

PE1777/A

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills submission of 28 February 2020

The Scottish Government recognises and fully values the importance of young people learning languages. We are implementing what we call the '1+2 approach' to improve language learning in schools by ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to learn two additional languages during the broad general education from P1 to S3. The first additional language, known as L2, should be taught from P1 onwards, and the second additional language, known as L3, at the latest from P5 onwards.

British Sign Language (BSL) can already be part of the curriculum in schools as the second additional language (L3) being taught. However, in keeping with the flexibility of Curriculum for Excellence, it is up to schools and local authorities to determine what is taught in schools and to decide which languages to offer to pupils, depending on their local circumstances. The Scottish Government cannot intervene and set requirements.

The BSL National Plan¹, launched by the Scottish Government in 2017, includes an ambition that more pupils will be able to learn BSL at school.

We are working with a range of organisations to make sure that BSL is promoted to schools and local authorities, and that resources are developed to support schools that wish to offer BSL as one of the languages they teach.

As part of this work, we have established an expert advisory group to develop a delivery plan for growing the provision of BSL in schools. The overall aim is to establish BSL as a normal part of the curriculum that is offered in schools, and one of the expected benefits is to grow the number of hearing people who are proficient in BSL.

As the 1+2 approach and BSL National Plan are implemented, we hope that more young people will have the chance to learn BSL as one of the additional languages being taught at schools.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/british-sign-language-bsl-national-plan-2017-2023/>