



BACKGROUND

NALA Lounge is an open forum for NALA members to 1. discuss matters of professional interest and 2. agree on outcomes (actions or principles) that NALA will pursue in its capacity as a professional association that seeks to have influence in the sphere of the teaching and learning of languages. Each Lounge session focuses on two questions, decided on in advance by the Executive committee. The committee encourages and welcomes suggestions for discussion from the wider membership. The questions discussed and outcomes (actions or principles) agreed at the Lounge session held on WEDNESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2025. Attendees (for all or part of this Lounge session) are listed at the end of these notes.

Question: What are the implications for languages of the Curriculum and Assessment Review?

Actions and/or principles agreed

From our discussions, the following points were mentioned:

The prospect of a defined core curriculum for KS2 was welcomed although there was some concern expressed regarding:

- the possibility of a prescribed curriculum and material that non-subject specialists might find hard to deploy in an agile way.
- provision of, access to and support for training within schools with reference to budgets

- whether schools might not deliver the core curriculum across the key stage, beginning in Year 3.
- whether the anticipated core content would include opportunities for the development of cultural as well as linguistic capital.
- The lack of reference to Home, Heritage, and Community Languages.

The relative lack of discussion of languages in KS3, coupled with news of the introduction of a new reading test in Year 8, led to concerns over pressure on curriculum time for languages in this key stage.

Disappointment was expressed at the removal of the EBacc. While it was acknowledged that the EBacc did not achieve previous government ambitions regarding the numbers taking a language at GCSE, it was the only 'incentive' for school leadership teams to promote the subject.

Reference to review the current GCSE for French, Spanish and German following next year's results was noted.

Reference to the development of an alternative to GCSE to widen participation at KS4 was broadly welcomed. However, discussion noted that:

- alternatives in the past were not widely taken up. Discussion explored whether this was due to school accountability measures and methodologies and/or structural issues in schools (curriculum time, staff resource, training).
- a commitment to dealing with the issue of harsh/severe grading at GCSE would likely result in more students opting for languages in KS4.

Reference to review A Level was noted and welcomed.

Attending were:

- Alan Dobson
- Alice Harrison
- Yvonne Kennedy
- Mark Oliver
- Lisa Panford
- Mike Rauh
- Alison Taylor
- Kit Thorne
- Alex Havers
- David Moss
- Wasyl Cajkler
- Bev Whiteside (NALA Chair)