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Evaluation of the MFL (Modern Foreign Languages) Mentoring Project

Cardiff University

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Evaluation of the MFL Mentoring Project

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GLOSSARY

Glossary text

Acronym/Key word	Definition
A-level	General Certificate of Education Advanced level
AoLE	Area of Learning and Experience
CfW	Curriculum for Wales
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
LLC	Languages, Literacy, and Communication
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
WG	Welsh Government

Note: As part of the Curriculum for Wales (CfW), there has been a shift in terminology from Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) to International Languages (IL). This change aligns with the CfW's vision of adopting a more global and inclusive approach to language learning. The term "International Languages" reflects this broader perspective whilst still referring to the "big three" languages traditionally taught in schools—French, German, and Spanish.

Despite this official terminology shift, the MFL Mentoring Project has retained its original name. This decision was made to avoid confusion for teachers and schools, who are familiar with the project under its established title.

Executive Summary

The MFL Mentoring Project, which has been funded under the Welsh Government's Global Futures strategy since 2015, has demonstrated its value as a transformative educational initiative. Designed to address the decline in modern foreign language (MFL) uptake in Wales, the project promotes multilingualism, fosters global citizenship, and equips learners with transferable skills. Managed by the project team based at Cardiff University in partnership with eight other Welsh universities, the project has evolved to meet the needs of learners, student mentors, and schools while aligning with key educational policies, including the Curriculum for Wales.

Key Findings

Significant Positive Impact on Learners
The project has successfully boosted learner confidence in, and enthusiasm and curiosity about languages. It has increased learners' awareness of languages as transferable skills with cultural and practical relevance. Activities like exploring food culture, playing idiom-based games, and incorporating music have helped connect language learning to real-life experiences, fostering both engagement and positive perceptions of language study.

Mentor Growth and Professional Development
Mentors reported significant personal and professional growth, including enhanced confidence and improved interpersonal and organisational skills. Many mentors credited the project for improving their employability, inspiring career aspirations in teaching, and equipping them with transferable skills applicable to many possible career paths.

Enhanced School Support and Collaboration
The project provided critical resources for schools, especially those with limited language staff, helping to fill resource gaps and integrate

mentoring sessions into school schedules. Collaborative efforts between mentors and teachers enriched language curricula and ensured successful mentoring sessions.

Strategic Alignment and Project Resilience
The project aligns effectively with the Welsh Government's Curriculum for Wales, supporting its goals of fostering global citizenship and multilingualism. It also demonstrated resilience and flexibility by transitioning to online delivery during the pandemic, extending its reach and maintaining engagement despite logistical challenges.

Strengthened Pathways to Higher Education and Careers
The project inspired aspirations for higher education and raised awareness about career opportunities linked to language skills. It encouraged learners to view languages as practical and enjoyable, helping to broaden their perspectives on the relevance of language learning to both personal and professional development.

Barriers and Challenges

Structural challenges, such as subject-conflict in GCSE option blocks, annual funding cycles, and recruitment of Welsh-speaking mentors, are some of the highlighted areas requiring strategic action.

Overall Project Impact

Between 2015 and 2024, the project has proven its capacity to address systemic issues in language education, contributing to Wales' vision of a multilingual nation despite school-based structural challenges, funding constraints, and entrenched unfavourable perceptions about the value of language learning. It has fostered enthusiasm for language learning, supported teacher and mentor development, and adapted effectively to changing educational contexts.

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1. Introduction

Background to the MFL Mentoring project

1.1 The Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) Mentoring project is a £2.3m initiative funded by the Welsh Government's Global Futures strategy, with this total funding received over a ten-year period since its inception in 2015. Managed by the project team based at Cardiff University's School of Modern Languages in collaboration with eight other Welsh universities[1], the project acts as a bridge between higher education institutions and secondary schools across Wales.

1.2 Now in its tenth year, the MFL Mentoring project continues to make a significant contribution to promoting international languages uptake among learners in Wales. The project recruits and trains university students with language enthusiasm — including those studying international languages and those with multilingual skills from across disciplines — to deliver interactive and engaging mentoring sessions to pre-GCSE learners. The ultimate aim of the project is to inspire young people to pursue international languages at GCSE and beyond, addressing the longstanding decline in international languages uptake.

1.3 The project has grown substantially since its inception, expanding its reach to work with 124 secondary schools across Wales during the 2023-2024 academic year. It has evolved alongside key policy priorities, remaining closely aligned with the Curriculum for Wales and commitments within the Welsh Government's Programme for Government[2]. In particular, the project has developed innovative educational resources that directly support the new Curriculum for Wales' Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) for Language, Literacy, and Communication (LLC).

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[1] Swansea University, Bangor University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drame, University of South Wales, Aberystwyth University and Wrexham University

[2] Specifically, to "expand the teaching of modern foreign languages in our schools." Welsh Government Programme for government: update [HTML] | GOV.WALES

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1.4   Throughout its lifecycle, the MFL Mentoring project has adapted to external challenges. Notably, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project transitioned to remote delivery methods, ensuring continued engagement with learners and drawing on these experiences to enhance its digital offering.

1.5   As the current phase of the Global Futures strategy (2022-2025) approaches its conclusion in March 2025, the Welsh Government and the MFL Mentoring project team are taking stock of the project's long-term impact. This evaluation sought to determine how the MFL Mentoring project can continue to evolve to support Wales' international languages sector, fostering a multilingual nation and empowering learners with the cultural and linguistic skills necessary for success in a globalised world.

Project Objectives

1.6   The MFL Mentoring project is designed to achieve a range of objectives aimed at revitalising understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the role of international languages within the Welsh education system. Specifically, the project seeks to:

- **Increase intentions to study international languages at GCSE level amongst mentored learners:** By engaging pre-GCSE learners through innovative mentoring sessions, the project aims to inspire more learners to choose international languages as an option for further study.
- **Enhance learner attitudes and motivations toward language learning:** The project works to shift perceptions by showcasing international languages as accessible, enjoyable, and valuable for both personal and professional development.
- **Foster multilingual identities:** The project encourages learners to view themselves as global citizens who can engage with multiple languages and cultures.

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- **Facilitate cross-curricular integration:** Recognising the interconnected nature of subjects within the Curriculum for Wales, the project aims to align international languages with other disciplines to create a more holistic and integrated learning ecosystem.

1.7   The MFL Mentoring project responds to the following social and economic needs within Wales.

Social and Educational Need:

1.8   The decline in international languages uptake among secondary school learners in Wales has created an urgent need for interventions that can reinvigorate interest in language learning. The project addresses this challenge by enhancing learner motivation and fostering a more positive outlook toward international languages.

Economic Need:

1.9   In an increasingly globalised economy, there is a growing demand for multilingual skills that can enhance the international competitiveness of Wales and its workforce. By equipping learners with language skills, the project contributes to foster a global perspective and broaden career opportunities.

Policy Alignment

1.10   The MFL Mentoring project has been designed to appropriately sit within an evolving policy context in Wales. The key policy drivers for the project identified throughout the evaluation were as follows:

Table 1.1: MFL Mentoring Project Policy Alignment

Policy	Description	Alignment with MFL Mentoring project
Programme for	The Welsh Government's Programme for Government, published in 2021, outlines their ten wellbeing objectives	The project details its commitment to 'expand the teaching of modern foreign

Government 2021 - 2026[3]	with corresponding commitments over the period until May 2026.	languages in our schools'.
Curriculum for Wales 2008[4]	The 2008 Curriculum for Wales outlined the Welsh Government's requirements for teaching in Welsh schools.	The curriculum guidance on Languages, Literacy and Communication states that 'all learners should have the opportunity to learn at least one international language at school'.
Curriculum for Wales 2022[5]	The 2022 Curriculum for Wales builds on the previous curriculum by providing an updated framework for Welsh Government's requirements for teaching, organised around six areas of learning and experience (AoLE).	MFL Mentoring supports the development of international languages under the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area. MFL Mentoring also supports cross-curricular learning through integration with other, non-language subjects.
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)[6]	This act strives to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It encourages public bodies to think and act in the long term and in the interests of all communities, including future generations. The Act enshrines in law seven	MFL Mentoring supports the delivery of four of the seven wellbeing goals: A Prosperous Wales: MFL Mentoring provides opportunities for education and

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[3] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/project-for-government-update-december-2021.pdf

[4] https://www.gov.wales/current-school-curriculum-guide

[5] https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/

[6] https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/

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	wellbeing goals, which should guide the work of national and local government, local health boards and public bodies. These goals include: A Prosperous Wales A Resilient Wales A More Equal Wales A Healthier Wales A Wales of Cohesive Communities A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language A Globally Responsible Wales.	developing skills for the future. A Wales of Cohesive Communities: MFL Mentoring fosters cross-cultural understanding and mutual appreciation. A Wales of Vibrant Culture: MFL Mentoring promotes greater understanding of other cultures through language learning. A Globally Responsible Wales: MFL Mentoring promotes multilingual education which fosters an outward-looking, global perspective amongst learners in Wales.

The Global Futures Strategy

1.11   The Global Futures Strategy is the Welsh Government's plan to improve uptake and promote international languages in Wales in order to become a "truly multilingual nation" and to support all learners to become global citizens. Global Futures was launched in 2015, with its current iteration of the strategic plan spanning to 2025.

1.12   The strategy aims to:

- support the development and delivery of meaningful international language provision in Wales

- provide our practitioners with the skills, knowledge and experiences to plan and deliver international languages provision
- challenge the misconceptions around language learning.

1.13   The current iteration of the strategic plan does not include the specific aim to increase the number of young people choosing to study international languages at GCSE and A-level, and in higher education. The new aims are thought to be more in line with the Curriculum for Wales and offer a more holistic approach to languages in both primary and secondary education[7].

Context of MFL in Wales

1.14   The MFL Mentoring project aimed to address a steep decline in uptake of MFL among learners in Wales; between 2002 and 2015, entries to GCSE modern languages fell by 44% in Wales, and between 2005 and 2014, entries to A Level modern languages halved[8]. This pattern was observed most strongly among schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas.[9]

1.15   The MFL Mentoring project ran alongside development of the new Curriculum for Wales, launched in 2022[10]. The new curriculum promotes a multilingual approach to learning, marking a significant shift from the sector's historical focus on single-language teaching models. This change poses challenges for the sector, which has not traditionally operated within a multilingual educational framework. The MFL Mentoring project actively supports this transition through its activities, helping to embed multilingualism in practice. Additionally, the UK's exit from the European Union sparked debate around

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[7] Evaluation of Global Futures: a plan to improve and promote international languages in Wales 2020 to 2022
[8] Gorrara, Claire (2018) *Speaking from Wales: building a modern languages community in an era of Brexit.* In: Kelly, M.(eds) Languages after Brexit. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65169-9_13
[9] *Ibid*
[10] https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/

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language skills and intercultural education in Wales to ensure Welsh businesses are prepared to work internationally[11].

Background to the Evaluation

1.16   The MFL Mentoring team based at Cardiff University commissioned Miller Research to undertake an independent evaluation of the MFL Mentoring project to understand the impact of the project and to inform the future evolution of the MFL Mentoring project. The aim of the evaluation is to establish the long-term impact of the project and to make recommendations about how best to support the international languages sector in Wales in the future, particularly in the context of the new Curriculum for Wales.

1.17   Previous evaluations of the MFL Mentoring project include:

- MFL Mentoring Evaluation 2015-2017, by Alcantara Communications
- MFL Mentoring Evaluation 2018-2019, by Alcantra Communications
- MFL Mentoring Digi-Languages Evaluation 2018, by Alcantara Communications
- MFL Mentoring Evaluation 2015-2020, by Ondata Research
- MFL Mentoring Schools Case Studies 2022, by Ondata Research.

1.18   The key findings of the previous evaluations included:

- Increased uptake of MFL by mentored learners compared to baseline and national figures, as a result of engagement with the MFL Mentoring project

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[11] Gorrara, Claire (2018) *Speaking from Wales: building a modern languages community in an era of Brexit.* In: Kelly, M.(eds) Languages after Brexit. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65169-9_13

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- Benefits of the project to learners including increased confidence, exposure to new experiences and increased ambition and career motivation

- Benefits of the project to student mentors including enhanced skills and impacts on future careers

- Improved MFL profile with senior school management, as a result of the MFL Mentoring project.

Evaluation Objectives and Research Questions

1.19 The evaluation of the MFL Mentoring project was designed to achieve three core objectives: to assess the outcomes and impacts of the project, to explore what might have occurred in the absence of the project, and to provide recommendations and lessons learned that can inform future iterations of the project as well as policy-making within the Welsh Government.

1.20 To guide the evaluation process, a series of key research questions were developed to ensure a comprehensive assessment of the project's delivery, achievements, and broader implications. These questions include:

1. What is the need for the MFL Mentoring Project?
2. What is the MFL Mentoring Project trying to achieve?
- What resource is the MFL Mentoring Project investing in order to achieve these objectives?
- What is the MFL Mentoring Project doing with the inputs in order to achieve these objectives?
3. What is being directly produced from the MFL Mentoring project activities?
4. What are the short and medium-term results from these outputs?
5. What are the long-term results from these outputs?

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1.21   By addressing these questions, the evaluation provides an evidence-based analysis of the MFL Mentoring project's contributions, challenges faced, and opportunities for future development.

Structure of this report

1.22   The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the methodology of the evaluation

- Section 3 examines the findings from the evaluation

- Section 4 focuses on key conclusions

- Section 5 provides key recommendations based on research evidence.

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2.   Evaluation Methodology

Overview of Evaluation Approach

2.1   The evaluation began with a comprehensive review of key documentation and data sources, including previous evaluation reports, strategy documents, mentor training materials, and monitoring and evaluation plans. Quantitative data, such as learner baseline surveys, mentor applications, and teacher and mentor exit surveys, were analysed to identify trends and measure the project's effects on learners, mentors, and schools.

Analytical framework (Theory of Change and Counterfactual Approach)

2.2   A Theory of Change (ToC) Logic Model was developed as part of the evaluation process to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how and why the MFL Mentoring Project achieves its intended outcomes. The ToC articulated the pathways through which change was expected to occur, mapping the project's activities to its short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals. This visualisation allowed us to examine each component of the project within its broader context and identify the preconditions, assumptions, and external factors necessary for success.

2.3   The ToC served as a critical tool for the evaluation, offering insight into the intended outcomes and impacts of the project. By clarifying the relationships between inputs (such as mentor training and resource development), activities (e.g., mentoring sessions and workshops), and desired outcomes (e.g., improved learner attitudes, increased MFL uptake, and professional development for mentors), the ToC enabled us to frame and test our hypotheses during fieldwork.

2.4   Underpinning the ToC, a counterfactual approach aimed to assess what might have occurred in the absence of the MFL Mentoring Project. By drawing on qualitative insights from stakeholders, the

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evaluation sought to identify the project's contributions and its role in addressing challenges within the language learning ecosystem in Wales.

Fieldwork

2.5 Building on the foundation of largely secondary quantitative data, the evaluation adopted a qualitative approach to gather in-depth feedback from key stakeholders, including delivery teams, teachers, mentors, learners, university staff, and education consortia leads. This included targeted fieldwork activities such as structured interviews, workshops, and learner-led peer-on-peer feedback sessions.

2.6 In all, the fieldwork comprised the following activities:

- A workshop with the delivery team
- Two workshops with university staff
- One workshop with former mentors
- Four teacher interviews
- Three interviews with current mentors
- Three interviews with former mentors
- An interview with the project academic lead
- One group interview with the education consortia
- Two mentee-led workshops.

Evaluation Approach: Key Strengths and Limitations

The State of MFL Learning in the UK

2.7 The need for the MFL Mentoring project is intrinsically linked to the broader decline in foreign language learning across the UK. This systemic trend creates challenges for the evaluation by making it difficult to isolate the project's (positive) contributions from the wider (negative) factors impacting MFL uptake nationally. While the project

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may be highly effective, its impact must be viewed within the context of this national decline, where its role has shifted from reversing the trend to pausing or slowing it down. This complicates the counterfactual assessment, as GCSE entry and attainment data over the project's lifespan might continue to reflect a declining trend, driven by systemic challenges beyond the project's control.

2.8　However, the extensive dataset collected—including qualitative insights and longitudinal survey data—adds weight to the counterfactual analysis. This rich evidence base substantiates claims about the project's impact, offering a legitimate framework for assessing additionality and attribution. The counterfactual method employed here allows the evaluation to hypothesise about what would have occurred in the absence of the project. The evaluation identifies specific outcomes that are unlikely to have come about in the absence of the project, such as increased learner confidence, shifts in attitudes toward MFL, and expanded career aspirations among both mentors and mentees. This comprehensive approach highlights the project's unique contributions, even within the context of broader systemic challenges.

Longitudinal Approach and Baseline Data Availability

2.9　The project has been running for a relatively long period of time; however, the absence of comprehensive baseline data on 'softer' outcomes—such as attitudes toward language learning—that pre-date the project's inception presents a challenge in fully measuring the extent of changes directly attributable to the MFL Mentoring project. While the surveys and research conducted for this evaluation clearly demonstrate positive shifts in learner attitudes and mentor confidence, determining the broader impact on attitudes to language learning across Wales is more complex without pre-project benchmarks for comparison.

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2.10   Nevertheless, the evaluation is supported by an extensive and detailed dataset collected throughout the project's lifespan. This dataset includes a mix of qualitative and quantitative findings—including surveys, feedback, and fieldwork—that provides a robust foundation for analysis. Furthermore, the use of longitudinal data collection and analysis has enabled the identification of trends and sustained changes over time, offering nuanced insights into the project's impact beyond isolated snapshots. This comprehensive approach enhances the reliability and depth of the evaluation findings.

Sample Representation

2.11   The evaluation relied on input from mentors, learners, and schools, with efforts made to capture diverse perspectives. For example, schools were anonymised and selected on the basis of key characteristics such as language medium, geographic location, and period of engagement with the MFL Mentoring project. This approach aimed to provide a representative cross-section of experiences and perspectives.

2.12   However, it is acknowledged that the absence of incentives for participation may have led to greater engagement from those with a stronger interest in the project or a greater availability of time to participate.

2.13   Overall, the carefully considered approach towards sampling sought to mitigate potential biases whilst recognising the inherent limitations of voluntary engagement, an issue that affects all evaluations.

Qualitative and Quantitative Balance

2.14   The evaluation draws heavily on qualitative insights from mentors, learners, teachers, and stakeholders, capturing the depth and nuance of the project's impact on participants. While such qualitative data is effective in providing a rich, contextual understanding, it is limited in establishing definitive causality or identifying quantitative trends.

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2.15 To address this, the evaluation integrates quantitative data collected by the MFL Mentoring project team. This mixed-methods approach provides a more rounded and corroborated picture of the project's impact. However, the quantitative data is limited to participating schools, and the lack of access to comparable raw data for non-participating schools restricts the ability to draw direct comparisons at a national level. Despite this limitation, the combination of qualitative and quantitative data strengthens the evaluation by triangulating findings and offering both breadth and depth of understanding.

Assumptions of the Evaluation Approach

2.16 Whilst undertaking the evaluation, there are a number of assumptions that have been made, primarily around the robustness of the available data.

Availability of Secondary Data

2.17 When utilising secondary data in the evaluation, it is our understanding that all data has been collected properly, cleaned sufficiently, and there are no user errors. This understanding is supported by the robust way in which the data has been presented and our knowledge that Cardiff University has followed established ethical processes, ensuring that data management aligns with institutional standards. Furthermore, the publication of data relating to the MFL Mentoring project adds to its credibility. It should be noted that due to Cardiff University's efforts to improve their data collection processes, some questions have been changed slightly or removed over time. For this reason, data presented throughout the report is used from a variety of dates and years.

Stakeholder Engagement

2.18   Whilst interviewing beneficiaries and stakeholders, it is assumed that the conversation is one that is honest and representative of the experiences of others. It is also assumed that those participating in interviews will be trusting of researchers to relay all elements of their experiences and that they remember all elements of their experience accurately.

Validity of Indicators

2.19   There were a number of indicators and metrics used to measure success, which reflect the intended outcomes. Although what is perceived as 'success' for the project was discussed with the MFL Mentoring project team, there is an assumption that the metrics assigned by the evaluation team (i.e. improved outcomes for mentors, mentee intent to take an MFL GCSE, A-Level, etc.) are the correct ones. Additionally, there is an informed assumption that the tools and methods used to collect data are the most reliable and valid available.

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3. Findings

Perspectives from Teachers and Mentees

Role and Involvement of Teachers:

3.1 In each year of the MFL project, a learner baseline survey was circulated by the MFL Mentoring team to participating teachers, providing these teachers – and the team – with an understanding of the likelihood of different learners opting to choose an MFL GCSE. This (alongside teachers' own knowledge and understanding of their learners) informed which learners were chosen to take part in the mentoring project (typically focusing on those who are unsure of their likelihood to take an MFL GCSE). Teachers reflected positively on this process.

3.2 Teachers had a clear understanding of their expectations in supporting mentors, including the process of communicating with the mentor prior to any sessions taking place, alongside the need for teachers to support both mentors and learners throughout the project.

3.3 It was noted that some teachers were more proactive than others when it came to supporting mentors. In one instance, a teacher described having provided the mentor with an introductory phone call, a tour of the school, and an explanation of the school's processes and procedures. This was in contrast to the simple e-mail exchange that most teachers had with mentors, as shared with the evaluators. Teachers mentioned that the email exchange, surveying and other administrative elements of the project can already be draining on their already limited time, and others were not aware that their role might include further support such as school tours etc.

Motivations for involvement

3.4 Teachers and schools were largely motivated to take part in the project as a result of existing low uptake of MFL in their schools. They

cited the need to raise the profile and increase awareness of the value of languages. Teachers wanted to bring an external influence (i.e.: an MFL mentor) into their school, to showcase the skills and potential opportunities that learning languages can create.

3.5   Some teachers stated that the project was just one part of wider efforts to promote languages in schools, believing that the mentoring should form a wider package of efforts to improve the number of learners taking a MFL GCSE or A-Level.

3.6   Though the primary motivation for engaging with the project remained the promotion of languages and the need to improve uptake of MFL qualifications, teachers also commented that the mentoring support has enabled learners who may *not* end up choosing to take a language for GCSE to still value the three years[12] spent learning an MFL and to recognise the transferrable skills they have acquired in doing so. One teacher, from a school that has been involved with the project for seven years, said:

> "...part of it also was for the students who don't end up take language taking languages for GCSE, making sure that they value the three years of the language that they've had and seeing that they got transferable skills".

3.7   Other teachers noted the project's value in engaging with learners who might not usually have such opportunities, for example one teacher from an English-medium school that has been involved with the project for three years said:

> "What I really like about this project is that it tracks those middle learners... this project focuses on those middle-of-the-road pupils— students who maybe haven't had the same opportunities. They might not have had the experience of going abroad or meeting someone who speaks a different language, for instance".

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[12] I.e.: Years 7, 8 and 9.

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Attitudes Towards Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

3.8   Mentees themselves reported a shift in the value they placed on MFL, with many acquiring a greater recognition of the advantages of learning a language, including better career opportunities, an increased cultural understanding when visiting other countries, and an enjoyable learning experience. One mentee commented on their shift in perspectives toward MFL lessons themselves; "I see languages as a more fun lesson now". This greater appreciation of languages aligns with survey findings, where 79% of mentees agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring has made them more interested in languages outside of school.

Figure 3.1: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Mentee Exit survey for mentees to the question: To what extent do you agree with the statement: 'The mentoring has made me more interested in languages and culture outside of school

The mentoring has made me more interested in languages and culture outside of school
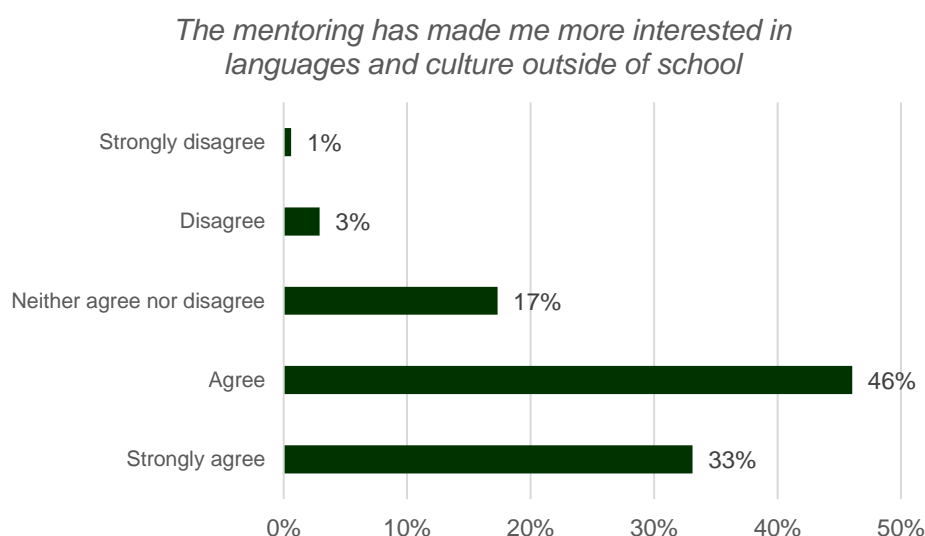
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for mentees, no of respondents = 2298 (2020-2023)

3.9   Teachers also reported a change in mentees' attitudes and behaviours once they had engaged in the mentoring project. Teachers had observed that mentees viewed languages more positively, became more engaged in the classroom, and demonstrated greater awareness of languages as a transferrable skill. One teacher reported that upon hearing positive stories of the

mentoring scheme from the mentees, other learners in the school became interested in taking part during the next term.

3.10 Although teachers expressed it was difficult to separate the impact of the mentoring scheme from other activities that had been undertaken to encourage language uptake, all felt that the MFL Mentoring project had in some way contributed to mentees' likelihood to take an international language subject for GCSE with one saying:

> "It's something that I would love to continue doing as part of our plan to sustain languages and keep languages going".

3.11 The reflections from teachers are in alignment with data captured in MFL Mentoring Exit Surveys by the MFL Mentoring project, where 45% of mentees and 46% of teachers felt that engagement with the project had increased likelihood of taking / uptake of MFL in schools. (Figures 3.2 and 3.3).

3.12 One teacher said:

> "A number of pupils have definitely said it's one of the reasons why they decided to take the subject… it definitely has a positive impact."

Figure 3.2: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Mentee Exit survey for mentees to the question: To what extent do you agree with the statement: 'Mentoring has made me more likely to take a modern foreign language for GCSE'

Mentoring has made me more likely to take a modern foreign language for GCSE

Strongly disagree	3%
Disagree	14%
Neither agree nor disagree	39%
Agree	31%
Strongly agree	14%
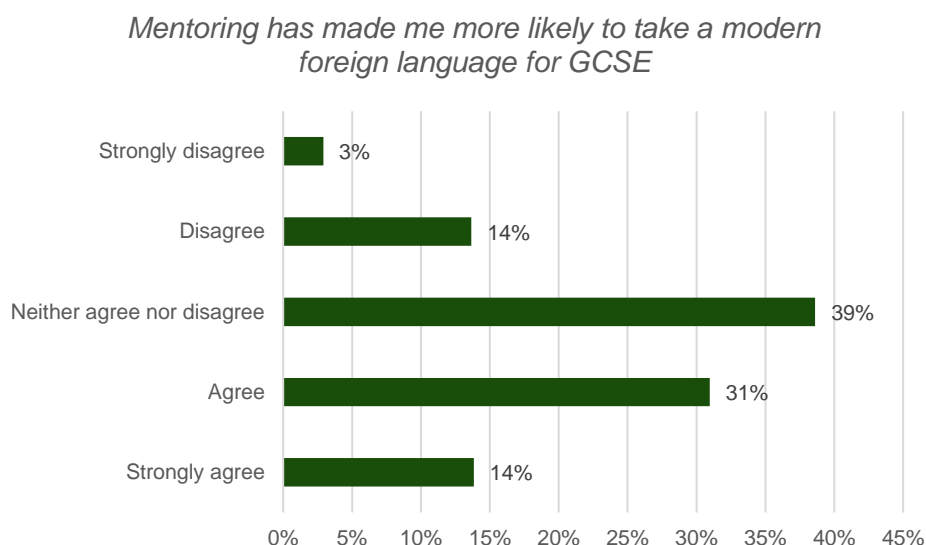
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for mentees, no of respondents = 549 (2020-2021)

Figure 3.3: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Teacher Exit survey for teachers to the question: To what extent do you agree with the statement: 'Participation in the project has had a positive impact on uptake for GCSE this year

Participation in the project has had a positive impact on uptake for GCSE this year

Strongly disagree	1%
Disagree	7%
Neither agree nor disagree	46%
Agree	33%
Strongly agree	13%
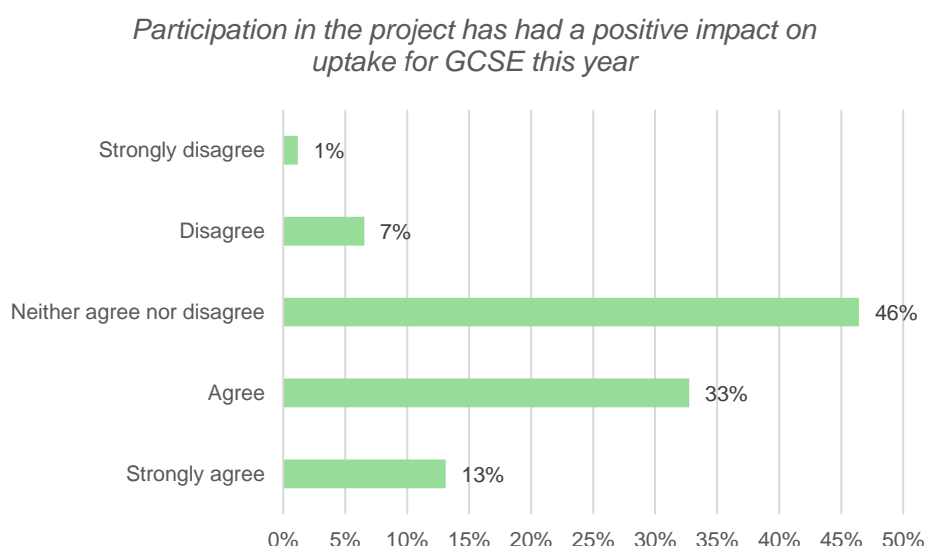
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for teachers, no of respondents = 168 (2021-2024)

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Impact on Learner Trajectories and Engagement:

3.13   Teachers observed that even just being chosen to take part in the MFL Mentoring project created a 'boost' in the self-confidence of prospective mentees. Teachers also reported that when learners with additional learning needs (such as ASD) or behavioural problems were given the chance to participate as mentees, and their learning needs considered and communicated to mentors ahead of the sessions, they too had a positive experience.

3.14   One teacher who has been involved in the project for four years - speaking of the mentees that participated in the project - shared that mentees who previously might have achieved lower grades became more confident and obtained higher grades:

> "For those learners getting lower grades, they're achieving the top marks they can on their speaking papers. They're able to converse and hold a conversation, and that's what matters most."

3.15   Upon mentees themselves reflecting on their experiences during the mentoring project, they felt that their communication skills had improved and that they were more comfortable in social settings – generally expressing an increase in confidence and interpersonal skills:

> "Yes. I've got more social skills now, so it's been better".
>
> "I think communication skills have gone up a bit more".

3.16   This aligned with survey results showing that 70% of mentees agreed that the mentoring has made them feel more confident in their MFL classes (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Mentee Exit Survey for mentees to the question: To what extent do you agree with the statement: 'Mentoring has made me feel more confident in my modern foreign language classes'

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Mentoring has made me feel more confident in my modern foreign language classes

Category	Percentage
Strongly disagree	1%
Disagree	4%
Neither agree nor disagree	26%
Agree	45%
Strongly agree	25%
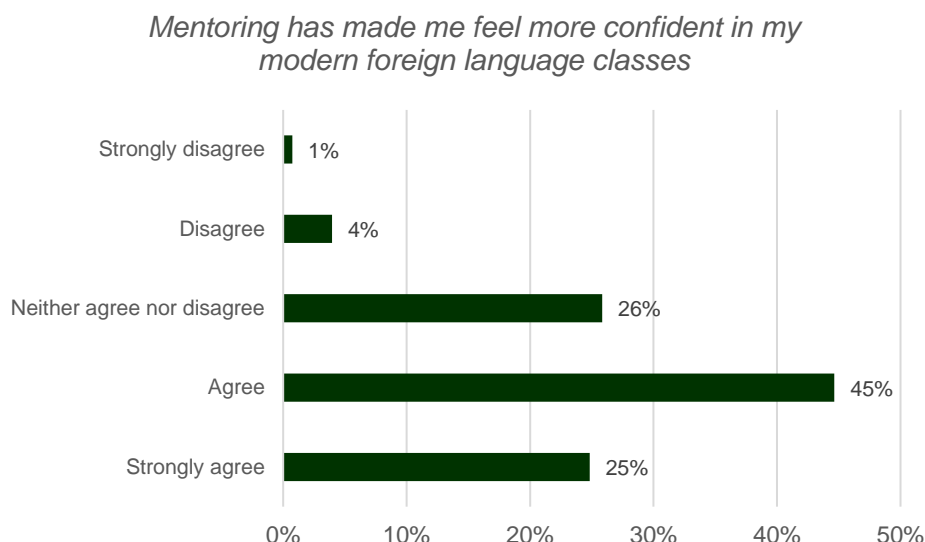
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for mentees, no of respondents = 2296 (2020-2023)

3.17   Teachers' insights into the future aspirations of learners as a result of the scheme were limited, although some observed mentors sharing stories of their experiences in university and during their time abroad with mentees. One teacher commented that they had heard some mentors talking positively about the opportunity to work and/or study in another country, which they considered likely to have had a beneficial impact on mentees. However, it is important to note that teachers are not necessarily present during mentoring sessions, as mentors hold Enhanced DBS checks, allowing them to work directly with students unsupervised. Teacher presence in sessions also has the potential to disrupt the relationship-building process, which is crucial for understanding learner motivations and barriers to engagement with language learning. Therefore, where teachers have provided feedback, it may be based on school policy decisions requiring their attendance, or reflections they have gathered indirectly from mentees or mentors after the sessions.

3.18   Direct reflections from mentees during the qualitative interview on future aspirations were also limited; however, one mentioned directly that they now wish to go to university as a result of the mentoring scheme. Moreover, the survey results overtly reflect the positive

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impact of the scheme on mentees' own ambitions, with 58% of respondents agreeing (32%) or agreeing strongly (26%) that the scheme had made them think about going to university in the future (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Mentee Exit Survey for mentees to the question: To what extent do you agree with the statement: 'The mentoring made me think about going to university in the future'

The mentoring made me think about going to university in the future
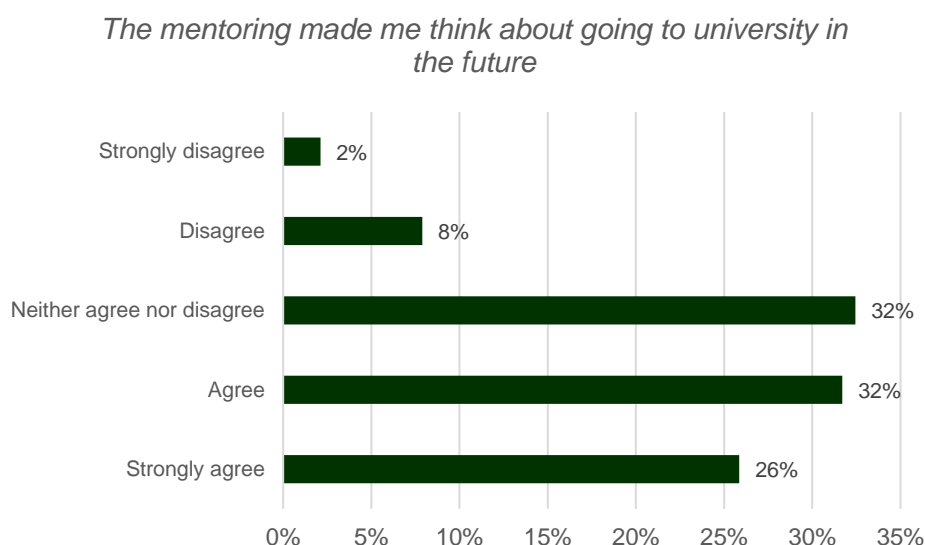
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for mentees, no of respondents = 1748 (2022-2023)

3.19   Teacher survey responses were also positive about the project's impact on mentee career aspirations, with 64% believing it has been effective in improving their aspirations to go to university (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Teacher Exit Survey for teachers to the question: How effective do you think the project has been on improving pupils aspirations to go to university in general?

How effective do you think the project has been on improving pupils aspirations to go to university in general?
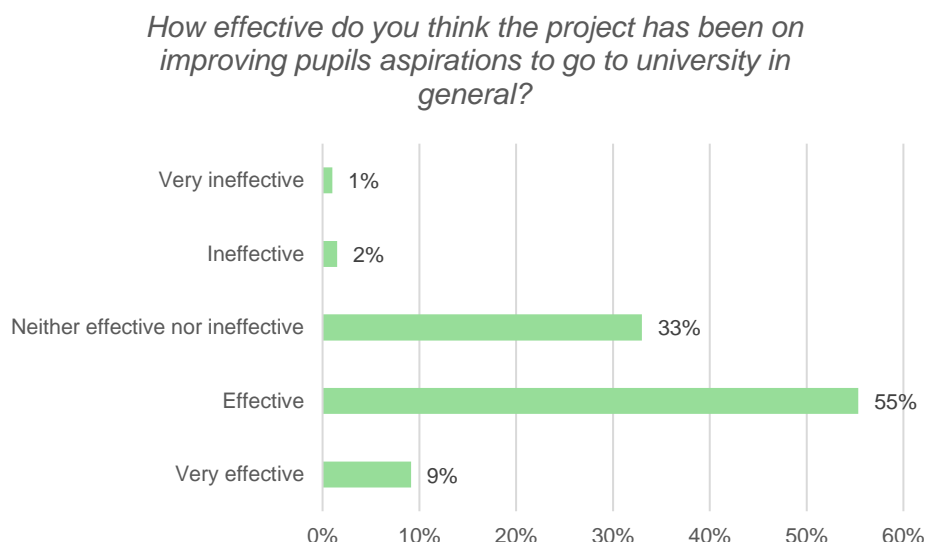
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for teachers, no of respondents = 197 (2019-2024)

3.20   Generally, teachers did not identify any patterns in the demographics of mentees who were most likely to engage with the mentoring scheme. One teacher however, noted that the more academic learners tended to value and benefit from the experience more:

   "It tends to be more academic learners get more out of it because it a bit more engaged and a bit more worldly and have a bit more experience that they can link onto."

3.21   Their positive sentiment aligns with survey results, where 84% of mentees and 96% of teachers indicated they were likely to recommend the project to others (Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.7: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Mentee Exit Survey for mentees to the question: How likely are you to recommend the mentoring sessions to others?

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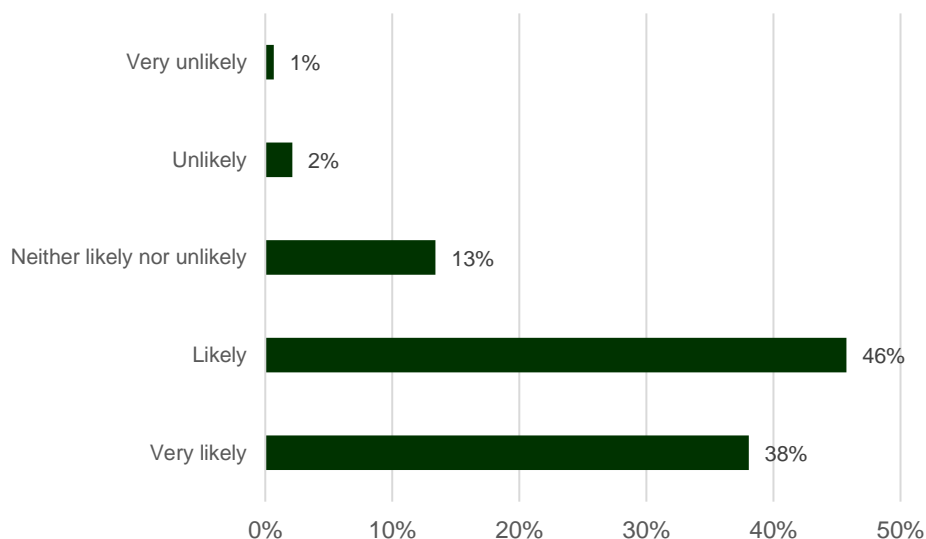
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for mentees, no of respondents = 1926 (2021-2023)

Figure 3.8: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Teacher Exit Survey for teachers to the question: How likely are you to recommend the mentoring sessions to others?
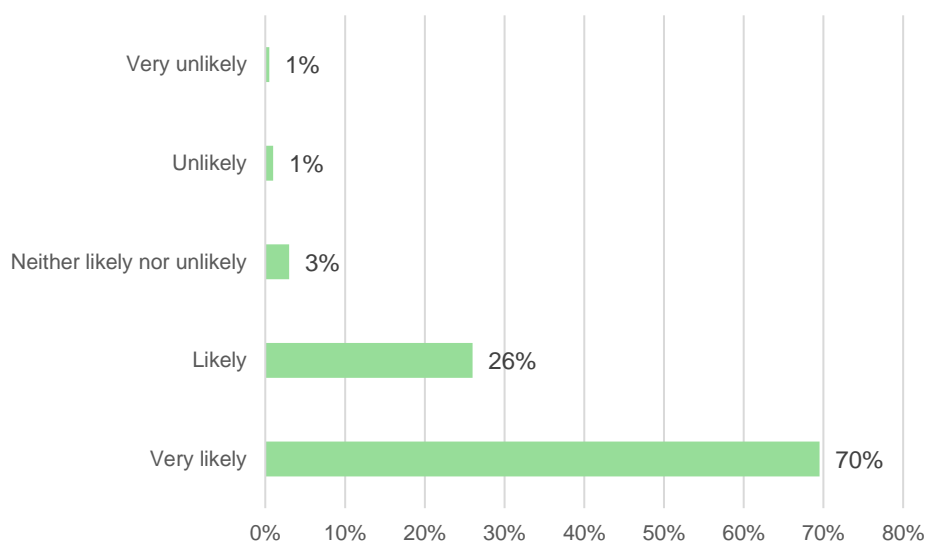
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for teachers, no of respondents = 200 (2019-2024)

Perspectives from Mentors

Skill Development and Experiences:

3.22 All of the mentors participating in interviews reported that their confidence had improved as a result of the mentoring project, whether that be through having to communicate with teachers, through using their presentation skills, or through the need to improvise when working with mentees:

"I think just standing in front of a class for the first time, doing all those things, it definitely increased my confidence. Public speaking skills to boot … Really, I felt much more confident afterwards." (Mentor)

3.23 Alongside confidence in presenting and communicating, mentors reported generally becoming more assured in their abilities (e.g. their own language learning, problem-solving, and adapting to different classroom dynamics), which contributed to their overall personal and professional development.

3.24 Although a number of mentors had aspirations to work in teaching or with children in future, some used the mentoring project as a 'trial' to understand whether or not working in schools was something they would definitely pursue. The MFL Mentoring project for them provided an opportunity to explore whether or not working in schools was what they imagined it might be, particularly for those wishing to teach international languages in future.

3.25 Some shared that they found employment after being involved in the project, and attributed it at least in part to the experience and skills they had acquired as Language and Culture mentors, given that they had been able to evidence these transferable skills during job interviews:

"even if you don't want to go into teaching, I think [being a mentor] really increases your confidence, your resilience in going for jobs in the future." (Mentor)

3.26 This is further evidenced with the mentoring outcomes survey, which also showed that 99% of mentors felt that the project had equipped them with skills they could use in their future endeavours (Figure 3.9).

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Figure 3.9: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Mentor Exit Survey for mentors to the question: To what extent do you agree with the statement 'The project has equipped me with skills I can use outside the project'

The project has equipped me with skills I can use outside the project

Strongly disagree	0%
Disagree	0%
Neither agree nor disagree	0%
Strongly agree	26%
Strongly agree	73%
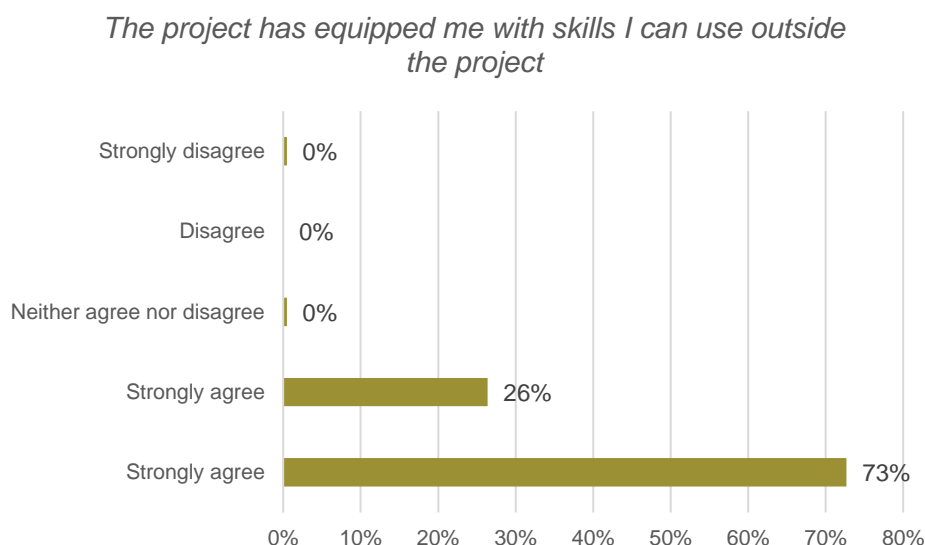
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for mentors, no of respondents = 216 (2021-2023)

Outcomes and Impact

3.27   All current and previous mentors involved in the evaluation process described a positive experience of engaging with the MFL Mentoring project team and the project overall. They also reflected on the positive impact of being a mentor on their own education and future career aspirations

3.28   The MFL Mentoring project is not principally designed to encourage mentors to pursue teaching or a career in education. Nonetheless, the evidence from both the primary and secondary research suggests that mentors became interested in teaching or working with children in some capacity in the future following their involvement in the MFL Mentoring project, having not necessarily previously considered this career pathway:

> "I do believe teaching is something I'll get into eventually. I'm now tutoring on the side." (Mentor)

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"I've always wanted to teach – [being a mentor with the MFL Project] really cemented this idea." (Mentor)

3.29   Two-thirds (66%) of mentors agreed that the project had made them consider going into teaching, with only 10% disagreeing (Figure 3.10).

3.30   One former mentor shared that they have gone on to become a teacher and still apply not just the skills they acquired during their time mentoring, but also the resources that were shared by the MFL Mentoring project team as part of their training to be a mentor. Another mentor who went onto work at a summer camp noted that they were able to observe the difference in professionalism between themselves and another colleague, which they put down to the training they had received during their time with the MFL Mentoring project.

Figure 3.10: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Mentor Exit Survey for mentors to the question: To what extent do you agree with the statement 'The project has made me consider going into teaching'

The project has made me consider going into teaching
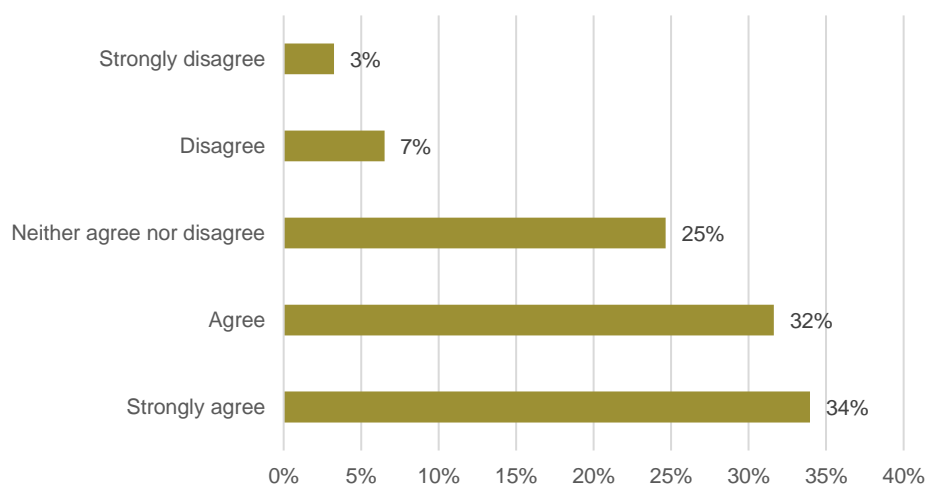
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for mentors, no of respondents = 215 (2021-2023)

3.31   When speaking with mentors, the most frequently mentioned skill that they had acquired through mentoring was communication, presentation skills and the ability to work in a school setting – this is in line with survey results (Figure 3.11). Those who had shadowed a

teacher and had gained a good grasp of school functions and procedures (for example, reporting safeguarding concerns or health and safety procedures) reported feeling more relaxed within school settings and therefore more confident in their role as a mentor.

Figure 3.11: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Mentor Exit Survey for mentors to the question: What employability skills do you think participating in the project has helped you develop?

What employability skills do you think participating in the project has helped you develop?
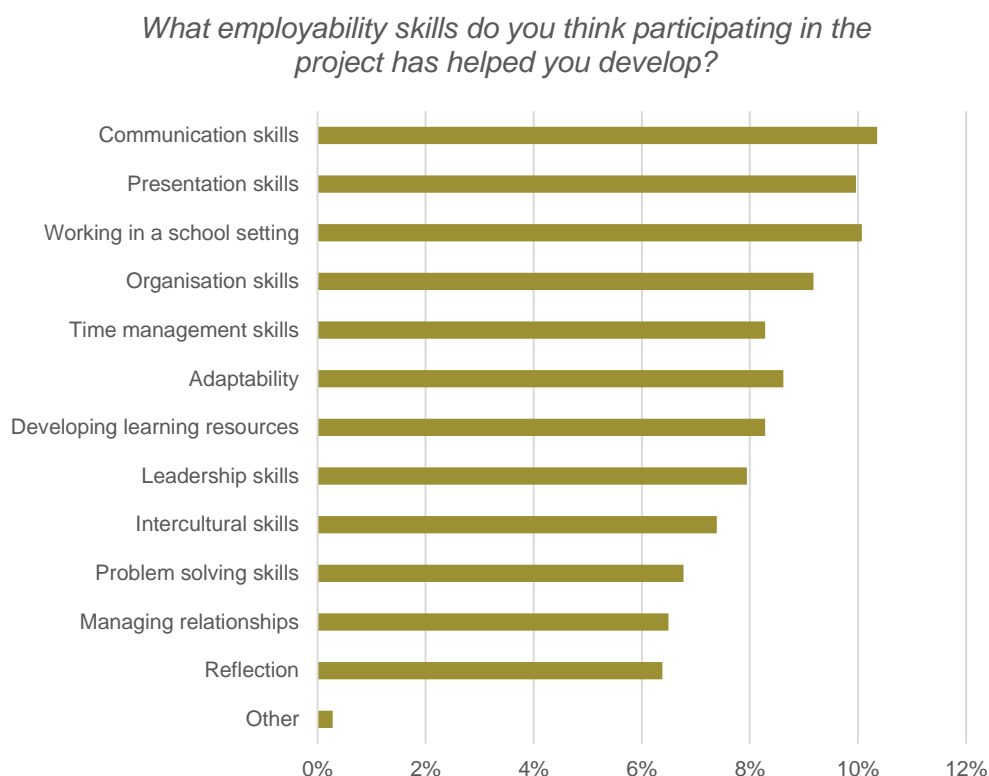
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for mentors (2021-2023)

3.32   Wider and unexpected outcomes for mentors included an increased understanding of the Welsh language, culture and its history (particularly for international students studying in Welsh universities) as well as the ability to understand safeguarding processes in other roles. One mentor also mentioned that the project had made her confident in her *own* language skills, having questioned her ability in the past.

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Communication and Collaboration

Effectiveness of Coordination:

3.33   Cardiff University's delivery of the MFL Mentoring project includes a comprehensive framework designed to support both mentors and schools. Resources provided to mentors include detailed training sessions, mentoring guidelines, and activity templates tailored to engage learners in global languages and cultures-based experiences. Schools receive clear guidance on integrating mentoring sessions into their schedules, ensuring alignment with their curriculum timetables. Teachers valued the resources and training provided, as well as the adaptability of the project team, with one describing the MFL Mentoring scheme overall as "irreplaceable."

Student Induction and Mentor Support:

3.34   Student induction into mentoring begins with a two-day intensive training session held at Cardiff University or Bangor University, which mentors found to be particularly valuable and enjoyable. These sessions focus on building cultural awareness, interactive mentoring methods tailored to engage learners in language and culture-based learning experiences, as well as safeguarding and role-specific skills. The mentors appreciated the structure and content of these training sessions, noting that they provided essential preparation and developed confidence in their roles, as well as introduced them to useful practical tools and materials (e.g. materials on different ways of introducing cultural awareness to mentoring sessions, games involving idioms and concepts like the Iceberg Theory).

Figure 3.12: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Mentor Exit Survey for mentors to the question: How useful did you find the session plans provided by the project team?

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How useful did you find the session plans provided by the project team?

Very useless	0%
Useless	0%
Neither useful not useless	0%
Useful	28%
Very useful	72%
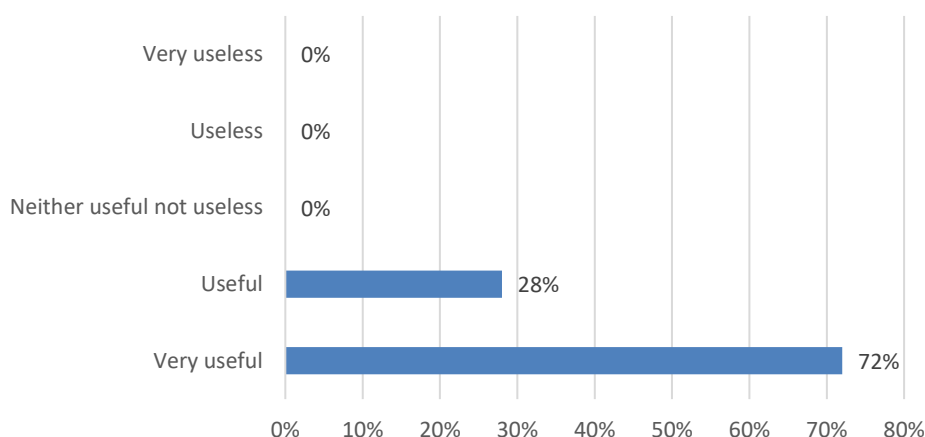
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for mentors, no of respondents = 173 (2022-2023)

3.35   Ahead of their placement in schools, mentors benefitted from pre-prepared PowerPoint presentations, session plans , and interactive activities, such as language puzzles, music quizzes, which they independently adapted to enhance their sessions, once they started mentoring. Session timetables provided directly by schoolteachers, along with detailed fact sheets about schools provided by the project team, further enhanced mentors' confidence and preparedness. One teacher from an English-medium school that has been with the MFL Mentoring project for seven years explained, "I always meet them virtually first to get to know them, ask questions, and address any worries or concerns about the school. I also let them know what resources we have on hand." This is an example of best practice delivered through the project.

3.36   Mentors also noted the flexibility of the project in matching them to schools based on geographical proximity, which eased the logistical challenges. As one mentor stated, "Glesni was really helpful in finding me a school very close, so I didn't have to drive." The alignment of mentors and schools in terms of proximity and respective schedules,

coupled with the flexibility to adapt to both parties' needs, was highlighted as a particular strength.

3.37   Building on this solid foundation, a small number of mentors expressed a desire for dedicated space and time to collaborate, share experiences, and exchange best practices from their sessions[13]. While the training equips them with essential tools and techniques for running sessions, ongoing peer support could provide an additional layer of confidence and practical support. Such a forum would also allow mentors to ask questions they might not feel comfortable raising directly with the project team. It would also help cultivate a sense of community and connection among mentors, thereby reinforcing their collective passion for languages education.

Successes and Challenges in Coordination:

3.38   Strong collaboration with schools ensured that mentoring sessions were effectively integrated within the school day, aligning with existing timetables and curriculum requirements.. Schools with small (sometimes one-person) language departments particularly valued the project's support in filling resource gaps and making mentoring sessions accessible within school schedules to minimise disruption. However, some teachers expressed a desire for more information about session topics to better integrate mentoring into their curricula. One teacher that had been involved with the project since its inception, noted:

"It would be good to have more information on the [mentoring session] topics so teachers might weave this into their teaching."

3.39   Whilst acknowledging this feedback, it is important to note that the mentoring resources have been developed by the project team

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[13] Note, the MFL Mentoring project runs reflection workshops every January for mentors to discuss any issues and share mentoring techniques with their Project Coordinator. Mentors are also able to attend mingle events organised throughout the year by other mentors. It is likely therefore that the minority of mentors who made the point about needing time and space to collaborate with other mentors are unaware of these existing opportunities.

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specifically for mentoring purposes and therefore differ from standard teaching materials. Designed to foster learner engagement and relationship-building, these resources are not intended to align directly with curriculum delivery. However, teachers do have access to a separate suite of dedicated teaching resources, also created by the project team, which can be downloaded from the project's website.

3.40   Teachers typically reported that mentoring sessions were scheduled within their existing MFL lessons, although in some cases, collaboration with other departments enabled sessions to be scheduled during other classes, such as Welsh language lessons. Teachers appreciated this adaptability but experienced difficulties arranging sessions due to practical challenges within schools, such as finding appropriate rooms, addressing technological difficulties, or managing equipment shortages during online delivery.

3.41   Feedback from teachers also highlighted that a full one-hour session could sometimes lead to learner disengagement or agitation, suggesting that alternative formats or varied session lengths might better maintain learner focus. However, it is important to note that the length of a mentoring session can range between 30 to 60 minutes, with flexibility for teachers and mentors to collaboratively decide the most suitable duration based on the needs of the learners and the school. Overall, mentees themselves responded positively to the content of the sessions.

3.42   While the project's overall structure was effective, a minority of mentors experienced challenges coordinating sessions during busy periods during their own degree courses or managing large groups without additional support[14]. In a few cases, feedback highlighted the need for more preparatory information about individual learner preferences and school environments to help mentors effectively adapt their approach. However, this information is expected to be

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[14] Group mentoring (where the school teacher is not present) are meant to take place with a maximum of 8-10 learners. Therefore, this point (made by only one mentor) is likely to reflect their perspective of what constitutes a "large" group.

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provided by teachers, who have been asked to discuss these aspects with their mentors prior to the sessions. Mentors are expected to engage with teachers to understand learner preferences and the school environment, as this is not an area the project team can directly address. Practical examples from best practice cases, as cited above, suggest that early communication and the provision of detailed information can effectively address these challenges.

3.43   Both teachers and mentors praised the project for its effective communication channels. Many cited the responsiveness and approachability of the project team, highlighting regular updates and accessible points of contact. Mentors valued ongoing support through feedback forms and post-session check-ins, which enabled them to refine their delivery of mentoring sessions and feel supported throughout the process.

Figure 3.13: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Mentor Exit Survey for mentors to the question: How supportive did you find your Project Coordinator?

How supportive did you find your Project Coordinator?

Very unsupportive	0%
Unsupportive	0%
Neither supportive nor unsupportive	1%
Supportive	10%
Very supportive	89%
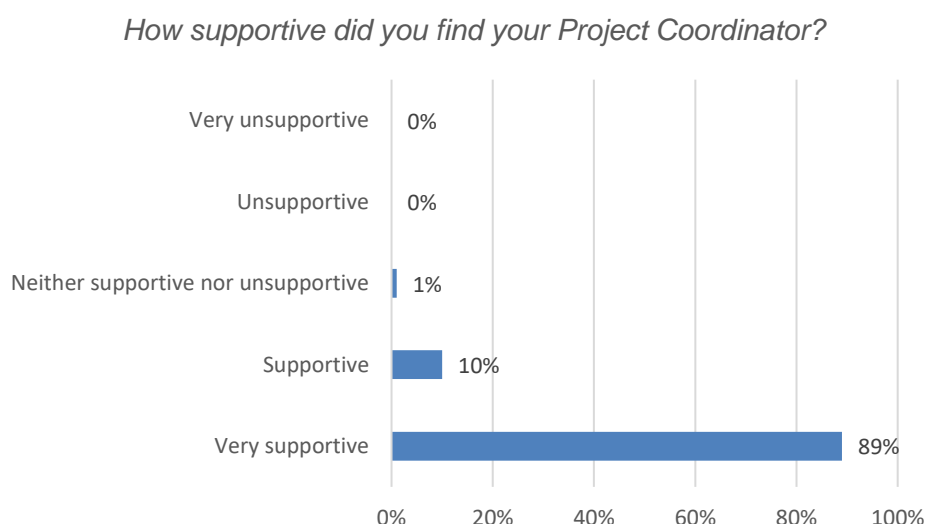
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for mentors, no of respondents = 216 (2021-2023)

3.44   One former mentor who had been with the scheme for two years noted; "The support was fantastic! Especially the ongoing emails and calls from Glesni. It wasn't just about mentoring but also general

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support with the university, which was incredibly helpful." The warm and supportive approach of the project team reassured younger and less experienced mentors, reducing their initial anxiety. Teachers also noted the reliability of the team's safeguarding processes and the clarity of their communications.

Figure 3.14: Survey results from the MFL Mentoring Teacher Exit Survey outcomes survey for teachers to the question: How supportive did you find your Project Coordinator?

How supportive did you find your Project Coordinator?
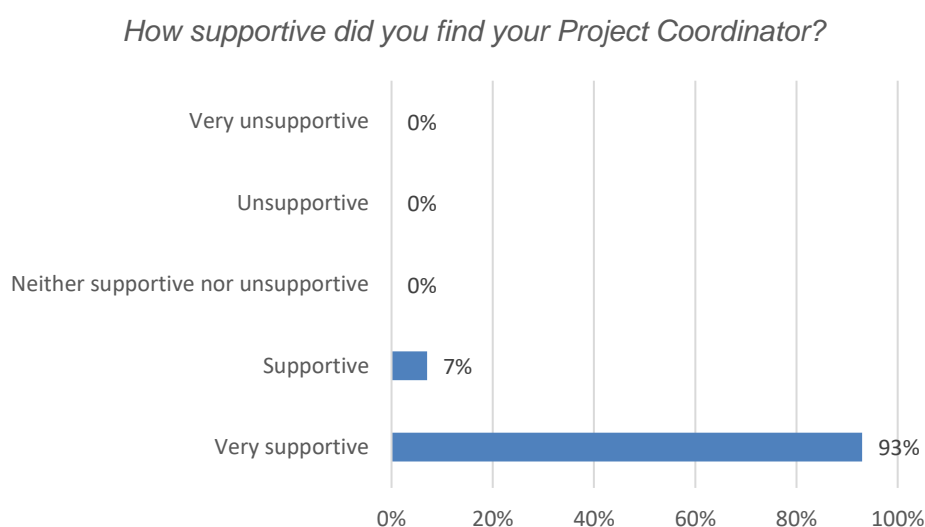
Source: MFL Mentoring survey for teachers, no of respondents = 165 (2021-2024)

3.45   Teachers did, however, provide a few suggestions for enhancing individual mentoring sessions and overall project delivery, including:

- Offering alternative activities, such as trips to universities or larger sessions focused on specific languages, to cater to a broader range of learners.[15]

- Prioritising in-person sessions where possible, as teachers felt these often had a greater impact on learners. Indeed, as of 2023,

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[15] It is worth noting that the project previously offered university visits prior to COVID-19; however, funds were repurposed from 2020 onwards to enable engagement with a greater number of schools. As interest increased, the project prioritised working with more schools over offering university trips. Additionally, while larger language-focused sessions are not a core aspect of the project, full-class workshops are available, and schools can opt to engage with these.

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the project returned to offering predominantly face-to-face mentoring sessions, with the large majority of schools now receiving in-person support.

Communication of the Project to Learners:

3.46   Overall, learners appreciated the mentoring sessions' content, particularly the engaging activities surrounding food and music, which they found particularly enjoyable. In a minority of cases, however, some learners reported uncertainty about the background, context, and purpose of the MFL Mentoring project at the outset.

3.47   One learner shared that when they were initially selected and called out of the classroom to participate, they thought they were in trouble: "I wasn't excited because I didn't know what was going on. I was called down and I thought we were going to get told off." In contrast, one teacher noted that learners selected for the project were told they had been individually "chosen" by the MFL Mentoring project , with the aim being to make them feel special and boost their confidence.

3.48   This feedback highlights a gap in communication with learners, which can lead to confusion and misunderstanding around the scheme's design and purpose. To address this, learners suggested incorporating more information into slide decks and / or hand outs to clearly explain the MFL Mentoring project and its rationale. They also recommended clearer communication about the mentor's role and the session objectives, i.e. one learner commented, "I think she [the mentor] could have told us more about the project and what she's doing it for."

3.49   These insights emphasise the importance of a more robust introduction and contextualisation of MFL Mentoring to improve learners' understanding and engagement.

Observed Impacts and Alignment with Strategic Objectives

Observed Impacts on Learners:

3.50   The evidence consistently highlights the positive influence of the MFL Mentoring project on learners' attitudes towards and confidence in language learning. Teachers frequently noted that learners demonstrated a greater willingness to engage with languages, often showing increased enthusiasm both during and after mentoring sessions. Mentors echoed these observations, recounting instances where shy or disengaged learners became more active participants in the sessions as they progressed. One mentor shared that, "By the end of the sessions, even the quieter students were asking questions and contributing."

3.51   Teachers emphasised how the presence of mentors provided learners with unique insights into the real-life applications of language skills, sparking curiosity and engagement. As one teacher explained, "It opened up discussions about what everyday life is like in different places and showed them a different perspective."

3.52   Learners' testimonials further support these findings. One learner remarked, "I see languages as a lot more fun lesson now because of that one lesson that she gave us. [I liked] the random words." Interactive and creative activities, such as exploring food culture, playing idiom-based games, and incorporating music, emerged as particularly effective tools for capturing learners' interest and making language learning feel relatable. These activities enabled learners to connect languages to their own experiences and interests, fostering a more positive perception of language learning.

Other Unexpected Outcomes:

3.53   A recurring theme among these learners was a newfound confidence in their ability to use languages and a better understanding of the practical benefits of language skills. For example, one learner shared, "It's better when you go on holidays so you can understand the locals a bit more." Another added, "I see languages as being very beneficial

because you can get paid more in your jobs." Teachers noted that learners frequently returned from sessions with a heightened awareness of the importance of languages in global contexts, and some even expressed an eagerness to explore languages outside the typical international languages offer, such as Italian, Korean, or Mandarin.

3.54 For some learners, mentoring sessions introduced the idea of lifelong language learning, reframing languages as a skill that could be pursued independently even if not part of their formal studies. One teacher highlighted this shift, explaining how mentors emphasised that "not being able to study [a language] in school doesn't mean you can't study it at university." Other learners began to see language skills as transferable and relevant to future career opportunities, such as international business or travel-related industries.

3.55 Additionally, the project has had an impact on learners' broader educational and personal development. Some learners, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, benefited from the recognition and confidence boost of participating in the mentoring sessions. One teacher noted, "Not all of them will be converted, but the fact they got chosen gives them a boost." For many, this sense of inclusion fostered greater engagement with school and learning overall.

3.56 Beyond academic choices, the project's influence extended to learners' personal growth. Many demonstrated increased confidence, improved communication skills, and a more positive outlook on language learning. As one teacher summarised, "They come back enthused and asking questions."

Stakeholder Insights on Strategic Alignment:

3.57 University staff, education consortia and the MFL Mentoring project delivery team emphasised the project's alignment with the Welsh Government's Global Futures strategy and its contribution to strategic

goals. At the heart of this alignment is the project's role in promoting multilingualism, a core tenet of the strategy, as well as fostering global citizenship among learners in Wales.

3.58   The recruitment of student mentors for the MFL Mentoring project has revealed a nuanced tension between the legacy structures of university language departments and the evolving needs of the project. Historically, the leadership and recruitment for MFL Mentoring were concentrated within modern languages departments, reflecting a structure suited to the project's initial focus. However, the recruitment landscape has broadened significantly since then, now engaging university students from across different academic disciplines to reflect the interdisciplinary relevance of language skills and intercultural skills and curiosity.

3.59   University staff highlighted that while modern language professors traditionally serve as project leads within their respective institutions, this structure increasingly limits adaptability given the changing profile of mentor applicants. Many mentors now come from non-MFL fields such as STEM, social sciences, and the arts, drawn by the project's emphasis on transferable skills and personal development. Despite this shift, feedback from long-standing university staff involved with the MFL project since its inception highlights a certain tension within the legacy structure. While the involvement of international language professors as project leads remains critical—as they provide subject-specific expertise and institutional knowledge—the entrenchment of this legacy structure may limit opportunities to engage with broader university departments. Broadening collaboration across disciplines could bring diverse perspectives and skills to enrich the mentoring process, complementing the core strengths of the international languages focus.

3.60   It should however be acknowledged that university language staff face existential challenges that add urgency to their involvement. The financial crisis affecting higher education has placed language departments under considerable pressure, with funding cuts

threatening their viability. Staff in these departments have a vested interest in promoting MFL uptake, as the project addresses systemic declines in language study.

3.61 The project's adaptation to recruit mentors from non-MFL backgrounds demonstrates its flexibility and responsiveness to the realities of modern education and employment trends. By leveraging interdisciplinary opportunities and addressing the constraints of legacy structures, the project can continue to balance its historic foundations with innovative approaches to mentor recruitment and delivery. This adaptability is essential not only for the project's success but also for sustaining the broader objectives of promoting multilingualism and global citizenship within Wales.

Synergies Between MFL and Welsh Language Education

3.62 The MFL Mentoring project is uniquely positioned to foster synergies between MFL and Welsh language education. Stakeholders highlighted that Wales' bilingual identity offers a strong foundation for promoting multilingualism and expanding international language learning. For example, some mentors recognised the inherent advantage that Welsh-speaking children have in language learning, with one observing that "Welsh has been a big help – bilingual children just do some things automatically. They know the orders of language changes, like [masculine and feminine] grammar." By integrating Welsh, English, and international languages into a balanced and complementary framework, the project supports the broader ethos of the Curriculum for Wales and its vision for learners to become "citizens of Wales and the world."

3.63 Additionally, introducing international languages at the primary level presents a critical synergy. While stakeholders noted a lack of existing support for primary-level MFL education, the project's mentoring framework could fill this gap, offering both resources and training to practitioners. Some university staff suggested that aligning the project

with Welsh language initiatives at the primary stage could further amplify its impact. Indeed, the MFL Mentoring project team piloted primary-level mentoring in the Autumn/Winter term of 2024, funded externally by the University of South Wales (USW). Additionally, the project's partner initiative, Love Reading, aims to inspire learners in primary schools to embrace reading in both English and Cymraeg, fostering a love of literature and expanding their worldview through a reading lens. This involvement in primary education demonstrates the MFL Mentoring project's unique position to create a pipeline of learners who are familiar with and enthusiastic about learning multiple languages.

4. Challenges and Barriers

Funding

4.1 One significant issue identified – and highlighted in previous evaluations of the MFL Mentoring project – is the challenge posed by its annual funding cycle. This issue is not unique to the MFL Mentoring project but also applies to other initiatives under the Global Futures Strategy and across government-funded projects more broadly. The reliance on short-term funding creates a precarious environment that threatens the project's sustainability and limits its ability to plan strategically for the long term.

4.2 The implications of annual funding cycles are far-reaching. For staff, the uncertainty surrounding contract renewals can lead to instability and a lack of continuity, as skilled employees may seek positions with greater job security. This risk of turnover undermines the project's capacity to retain institutional knowledge developed over ten years. Additionally, the delivery team is forced to prioritise short-term objectives over long-term strategic growth, curbing the potential for innovation and cross-disciplinary expansion.

4.3 The precarious and continuous short-term funding situation stands in contrast to the project's steady long-term evolution and proven track record of success over its ten-years of delivery.

GCSE Option Blocks

4.4 The structure of GCSE options blocks poses a significant challenge for the MFL Mentoring project's goal of increasing uptake in international languages. Schools will organise subjects into fixed option groups, where learners must choose between disciplines. This arrangement frequently places languages in direct competition with other popular subjects, limiting the number of learners able to select international languages even if they are interested.

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4.5   Teachers noted that this system disproportionately affects learners who express an interest in languages but are also drawn to other subjects in the same block. Despite the project's success in fostering enthusiasm for languages, these structural constraints remain a significant barrier to converting interest in international languages into actual uptake at GCSE level. For example, one teacher explained, "We take a straw poll and anticipate getting around 28 pupils, but when the option blocks are finalised, we usually end up with 16 to 24. So, we definitely lose some learners along the way."

4.6   Logistical pressures within schools, such as timetabling conflicts and the limited availability of language teachers, exacerbate this issue.

Digital Delivery Constraints

4.7   While online mentoring expanded accessibility, it introduced new challenges specific to remote delivery. Teachers often had to leave classes early to set up online sessions, reducing session durations from one hour to approximately 40 minutes. This reduction, combined with technical difficulties—such as a lack of suitable rooms or connectivity issues—occasionally disrupted sessions.

On-site Delivery Constraints

4.8   In-person mentoring sometimes encountered logistical challenges. For instance, mentors occasionally arrived at schools to find insufficient resources, such as laptops, tablets, or teaching materials, which hindered their ability to execute planned activities effectively. Additionally, schools frequently struggled to allocate appropriate spaces for mentoring sessions, particularly during busy periods when classroom availability was limited.

Perceiving the Value of Languages

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4.9 Regressive perceptions surrounding the practical value of language learning contribute significantly to resistance. Among some parents and learners, there is a misconception that language learning is less important or valuable when compared to other subjects like STEM.[16] This perception stems from a broader systemic educational and societal emphasis on STEM fields as essential for career prospects, which consequently sidelines the value of multilingualism. Such bias is further reinforced by limited awareness of the practical and cultural benefits that language skills offer, such as improving employability (particularly in a globalised economy), and enhancing cross and inter-cultural understanding.

Insufficient Teacher Training

4.10 It is evident that some teachers struggle to embrace the multilingual ethos promoted by the Curriculum for Wales and the Global Futures Strategy. Without adequate training, teachers may lack the confidence to integrate multilingual approaches into their classrooms. As one university stakeholder noted, the lack of sufficient training opportunities hinders the development of a multilingual mindset, leaving many educators under-prepared to champion language learning.

Curriculum Pressures and Competing Priorities

4.11 Teachers are frequently tasked with balancing numerous curriculum demands, which can result in languages being deprioritised, especially in schools where language departments are under-resourced. The integration of international languages into the new

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[16] Bartram, B. (2006). An examination of perceptions of parental influence on attitudes to language learning. *Educational Research, 48*(2), 211–221. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/00131880600732298
British Council. (2019). *Languages for the future: The foreign languages the United Kingdom needs to become a truly global nation.* Retrieved from https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/languages_for_the_future_2017.pdf

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Curriculum for Wales faces challenges from competing priorities and the fear of overburdening already stretched school staff.

Recruitment and Capacity: Welsh-Speaking Mentors

4.12   The recruitment of Welsh-speaking mentors remains a persistent challenge, particularly in rural or Welsh-medium schools where the demand for bilingual mentors often exceeds the availability. This issue stems from a combination of factors, including the relatively limited pool of confident Welsh speakers and potential engagement fatigue among those already participating in similar initiatives.

4.13   Proficiency levels also play a role, as not all Welsh speakers feel confident enough in their language skills to assume a mentoring role through the medium of Welsh. This perceived inadequacy may deter potential mentors who would otherwise contribute effectively given the right support and encouragement.

4.14   Geographical factors further compound the issue. Schools in more remote or underserved areas often face additional difficulties in securing Welsh-speaking mentors due to the logistical constraints of timetable scheduling and travel.

5. Counterfactual Analysis

5.1 The counterfactual analysis of the MFL Mentoring project explores the hypothetical scenario of the MFL Mentoring project's absence. By assessing could have happened in the absence of the MFL Mentoring project, the analysis highlights the project's role in tackling some of the aforementioned challenges, as well fostering collaboration, and developing enthusiasm for language learning.

Additionality Against the Counterfactual Scenario

5.2 The additionality of the MFL Mentoring project is evident in the extent to which it has generated positive educational and personal development outcomes that would likely not have occurred in its absence. This is true for mentors and mentees. While the primary motivation for engaging with the project has been to promote language learning and improve MFL qualification uptake, qualitative feedback from teachers suggests that the programme has contributed more broadly to learners' experiences and attitudes toward language learning. Even for those who do not choose to pursue a language at GCSE, teachers observed that mentoring has helped learners to value their language learning experience and recognise the transferable skills developed through language study.

5.3 Learner feedback further highlights this additionality. Mentees reported a shift in their perception of MFL, citing increased awareness of the benefits of language learning, including enhanced career opportunities, cultural understanding, and personal enjoyment. Survey data reinforces this trend, with 79% of mentees between 2020-2023 agreeing or strongly agreeing that the mentoring experience had made them more interested in languages beyond the classroom (see Figure 3.1). Such qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that the programme has generated outcomes extending beyond standard curriculum delivery.

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5.4   Teachers also identified observable changes in mentees' classroom behaviour and attitudes following participation in the mentoring sessions. Learners appeared more engaged, demonstrated greater awareness of language learning as a valuable skill, and were inspired by mentors sharing their personal experiences, including of university life and travel. Several teachers noted increased interest among other learners after hearing positive feedback from mentees, indicating an effect that would not have occurred without the mentoring intervention.

5.5   While data collected was less clear on impacts on mentees' future aspirations, a clear impact can be seen on mentees' aspirations to go to university, with 58% of respondents agreeing or agreeing strongly that the scheme had made them think about going to university in the future (see Figure 3.5).

5.6   Although some teachers acknowledged the difficulty in isolating the exact influence of mentoring compared to other language-promotion efforts, there was a general consensus that the project had positively influenced mentees' likelihood of pursuing languages at GCSE level. In alignment with this perception, survey results show that 45% of mentees and 46% of teachers felt the project had contributed to increased interest and language uptake (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3). Teacher reflections further support this, with one educator stating, "A number of pupils have definitely said it's one of the reasons why they decided to take the subject… it definitely has a positive impact."

5.7   The project's additionality extends to broader personal development outcomes for mentees, including improved communication skills and increased confidence. Survey data confirms this, with 70% of mentees agreeing that the mentoring sessions made them feel more confident in their language classes (see Figure 3.4).

Attribution of Impact to the MFL Mentoring project

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5.8   While additionality captures the unique benefits driven by the project, attribution relates to the degree to which the observed positive outcomes can be directly linked to the MFL Mentoring project rather than other initiatives or external factors.

5.9   The data collected through surveys and qualitative interviews strongly suggests a high level of attribution, particularly for outcomes experienced by mentors. Some teachers did indicate that the MFL Mentoring project was one of a number of measures being undertaken by the schools, and were careful to not attribute all observed changes to the project. Similarly, partner universities noted that the project was one of a small number of initiatives underway to encourage greater take-up of language courses at university. However, the majority of mentees and teachers directly credited the mentoring sessions for positive shifts in attitudes toward language learning and classroom engagement. Teachers specifically referenced how mentors' accounts of university life and international travel and living experiences inspired mentees, contributing to a broader understanding of language learning's long-term benefits.

5.10   The link between the mentoring project and increased career aspirations was also evident among mentees, albeit to a lesser degree. While teachers noted limited direct evidence of mentees expressing long-term aspirations for higher education or language-based careers, as noted above, survey data indicates that MFL Mentoring positively influenced mentees' consideration of attending university.

5.11   Mentors' reflections also support attribution, particularly regarding their professional and personal growth as a direct result of the mentoring experience. Many mentors reported enhanced confidence in communication, presentation skills, and problem-solving abilities, which they directly linked to their participation in the project. The survey data further substantiates this, with 99% of mentors indicating that the project equipped them with skills they could use in future careers (see Figure 3.9). Moreover, while the project was not explicitly

designed to encourage mentors to pursue careers in education, it has clearly influenced career pathways, with 66% of mentors agreeing that the experience made them consider entering the teaching profession (Figure 3.10). This outcome can be attributed strongly to the MFL Mentoring project.

Analysis of Impact

Support for Higher Education Language Departments

5.12   The MFL Mentoring project has proven essential in sustaining – or at least preventing a decline in – the pipeline of learners progressing to higher education language studies. Whilst this influence is not reflected in the data on take-up of international languages post-14[17], the feedback from mentees, teachers and those involved in delivering the MFL Mentoring project is that this is indicative of the declining trend in languages, and a range of systemic factors contributing to that decline, which are beyond the project's control. This contribution is particularly vital in addressing the challenges faced by university language departments, many of which are under existential threat due to declining enrolments. By nurturing learner interest in languages and creating a bridge between secondary and higher education, the programme plays a critical role in supporting the fragile ecosystem of languages education.

5.13   Without the support of the MFL Mentoring project, the number of prospective PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) candidates would likely have diminished even more severely over the past ten years, exacerbating the already precarious shortage of qualified language teachers and further weakening the infrastructure of language education in Wales and will likely continue to do so in the future if the project is not sustained.

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[17] Gorrara, Claire (2018) *Speaking from Wales: building a modern languages community in an era of Brexit.* In: Kelly, M.(eds) Languages after Brexit. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65169-9_13

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Advancing Collaboration and Co-Production

5.14   The MFL Mentoring project has cultivated a culture of collaboration and co-production between schools, education consortia, higher education institutions, and other stakeholders. By bringing these groups together, the project has created strong networks that enhance the overall delivery and impact of language education. This collaborative approach ensures that resources are shared, expertise is leveraged, and language education initiatives are informed by diverse perspectives. This model aligns closely with the goals of Curriculum for Wales and the Global Futures Strategy.

Maintaining Language Advocacy

5.15   The MFL Mentoring project's advocacy for international languages ensures that multilingualism remains visible within Welsh Government strategies. By demonstrating the cultural and economic benefits of language learning, the programme has elevated the role of languages in Wales' educational vision.

5.16   The MFL Mentoring project addresses the already low prioritisation of languages, helping to slow the rate of decline. It secures space for innovation and opportunity within the curriculum. The project's consistent advocacy for international languages ensures that language education is perceived not just as an academic pursuit but as a gateway to global citizenship, career opportunities, and inter-cultural understanding.

Demonstrated Success and Scalability

5.17   The MFL Mentoring project has proven successful in enriching schools, boosting international languages uptake, and tackling attitudinal challenges in languages education. Its mentoring model

has proven adaptable and effective, offering a unique approach to inspiring learners and mentors alike.

5.18　The scalability of the mentoring framework highlights its broader applicability beyond languages, serving as a template for other engagement-driven learning initiatives. This potential for cross-disciplinary application highlights the project's innovative potential and its ability to address wider educational goals.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The MFL Mentoring project has made a substantial contribution to learners, mentors, and schools across Wales. It has revitalised interest in language learning, provided mentors with career-shaping opportunities, and supported schools in addressing resource gaps. By fostering multilingualism, the project aligns well with Wales's Curriculum for Wales.

6.2 The project directly supports the Welsh Government's Global Futures Strategy by providing meaningful opportunities for schools to engage with university students via the mentoring sessions and workshops, exploring multilingualism and culture and equipping learners and educators with essential skills and knowledge.

6.3 Furthermore, the project's synergies with Welsh language education present significant opportunities for deeper integration. Leveraging Wales's bilingual heritage, the MFL Mentoring project can serve as a model for embedding cultural and linguistic diversity within the Curriculum for Wales.

6.4 However, challenges remain. Short-term funding cycles hinder long-term planning and sustainability. Logistical barriers, such as timetabling conflicts and limited resources in schools, impact delivery, while systemic misconceptions about the value of languages persist. Addressing these issues is crucial to unlock the project's full potential. Looking ahead, sustained funding and strategic enhancements will be vital. Strengthening connections between international languages and Welsh language initiatives, overcoming logistical constraints, and promoting the role of language learning in bolstering global citizenship will further embed the project's legacy.

6.5 As Wales progresses toward its vision of becoming a multilingual nation, the MFL Mentoring project exemplifies the transformative power of education in shaping individuals and communities. Continued investment and innovation will ensure its enduring success and contribution to the future of language education in Wales.

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7. Recommendations

Strategic Recommendations for Future MFL Mentoring

Longer Term Funding Cycles

7.1   The evaluators recommend that the Welsh Government considers funding the MFL Mentoring project in longer term cycles to allow for better strategic planning and to build the project's compounding impact over time. Longer term funding will allow the MFL Mentoring project team to retain their capacity and capability as well as make adaptations to the project design, so it might better support schools and teachers and further align itself with the aims of Global Futures.

Leveraging Wales's Bilingual Strengths

7.2   At multiple points during the evaluation, the value of the Welsh language was mentioned by different stakeholders and beneficiaries, noting its role as a distinguishing feature within the broader UK context. Wales's bilingualism is widely regarded as an advantage, showcasing a unique cultural and linguistic identity that sets it apart.

7.3   However, Welsh and international languages are often perceived as distinct or even competing priorities within policy and educational contexts, limiting opportunities for strategic alignment and collaboration.

7.4   We recommend that international languages becomes integrated with Welsh and English language learning and promotion in schools at an earlier age[18] through a balanced and complementary framework. The MFL Mentoring project has already piloted mentoring in primary schools, demonstrating its potential to establish a strong pipeline of multilingual learners. Aligning MFL Mentoring with Welsh language initiatives at the primary level would enhance multilingual education and provide early exposure to multiple languages. By implementing MFL Mentoring in primary school settings, its visibility will be

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[18] I.e.: starting in primary school as part of the Languages, Literacy and Communication AOLE within Curriculum for Wales.

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heightened and will support the ⎙OBJ⎙OBJ⎙OBJ⎙ the curriculum is still in the early stages of being rolled out, it presents an opportunity for specialists (such as the MFL Mentoring project team) to produce guidance on how this framework might

7.5   Teachers and mentors highlighted that Welsh-speaking learners often acquire additional languages more easily due to their bilingual experience. This underscores the potential for a structured approach that integrates Welsh, English, and international languages to reinforce language acquisition skills from an early age.

Suggestions for Improving Project Design, Implementation, and Evaluation

Lesson Integration

7.6   As mentioned in chapter 3 of this report, teachers were interested in understanding what topics might be covered during the mentoring sessions so that lesson plans can be designed or at the very least prepared in accordance with mentoring sessions. This would allow mentees to build positive connections between their MFL Mentoring sessions and their more formal language learning. To support this, a range of curriculum-aligned resources is available on the MFL Mentoring website,[19] providing materials that can help integrate mentoring themes into classroom teaching.

7.7   This recommendation additionally builds on the positive feedback teachers have given to the MFL Mentoring resources they have accessed. This process can also make sure there is wider involvement with the rest of the class, who were not chosen to take part in the mentoring sessions.

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[19] https://mflmentoring.co.uk/key-stage3/

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Introducing the Project to Learners

7.8   Although it is understood that teacher time is limited, it is
         recommended that there be a more detailed introduction of MFL
         |Mentoring both from teachers before sessions begin, and from
         mentors themselves during the first session to aid in mentee
         understanding of the purpose of the project and what they will be
         expected to contribute. This was specifically requested by learners as
         per paragraph 3.43.

7.9   Where teachers may be short on time, it could be suggested that the
         MFL Mentoring project team prepare a pre-mentoring activity for
         those chosen to participate as mentees, which can be both engaging
         and educational, so that they might understand more about the
         sessions and what to expect.

Peer Support for Mentors

7.10   We recommend that an informal, mentor support group is set up for
         the mentors to provide peer support and ask one another questions.
         We believe this could aid in lessening some of the administrative
         burden for the MFL Mentoring project team in the long term, whilst
         also enhancing mentors' confidence before their first school visits.
         However, it is also important to recognise that while opportunities for
         additional preparation and engagement have been made available in
         the past, challenges arise in encouraging mentors to fully utilise these
         opportunities due to competing demands on their time. Adjusting how
         these opportunities are advertised or reconsidering their format could
         help better align with mentors' availability and needs.

7.11   As per paragraph 3.33, mentors felt that an opportunity to share
         lessons learnt, ask common questions and generally bond with other
         student mentors with similar interests would be beneficial. This is
         seen as a form of added value for the mentors that could both
         improve outcomes and is low-effort for those running the project.

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Annex A – Evaluation Fieldwork Topic Guides

Below are the 'topic guides' used during fieldwork for this evaluation. These guides should be seen as a broad framework of themes, talking points, and conversation starters rather than a rigid set of questions to be posed sequentially and/or verbatim. The particular context and dynamics of each interview often result in deviations from the guide. As a result, not all outlined questions were asked in every interview, and additional questions beyond those listed were posed to explore information as it arose during discussions.

Questions posed to the Delivery Team:

Introduction and Role

- Can you introduce yourself and your role in relation to the MFL Project, as well as how long you have been working on the project?

Project Overview and Alignment

- What is the MFL Mentoring Project? What are its primary goals and objectives?
- How do these align with the broader educational goals in Wales, particularly the Curriculum for Wales?

Evolution of the Project

- How has the project evolved since its inception?
- How, if at all, have the MFL Mentoring Project's goals and objectives changed over time?

Delivery and Operations

- Fundamentally, what does delivery of the MFL Mentoring Project involve? (nuts and bolts of delivery)

Challenges and Barriers

- What are the main challenges you have encountered during the delivery of the MFL Mentoring Project over the last nine years?
- How have you addressed or are planning to address these barriers? To what extent have you been successful in addressing them?

Mentor Recruitment and Training

- How are mentors recruited for the MFL Mentoring Project?
- How successful has recruitment for mentors been?
- What training do mentors receive before they begin working with learners?
- How effective do you believe the current training programme is in preparing mentors?

Resources and Support

- To what extent has the project had sufficient resources to be able to fulfil its objectives and goals?
- What resources or support, if any, are missing?

Engagement and Impact

- What strategies have been most effective in increasing learner interest in learning MFL?
- Can you share any success stories or notable changes in learner attitudes towards MFL?
- What impact has the project had on learners' academic choices, particularly in terms of opting for MFL at GCSE level?
- Have there been any trends in terms of the schools/learners that are more or less likely to engage in the project? If yes, please elaborate.
- Are there any other impacts in personal growth or skills development you have noticed in learners?
- Are there any unintended or unexpected outcomes/impacts that you have observed?

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Feedback and Improvement

- How do you collect and incorporate feedback from mentors, mentees, and schools to improve the project?
- Can you provide examples of adjustments or changes made to the project based on feedback?

Sustainability and Innovation

- What do you believe would be the current state of MFL uptake and learner attitudes towards MFL without the mentoring project?
- What are your plans for sustaining the MFL Mentoring Project in the long term?
- Are there any innovative practices or approaches you have adopted in the MFL Mentoring Project that you believe could serve as best practices for other educational initiatives?
- Do you plan to integrate new technologies or methodologies into the mentoring project to enhance its effectiveness? If yes, please elaborate.

Future of MFL Education

- What future prospects do you foresee for MFL education in Wales without the support of this mentoring initiative?
- What opportunities exist?

Additional Input

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences or suggestions for future improvements?

Questions posed to Teachers:

Introduction and Background

- Can you introduce yourself and describe your role within the school?

- How long have you been involved with the MFL Mentoring Project?
- How did your school first hear about/ become involved with the MFL Mentoring Project?

Motivations and Objectives

- What initially prompted the school to participate in the project?
- What were you/your school hoping to get out of involvement with the project?

Mentoring Sessions

- What are your thoughts on the structure and format of the mentoring sessions?
- How, if at all, could they be improved?
- How are the mentoring sessions integrated into the school timetable?
- What is your role in facilitating or supporting these sessions?

Collaboration and Coordination

- How do you coordinate with the MFL mentors?
- What has worked well in this collaboration, and what could be improved?
- Can you describe your experience working with Cardiff University on this project?

Challenges and Barriers

- What, if any, challenges or structural barriers (e.g., timetabling, resource allocation) have you encountered in implementing the MFL Mentoring Project at your school?
- How, if at all, have these barriers or challenges influenced the effectiveness of the mentoring sessions?

Observed Impacts

- What impact have you observed the MFL Mentoring Project having on learners' attitudes towards learning languages?

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- Have you noticed any changes in the confidence, career aspirations, or wider skills of learners?
- Have you noticed any changes in the number of learners choosing to study MFL at GCSE level?
- To what extent do you attribute any change to the MFL Mentoring Project?
- Have there been any unexpected outcomes or impacts from your involvement in the project?

Trends and Inclusivity

- Are there any particular trends in learner engagement with the project? For example, are certain groups of learners more likely to engage than others?
- How does the programme engage with learners who have additional needs?

Language Integration

- How do you see the relationship between MFL teaching and Welsh language teaching in your school?
- Do they intersect, complement each other, or clash in terms of timetabling, resources, and/or learner choices?

Feedback and Improvements

- How do you provide feedback to the project team about your experiences with the MFL Mentoring Project?
- Can you share any examples of changes or improvements that have been made to the project based on your feedback?

Sustainability and Future

- What are your thoughts on sustaining the MFL Mentoring Project in your school over the long term?
- How do you envision the future of MFL education in your school, with or without the support of the mentoring project?
- What would be lost in the absence of the MFL Mentoring Project?

Additional Input

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with the MFL Mentoring Project or suggestions for its future improvement?

Questions posed to Mentors:

Introduction and Role

- Can you introduce yourself and your role in relation to the MFL Mentoring Project?
- Can you describe what your role as a mentor involved on a day-to-day basis?
- What are the main activities and responsibilities you have during a mentoring session?

Session Structure and Engagement

- How do you structure your mentoring sessions?
- What methods or techniques do you use to engage learners during these sessions?

Motivation and Recruitment

- What initially attracted you to the MFL Mentoring Project?
- How did you hear about the opportunity to become a mentor?
- Did you have any concerns about becoming a mentor?
- How were you recruited for the MFL Mentoring Project?
- What aspects of the recruitment process did you find most effective?
- Were there any parts of the recruitment process that you found confusing or challenging?

Training and Preparation

- What training did you receive before starting your role as a mentor?

- How well did the training prepare you for your mentoring responsibilities?
- Were there any particular training sessions or resources that you found especially useful?
- How, if at all, could the training programme be improved to better prepare new mentors?

Introduction to Schools and Learners

- How were you introduced to the schools and the learners you would be mentoring?
- Was there any specific information or support you wished you had received before starting in the schools?

Challenges and Support

- What challenges did you face as a mentor?
- How well were you supported to meet or address these challenges?
- Are there any specific structural barriers (e.g., timetabling, resource allocation) that have influenced your ability to mentor effectively?

Collaboration and Feedback

- How do you manage communication and coordination with teachers and project staff?
- How do you provide feedback to the project team about your mentoring experiences?

Impacts and Success Stories

- Can you share any success stories or notable changes in learner attitudes towards MFL?
- Are there any other impacts, such as personal growth or skills development, that you have noticed in learners?

Professional Development

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- How has your role as a mentor contributed to your own professional development?
- Did you consider teaching as a career before becoming a mentor?
- Has this experience influenced your interest in teaching as a career?

Suggestions and Improvements

- What additional support or resources do you think are needed to further enhance the MFL Mentoring Project?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences or suggestions for future improvements?

Questions posed to Learners (Mentees) during peer-on-peer sessions:

GCSE Choices and Interests

- What options are you currently thinking about taking for GCSE?
- How interested were you in languages before being signed up for the MFL mentoring?

Exposure to Languages

- How much exposure do you get in your day-to-day life to people who speak languages other than English?

First Impressions and Expectations

- What were your first impressions when told you were selected to take part in the mentoring scheme?
- What did you expect the mentoring scheme to involve?

Feedback on the Mentor

- What do you think the mentor should improve on next time, if they did come again?

Impact on Attitudes and Skills

- Since taking part in the process, how has your attitude changed towards languages?

- Has the process increased your confidence or communication skills?

- Has the process changed your attitudes or views towards university?

- Did you have any reservations or worries about it? Were you excited?

- Did you have any questions about the process? If so, did your teacher answer these for you?

Enjoyment and Feedback

- What topics did you enjoy the most?

- What did you enjoy the least?

- Do you have any feedback from your time being mentored?

- What was the best or your favourite moment from your mentoring sessions?

Suggestions for Improvement

- Is there anything else that you would have liked in the mentoring process?

- What else do you think could be done to promote languages in schools?

Additional Thoughts

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences or suggestions for future improvements?

Questions posed to Consortia partners:

Introduction and Involvement

- What is the nature of your relationship with the MFL Mentoring Project?

- How long have you been involved in the MFL Mentoring Project?

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Support and Evolution

- How does the MFL programme support the consortia?
- How has the project evolved since its inception?

Aims and Delivery

- What do you understand to be the main aims and objectives of the MFL Mentoring Project?
- How is the MFL Mentoring Project delivered within your consortium?
- How do you collaborate with the schools or mentors/Cardiff University to deliver the project?

Challenges and Barriers

- What are the main challenges you have faced in delivering the MFL Mentoring Project?
- Are there specific structural barriers (e.g., scheduling, resource allocation) that have affected the delivery of the project?
- How have these obstacles influenced the effectiveness of the project?

Resources and Support

- Are there particular resources or support that you feel are lacking?

Impact and Trends

- What impact has the project had in your consortium?
- Have you observed any trends in terms of which schools or learners are more likely to engage with the project?

Future Considerations

- What do you think would be lost in the absence of the MFL Project?
- What are your ideas for running the MFL Mentoring Project in the long term?

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Questions posed to University Staff/Leads:

Introduction and Role

- Can you introduce yourself and describe your role within the university?
- What is the nature of your relationship with the MFL Mentoring Project?
- How long has your university been involved in the MFL Mentoring Project?

Evolution

- How has the project evolved since its inception?
- How has the relationship with the MFL team/project evolved over the years?

Aims and Delivery

- What do you understand to be the main aims and objectives of the MFL Mentoring Project?
- How is the MFL Mentoring Project delivered within your university?

Student Experience

- How do students describe their experience with the MFL Project?

Challenges and Barriers

- What are the main challenges you have faced in promoting or working with the MFL Mentoring Project?
- Are there specific structural barriers (e.g., student capacity) that have affected the delivery of the project and the ability for students to get involved?

Resources and Support

- Are there particular resources or support that you feel are lacking?

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- What additional support or resources do you think are needed to further enhance the MFL Mentoring Project?

Impact

- From an academic perspective, what impact has the project had in your university?
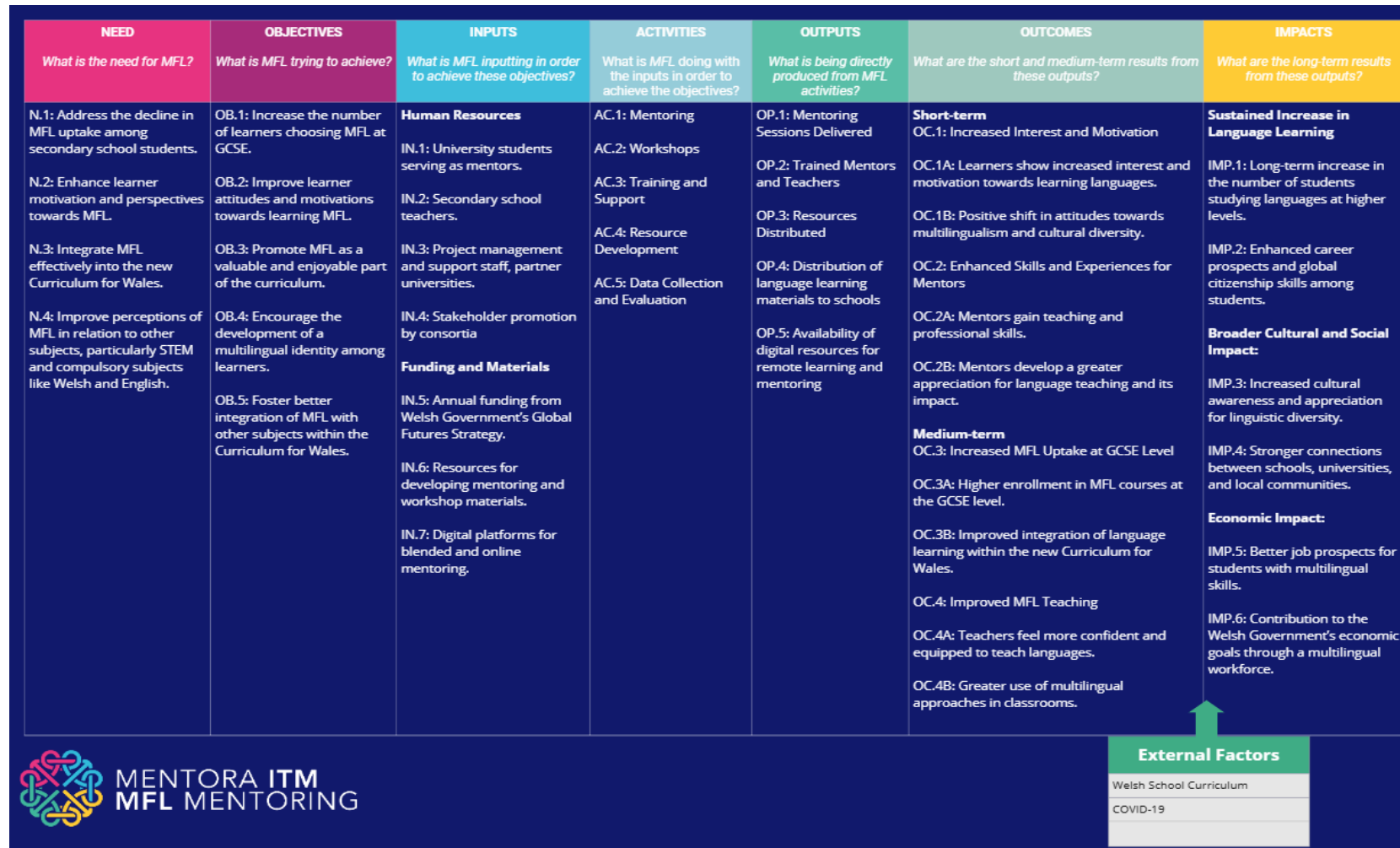- What do you think would be lost in the absence of the MFL programme?

Future Considerations

- What are your ideas for running the MFL Mentoring Project in the long term?
- What future prospects do you foresee for MFL education in Wales?

Additional Input

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences or suggestions for improving the project in the future?

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Annex B – MFL Mentoring Project Logic Model

NEED	OBJECTIVES	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACTS
What is the need for MFL?	*What is MFL trying to achieve?*	*What is MFL inputting in order to achieve these objectives?*	*What is MFL doing with the inputs in order to achieve the objectives?*	*What is being directly produced from MFL activities?*	*What are the short and medium-term results from these outputs?*	*What are the long-term results from these outputs?*
N.1: Address the decline in MFL uptake among secondary school students. N.2: Enhance learner motivation and perspectives towards MFL. N.3: Integrate MFL effectively into the new Curriculum for Wales. N.4: Improve perceptions of MFL in relation to other subjects, particularly STEM and compulsory subjects like Welsh and English.	OB.1: Increase the number of learners choosing MFL at GCSE. OB.2: Improve learner attitudes and motivations towards learning MFL. OB.3: Promote MFL as a valuable and enjoyable part of the curriculum. OB.4: Encourage the development of a multilingual identity among learners. OB.5: Foster better integration of MFL with other subjects within the Curriculum for Wales.	**Human Resources** IN.1: University students serving as mentors. IN.2: Secondary school teachers. IN.3: Project management and support staff, partner universities. IN.4: Stakeholder promotion by consortia **Funding and Materials** IN.5: Annual funding from Welsh Government's Global Futures Strategy. IN.6: Resources for developing mentoring and workshop materials. IN.7: Digital platforms for blended and online mentoring.	AC.1: Mentoring AC.2: Workshops AC.3: Training and Support AC.4: Resource Development AC.5: Data Collection and Evaluation	OP.1: Mentoring Sessions Delivered OP.2: Trained Mentors and Teachers OP.3: Resources Distributed OP.4: Distribution of language learning materials to schools OP.5: Availability of digital resources for remote learning and mentoring	**Short-term** OC.1: Increased Interest and Motivation OC.1A: Learners show increased interest and motivation towards learning languages. OC.1B: Positive shift in attitudes towards multilingualism and cultural diversity. OC.2: Enhanced Skills and Experiences for Mentors OC.2A: Mentors gain teaching and professional skills. OC.2B: Mentors develop a greater appreciation for language teaching and its impact. **Medium-term** OC.3: Increased MFL Uptake at GCSE Level OC.3A: Higher enrollment in MFL courses at the GCSE level. OC.3B: Improved integration of language learning within the new Curriculum for Wales. OC.4: Improved MFL Teaching OC.4A: Teachers feel more confident and equipped to teach languages. OC.4B: Greater use of multilingual approaches in classrooms.	**Sustained Increase in Language Learning** IMP.1: Long-term increase in the number of students studying languages at higher levels. IMP.2: Enhanced career prospects and global citizenship skills among students. **Broader Cultural and Social Impact:** IMP.3: Increased cultural awareness and appreciation for linguistic diversity. IMP.4: Stronger connections between schools, universities, and local communities. **Economic Impact:** IMP.5: Better job prospects for students with multilingual skills. IMP.6: Contribution to the Welsh Government's economic goals through a multilingual workforce.

External Factors
- Welsh School Curriculum
- COVID-19

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