Language Horizons*. As part of the training weekend surveys, mentors were asked: “Are you interested in teaching after you have completed your degree?” mentors said:

| Definitely Yes | Probably Yes | Maybe | Probably not | Definitely not |
|----------------|--------------|-------|--------------|----------------|
| 24%            | 20%          | 39%   | 13%          | 4%             |

Table 6. Interest in teaching as a career amongst mentors<sup>18</sup>.

Although a subsidiary aspect of the *Language Horizons* project, understanding the potential impact of the project on mentor attitudes and aspirations towards a career in teaching is important as the recruitment and retention of teachers in England, including MFL teachers, continues to be highly challenging (DfE, 2019). High vacancy rates in MFL teaching positions, sustained under-recruitment for MFL Initial Teaching Education courses and increasing pupil numbers mean that shortages of qualified MFL teachers will only increase (Foster, 2018) and, these shortages are most acutely felt in schools in socially and economically disadvantaged areas (DfE, 2019). With this context in mind, understanding the role of mentoring in shaping MFL university students’ intentions towards a career in teaching is timely and appropriate.

Following the completion of *Language Horizons*, all mentors were asked to complete an electronic survey which included questions focused around, (1) general attitudes towards teaching, (2) intentions towards careers in teaching and, (3) general skills development. Of the 78 mentors, 71 completed the survey, a response rate of 91% and, mentors from each of the four participating universities were included in the sample.

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<sup>18</sup> 80 mentors responded



## Mentors' general attitudes towards teaching

Mentors reported that they were interested in teaching as a future career broadly due to the positive impact they could have, especially through working with young people and providing a positive role model. Mentors also reported that the opportunity to continue to use their skills and expertise as linguists was an important motivating factor. Less important were mentors' perceptions of the benefits associated with teaching as a career (e.g. long holiday, job security).

|  | %   | N  |
|--|-----|----|
| To make a positive difference          | 22% | 28 |
| To continue using my languages         | 19% | 24 |
| To work with young people              | 13% | 17 |
| An inspirational teacher               | 13% | 16 |
| Teacher benefits such as holidays      | 9%  | 11 |
| A family member is/was a teacher       | 7%  | 9  |
| Job security                           | 7%  | 9  |
| Logical step after degree in languages | 6%  | 7  |
| Unsure of other options                | 4%  | 5  |

*Table 7. Responses to mentor exit survey question: "What factors motivate you to consider a career in teaching?"<sup>19</sup>*

Mentors who were unsure about going into teaching suggested this was due to a range of factors which included:

- Perceptions that teaching is a 'high-stress', 'high workload' career with relatively low pay compared to other graduate careers.
- Perception that teaching is a 'low-status' career, and that there is particularly low value associated with MFL.
- Unsure about classroom management.

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<sup>19</sup> Mentor responses = 68



## Mentors' intentions towards careers in teaching

The survey results suggest that there was an increase in mentors' reported intentions towards pursuing careers in teaching having completed *Language Horizons*, with 37% of mentors suggesting they were probably or definitely considering a career in teaching increasing to 46% having completed *Language Horizons*. Relatedly, far fewer mentors suggested that they 'definitely would not' consider a career in teaching having participated in *Language Horizons*, decreasing from 22% to 7% of mentors.

| Considering a career in teaching? | Before (%) | N  | After (%) | N  |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----|-----------|----|
| Definitely yes                    | 21         | 14 | 25        | 17 |
| Probably yes                      | 16         | 11 | 21        | 14 |
| Unsure                            | 15         | 10 | 21        | 14 |
| Probably not                      | 26         | 18 | 26        | 18 |
| Definitely not                    | 22         | 15 | 7         | 5  |
| Total                             |            | 68 |           | 68 |

Table 8. Responses to mentor exit survey questions: "Before/After being a mentor were/are you considering a career in teaching?"<sup>20</sup>

Just under half of mentors agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring had inspired them to pursue a career in teaching:

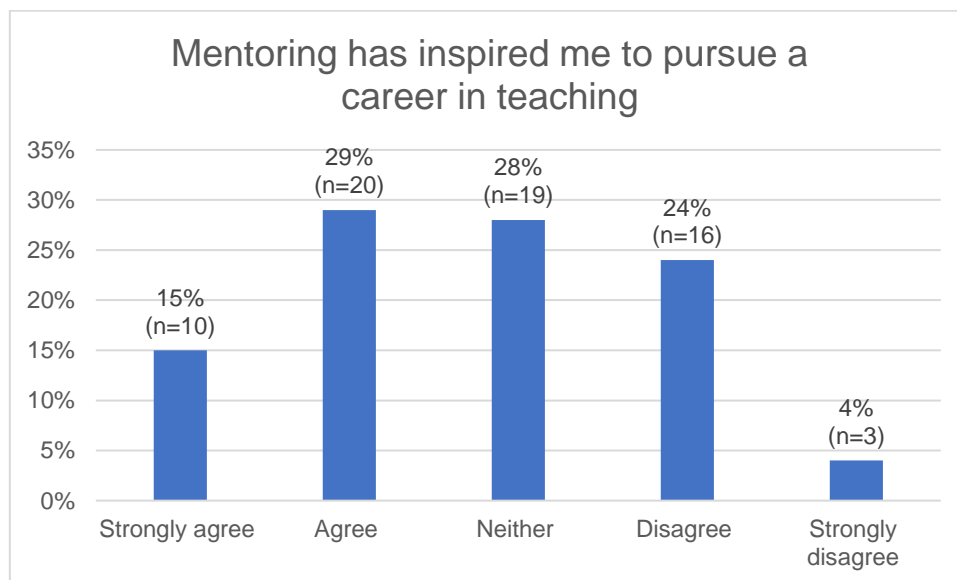


Figure 9. Responses to mentor exit survey question: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement? Mentoring has inspired me to pursue a career in teaching."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Mentor responses = 68



Mentors were asked how their experience of mentoring as part of *Language Horizons* had shaped their decision to go into teaching and their responses coalesced around the following three areas:

- Firstly, mentors had their previous positive attitudes and intentions towards teaching confirmed by their experiences of *Language Horizons*, with one mentor reporting that their experience had, *“solidified my desire to teach, through allowing me to experience the classroom setting, and letting me know that the job is compatible with my skill-set and passion”*. Another mentor said that *Language Horizons*, *“has confirmed that it [teaching] is an important job and something that I feel I would be good at and enjoy.”*
- Secondly, mentors reported that they gained a better insight into the reality of teaching which also developed their self-confidence and reduced some of the unknown elements and anxieties around teaching as a career as they had, *“a clearer idea of the reality of being a teacher”* and had had the opportunity to develop their skills in relation to classroom management and designing learning activities as well as increasing their understanding of school language curricula.
- Lastly, mentors described how their experiences with mentees had highlighted the value of working with young people in general and, specifically, in relation to languages. One mentor said that the mentoring experience:

*“...made me realise how much I enjoy working with young people and also how much I enjoy inspiring and enthusing others about studying languages. I really believe mentoring has had a positive impact on me as well as the pupils and teaching would definitely offer the same benefits.”*

Other mentors describing the ‘rewarding’ and ‘fulfilling’ nature of the experience, emphasising that they had positively benefited from observing rapid, positive changes in students’ attitudes towards, and interest in languages. Although the findings shared in Figure 9 indicate that there were some negative responses, the qualitative feedback from the mentors suggest that the mentors had a positive experience but that they did not want to become teachers.





## Mentors' general skills development

An overwhelming majority of mentors (96%) reported that their experience of mentoring had helped them to develop professional skills. Mentors identified that *Language Horizons* had helped them develop a range of skills including communication, organisation, leadership, and adaptability:

|                             | %   | N  |
|-----------------------------|-----|----|
| Communication skills        | 28% | 57 |
| Organisation skills         | 26% | 53 |
| Leadership                  | 25% | 50 |
| Adaptability                | 25% | 50 |
| Working in a school setting | 24% | 49 |
| Developing resources        | 23% | 46 |
| Presentation skills         | 22% | 44 |
| Reflection                  | 17% | 35 |
| Time management             | 17% | 34 |
| Managing relationships      | 15% | 31 |
| Problem solving             | 13% | 27 |

Table 9. Responses to mentor exit survey question: "What professional skills do you feel the project has helped you develop?"<sup>21</sup>

As noted in mentors' perspectives on their experiences of mentoring in relation to careers in teaching, mentors also highlighted the ways in which *Language Horizons* provided them with combined opportunity to increase their confidence through the development of (new) skills. One mentor described how mentoring had supported them to, "gain more confidence in my own abilities". Mentors frequently highlighted the valuable opportunity that mentoring provided them to gain real-world experience and skills beyond their university setting. Another mentor reflected that they had developed skills and increased confidence that could be transferred to other contexts:

*"I have really enjoyed the mentoring programme and feel it had really benefited me professionally. I now have more confidence to stand up in front of a group of pupils and present, and I know that this skill can be transferred to so many settings within the workplace...Delivering the online sessions has also improved my confidence in online platforms..."*

When describing the general skills they had developed through their training and the experience of mentoring, mentors frequently linked this to the overarching goals of *Language*

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<sup>21</sup> Mentor responses = 68



*Horizons*, suggesting that the opportunity to ‘make a difference’ was a motivating factor for mentors to persist during periods of challenge and that this enabled them to further develop skills and experience. One mentor said, *“this programme does provide an excellent opportunity for mentors to gain experience and be involved in a cause they find important.”* Another mentor reflected, *“I really enjoyed the whole mentoring experience and feel it has had made an impact on pupils. I have gained many skills that I feel I can use in my future career”.*

As well as developing skills and confidence, mentors also described how participating in *Language Horizons* reinvigorated their love of languages. One mentor said:

*“I found the training weekend really inspiring and it almost 're-energised' my love for languages and my degree! I think this was because I was surrounded by other people who also loved their degree and languages and they were also people that wanted to make a difference in terms of language uptake in the UK.”*

Other mentors described the experience as re-connecting them with their “passion” for languages, with one mentor highlighting how the experience had enabled them, *“to see the wider perspective of how important language learning is and reminded me why I study languages”.* As well as energising mentors’ engagement with languages, they also reported that mentoring helped them sustain active engagement with their university studies, and 57% of mentors reported that their appreciation for opportunities to study languages increased. One mentor said, *“talking to the mentees about why I like languages and why they are important also made me realise how much I enjoy my degree and why I'm doing it. Overall, I think the mentoring experience has made me want to try harder in my degree”.* Another mentor reflected, *“I was beginning to lose motivation in my studies but not just the mentoring but also the training week really boosted my spirits and made me realise the fun in languages and where they could take me.”*

Although *Language Horizons* is a project focused on improving GCSE MFL uptake, the experience of mentoring has clearly provided undergraduate mentors with the opportunity to develop new, transferable skills, increasing their confidence in themselves and their engagement with their studies and, more broadly, has reinvigorated their love of languages. These are all significant additional benefits that this project brings to the wider language community.



## 9. School and university partnerships

One of the key reasons for participation in *Language Horizons* was being able to build links with universities. As part of their interviews, teachers talked about the importance of having university role models in school.

In the teacher exit surveys, one third of teachers reported having previously linked up with their local university but this tended to be for one-off taster days or workshops rather than engaging in a sustained project such as *Language Horizons*. Almost two thirds of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that participating in the project had improved their links with universities.

*“It has been great to have undergraduates coming into school and hope we can keep these links going.”*

Teacher<sup>22</sup>

Another motivation for involvement was improving aspirations of pupils. Many of the schools were in areas of deprivation and teachers wanted to find ways to increase the aspirations of their pupils and their parents (discussed more fully in section 3.3 of the interim report). 81% of teachers said that the project has been effective or very effective in improving their pupils' aspirations to go to university.

*“It was nice for them to hear about the whole university experience, for example when they were discussing all the social aspects of societies etc, many of the pupils had no idea about these”.*

Teacher<sup>23</sup>

When considering whether the project had impacted on the intentions to take a language at university, 50% of teachers reported that they thought it had been effective or very effective. 5% reported (1 respondent) that they felt it was ineffective. Based on responses to further survey questions from this teacher, it seems as though the issue was linked to the performance of the mentor and not an issue with the programme in general.

The remaining 45% responded that it was neither effective or ineffective. The reasoning given for the was centred around the early closure of the programme due to COVID-19 and the cancellation of the Award and Recognition events. Teachers did anticipate that being able to complete the programme, particularly with a final face-to-face session for those on the blended

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<sup>22</sup> 45% uptake with current Y11. German, French and Spanish available at GCSE, no Y12 or Y13 pupils taking A-level.

<sup>23</sup> No uptake information available. MFL teachers all recently joined the school. One GCSE option available (Spanish).



model, along with seeing the university campus and experiencing a bit of student life would have had a further impact.

*Language Horizons* partnered with four universities, two in each hub:

- South Yorkshire: University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam.
- West Midlands: Warwick University, Coventry University.

The motivation for the universities to be involved ran in parallel to what the schoolteachers wanted to achieve. In interviews with the academic leads from the universities, they spoke about being motivated to provide role models to their local schools and participation in *Language Horizons* was a way for them to promote languages more generally. In addition, the importance of a joined-up approach across sectors and the value of near-peer relationships were also highlighted.



## 10. Comparing approaches: the blended and face-to-face programmes

Two models of mentoring ultimately formed part of *Language Horizons*. The intention at the outset was for all mentoring to be delivered as part of a blended mode: face-to-face sessions in weeks 1 and 5, online sessions for weeks 2, 3 and 4. However, the decision to run one hub entirely as a face-to-face hub became necessary due to delays in the online platform being ready for use. On the approach to the West Midlands mentoring training weekend the *Language Horizons* team made the decision to pivot to using face-to-face sessions only in this hub. This required a significant investment of time in order to rewrite handbooks and training materials. The West Midlands schools who went on to take part in the face-to-face sessions had either a three week or five-week programme. The three-week programme was run in schools that were more geographically remote from the partner university (more than 90 minutes travel time), thus reducing travel time for mentors or those whose pupils were about to make their GCSE options.

There were eight schools on the 3-week face-to-face programme, eight schools on the 5-week face-to-face programme and twenty-two on the blended programme. However, as outlined in Section 3 on the effects of Covid-19, not all schools completed the sessions (10 schools completed all sessions, 15 were one short, 9 were two short and 5 had only completed one or two sessions). As can be seen in table 8 below, there was a similar split in year groups between the two approaches.

|              | Year 8<br>N (%) | Year 9<br>N (%) |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Face-to-face | 37 (66%)        | 19 (34%)        |
| Blended      | 48 (64%)        | 27 (36%)        |

Table 10. Age group distribution of those participating in the different types of mentoring<sup>24</sup>.

Whilst the changed delivery modes were not an ideal outcome for the *Language Horizons* team and resulted in extra organisational requirements and changed arrangements with the schools, there has been an opportunity to review the data collected from pupils, teachers, mentors and the *Language Horizons* team to identify if there are any differences in impact between the two delivery modes. For the purposes of this analysis, the 3-week (9 schools) and 5-week (8 schools) face-to-face programmes have been combined, of which a total of 5 schools were able to provide feedback.

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<sup>24</sup> Mentee responses = 131



## Intention to take a language at GCSE

At first glance, the responses to pupil census survey 2 indicate there are no clear differences between delivery modes (43% of respondents participated in the face-to-face programme whilst 57% were part of the blended programme). For those on the face-to-face programme, 45% replied “Yes” to the question “Has mentoring made you more likely to take a language for GCSE?” and this was 44% of those on the blended programme.

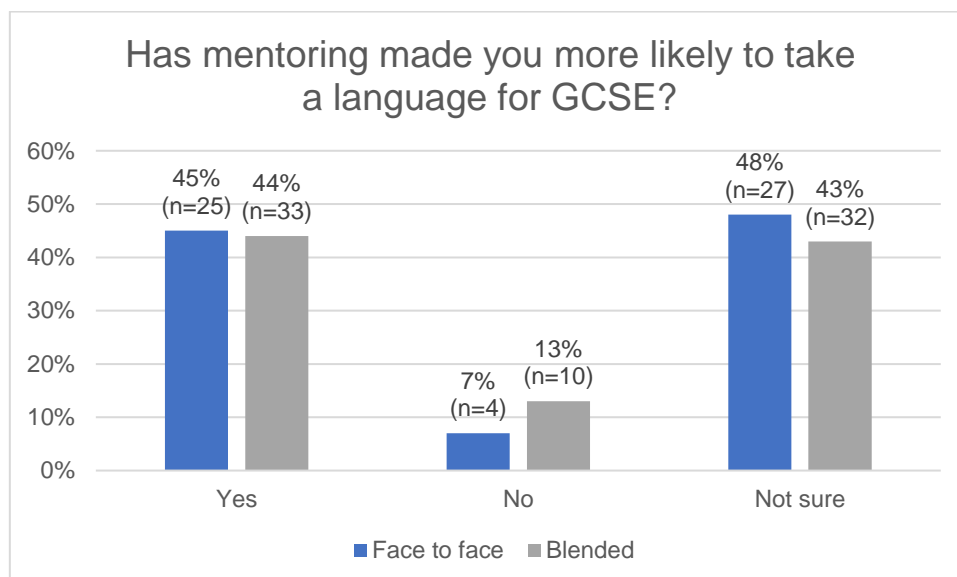


Figure 10. Responses from mentees to the question: “Has the mentoring made you more likely to take a language for GCSE?”<sup>25</sup>

However, when considering the opinions of teachers on the effectiveness of the project in improving intentions of taking an MFL at GCSE there is a reported difference. We find that 83% of teachers whose school participated in the face-to-face sessions replied that the project was very effective or effective on improving pupils’ intentions compared with 55% of teachers who participated in the blended programme.

<sup>25</sup> Mentee responses = 131 made up of 56 face-to-face and 75 blended

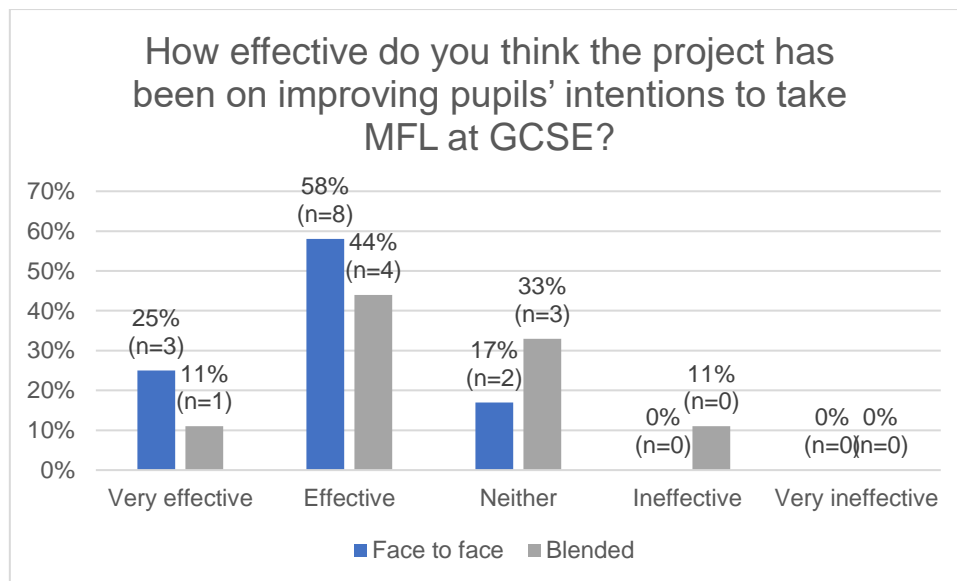


Figure 11. Responses from teachers to the question: “How effective do you think the project has been on improving pupils’ intentions to take MFL at GCSE?”<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the previous question to mentees around the impact of the mentoring scheme on their intentions, they were also asked directly whether they would be choosing an MFL at GCSE:

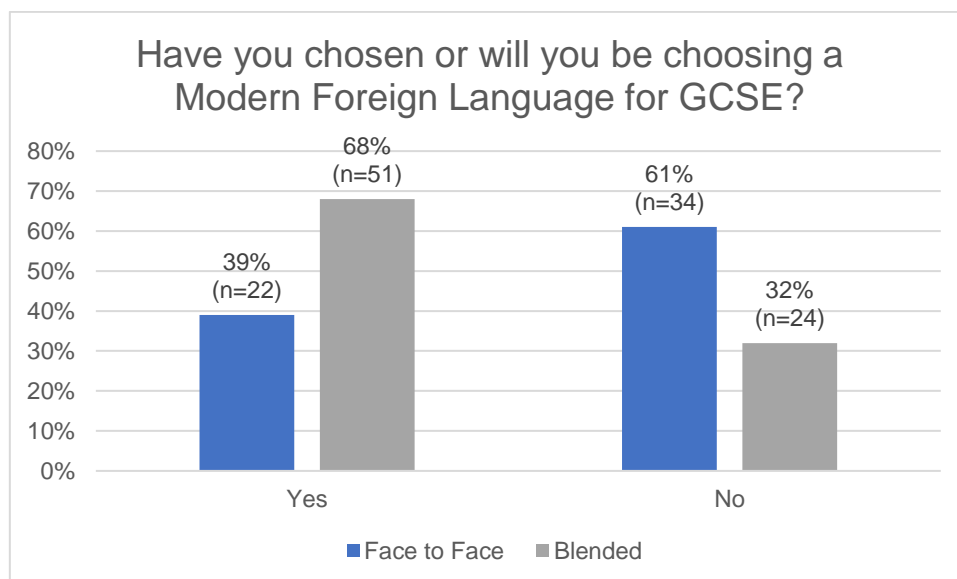


Figure 12. Responses to pupil exit survey question by mentees: “Have you chosen or will you be choosing a Modern Foreign Language for GCSE?”<sup>27</sup>

In this instance, the blended programme seems to have a much higher success rate when it comes to GCSE selection: 68% versus 39%. This isn’t quite consistent with the previous responses in Table 10 which showed both approaches performing similarly. However, on further investigation it was found that a higher proportion of the blended schools are choosing

<sup>26</sup> Teacher responses = 22 made up of 13 face-to-face and 9 blended

<sup>27</sup> Mentee responses = 131 made up of 56 face-to-face and 75 blended



their GCSEs this year which explains the higher response rate amongst the blended group in Figure 13:

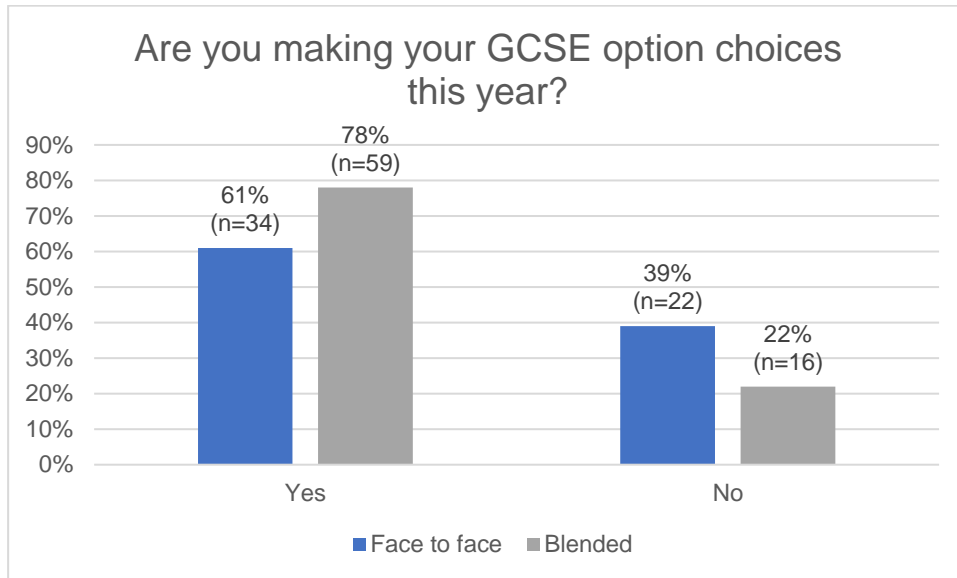


Figure 13. Responses to pupil exit survey question by mentees: “Are you making your GCSE option choices this year?”<sup>28</sup>

### Experience of the mentoring sessions

Moving beyond the intentions around GCSE, both approaches seem to be equally successful in building confidence amongst mentees:

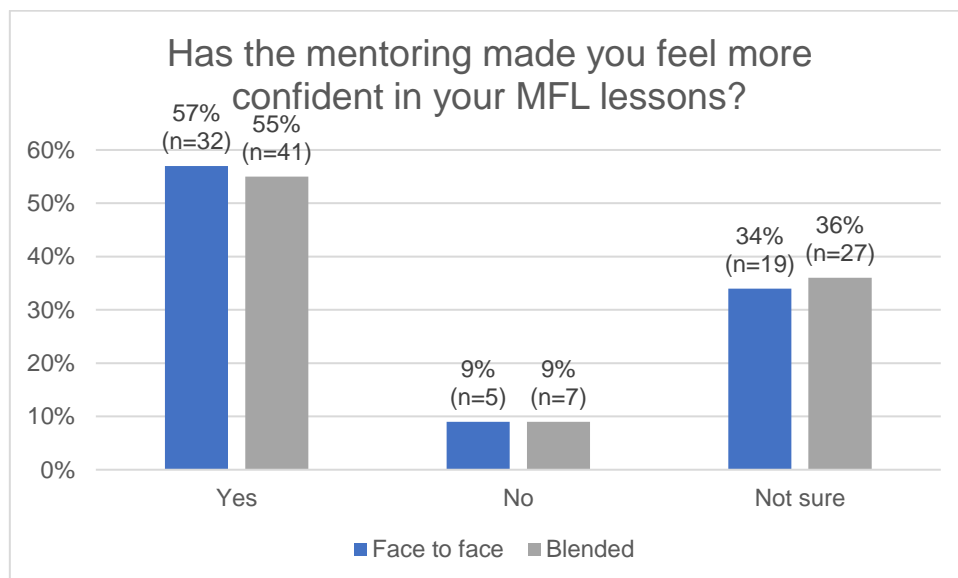


Figure 14. Responses from mentees to the question: “Has the mentoring made you feel more confident in your MFL lessons?”<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Mentee responses = 131 made up of 56 face-to-face and 75 blended





A divergence is observed when mentees were asked about their university intentions, with 70% of those in the face-to-face programme saying that mentoring has made them think about going to university in the future, compared with 50% on the blended programme.

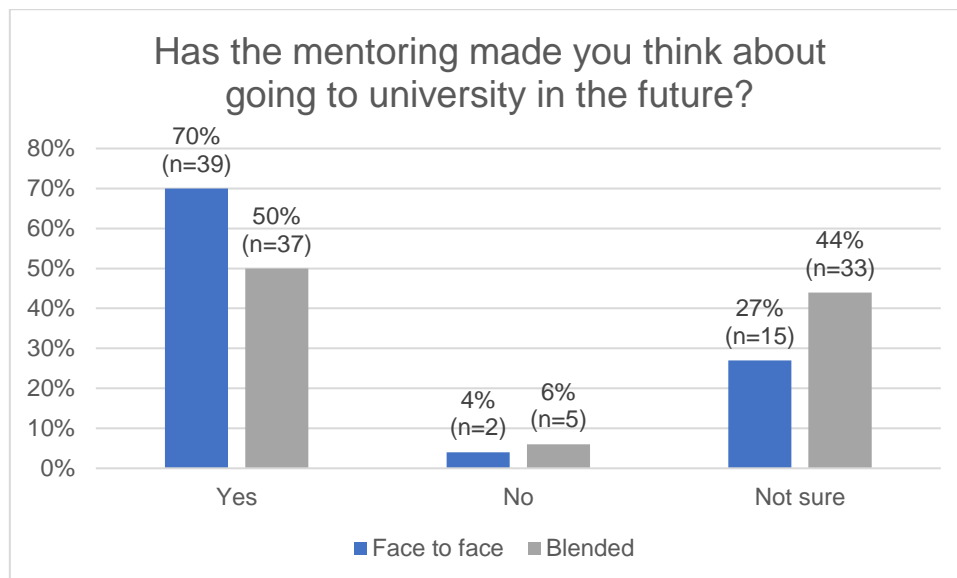


Figure 15. Responses from mentees to the question: “Has the mentoring made you think about going to university in the future?”<sup>29</sup>

This could be due to the extra time spent with the mentor, allowing for continued relationship development between the student and mentees.

*“When I first went into school the pupils were very excited to have someone come in from the university to speak to them - I could tell they felt that was really cool. They had lots of questions for me about life as a university student, so I hope that my insights will have really helped to raise their aspirations. I feel that this has been a really valuable experience for them to speak to a student, as their teacher told me that for many of them, they would be the first in their families to go to university, and so they may not know many people who go to university.”*

*Mentor*

Another impact of being able to spend more time with the mentor could be seen in mentee’s responses indicating whether or not they are more interested in languages and cultures outside the classroom. For both groups, the percentage responding yes is very high but those on the face-to-face programme report slightly higher at 73% with blended at 61%.

<sup>29</sup> Mentee responses = 131 made up of 56 face-to-face and 75 blended

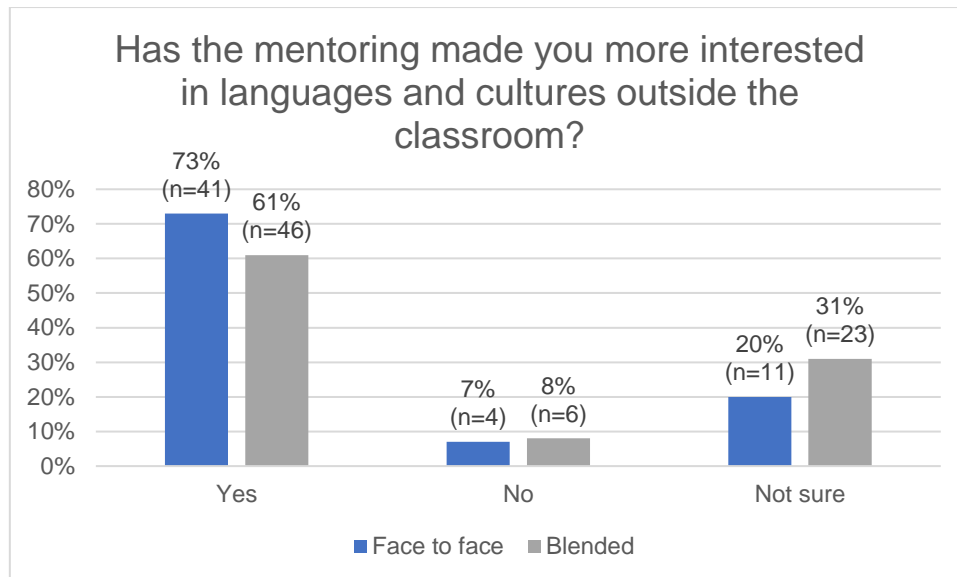


Figure 16. Responses from mentees to the question: Has the mentoring made you more interested in languages and cultures outside the classroom? <sup>30</sup>

In addition, there were slightly higher reported levels of satisfaction with their experience from those on the face-to-face programme compared with the blended programme:

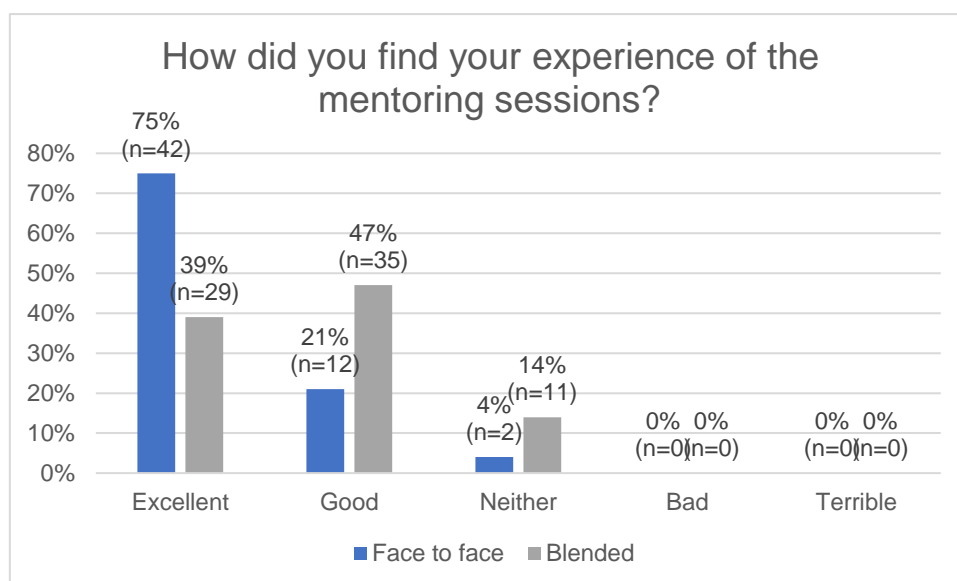


Figure 17. Responses from mentees to the question: "How did you find your experience of the mentoring sessions?"<sup>30</sup>

There were reports of technical difficulties in accessing the online platform, particularly in the first of the online sessions so this could have affected the responses from the group participating in the blended programme.

However, the mentors on the blended programme themselves reported that both they (63%) and their mentees (54%) preferred the face-to-face sessions compared with the online ones.

<sup>30</sup> Mentee responses = 131 made up of 56 face-to-face and 75 blended



This was reinforced by the feedback from interviews conducted with mentors. Those on the face-to-face programme felt that this extra time allowed them to build rapport and react to individuals more easily, something that those in the blended programme agreed with. However, those delivering on the blended programme also felt that online sessions encouraged the mentees to be independent and personalise their experience.

Whilst there is some divergence in the two schemes, the overall impact reported is the same. Each has its advantages and disadvantages in terms of logistics and organisation. One aspect of the online delivery which perhaps has not been emphasised enough is the potential for cross-curricular working between MFL and other school departments e.g. History, Geography. It was felt by the *Language Horizons* team that the digital skills and literacy gained from participation in the blended programme would be an additional benefit that could further enhance the project with non-MFL teachers and SLT and could perhaps be a way of helping to reduce some of the logistical barriers experienced by teachers. Furthermore, we suggest that the learnings from the delivery of online language mentoring are especially pertinent given the current situation arising from COVID-19 and the need to rethink how to deliver language learning. The findings from this project concerning the efficacy of mentored online language engagement could apply more broadly and instruct educators beyond MFL when thinking about engagement in online learning as we move through the different phases of COVID-19 and beyond.



## 11. Potential areas for future academic and policy-related research

Over the course of the *Language Horizons* project (2018-2020) and, building on understandings drawn from the five-year long Modern Foreign Languages Student Mentoring Project (MFL SMP), based in Wales (2015-ongoing), it has been possible to identify further areas of academic research and policy-focused work. Although these areas are beyond the scope of the *Language Horizons* project, they may prove fruitful for future academic research e.g. Masters' and/or PhD theses.

### Understanding trends in attitudes and aspirations towards MFL

As part of the *Language Horizons* project significant quantities of quantitative and qualitative data has been methodically collected by the Project Team using tools such as surveys, interviews and focus groups. This data has been gathered from a range of stakeholders including young people, teachers, school leaders, MFL university students (mentors) and university staff. This provides a comprehensive and nuanced data set in terms of exploring trends in attitudes and aspirations towards MFL. For example, research questions might include:

- What value do school leaders and parents ascribe to language learning? How does this shape student's attitudes and aspirations towards MFL?
- Which factors motivate students to continue with MFL? (e.g. perceived value in relation to careers/access to different cultures/difficulty/interest?)
- To what extent have wider political decisions shaped attitudes and aspirations towards MFL learning? E.g. Brexit?
- To what extent have wider policy decisions shaped attitudes and aspirations towards MFL learning? E.g. Introduction of the EBacc?
- What support do school leaders and teachers need to further encourage uptake of MFL at GCSE and beyond?
- What are the successful strategies for building school-university partnerships which go from primary through to higher education?
- To what extent does the local/regional context (e.g. socio-economic, geographical) shape and inform attitudes and aspirations towards languages? (e.g. proximity to/accessibility of local university with strong MFL)

Drawing on the five-year data set from Wales it is also possible to compare and contrast MFL learning between the English and Welsh contexts. For example, a comparison between the impact of the 'bilingual plus one policy' on the uptake of MFL at GCSE compared to the



introduction of the English Baccalaureate. These policies have been introduced within a context of reduced option choices at GCSE (Tinsley, 2018) and, since 2015, a move towards pupils taking fewer GCSEs in general (Burgess & Thomson, 2019). Future research could consider the ways in which the introduction of this policy has shaped the attitudes, beliefs and values of students and their parents and teachers towards studying MFL at GCSE level and beyond.

### Understanding the role of Language Horizons and MFL Teacher Recruitment

As has been outlined in Section 7 of this report, the experience of mentoring school pupils has provided mentors with an authentic opportunity to develop the skills and experience of working with young people in the context of education. This appears to have at least confirmed for the those mentors that their aspirations towards teaching as a career are well placed and, at best, highlighted for some mentors teaching as a career pathway that they may not have previously considered or were perhaps unsure about. Further research into the experience of mentoring as an effective pathway into MFL Initial Teacher Education (ITE) would be both of academic interest but also to policy makers who seek to ameliorate the sustained shortage of MFL teachers. Areas of focus could include:

- To what extent does mentoring provide a pathway into ITE for those that might otherwise have not considered teaching?
- To what extent does mentoring effectively prepare ITE candidates for their classroom placements?
- What further support (e.g. financial) or recognition (e.g. academic credit) might be appropriate for mentors?

As discussed previously, it is also possible to compare and contrast the role of mentoring in recruitment to ITE programmes between England and Wales.

### Mentoring as an approach to widening participation in Higher Education

As has been discussed in Section 6, *Language Horizons* has had an important role in providing opportunities for school students to engage with near-peers who are successfully engaged in university-based MFL degrees. Further exploration of this interaction could support the Widening Participation strategies of Universities and policy makers involved in education and social mobility.



## Mentoring as an approach to developing graduate attributes

Graduate attributes are a framework of skills, attitudes, values and knowledge which a university community agrees that its graduates should develop by the end of their degree programmes, through participation in both curricular and extra-curricular activities (Hill & Walkington, 2016; Hill, Walkington & France, 2016).

In the wider literature, graduate attributes have been defined by Bowden, Hart, King, Trigwell, and Watts (2000, p. 3) as:

the qualities, skills and understandings [that] include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future.

In his model of graduate attributes, Barrie (2004) outlines three overarching enabling graduate attributes of (1) Scholarship, (2) Lifelong learning and, (3) Global Citizenship, with the five translation graduate attributes forming the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle.

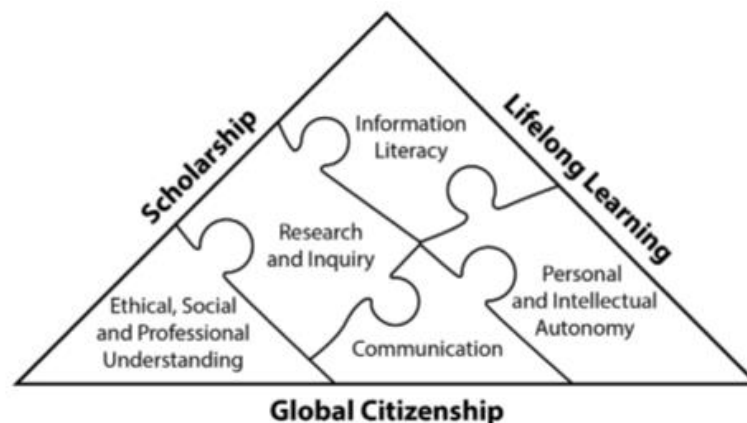


Figure 18. The graduate attribute model of Barrie (2004).

Future research could explore the extent to which the *Language Horizons* project offers university students the opportunity to develop both the graduate attributes of Lifelong Learning and Global Citizenship. This model could provide a coherent framework against which universities could better understand the ways in which students have developed graduate attributes and develop skills and experiences that will better prepare them for further study or employment.



## 12. Placing Language Horizons Year 2 into a wider context

The impact of the beta one-phase of *Language Horizons*, as documented in this report, should be understood as part of a wider body of work over the last five years that has sought to address the decline in numbers of pupils taking MFL GCSEs in Wales. Since 2015, the numbers taking MFL GCSE in Wales have reduced by nearly a fifth (Welsh, Government, 2018) and the *MFL Student Mentoring Project* has been part of Welsh Government's Global Futures strategy to promote MFL within schools in Wales. The theoretical framework that underpins *Language Horizons*, as well as its delivery model is rooted in the extensive experience of the *MFL Student Mentoring Project*, including the expertise of members of the project team. As such, it is appropriate to briefly outline evidence of impact from Wales, as this is indicative of *Language Horizon's* potential for continued and increased impact were it to be funded beyond the academic year 2019-2020.

Over the course of five years, the number of schools participating in *MFL Student Mentoring Project* increased from 18 to over 100 and in this period, supporting schools from a range of geographical and socio-economic contexts and providing opportunities for both high-quality mentoring experiences and partnerships between schools and universities. Two consecutive evaluation reports (Tinsley, 2017; 2018) and a review of the five-year programme (Rushton & Thomas, 2020a) demonstrate that the *MFL Student Mentoring Project* has had a positive impact on the numbers of young people intending to MFL at GCSE, with 42% of mentees choosing GCSE MFL in 2018-2019, which is higher than average uptake in Wales and England during the same period.

Over the course of five years, and during a period of significant growth the *MFL Student Mentoring Project* has maintained a consistently positive impact. This demonstrates that the infrastructure and project of the project can be consistently applied as the number of schools supported increases and it is therefore highly probable that *Language Horizons* would continue to have the same positive impact on MFL GCSE uptake in England and that this intervention is highly scalable.

### 13. Appendix A: Data Collection Summary

|                | Data source and delivery method   | Purpose  | Data collection date                           | Summary   |
|----------------|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Mentees</b> |   |  |  |   |
|                | Pupil census survey 1 completed by entire year groups for all schools using Qualtrics     | To provide a baseline measure of attitudes towards MFL and future GCSE intentions.<br>To identify a sample from which to randomly select participants. | December 2019 – February 2020                  | 6075 responses from 40 schools.   |
|                | Pupil census survey 2 completed by all mentees and natural control group using Qualtrics. | To measure changes in attitude and intentions for mentees compared to the natural control group.   | February – April 2020                          | 223 responses from 11 schools: 131 mentees and 92 non-participating pupils.     |
|                | Feedback sheets completed on paper by mentees during sessions in Wks1&5.                  | To provide immediate, individual feedback at the beginning and end of the mentoring period.  | February – March 2020                          | Feedback sheets from 20 schools (6 in South Yorkshire and 14 in West Midlands). |
|                | In person interviews/focus groups led by LH team.   | To gather more detailed, individual feedback regarding mentees' experience of mentoring within their school context.                                   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2020 | 28 pupils from 2 different schools participated in focus groups.                |
| <b>Mentors</b> |   |  |  |   |
|                | Training surveys completed by all those who attended training, using Qualtrics.           | To provide feedback before, during and after the training weekend for each hub.  | February 2020                                  | 80 mentors from 4 universities.   |
|                | Feedback sheets completed by all mentors and collated by the project team.                | To provide weekly feedback on mentoring sessions.  | February – March 2020                          | Feedback sheets from 20 mentors (6 in South Yorkshire schools and 14            |





|                |   |  |                             |  |
|----------------|---|--|-----------------------------|--|
|                |   |  |                             | in West Midlands schools) were reviewed.   |
|                | Exit surveys completed by all mentors, including surveys focused on skills and intentions toward careers in teaching. | To gather feedback on the mentors' overall experience of the project and the skills they have developed. | April 2020                  | 67 mentors from 4 universities.  |
|                | Phone interviews with mentors from six schools.   | To gather feedback on mentors' experience of mentoring within that school context.                       | February and March 2020     | 6 mentors spoken to.   |
| <b>Schools</b> |   |  |                             |  |
|                | Fact files created for each school by the project team via email, phone calls and in person meetings.                 | To provide contextual information about each school.   | December 2019 to March 2020 | 45 school fact files collated. Information gathered included current numbers at GCSE, number of MFL teachers and other relevant context. Full details available in the evaluation - technical report (Thomas & Rushton, 2020). |
|                | Teacher surveys – both in the early stages and at the end of the project, via Qualtrics.                              | To gather feedback regarding the onboarding process, overall experience and suggestions for improvement. | December 2019 – April 2020  | First survey: responses from 36 schools (20 from South Yorkshire, 16 from the West Midlands).<br>Second survey: responses from 22 schools (9 from South Yorkshire, 13 from the West Midlands)                                  |
|                | Interviews via phone with teachers from six schools   | To gather feedback on the teachers' experience of the project.   | February and March 2020     | 6 teachers spoken to.  |



|                  |  |  |                       |   |
|------------------|--|--|-----------------------|---|
|                  | GCSE uptake data for mentee and natural control groups.  | To measure any impact of the project on students' choices to study MFL at GCSE.                                | March 2020            | Data available for 3 schools (Rushton & Thomas, 2020b). |
| University Leads |  |  |                       |   |
|                  | Interviews (via telephone) with university leads from the two hubs.  | To gather feedback on the universities' experience of the project.   | March 2020            | Interviews with two university leads.                   |
| Project Team     |  |  |                       |   |
|                  | Interviews (via telephone) with project team including leadership team and regional coordinators.  | To better understand the project from the perspectives of those who have led the project over a 2-year period. | March 2020            | Interviews with 5 team members.                         |
|                  | Informal discussions, observations and fieldnotes gathered by the evaluators during regular update meetings and visits e.g. mentor training weekend. | To better understand the nature of the project.  | December – March 2020 | -   |

## 14. Appendix B: Reasons for not choosing MFL at GCSE

|   | Mentees  | Control group pupils |
|---|----------|----------------------|
| I want to take something else more            | 32 (25%) | 21 (16%)             |
| I'm not good at it                            | 22 (17%) | 19 (15%)             |
| It's boring                                   | 16 (13%) | 18 (14%)             |
| I don't need it for the job that I want to do | 17 (13%) | 18 (14%)             |
| It's too difficult                            | 21 (16%) | 17 (13%)             |
| I don't like my lessons                       | 3 (2%)   | 14 (11%)             |
| Everyone speaks English                       | 5 (4%)   | 6 (5%)               |
| I don't like my teacher                       | 1 (1%)   | 4 (3%)               |
| It's not useful                               | 5 (4%)   | 4 (3%)               |
| My teacher thinks it's a bad idea             | 0 (0%)   | 2 (2%)               |
| My friends aren't doing it                    | 1 (1%)   | 2 (2%)               |
| My parents/guardian thinks it's a bad idea    | 5 (4%)   | 3 (2%)               |



## 15. Appendix C: Organisational Structure (Excerpt from Co-ordinator Handbook)

Project Team:

- Role of the Academic Lead

The Academic Lead provides overall strategic leadership for the project and its Welsh counterpart. The main roles and responsibilities are:

- Liaison and partnership building between the MFL community in the UK and external stakeholders
- Leading project reporting and overall delivery
- Overseeing project evaluation, interim and final
- Leading on developing project sustainability

- Role of the Project Development Manager

The Project Development Manager is responsible for the overall management of the project and its Welsh counterpart. The main roles and responsibilities are:

- Liaising between the project team, universities and the Department for Education
- Convening and chairing quarterly project meetings
- Liaising with any press who wish to run pieces on the project
- Leading on any research associated with the project
- Assisting the Academic Lead on developing project sustainability
- Creating networks for further rollouts in England
- Assisting the Academic Lead as and when required

- Role of the Operations Manager

The Operations Manager is responsible for the management and administration of *Language Horizons*. The main roles and responsibilities are:

- Assisting on any research associated with the project
- Overseeing project evaluation, interim and final
- Liaising with the website developers to ensure delivery
- Managing the creation of resources
- Designing and delivering the mentor training
- Ensuring that the scheme meets the needs of the schools involved
- Monitoring and ensuring project delivery
- Assisting the Project Development Manager as and when required

- Role of the Hub Manager

The Hub Manager is responsible for the management and administration of *Language Horizons*. The main roles and responsibilities are:

- Leading on recruitment of schools and mentors
- Planning and facilitation of the mentor training
- Administering payment of bursaries and travel expenses



- Ensuring that the scheme meets the needs of the schools involved
- Monitoring and ensuring project delivery
- Managing safeguarding procedures
- Training the Regional Coordinators to become increasingly independent
- Managing the organisation and delivery of the Award and Recognition Days
- Assisting the Project Development Manager as and when required

- Role of the Regional Coordinator

The Regional Coordinators are responsible for the administration of Language Horizons within their designated area and act as the first point of contact for all mentors and schools. The main roles and responsibilities are:

- Assisting in the recruitment of schools and mentors
- Liaising between the university, mentors and the schools
- Facilitating the training of mentors
- Ensuring that all teachers are fully informed and prepared
- Pairing mentors with schools and monitoring the mentor-school relationship
- Ensuring that the scheme meets the needs of the schools involved
- Checking that the mentors fulfil their commitments to their mentees and that schools support mentors
- Ensuring safeguarding procedures are in place
- Collating the required data from schools and setting up of pupils on the platform
- Organising the Award and Recognition Days
- Assisting the Hub Manager as and when required

### The Partner Universities

The University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, The University of Warwick and Coventry University are taking part in the scheme, with Cardiff University offering expertise and administrative support.

The spearhead of the initiative are university undergraduates studying modern languages at the partner universities in South Yorkshire and the West Midlands. The undergraduates will be trained as mentors and will work with school pupils in a partnership model facilitated by their respective university and supported by the team in Cardiff.

- Role of the University Lead
  - To act as a liaison point between the project team and the partner university so as to ensure the smooth running and coordination of the project
  - To oversee the recruitment and selection of the undergraduate student mentors for their institution, in partnership with the Regional Coordinator
  - To provide pastoral support for the student mentors as and if needed
  - To assist in the organisation and delivery of the Award and Recognition Days

### The Partner Schools

The second phase of this project partners thirty schools with one of the four universities. These schools are selected based on low MFL uptake and a need for this intervention. Each school will be allocated two mentors from one of the partner universities.



- Role of the School Coordinator

The School Coordinator has the responsibility of running the *Language Horizons* scheme at the school and will be the first port of call for any queries at the school. Their roles are as follows:

- To identify a cohort of pupils to take part in the mentoring scheme, in accordance with criteria set out by the scheme
- To inform parents about the scheme and obtain parental consent
- To ensure that the student mentor is welcomed into the school
- To organise a room and facilities for the face-to-face and online sessions
- To brief the student mentors about the school and introduce them to their mentees
- To ensure that there is an awareness and understanding of the scheme in the school as a whole



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This report was written by the Directors of Ondata Research Ltd, Laura Thomas and Dr Lizzie Rushton. Ondata Research collaborates with clients to help them understand project impact, whilst also providing mentoring and support through the phases of project development and delivery.



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