

Press Statement

15 December 2005

Christmas cheer on languages entitlement

CILT, the National Centre for Languages, has warmly welcomed today's announcement by Schools Minister Jacqui Smith that schools will be required to set targets of no fewer than 50% of pupils taking languages to GCSE or similar.

Director of CILT, Isabella Moore, said:

'We are delighted that the Government has taken a strong stance in relation to pupil drop-out from languages. This is, indeed, a Christmas message of cheer for us all. Schools now have a clear definition of "entitlement" and a very strong message about the level of take-up they are expected to deliver. With this in mind, we hope they will not only safeguard existing provision but also look to developing vital new courses which are motivating to pupils and relevant to their future needs.

'We also welcome the Government's announcement that languages are to be incorporated in the new specialised Diplomas. This is evidence of the Government's commitment to languages and that it wants to see them as a normal part of education at all levels, as they are in so many other countries. Languages are not alternatives to other subjects, they complement any pathway.

'If our young people are going to believe in their own untapped potential and get excited about the opportunities ahead of them as global citizens of the 21st century, languages need to be part of the equation. To succeed in life and in the jobs market they will need to be outward looking, culturally aware, happy to be internationally mobile and comfortable communicating in another language, whatever job they are doing. For jobs like interpreting and translating that need to be done by English native speakers with a command of other languages, we need to bring on our specialist linguists too.

MORE FOLLOWS

'CILT's priorities as we go into the New Year will be to support schools in developing their languages provision, and to continue to make the case for languages and their contribution to economic, social and cultural life.'

ENDS

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To view the DfES release '*Modern Foreign Languages Ensuring Entitlement at Key Stage 4 is a Reality*', visit www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2005_0159