**Q&A**

**Q: What is the length of time of the contract for the Centre of Excellence (CoE)?**

A: The Department is unable to commit beyond the end of the current spending review. It is therefore proposed that the contract will be for an initial two year period with the inclusion of a further option to extend the term, at the Department’s discretion, by up to a further two years.

Bidders will therefore be required to provide costs for the initial two year period of the contract and for the subsequent two year extension period.

**Q: Which languages will be taught through the hubs? Is there an opportunity for more than one to be focused on?**

A: We will be leaving it open to hub schools to decide on which languages they will support, in conjunction with the centre of excellence. We want the best possible schools to apply to be leads schools, who have the capacity to deliver the services we want. We haven’t set parameters around how many languages can be supported through the hubs, but it could be more than one.

**Q: Can you explain the hierarchy of the programme?**

A: The Centre of Excellence will develop and promote best teaching practice and be the locus of expertise. It will train specialist MFL teachers to provide support for schools. It will also be responsible for holding the hub schools to account. Within the hubs there will be a number of lead schools (we anticipate between 7 to 10 – this will be confirmed in the ITT) and these will engage with (primarily) local schools.

We expect there to be two specialist teachers in each hub, who will already be excellent languages teachers, but the CoE will give them the training needed to disseminate good practice and to be able to deliver support and training. The DfE will lead on selection of the lead schools referred to above, in parallel with the process to appoint the CoE.

**Q: Why was the decision taken to only focus on state-funded schools when there might be independent schools who could deliver the services you require for the lead schools? Will you be assessing at Key Stage 3 or just Key Stage 4?**

A: The programme will be covering both KS3 and KS4. We are finalising the scope at the moment and will publish final arrangements in the ITT, including arrangements for evaluation. CoE bidders may choose to draw on the expertise and specialisms of other proven school improvement/school-to-school support providers, including independent schools.

**Q: Who is setting up the Centre of Excellence? And with only 7 – 10 hubs, will the reach be just 60 or so schools?**

A: We are going out to tender for the CoE. There will be just one CoE, although there are no pre-conceived ideas regarding its composition. It could be an individual organisation or could comprise a consortium. Initially the reach will be limited, but we would expect this to expand and expertise to build. We cannot at this stage commit to anything beyond two years due to the need to review funding at the next spending review.

**Q: Will the number of lead schools you are procuring for be announced by the time the ITT goes up?**

A: Yes.

**Q: What training is to be provided in terms of the specifics of different language requirements? Or are you looking at just generic languages pedagogy? Is the focus just on modern foreign languages?**

A: French, Spanish and German account for the great majority of all languages GCSE entries. Much of what the Teaching Schools Council report (which will underpin the MFL pedagogy programme) applies to these languages, and to the teaching of other Indo-European languages when they are taught as foreign languages. For languages with very different features, including those with different writing systems and sound systems, other considerations may apply. We would not expect these to be the focus of the MFL pedagogy programme at this stage.

**Q: Will there be any guidelines to the hubs about whether or not they work with feeder primary schools?**

At the moment, available resource means that the MFL pedagogy programme is focusing on KS3 and KS4. The Teaching Schools Council review, upon which this programme will be based, did not look into primary languages pedagogy, although we think that similar principles will apply. At this stage, we do not want to spread ourselves too thinly with limited resources.

**Q: When will schools be able to apply to become lead schools; and what are the logistics?**

A: We are currently developing the criteria for the lead schools, and will then ask for expressions of interest. Recruitment of schools will run along similar timelines to the procurement for the CoE.

**Q: What funding is available for this programme?**

A: Funding has been approved. We will announce details of funding when we launch the ITT, or before then if possible.

**Q: How do the opportunity areas feature? Will you use the arrangements to communicate leadership in this area and how the programme will help disadvantaged pupils?**

A: We will want successful lead schools to show that they can improve MFL outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. We will welcome lead school bids from schools in opportunity areas and which meet the criteria or which want to support schools in those areas.

**Q: Will the CoE have a remit to engage with specialist organisations that already exist, but who are not part of a consortium bid?**

A: The process of appointing a CoE will be underpinned by the [TSC MFL pedagogy review](https://www.tscouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/MFL-Pedagogy-Review-Report-2.pdf) and the CoE needs to exhibit expertise and knowledge of the pedagogical approach. Knowledge can be drawn from a wide range of places eg, universities, existing research etc, but it must meet the approach set out in the review.

**Q: How will the interaction between Progress 8 (P8) and the EBacc performance measures be considered and what would schools’ motivations for growing the number of pupils taking language be? Some disadvantaged pupils are discouraged from taking MFL due to P8.**

A: Both the P8 and EBacc measures are headline secondary performance measures. We want schools to increase MFL uptake and achievement and to support this by providing a foundation for excellent pedagogy.

**Q: Can you give more information about the key performance indicators and the evaluation of the Centre of Excellence?**

A: We are finalising our thinking on this and it will be clear in the ITT.

**Q: Can you say more about the lead schools and their role? Do they develop schemes of work and pedagogy? Or will the Centre of Excellence develop and disseminate this? Also, September is not far off. Will a package of materials be available to disseminate at the outset? And how many classes are expected to be involved?**

A: The contract starts in September, and the process will develop from then. It will not be a ‘top down’ process, but a collaborative one. The Centre of Excellence will have a supportive role. The CoE will also determine how to develop and expand the programme, in collaboration with the hubs. We cannot give a precise number of classes to be involved.

**Q: Will the lead schools have to declare who their support schools are before they apply?**

A: When responding to the ITT, we will expect lead schools to have already confirmed sign-up from their proposed support schools. This will be collaborative process and we expect the lead and supported schools to be working together.

**Q: How might pre-existing networks feed in to this? How will the proposals take these into account?**

A: We are finalising the criteria but would expect there to be opportunities for these wider links to be made.

**Q: Is there a role for post 16?**

A: The scope of the programme is for KS3 and KS4. But there is no reason why sixth forms, with expertise in this area, should not have a role in the process, nor why a strong sixth form should not apply to be involved.

**Q: Will the PowerPoint presentation be made available?**

A: Yes, it will be made available with this Q&A write-up on the contract finder website here: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/1b5f4322-8f0e-4d07-86ca-85954d8b75dd?p=@8=UFQxUlRRPT0=NjJNT0>

**Q: A comment was made about using historical controls over real time controls, given the short time frame for the pilot. A point was also raised about the assessment style used by the Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP) and it being based on findings from the teaching review.**

A: We are working with colleagues from the MEP, English, maths and computing to ensure there is join up in our thinking across pedagogy programmes.