UCFL Executive Committee Meeting

Friday, 24th May, 2024

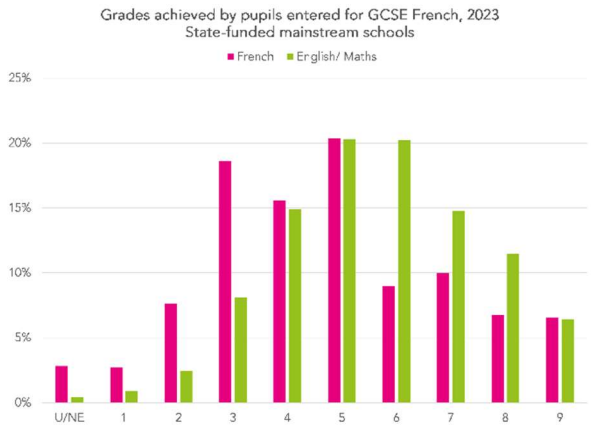
Report, Vice Chair Languages and Intercultural Education

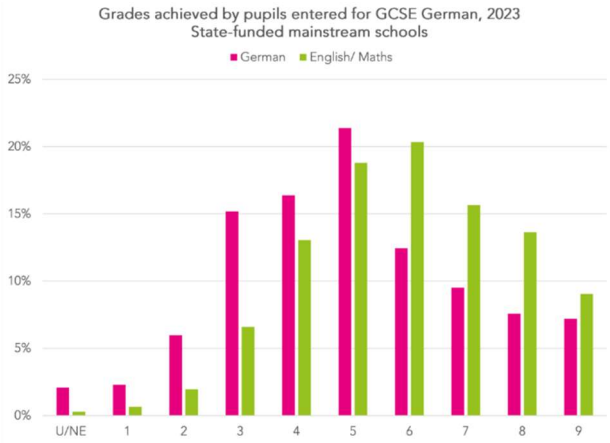
This brief report reviews activities since the last meeting.

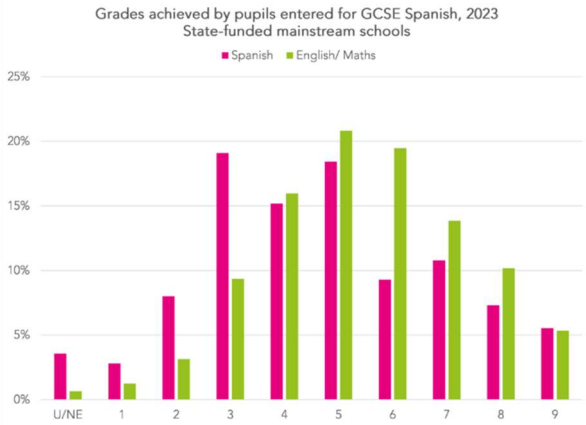
1. The UK Languages landscape

Languages are still harshly graded at GCSE

Key Stage 4 data (2023) from the National Pupil Database shows the following levels of performance in GCSE French, German, and Spanish. The entries for these subjects were 117,000 for French, 31,000 for German, and 111,000 for Spanish. The students' language results are compared to their outcomes in English language and mathematics. Nearly all students who took language exams also sat for English language and maths:







Fewer pupils achieved grades 9-6 in languages compared to English and maths and far more achieved grades 3-1 (or were ungraded) in languages compared to English and maths. Grade 3 remains the modal grade in Spanish (compared to 5 in French and German). Sadly, these charts look pretty similar to those produced based on 2018 data.

Source: FFT Education Datalab

2. Promoting Languages

i. The Languages Gateway: Wendy Ayres-Bennet and I put together a short piece for the Languages Gateway about '10 reasons why you should be studying languages at university'.
ii. The Languages Gateway: I am writing another piece on 'Why and How to study a Languages degree at University'.
iii. Government consultation on the Advanced British Standard: I coordinated a response on behalf of UCFL.

3. Other Education activities:

i. I am organising the Plenary's afternoon activities (5th July).

Plenary afternoon panels:
13:00 - 1. *Challenges we are facing in the Arts & Humanities*: Jo Fox
2. *Department contractions and closures: What does this crisis tell us? How do we prepare for the future?* Fransiska Louwagie, Alvise Sforza Tarabochia
14:30 – 3. *How did we get here? Understanding the challenges of the present for languages through the past*: Mike Kelly
4. *Reimagining the future of Language departments: what will the departments of the future look like? Ensuring sector-wide engagement in supporting the subject area*. Introduction by Emma Cayley, Charles Forsdick and Charles Burdett. Presentations from Claire Gorrara, Alvise Sforza Tarabochia, Charles Forsdick, and Mark Critchley

ii. I have contributed to the *Ensuring sector-wide engagement in supporting the subject area* document.

Marcela Cazzoli, 15th May 2024