

Submission from Dr Judith McClure, Scotland China Education Network

1 Personal Background

I taught and did research in History and Medieval Latin at the Universities of Oxford and Liverpool for 8 years. My career in the school teaching profession spanned 34 years, for the last 22 of which I was a Headteacher. For the final 15 years I was Headteacher of St George's School, Edinburgh, an all-through school where there was vibrant language exposure in the pre-school department, the teaching of French began in Primary 1 and that of Chinese in Primary 4. I was also very fortunate in that for all of these years my teaching and my leadership responsibilities involved communities with strong international student participation. I am currently a member of the Court of Heriot-Watt University, whose strategic plan is entitled *Global thinking, worldwide influence* and contains *Internationalisation* as a leading theme. I am a member of the Advisory Board of the Confucius Institute of the University of Edinburgh and its Ambassador for the teaching and learning of Chinese in Scottish Schools, of the Cross Party Group on China and that on Universities and Colleges. I founded the Scotland China Education Network (SCEN) in 2006 and remain its Convener: the mission of SCEN is to promote learning of Chinese and about China in Scottish schools. I have supported the Scottish Government's work on educational leadership and on its China strategy.

2 Responses to the Committee's Request for Views

(a) *Is there enough funding for the Scottish Government's proposal (including use of EU money)?*

This proposal will inevitably require additional funding, especially in terms of training primary teachers (existing and future) in languages, in planning and co-ordination, and potentially in the employment of new staff. It is worth noting that the teaching of Chinese is supported by the Confucius Institute for Scottish Schools (CISS) and its network of Hubs, which receive funding and visiting teachers from China arranged by Hanban, the Office for Chinese Language International, in Beijing. The Confucius Institute at the University of Edinburgh supports schools. The visiting teachers from China function really as language assistants, as they do not have GTCS qualifications.

The proposal is intended to be implemented over two Parliaments, to be fully operational in 2020. SCILT, Scotland's National Centre for Languages, has drawn up a plan for supporting self-evaluation and planning for improvement in local authorities; this is essential and useful, but it will produce 32 answers. Pilot projects sponsored by the Scottish Government are taking place, but it is important that we encourage all kinds of innovation from which we can learn, and which will inspire others to take part. An example is the International Students Languages Project, which I co-ordinated and was led by the University of Edinburgh. This project selects volunteer International Students at

University who work in partnership with a primary or nursery class teacher to introduce their own language and culture. The class teacher leads the project but the children have the benefit of hearing a native speaker. The project was evaluated very helpfully by Education Scotland and is now moving into a second phase; details are attached. It is an example of a way in which universities and schools can work together, at low cost, in a programme of language learning that benefits pupils, teachers and university students. These sorts of projects need to be encouraged, so that more and more primary teachers are enthused to support the proposal and, ideally, to begin developing their own language skills.

- (b) ***Do existing teachers have the skills and teaching resources available for language tuition? Are existing teachers and teaching assistants equipped to teach languages? Should there be more training and support for new and existing teachers for language teaching?***

There can be no doubt that more teacher training and support is required. However, the Committee's inspiring visit to Dalmarnock Primary School demonstrates how much can be achieved at low cost by a headteacher with clear leadership qualities, working collegially with enthusiastic teachers and making imaginative use of native language connections. While national and local planning needs to take place, linked with changes in teacher training recommended by Professor Donaldson in *Teaching Scotland's Future*, it is important that Headteachers are empowered and supported in leading change in their own schools immediately. This wider engagement and the new partnerships that will be engendered are vital in securing commitment for system change.

- (c) ***What is the capacity within the curriculum to accommodate greater language study? Can language learning be embedded in existing teaching?***

The primary curriculum must be designed to accommodate language learning. It can be done and to be successful, does involve embedding language learning in existing teaching through, for instance, project work, assemblies, performances and general classroom interaction. Professor Sorace's *Bilingualism Matters* provides excellent research examples and Scotland's National Centre for Languages provides practical training.

- (d) ***The choice of languages for teaching – which languages should be learning and why? AND***
- (e) ***The role of languages in economic development – what languages should children be learning to benefit their future careers, and to help Scotland flourish economically?***

I hope you will forgive me if I reply at length to these two questions, as I think they go to the heart of the languages initiative and its immense importance. I understand entirely that our national agencies and our researchers do not wish to promote one language more than another and I accept that, as Professor Sorace will tell you, the research indicates that early learning of and even exposure to any second language promotes cognitive ability. However, I have no doubt of the importance for our pupils of learning one of the three world languages, in addition to English: Spanish or Chinese. I shall rehearse the arguments I made in response to the Scottish Government's China Plan Consultation:

Why Scotland wants to engage with China, including Hong Kong, on educational matters

(i) Benefits for our young people

Ultimately, the aim of Curriculum for Excellence is to make our education system fit for the modern world and to improve young people's achievements, attainment and life chances.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/ACE

An education fit for the modern world, helping young people to understand their role as global citizens and to secure work, must include a knowledge and understanding of China, its history, culture, politics and society. It should also offer the opportunity to learn Mandarin, one of the three most frequently spoken languages in the world. China is the home of 1.3 billion people in the world's most ancient surviving civilisation, now in the process of becoming a super power and already a top performing economy.

(ii) Benefits for developing the Scottish Economy

Scotland's Plan for a Stronger Engagement with China already includes the objectives of encouraging greater internationalisation of Scottish companies in China (5) and of expanding connections between businesses in Scotland and China (6). There have been marked successes in these areas, encouraged by the First Minister and his Cabinet colleagues. However, the business world would agree that there is still a long way to go in encouraging a full response to the challenges and opportunities of trade and investment with China, honestly admitting that ignorance of Chinese culture, business methods and language holds companies back in understanding and managing the risks. Stephen Perry, Chairman of the 48 Group Club <http://www.48groupclub.org/> and Managing Director of the London Export Corporation www.londonexportcorporation.com/ argues that China is a competitive, transitional market, with a tight hold on the forms and styles of demand; it is very open to the modern world and change, but careful to use its resources for its priority needs. He

believes that the Western effort to do business is fragmented and diffuse: *doing business with China successfully depends on identifying Chinese policy, its future trends and finding ways to work with that.*

It is not China the market any more – it is China the global partner.

Stephen Perry, Chairman of the 48 Group Club, *Doing Business with China*, Confucius Institute for Business, London, 8 November 2011.

There can be no doubt that Scottish efforts to understand the core drivers of China's policy and business methods need to be underpinned by a workforce with a better education in Chinese and about China, some of whom have specialist knowledge and understanding of the country and skills in the language. The contribution of learning about China in Modern Studies must not be underestimated. This is another area for the collaboration of universities, colleges, schools and businesses, evidenced for instance by *Scotland in Conversation with China*, the Autumn 2012 programme planned by the University of Strathclyde and SCEN.

(iii) Benefits for the Scottish educational system

Scotland has responded constructively to China's own efforts to extend knowledge of its language and culture through the support of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms throughout the world, and this has been strongly backed by the Education Secretary. It has been clear through these engagements, and through visits such as that of Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in September 2011 and the work of Archie McGlynn, former Chief HMIe and Director of the Hong Kong Schools Self-Evaluation Network www.edb.org.hk/hkssen/ that there is a great commonality of purpose in educational reform in China, including Hong Kong, and many Western countries, including Scotland.

China has made great strides in educating its population, with Shanghai and Hong Kong as examples of innovation. The main lessons include the government's abandonment of a system built around 'key schools' for a small elite and its development of a more inclusive system in which all students are expected to perform at high levels; greatly raising teacher pay and upgrading teacher standards and teacher education; reducing the emphasis on rote learning and increasing the emphasis on deep understanding, the ability to apply knowledge to solving new problems and the ability to think creatively. All of these are reflected in deep reforms to the curriculum and examinations. These changes have been accompanied by greater curricular choice for students, and more latitude for local authorities to decide on examination content, which in turn is loosening the constraints on curriculum and instruction.

Shanghai and Hong Kong: Two Distinct Examples of Education Reform in China: Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Lessons from PISA, OECD 2010

At the current phase of educational reform in Scotland, including not only the implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence* but the efforts to promote the flexible learner journey to further study and employment and the improvements in teacher education, continuing professional development and school leadership and management, there is no doubt that increased partnership with education in China, at system, local authority, university, college, school and individual teacher and pupil levels, will bring considerable advantages to the improvement of Scottish education. It will also support economic development.

I am glad to say that the new China Plan, produced in December 2012, includes new targets for the teaching and learning of Chinese in Scottish schools.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/12/7734/1>

3 Particular Issues Suggested for the Oral Evidence Session on 24 January 2013

(a) *How do you think that the Scottish Government's 1 + 2 proposal compares with other countries European or otherwise?*

I can best use the example of China, where the Ministry of Education made the decision in 2001 that English should be taught in all primary schools. I have observed the swift implementation of this policy and seen it in action in Hong Kong primary schools. I have up-to-date information from Archie McGlynn.

The first language of Hong Kong pupils is Cantonese. Mr McGlynn confirms that now English is taught in all schools, irrespective of district, from Primary 1 and continues all the way to S6 for all pupils. Also in most Hong Kong schools, Mandarin is introduced early in primary and continued through secondary education. So here three languages are part of education for all pupils.

Mr McGlynn is currently completing a review of learning and teaching in a New Territories primary school. The school serves one of the original public housing estates and few, if any, children use English at home. The quality of learning is good to very good (NB he was an HMI in the days when 'excellent' was not a category!); even the so-called low achievers manage quite well. The written work is probably as good as any he has seen over the years in primary schools in Scotland. The teachers are all ethnic Chinese and are English Language graduates; their command of English is very good. Grammar features a lot in the

work! Mr McGlynn suggests that the Committee may like to look at his website:

www.edb.org.hk/hkssen

Primary school students are invited to contribute to Mr McGlynn's big conferences; unrehearsed presentations and discussions are shown, including pupils from a primary school located in a public housing estate, whose parents will belong to a low socio-economic group. He recommends that the Committee looks at the section SVSI, and then prepares to sit up watching the video in the section Annual Conference with EDB!

We must believe that Scotland can achieve this.

- (b) ***What are the benefits of learning languages earlier at school? What is the right age to start acquiring languages? Is there an age when it becomes more difficult to learn languages?***

Professor Sorace and Dr Sarah Breslin from Scotland's National Centre for Languages are the best people to respond to the Committee here, together with other researchers giving evidence to it. Professor Sorace's project Bilfam illustrates that family learning of another language as early as possible works. In my experience, exposure to other languages in pre-school education, from the ages of 3 – 5, has a great impact on children's interest in languages and ability to communicate with native speakers. In my view early secondary is late to begin languages, because then the pupil is more self-conscious and wary of mistakes. Although I learned languages at my grammar school, my terror at saying anything aloud remains to this day!

- (c) ***Committee members have heard about different methods being used for different ages at their recent visit to Dalmarnock Primary School, for example, speaking the language through songs and games was more appropriate for Primary 2 (rather than reading and writing exercises). They also heard that learning through culture, such as sport, made children more interested in learning. What are your thoughts on how to make learning languages interesting and relevant for children?***

We do have ample support for imaginative early language learning approaches, in SCILT, Education Scotland and Bilingualism Matters, for instance.

- (d) ***The Committee has heard concerns that children making the transition from Primary to Secondary School may have difficulty in continuing the languages they have learned in Primary School. Do you have any thoughts on how to resolve this issue?***

I acknowledged this is a difficult area, especially in the light of our unwillingness to prioritise world languages. I think this approach has to be considered very carefully. If we are to continue our current approach, and I have no doubt that European languages are important and life-enhancing, then we shall have to work locally in clusters and with universities (and I would hope colleges, if they develop their language provision) to maintain continuity in language learning into secondary school. I do hope that there will be imaginative local partnerships, not necessarily organised by local authorities.

I applaud this proposal and I hope that schools will be keen to put it into effect for the benefit of our children and young people.

Supporting paper from Dr Judith McClure

1 The Aims and Relevance of the Pilot

The Languages Think Tank met at the Confucius Institute of the University of Edinburgh in the second half of 2011 to consider a pilot project aiming to enhance exposure to languages in pre-school and primary education, by providing for class teachers the support of an international student. The fundamental aim of the pilot was that the children would hear another language and that the class teacher would make use of that experience. As Professor Antonella Sorace, of the Department of Developmental Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh and Director of *Bilingualism Matters*, has shown, early exposure to a foreign language not only assists future language learning but also enhances cognitive ability.

The Languages Think Tank believed that this project could contribute to arousing children's curiosity about other languages, the first step in tackling the need to improve language learning in Scotland and to respond to the Cabinet Secretary's support of the 1 + 2 model of language learning for all pupils. This belief was reinforced as the pilot project took shape in 2012 by the Report of the National Languages Working Group, chaired by Simon Macaulay. It was always thought that the languages pilot project would have a part to play in the implementation of the Donaldson Report, *Teaching Scotland's Future*, by linking universities and schools practically in improving teaching and learning and in creating more contacts between researchers, lecturers and teachers. It was hoped that it would contribute to the experience of international students by giving them an experience in the local community that would enable them to demonstrate their native language and culture and gain valuable skills in relating to teachers and pupils. The essence of the project was that it would be led in the classroom by qualified and experienced class teachers, who would be able to give lively learning experiences to their pupils and enhance their own confidence in leading early language learning. A great advantage of the pilot was that it could use the established practice of the University of Edinburgh Student Association (EUSA) and in particular the work of its Volunteer Development Manager, Hilary Wardle. Members of the Think Tank volunteered their time, facilities, expertise and induction support selflessly and the volunteers received only their travel expenses by bus to their schools.

2 The Languages Think Tank and the Evaluation of the Pilot

The initial meetings of the Languages Think Tank in the second half of 2011 at Abden House, the Confucius Institute for Scotland at the University of Edinburgh. The concept and the parameters of the pilot were refined in discussion with the following members:

Dr Judith McClure, Convener of the Scotland China Education Network

Graham Thomson, Director of CEL and SCSSA, Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh

Professor Antonella Sorace, *Bilingualism Matters*, University of Edinburgh

Richard Easton, Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh

Sarah Breslin, Director of SCILT, Scotland's Centre for Languages, University of Strathclyde and Chair of Languages Excellence Group

Simon Macaulay, Chair of Languages Working Group at the Scottish Government and Executive Committee of SCEN

Liz Gray, Quality Improvement Officer, Department of Children and Families, University of Edinburgh

David Scott, Education Officer, East Lothian Council

Peter Hogan, Headmaster, Loretto School

Johanna Holtan, Internationalisation Co-ordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA)

Hilary Wardle, Volunteer Development Manager, EUSA

Finbar Bowie, Community and Volunteering Officer, EUSA

Angela Gayton, Edinburgh Language Ambassadors, University of Edinburgh

Eduardo Lees, British Council Scotland

It was decided from the first that the project should be properly evaluated as it progressed. Bill Maxwell, CEO of Education Scotland, agreed that Fiona Pate HMle, the national languages specialist, should carry out the evaluation and produce an Evaluative Report ***see separate document***.

3 The Schools Participating in the Pilot

East Lothian Council

Dirleton Primary School

East Linton Primary School

Musselburgh Burgh Primary School

Pinkie St Peter's Primary School

St Martin's RC Primary School Tranent

Whitecraig Primary School

Macmerry Primary School

City of Edinburgh Council

Sighthill Primary School, Nursery Class

SCIS

Loretto Junior School

4 The International Students and their Selection

Hilary Wardle, Volunteer Development Manager of EUSA, developed a Volunteer Role Description for interested international students, with the role title of **Nursery or Primary School Language and Culture Facilitator**. The purpose of the role was *to work with the Class Teacher to engage children in lively activities and to enable them to hear the Volunteer's native language and something about its cultural context*. Liz Gray, QIO at City of Edinburgh Council, drew up a more detailed role specification for discussion by the Think Tank, including the characteristics of active, engaging learning approaches.

See Appendix 1, Volunteer Role Description

Volunteers were told that they would need a disclosure check. In practice, East Lothian Council decided that as they would always be working with the class teacher and would have no unsupervised access, this was not necessary.

Hilary Wardle, supported by Angela Gayton, interviewed the international students who applied to take part.

Sixteen international students took part in the pilot: fifteen from the University of Edinburgh and one from Queen Margaret University. The following languages were included:

Dirleton PS, P1/2	Norwegian (with Viking project)
East Linton PS, P4/5	Malay (with Rain Forest project)
Musselburgh Burgh PS, P7a and P7b	Hindi (for work on India)
P6	German
P5	German
P4/5	Greek (for work on Greece)
P3	Mandarin
P3/4	Japanese
P2	German

Pinkie St Peter's, P5	Gaelic
St Martin's RC PS Tranent, P6 and P2	Korean
Whitecraig PS, P4/5/6	Gaelic
Macmerry PS, P3/4	German
Sighthill PS (Nursery Class) Edinburgh	Spanish
Loretto Junior School, P4	Mandarin

It is noteworthy that the Headteacher of Musselburgh Burgh Primary School, Karen Fleming, who welcomed so many international students, studied French and Italian at the University of Edinburgh.

Degree Subjects of International Students
Biology
Medicine (2)
MSc Ecological Economics
MSc TESOL
MSc Public Health Practice (QMU)
English and Maths for Teaching
Erasmus Programme: Linguistics and Gaelic
MSc Children and Young People's Mental Health and Psychological Practice
Economics and Maths
English Literature and French
Celtic and English Literature
English Language and Literature

Spanish and History
Celtic and Archaeology
English Literature, Linguistic and Cognitive Science

The students made very interesting comments about their work. One, who worked in partnership with another student to introduce Malay in East Linton Primary School, wrote as follows:

For my undergraduate dissertation I examined the linguistic pre-inclinations of urban secondary school children within Malaysia's multi-lingual linguistic market, and the link this had to education and economic development policies. The cultural and ideological neutrality of language was reviewed with regards to global Anglicisation and the growing economic disutility of other mother tongues.

This experience with the Edinburgh Languages Project has taught me a lot. While I am currently pursuing an MSc in Ecological Economics and will most probably continue on in that line of work, I look forward to the day that I can return to teaching children again!

Another student, who had brought his Norwegian to enhance a Viking project, has decided to embark on a teaching career as a result of his experience.

For the quality of the work produced by some of the students:
See Appendix 2.

East Linton Primary School Project.

5 Induction for Teachers and International Students

Peter Hogan, Headmaster of Loretto School, generously hosted a twilight induction session for Teacher Leaders of the project, entitled ***Why and How?*** on 18 January 2012. Professor Antonella Sorace from the University of Edinburgh, Director of *Bilingualism Matters*, explained the research context of early language exposure and acquisition and their impact on cognitive ability – ***Why?*** Laura Stewart from Scotland's National Centre for Languages, SCILT, introduced methods and resources for early language learning – ***How?***

The group included not only Teacher Leaders from the schools participating in the project, but representatives of SCEN, Education Scotland, East Lothian Council, the City of Edinburgh Council, Language Ambassadors from the University of Edinburgh and Moray House School of Education. The resulting discussion was most helpful and ended with a consideration of practical issues, including the importance of teacher leadership, the acceptance that

the pilot would involve difficulties as well as strengths, and the process of evaluation by Fiona Pate HMIe.

The Student Training Session took place at the Confucius Institute for Scotland at the University of Edinburgh on 13 February 2012. The same speakers for **Why?** and **How?** adapted their presentations for their student audience. The pilot was placed within the context of language developments in Scotland, in particular the 1 + 2 agenda. Professor Antonella Sorace was assisted by her colleague Martha Robinson. In addition, Angela Gayton, a doctoral student in languages at the University of Edinburgh and a Language Ambassador, spoke with Alice and Miri on their experience of supporting language learning in City of Edinburgh Primary Schools. This student participation was of great importance. A striking element of the training session was the commitment and enthusiasm of the international students, coupled with their intelligence and wide range of intellectual interests.

6 Progress of the Pilot

Schools made their own arrangements with students and the pilot took place for a four to six week period, depending on these arrangements, at the end of the Spring and the beginning of the Summer Terms 2012. The Project Co-ordinator received queries and enthusiastic emails and sent out updates. Fiona Pate HMIe conducted the evaluation and the best account of the progress of the project is hers: **See Evaluative Report 2012.**

At the end of their session each student received a Certificate of Participation from EUSA and the schools provided their own references and thanks. The Evaluative Report was sent to everyone and extremely well received: the students valued its commendation of their work and the honest approach to the areas in need of improvement. Similarly the EUSA Volunteer Development Manager, the Project Co-ordinator and the members of the Think Tank generally were very much encouraged and took the view that the pilot had been very worthwhile and should be taken further.

7 Next Steps

The core members of the Think Tank re-convened to consider the next stage of the project. Representatives of the following groups have given their view:

- ❖ East Lothian Council
- ❖ City of Edinburgh Council
- ❖ EUSA Volunteer Development
- ❖ The University of Edinburgh, *Bilingualism Matters*
- ❖ Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT)
- ❖ Education Scotland (through the Evaluative Report)

There was strong agreement that the project should be developed in the light of the comments in the Evaluative Report. In particular, it was thought that the

need for a sustainable programme should be met by making the next stage of the project run for the whole academic session (in University terms) 2013 – 2014. Improvements would be made to the selection and training process for international students. It would be seen whether it were possible to link class teacher language learning with the classroom pilot.

Hilary Wardle, EUSA Volunteer Development Manager, said that the volunteering service is totally ready to further HMIe recommendations and also thinks that students could travel up to one hour each way by bus or train. That opens up the possibilities of Fife, West and Mid Lothian and possibly the Borders. It may be too that other universities and authorities would be interested in the pilot in their own areas: the Project Co-ordinator will pursue this.

Judith McClure is also in contact with Professor Antonella Sorace, to discuss the continued involvement of *Bilingualism Matters* with the project. There is also discussion of a separate but linked project to introduce the early learning of Mandarin: the Scotland China Education Network will support this.

The University of Aberdeen is interested in the project and is looking to take it forward with Aberdeen City Council.

The next meeting of the Languages Think Tank, to consider the second stage of the International Student Project for 2013-2014, will take place in February 2012.