

Filling And Bridging The Gap In Languages: How Are Foundation Certificates Being Used In The Progression To GCSE?

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Summary

This is an investigation into the Foundation Certificates in Secondary Education (FCSEs), which are currently only available in some Modern Foreign Languages (MFLs). Students may take the FCSE to fill the current gap in formal accreditation at Key Stage 3 (KS3) or to bridge the gap to GCSE at Key Stage 4 (KS4). The effectiveness of the FCSE at preparing those students who continue to a GCSE in MFLs forms the main part of this investigation. The students considered are those who progressed from an FCSE to one of the most popular language GCSEs: French, Spanish, German and Italian. How the FCSE fits with other non-mainstream qualifications and with the newly-introduced English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is discussed and the typical candidature is summarised. The language learning routes that these students follow, the progression to GCSE made according to FCSE outcome and the value added to students for having taken the FCSE and are all analysed. This investigation is partly informed by several case studies of the use of the FCSE in centres. Overall, findings indicate that the FCSE is being used beyond its original intention, appears to be fostering GCSE uptake and, in some cases, may be contributing to improved GCSE outcomes.

Introduction

The FCSE is a Level 1 qualification, unique to AQA MFLs, which is equivalent to GCSE grades D to G in the National Qualifications Framework (Figure 1). The FCSE is therefore designed, in part, for students who would not be expected to obtain a grade C or above at GCSE level. It is mainly targeted at Year 9 students who would usually complete the qualification in one academic year. The first Full Course FCSEs in French and Spanish became available for first teaching in Autumn 2007 with certification first possible in Summer 2008. Three further languages, German, Italian and Chinese (Mandarin), were added a year later with first certification possible in Summer 2009. Short courses (one Spoken, one Written) in each language became available for first certification in Summer 2010.

The Full Course covers the four language skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking over twelve units. The Short Course can be taken in either Spoken Language (listening and speaking) or Written Language (reading and writing) over six units. Until very recently, the FCSE had not changed structurally a great deal since its inception. It was a non-exam based, fully internally-assessed qualification with a single overall mark being provided to AQA for moderation. It is now required that a quarter of the Full Course assessment and half of the Short Course assessment be submitted for moderation. The grades available are Pass, Merit and Distinction, equivalent to National Curriculum Levels 4, 5 and 6. In 2009 there was a huge surge in the size of entry but, for 2011, figures suggest that the entries now appear to stabilised (Table 1).

Before the introduction of the FCSE, students who had studied an MFL up to the end of KS3 (age 14), but who did not continue to GCSE at KS4 (age 16), would not receive a formal qualification for their attainment after three or more years of studying a language. Currently, all students learn at least one language at KS3 as MFL is compulsory at KS3 in the National

Curriculum. This provided the primary motivation for the introduction of the FCSE in that it 'fills the gap' for students that would ordinarily drop their non-GCSE language choice at KS3. It must be noted, however, that the FCSE is not restricted to students who are in KS3. Primary, KS4, Sixth Form and adult learners are also able to enter for an FCSE (although due to the internally-assessed nature of the qualification, private students¹ are not permitted).

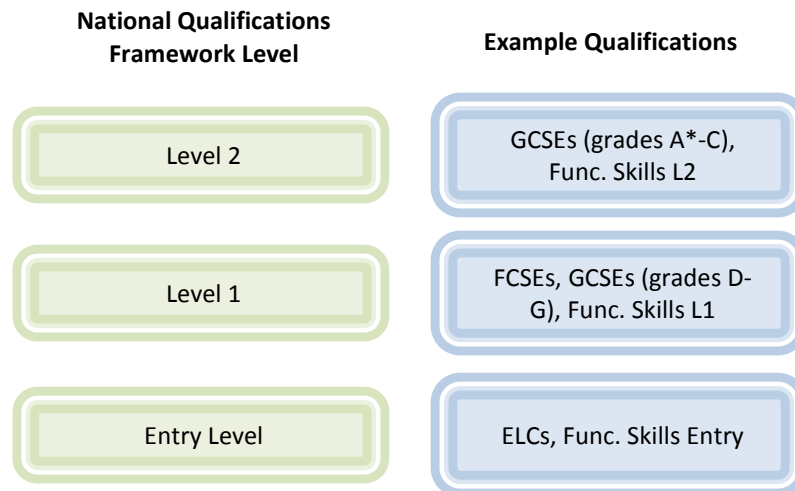


Figure 1: The first three National Qualifications Framework levels (out of 9) and the relationship to ELCs, FCSEs and GCSEs.

The compulsory study of MFLs to the age of 16 was removed from the National Curriculum in 2004. This resulted in a dramatic 35 *per cent* decrease in the number of language GCSE entries from over 540,000 in 2003 to fewer than 350,000 in 2010. Most of this change was accounted for by the French and German GCSEs as the combined entry changed by 45 *per cent* between these two years. This resulted in a secondary motivation for the introduction of the FCSE, in that at KS3 it might 'bridge the gap' between KS2 (age 11) and GCSE level, possibly helping to address the fall in GCSE uptake.

Table 1: Candidate entry figures and centre figures for the FCSEs with year on year percentage increases.

		2008	2009		2010		2011	
		Entry	Entry	% increase	Entry	% increase	Entry	% increase
French	Cands.	2,540	13,331	425	23,747	78	26,711	12
	Centres	33	197	497	305	55	339	11
Spanish	Cands.	718	3,847	436	6,268	63	7,087	13
	Centres	19	85	347	122	44	157	28
German	Cands.	-	3,141	-	6,018	92	6,285	4
	Centres	-	58	-	99	71	120	21
Italian	Cands.	-	131	-	209	59	221	6
	Centres	-	12	-	13	8	13	0
Chinese (Mandarin)	Cands.	-	27	-	43	59	75	74
	Centres	-	5	-	8	60	11	38

¹ Private students make their own examination entries directly with a centre. They are not included in centre statistics.

There has not been the same impetus for the introduction of the FCSE in other subject areas. Before the 2004 reform, students at the start of secondary education were typically exposed to one (or two) MFLs at KS3 and it was one of these languages that they continued through to GCSE. This kind of structure is not present in all subject areas, although in Design and Technology and the Humanities there can be some level of student choice when moving from KS3 to KS4. The structure of language learning, however, is currently dependent on individual centre models and policies, hence there are several possible routes taken by students, such as learning:

- 1) two languages at KS3 and one compulsory language at KS4;
- 2) one language at KS3 with options of non-compulsory languages at KS4;
- 3) one compulsory language through both KS3 and KS4;
- 4) no compulsory languages but options being available at KS3 and KS4.

There are other non-mainstream qualifications available in MFLs, such as Entry Level Certificates (ELCs), which have recently been redesigned. These are equivalent to abilities below GCSE grade G in the National Qualifications Framework (Figure 1) and are designed primarily for 16-year-old students. They are also popular with students who have Special Educational Needs and with non-mainstream centres, such as prisons. ELCs, therefore, have a different purpose to the FCSE and are hence not considered as conjunctive with the FCSE in this study. However, a further motivation for the introduction of the FCSE is that of centres using the FCSE as an alternative to the ELC for 16-year-old students whose ability is considered to sit between the ELC and GCSE standards. In this respect, it would not be expected that students would progress sequentially from ELC to FCSE through to GCSE, but rather that the FCSE sits between the other two as an alternative (see Figure 1).

Table 2: Alternative accreditation offered to language GCSE as percentages of the total number of centres surveyed (CILT, 2008–2010).

		2008	2009	2010
KS3	Asset Lang.	18	16	11
	FCSE	7	13	14
	ELC	6	6	6
	NVQ	2	4	6
	Other	2	0	0
	No alternative	65	61	63
KS4	Asset Lang.	10	10	7
	FCSE	3	4	3
	ELC	5	4	3
	NVQ	5	10	13
	Other	7	3	2
	No alternative	70	69	72
No. Centres		659	558	559

Other awarding bodies do not provide similar qualifications to the AQA FCSE. For example, OCR is contracted to administer the government strategy 'Asset Languages', which is a language ladder scheme wherein the FCSE would equate to 'Preliminary' – the second of four stages. Since 2002, the Centre for Information on Language Teaching (CILT) annually tracks developments in language provision and uptake. Its 2008 review found that, for maintained schools, the most commonly-offered alternative accreditation to GCSE languages at ages 11–14 (KS3) was Asset Languages followed by the FCSE, even though the FCSE had only been running for one year (Table 2). In both 2009 and 2010, Asset Languages decreased in

popularity and the FCSE increased. The FCSE then became the most popular alternative, followed by Asset Languages. CILT does not collect data on the use of the GCSE at KS3 or before, however this is considered later in this study. At KS4, the most commonly offered alternatives to GCSE have become Asset Languages and language units of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

In addition to providing young people with the skills to compete in the globalised marketplace, learning another language has been shown to have a positive impact on cognitive development. For example, bilingual children have better inhibitory cognitive control than monolingual children. This means that they are better at ignoring irrelevant perceptual information, enabling them to sustain their attention during activities (Bialystok & Martin, 2004). This is beneficial for many tasks including problem solving (Bialystok & Majumder, 1998) and encouraging language learning may therefore produce cognitive benefits that are advantageous for learning across the curriculum.

The recent introduction of the EBacc², aims to encourage students to take a broad core of academic subjects, including MFLs. The present study is of interest in the context of these recent reforms because a language is now included in the EBacc. This means that students may be more encouraged to take a language at GCSE as the following quote from the Government's 2010 Education White Paper shows:

"The introduction of the English Baccalaureate will encourage many more schools to focus more strongly on ensuring every student has the chance to pursue foreign language learning to the age of 16." (Department for Education (2010) 4.23, p. 44).

All qualifications smaller than a full GCSE not containing an external assessment no longer attract points in the School and College Performance Tables. Until recently this included the FCSE and created a situation where the FCSE may have become less popular, which is in contrast to the aim of the EBacc. In response to this, the FCSE now contains the element of external assessment as discussed earlier. Hence the FCSE now attracts Level 1 points in these tables, providing a possible motivation for some centres to offer it.

The present paper explores how the FCSE is currently being used and how it might assist in elevating students to GCSE. This study therefore analyses the performance of FCSE candidates who have continued through to a MFL at GCSE. The three themes considered are:

1. Which students enter for the FCSEs and which of these continue to a language GCSE;
2. How the FCSE is being used within the routes of language learning from KS3 to KS4;
3. The relationship between FCSE participation and student performance in GCSE languages.

Methods

FCSE and GCSE language entry

The study focuses on candidates who took an FCSE in 2008 and then a language GCSE in 2010, hereon known as common FCSE–GCSE candidates. The entries for FCSE French and Spanish in 2008, GCSE French and Spanish 2010 and the common FCSE–GCSE cohorts were all analysed. The candidates were broken down by age, gender, centre type and number of GCSEs in their GCSE profile.

² The EBacc is a certificate awarded to any student securing good GCSE passes in English, mathematics, the sciences, a modern or ancient foreign language and a humanity subject.

For GCSE French and Spanish there were two legacy Full Course AQA specifications in 2010, Language A (linear, untiered) and Language B (modular, tiered). For the analysis, these two specifications were combined for both languages, the validity of which is discussed in Appendix A. Early units of the new modular French and Spanish GCSEs were also available in 2010 but there were no FCSE candidates taking these and hence they were not considered. As the AQA FCSE is not part of a formal ladder scheme within AQA, candidates may take a GCSE with another awarding body. Hence, in addition to in-house common FCSE–GCSE candidates, the paths taken by FCSE candidates who continue to take any Full Course GCSE in a MFL with other awarding bodies were also studied (permission was gained to use the data from the other awarding bodies – OCR, Edexcel, WJEC and CCEA).

How the FCSE is being used

Other KS4 language learning routes were considered by identifying those FCSE candidates in 2008 who took at least one Full Course language GCSE in 2010 out of French, Spanish, German and Italian (the four most popular GCSE MFLs by entry). In the remainder of this paper, the term ‘language’ refers to MFLs in one of these languages with Chinese (Mandarin) not included due to its small entry of less than 100 candidates. Candidates who took two of these GCSEs were included but three or more was not considered as the entry figures were negligible. Furthermore, in order to make some meaningful and up-to-date longitudinal comparisons, other cohorts of common FCSE–GCSE candidates across other years were also gathered and summarised.

In addition to carrying out the Language Trends surveys, CILT also collates case studies about initiatives and practices in language learning from centres across the UK. Interestingly, it has collected a small number of case studies (CILT, 2011) from centres that have provided the FCSE. These give some insight into the ways the FCSE has been used. They are summarised here in order to illustrate why it is difficult to categorise the common FCSE–GCSE cohorts.

To discover if attainment at FCSE influences progression to GCSE, the percentages of FCSE candidates continuing to GCSE were explored and grouped by FCSE grade obtained.

Relationship between FCSE participation and GCSE performance

The relationship between FCSE participation and GCSE language performance was considered by adopting an approach similar to that used during the awarding process using value added techniques. These techniques involve producing predicted outcomes for one cohort by taking into account the ability of a reference cohort, replicating previously observed relationships between ability and outcome. Conventionally, this is achieved by using prior attainment as a measure of ability to define the value added relationship. For example, in producing GCSE predicted subject outcomes, mean KS2³ results are used for prior attainment (Eason 2008a).

In the present study, retrospective analyses were conducted on the performance of common FCSE–GCSE candidates at GCSE by using candidates’ concurrent mean GCSE grades (with the other awarding bodies’ permission) as the measure of ability (Eason 2008b). In this way, post-hoc GCSE outcomes, as opposed to true predictions, were generated for the FCSE–GCSE candidates. The differences between these and the outcomes of the full corresponding GCSE cohort were then calculated. This is also the method used in the inter-awarding body statistical screening process (Stringer 2011). Although the FCSE may have a wider impact on cognitive skills (Bialystok & Martin, 2004; Bialystok & Majumder, 1998), it was considered here that the FCSE would have its strongest relationship with language GCSE outcomes. Furthermore, the influence of the one-year FCSE course on general GCSE outcomes would likely be negligible,

³ KS2 has recently replaced mean KS3 in this process due to the withdrawal of all KS3 tests in 2008.

which is the assumption under which the measurement of ability by mean GCSE grades is used.

Candidates' mean GCSE grades were calculated by converting grades onto a linear scale via A*=8, A=7, B=6, C=5, D=4, E=3, F=2, G=1, U=0 and the candidates were divided into ten ability deciles based upon these mean grades, which is the method used during the awarding process. Language GCSEs were included when calculating mean GCSE grades⁴. One-way Analyses of Covariance (ANCOVAs) were also performed to inform the value added outcomes, which used the GCSE scores as the dependent variable and GCSE mean as a covariate. When considering all-board data only GCSE language grades were available.

Results

FCSE and GCSE language entry

FCSE entry

Summaries of the FCSE French and FCSE Spanish entries are presented in Tables 3 and 4, respectively. The greatest proportion of candidates was comprised of those who were of the intended age for the qualification (i.e. 14). These two FCSEs were more popular with girls than boys, the greatest proportion of entries was comprised of those from Secondary Comprehensive centres and there were a small number of entries from Independent centres. Further, 221 candidates (from 4 centres) did both of these FCSEs, which represented 9 *per cent* of the FCSE French entry and 31 *per cent* of the FCSE Spanish entry.

Table 3: Summary of candidature (n=2,540) for FCSE French (2008) from 33 centres.

		No. cands	% of total entry
Gender	Male	1,186	46.7
	Female	1,354	53.3
Age	Under 14	32	1.3
	Age 14	2,462	96.9
	Over 14	46	1.8
Centre	Comprehensive	2,214	87.1
	Selective	-	-
	Modern	279	11.0
	Independent	47	1.9

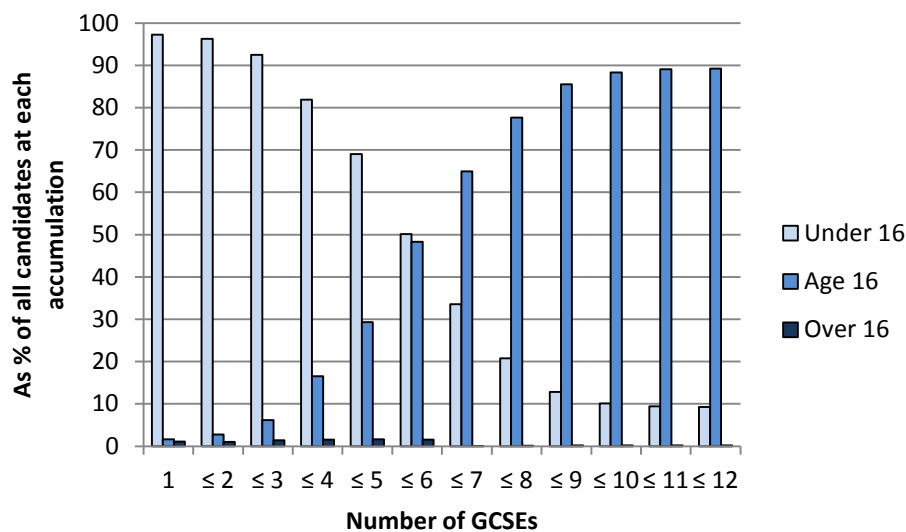
GCSE entry

The entry for AQA GCSE French in 2010 was 84,801 candidates from 2,327 centres. Similarly, the entry for AQA GCSE Spanish 2010 was 33,776 candidates from 1,578 centres. Figure 2 shows the number of candidates taking GCSE French, respectively, in terms of age and cumulative total of number GCSEs taken in the same year (the corresponding figure for GCSE Spanish was very similar). For both languages, the largest proportion of candidates taking up to six GCSEs was comprised of those candidates who were under 16 years of age. Within these groups, the youngest candidates were 9 years of age.

⁴ This was checked by removing language GCSEs from later analyses and confirming a negligible impact on the results.

Table 4: Summary of candidature (n=718) for FCSE Spanish (2008) from 19 centres.

		No. candS	% of total entry
Gender	Male	280	39.0
	Female	438	61.0
Age	Under 14	28	3.9
	Age 14	630	87.7
	Over 14	60	8.4
Centre	Comprehensive	659	91.8
	Selective	-	-
	Modern	37	5.1
	Independent	12	1.7

**Figure 2:** For each age group, the percentage of candidates taking AQA GCSE French in 2010 by cumulative total number of GCSEs sat in 2010.

The entry for language GCSEs from all awarding bodies in 2010 was 288,856. The distribution of candidates taking any language GCSE in 2010 in terms of age and cumulative total of number GCSEs taken in the same year was again produced. As above, the largest proportion of candidates taking up to six GCSEs was comprised of those candidates who were under 16 years of age.

FCSE–GCSE entry

It was found that 529 candidates from 22 centres offering FCSE French had candidates progress to AQA GCSE French. This represents 21 *per cent* of the total FCSE French 2008 entry in Table 3. There were 180 candidates from 9 FCSE Spanish centres who progressed to AQA GCSE Spanish, representing 25 *per cent* of the total FCSE Spanish entry in Table 4. Furthermore, a significant percentage of FCSE centres, especially for French (67%), had candidates progress to GCSE.

In Figure 3 the distribution of common FCSE–GCSE candidates is shown by the number of GCSEs taken in 2010, which shows that the majority of such common candidates take a more full set of GCSEs, rather than just a handful. Figure 2 showed earlier that for GCSE French the 16-year-old age group formed the largest proportion of the full GCSE cohort from six GCSEs

and upwards in a GCSE profile. Below six GCSEs the under 16-year-old age group formed the largest proportion. Furthermore, none of these younger candidates took an FCSE. This was also found to be the same for GCSE Spanish. From this information, it was decided that a minimum of six GCSEs was an appropriate threshold for use in candidates' abilities measures. Therefore, when using candidate ability profiles to investigate the relationship between FCSE participation and GCSE performance, only those candidates who sat six GCSEs or more were included in the analyses. After the FCSE–GCSE candidates were matched to a GCSE profile containing at least six GCSEs, there was only a slight drop in figures, from 529 to 504 for French and from 180 to 178 for Spanish. Additionally, 119 (54%) of the 221 candidates who took *both* FCSEs continued to GCSE.

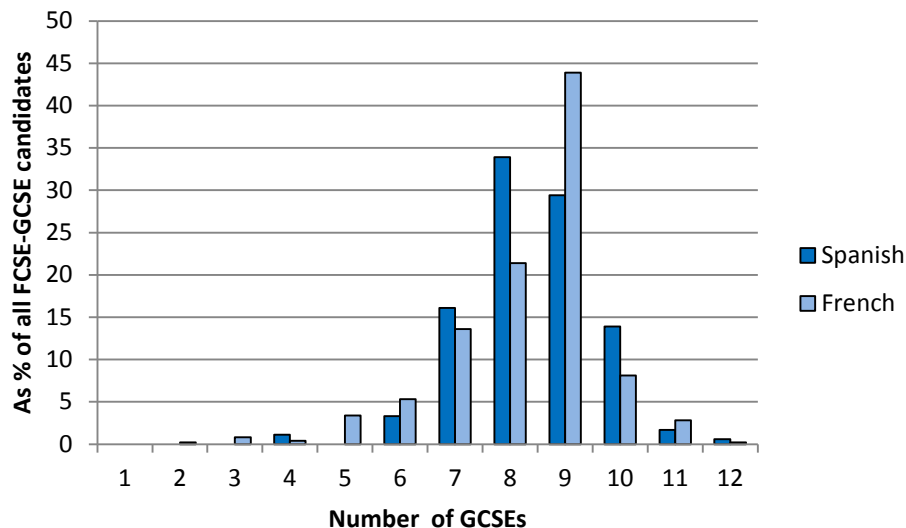


Figure 3: The percentage of common FCSE–GCSE candidates who did both FCSE in 2008 and AQA GCSE Language A or B in 2010 for French and Spanish, by number of GCSEs sat in 2010.

For all awarding body language GCSEs, it was found that 896 candidates from 26 FCSE French centres had candidates progress to GCSE. This represents 35 *per cent* of the total FCSE French 2008 entry in Table 3. There were 267 candidates from 10 FCSE Spanish centres who progressed to GCSE, representing 37 *per cent* of the total FCSE Spanish entry in Table 4. The distribution of common FCSE–GCSE candidates by the number of GCSEs taken in 2010 was again produced for these groups. This again showed that the majority of common candidates take a more full set of FCSEs and, therefore, exclusion of candidates with fewer than six GCSEs was repeated for these groups when analysing their performance. After the FCSE–GCSE candidates were matched to a GCSE profile containing at least six a GCSEs, there was only a slight drop in figures, from 896 to 857 for French and from 267 to 263 for Spanish. Finally, for these language GCSEs, 12 *per cent* of FCSE–GCSE French candidates and 9 *per cent* of FCSE–GCSE Spanish candidates did their GCSE with an awarding body other than AQA.

Summary

In this section, profiles of the entries for FCSE French and Spanish 2008 were presented. The entries for AQA GCSE French 2010 were also presented and broken down by age group and cumulative total number of GCSEs taken in the same year. It was found that the majority of candidates taking only handful of GCSEs were aged under 16 whilst the majority of common FCSE–GCSE candidates took over six GCSEs. This was the same for the entry of all language

GCSEs. It was decided to take six GCSEs as the threshold for use in the candidate ability measures. There were between 21 *per cent* and 25 *per cent* of common the FCSE–GCSE candidates continuing to the same language with AQA and between 35 *per cent* and 37 *per cent* of them continuing to any language GCSE with any awarding body.

How the FCSE is being used

Language learning routes

To demonstrate all of the language learning routes taken by candidates taking the FCSE in 2008, Figures 4 and 5 present the proportions of these candidates who continued to one language GCSE and those who continued to two language GCSEs (with any awarding body), both further split by the specific languages taken. It can be seen, even with this relatively small group of candidates, that there was a variety of routes taken by candidates after FCSE.

Table 5 shows the timing of progression for FCSE–GCSE candidates for the three most popular AQA MFL GCSEs. This shows the year in which FCSE candidates from 2008, 2009 and 2010 sat the indicated GCSE. This reveals a few interesting trends. Firstly, the number of FCSE candidates from 2008 completing a GCSE in the following year (2009) was relatively low compared to common candidates spanning two academic years. This was even lower for the common 2009–2010 candidates. This is not surprising given that it normally takes two years to complete a GCSE and that 2010 was the year in which most GCSEs (including languages) changed from the old linear specifications to units of the new modular specifications. However, the fact that there were such candidates suggests that some centres offered the FCSE concurrently with the GCSE. Conversely, the common FCSE 2010–GCSE 2011 candidate figures were relatively high compared to common candidates spanning two academic years, with a greater use of several combinations of FCSE and GCSE languages. These were comparable to the common FCSE 2009–GCSE 2011 figures indicating a broader range of uses of the FCSE (see Table 11) (2011 saw the first certification in the new GCSEs).

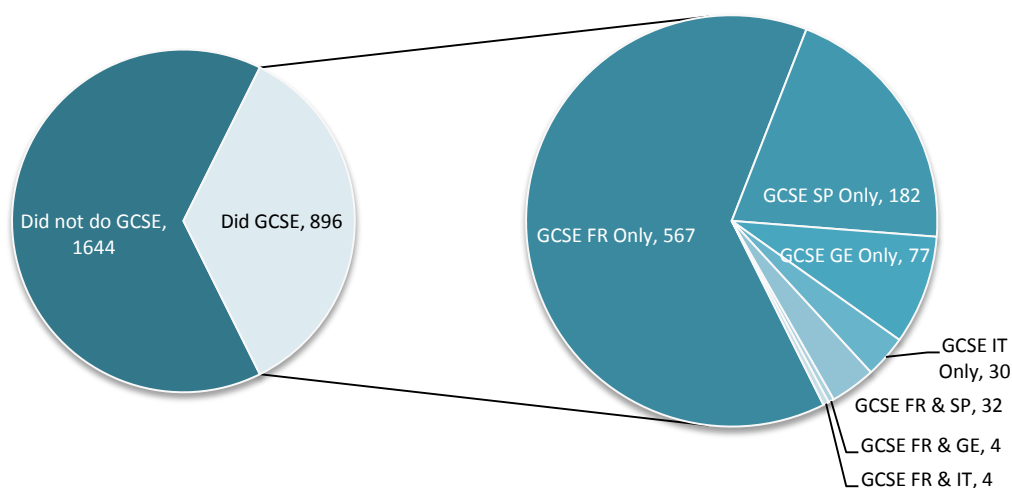


Figure 4: The MFL GCSE language routes taken by FCSE French candidates.

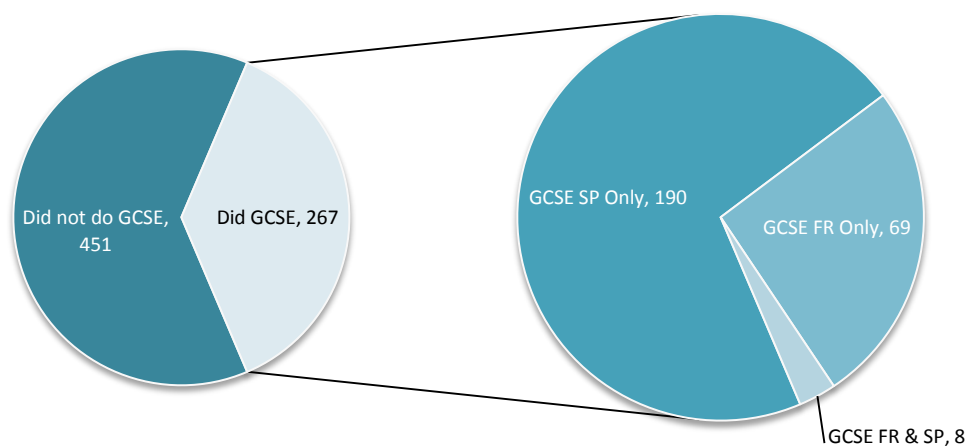


Figure 5: The MFL GCSE language routes taken by FCSE Spanish candidates.

By comparing the common 2008–2010 French–French and Spanish–Spanish candidates (underlined in Table 5), who are the main focus of this study, to the common 2009–2011 candidates it appears that entries decreased. However, as mentioned above, the common candidates of GCSE in the year 2011 came from two FCSE years (2009 and 2010), meaning that figures rose over time. As a percentage of the total FCSE cohorts, these entries were between 2 *per cent* and 5 *per cent* compared to between 21 *per cent* and 25 *per cent* for the common FCSE 2008–GCSE 2010 candidates as discussed earlier.

There was also, as suggested above, several used combinations of FCSE and GCSE languages even for the years analysed in this study. Candidates using the FCSE in this way were ‘filling the gap’ as discussed in the Introduction and they are not considered in later sections of this study. Finally, Table 5 also shows that there were no common FCSE–GCSE candidates spanning a three year period.

Table 5: Common FCSE–GCSE candidature across years for French (FR), Spanish (SP) and German (GE).

GCSE year			2009			2010			2011		
Lang.			FR	SP	GE	FR	SP	GE	FR	SP	GE
FCSE year	Lang.	Entry	98231	38490	39589	90855	37968	44605	80745	35628	31789
2008	FR	2540	80	1	0	<u>552</u>	200	89	0	0	0
	SP	718	16	5	0	69	<u>189</u>	0	0	0	0
	GE										
2009	FR	13331				17	5	4	404	46	29
	SP	3847				3	3	4	97	156	11
	GE	3141				0	0	0	37	4	142
2010	FR	23747							326	6	117
	SP	6268							27	109	18
	GE	6018							111	4	148

The hashed boxes are due to the unavailability of FCSE German in 2008 and the shaded boxes are due to candidates not entering for FCSE and GCSE in the same year. The underlined figures correspond to those presented earlier (candidates are included here regardless of whether they can be matched to a GCSE profile).

Centre case studies

In terms of student achievement, the feedback from centres to AQA about the FCSE has generally been very positive for two main reasons: the FCSE (i) keeps KS3 students on target and (ii) helps with Year 9 motivation when KS4 options have already been made. This was based on anecdotal evidence acquired via face-to-face INSET meetings, coursework advisors and direct communication to the subject team, and at language conferences. There are many reasons why centres may choose to offer the FCSE and when they choose to deliver it, of which the main ones that have been reported are:

- 1) teaching FCSE alongside GCSE in KS4 where more able students do GCSE and less able do FCSE, which is feasible due to topic overlap;
- 2) teaching FCSE to sixth form students as an *ab initio* course in a second or third language or to adult learners;
- 3) teaching FCSE at KS3 as the building blocks towards GCSE, perhaps for lower tier candidates to gain confidence or for general fostering of GCSE uptake.

Table 6: FCSE and FCSE–GCSE candidate entries for the case study centres.

Case Study	FCSE FR	FCSE–GCSE		FCSE SP	FCSE–GCSE	
	Entry	Entry	% of FCSE	Entry	Entry	% of FCSE
1	125	10	8	0	0	0
2	15	0	0	11	0	0
3	62	38	61	0	0	0
4	102	75	74	73	53	73

The key features of the four case studies collected by CILT are summarised below and a breakdown of the entries is presented in Table 6. Centres 1 and 2 provided the FCSE to accredit KS3 language learning and to provide an alternative to limited ability students, respectively, and Table 6 shows that these two centres had minimal or zero FCSE candidates progressing to GCSE. Centres 3 and 4, however, which provided the FCSE to foster GCSE uptake and to provide options to highly motivated students, respectively, had higher numbers of FCSE candidates progressing to GCSE. These are not necessarily representative of all centres and they do not provide candidate-level information, but they do give an indication of the variety of options for the use of the FCSE.

Case Study 1: Using the FCSE in Year 9

Centre Type:	Community specialist school for technology and expressive arts.
Main aim:	To provide accreditation at the end of KS3 for several years of language learning to students who will not continue to GCSE in languages.
Delivery:	FCSE French taught in Year 9, building on work covered in Years 7 and 8, across the whole year group and hence all abilities.
Perceived benefit:	Provided focus to Year 9 students rather. For those continuing to GCSE, the FCSE provided good practice in the rigour of formal

assessments. There has since been a steady increase in the number of students opting for GCSE French with a fourfold increase in 3 years.

Future: Teaching of FCSE may begin earlier than the start of Year 9.

Case Study 2: *Ab Initio* in Year 10

Centre Type: Independent co-educational.

Main aim: To provide to limited ability students, from the start of KS4, an alternative to the GCSE and ELC and to enable them to achieve at least a Merit.

Delivery: FCSE French and FCSE Spanish taught in Year 10 to a group of students identified as reluctant language learners (of limited ability). Although the group had already studied 3 years of French and 2 years of German at KS3, the delivery of the FCSE was regarded to be 'from the beginning' for these particular students.

Perceived benefit: The students, who were mainly teenage boys with low confidence, were much better motivated. There was anticipated to be an impact on language results as the FCSE was to be targeted at students who would have struggled to obtain Grade C at GCSE.

Future: FCSE French, Spanish and additionally German to be offered the following year (2009) in Year 10 and possibly Year 11, with the further possibility of students taking two FCSEs.

Case Study 3: To Increase GCSE Uptake

Centre Type: Mixed comprehensive.

Main aim: To increase uptake of languages at GCSE and to provide a framework upon which to update the KS3 work scheme.

Delivery: Piloted with two top set Year 9 groups with high KS3 abilities. Following this, the FCSE was used with a range of groups of varied abilities.

Perceived benefit: Very beneficial for students who opted for GCSE languages as they had a clearer idea of what was required. For students who had decided not to continue to GCSE, level of engagement in MFL lessons was improved.

Future: Possibility of running FCSEs alongside GCSEs with lower ability students.

Case Study 4: To Accredit French and Spanish in Year 9

Centre Type: Mixed comprehensive.

Main aim: To accredit performance in French and Spanish to a top set of Year 9 students.

Delivery: The FCSE was trialled with two pilot groups in Year 9 and one was chosen for accreditation. All of the students in the selected group had

high levels of motivation and interest, but not all would necessarily choose to study a language at GCSE.

- Perceived benefit:** Some student feedback has been that (i) the opportunity to obtain an accredited qualification was welcomed as they would not be studying that language for GCSE, (ii) in other subjects, which they did not continue to GCSE, they would have nothing to show for three years of study and (iii) some changed their minds and chose to study for a GCSE language as the FCSE made them realise that they can do well.
- Future:** Planned to teach the FCSE over two years (Year 8 and 9) so that the delivery can be more relaxed.

FCSE grade and progression to GCSE

To establish the effect that FCSE performance had on progression to GCSE, for both FCSE French and FCSE Spanish, 4×2 chi-squared tests were conducted to compare the proportions of FCSE candidates who continued to GCSE to those who did not, when split by achieved FCSE grade (Ungraded 'U', Pass 'P', Merit 'M' and Distinction 'D'). For French, there was found to be a significant difference in the proportions continuing to GCSE between candidates, grouped by grade ($\chi^2(3) = 176.55$, $p < 0.01$, $n = 2540$). To determine more about the nature of this association, a likelihood-ratio χ^2 test (G^2 test) was performed (Agresti, 2002). For the full contingency table in Table 7 the value was $G^2(3) = 192.65$ which was partitioned into three independent components by using three 2×2 partitioned contingency subtables. Subtable 1 in Table 7 compares the progression to GCSE for those candidates who obtained grade P and those who failed with grade U ($G^2(1) = 2.79$, $n = 843$). Subtable 2 compares the progression to GCSE for those candidates who obtained grade D and those who obtained grade M ($G^2(1) = 30.48$, $n = 1697$). There is little evidence of a difference between the progression of candidates who achieved grade P and those who achieved grade U. This is also the same for the relationship between candidates who achieved grade D and those who achieved grade M. Next, the lowest two grades and highest two grades were combined. Subtable 3 compares the progression to GCSE for those candidates who obtained one of the lowest two grades (P or U) and those who obtained one of the highest two grades (D or M) ($G^2(1) = 159.38$, $n = 2540$). The candidates obtaining the highest two grades seemed more likely to progress to GCSE (28%) than the candidates obtaining the lowest two grades (7%). The sum of the three statistics was $G^2 = 192.65$, demonstrating independence of the three subtables within the full table.

For Spanish, the analogous 4×2 chi-squared test also showed a significant difference in the proportions continuing to GCSE by grade ($\chi^2(3) = 38.39$, $p < 0.01$, $n = 718$). Similarly, the three corresponding 2×2 partitioned contingency subtables also showed that candidates obtaining the highest two grades seemed more likely to progress to GCSE (30%) than the candidates obtaining the lowest two grades (11%). The values were: $G^2(3) = 41.18$ for the full table; $G^2(1) = 1.39$, $n = 193$ for Subtable 1; $G^2(1) = 10.38$, $n = 525$ for Subtable 2; $G^2(1) = 29.41$, $n = 718$ for Subtable 3.

Summary

In this section, the language learning routes taken by FCSE candidates were first analysed. This revealed several interesting trends including the use of several combinations of FCSE and GCSE languages and the decrease over time in the proportion of FCSE candidates progressing to a language GCSE. The centre case studies showed the variety of options available to centres in using the FCSE. In particular, centres may focus on using the FCSE on students at the

GCSE grade C/D borderline. The analysis of candidate progression to GCSE showed that FCSE candidates are more likely to continue to a GCSE in the same language if they obtain either Distinction or Merit in their FCSE.

Table 7: Number of candidates doing GCSE and not doing a GCSE after achieving particular FCSE grades in French (FR) or Spanish (SP).

Full FR Table			
FCSE FR grade	Did GCSE	Did not do GCSE	Total
D	284	564	848
M	183	666	849
P	56	645	701
U	6	136	142
Total	529	2011	2540
Subtable 1			
FCSE FR grade	Did GCSE	Did not do GCSE	Total
P	56	645	701
U	6	136	142
Total	62	781	843
Subtable 2			
FCSE FR grade	Did GCSE	Did not do GCSE	Total
D	284	564	848
M	183	666	849
Total	467	1230	1697
Subtable 3			
FCSE FR grade	Did GCSE	Did not do GCSE	Total
D/M	467	1230	1697
P/U	62	781	843
Total	529	2011	2540

Full SP Table			
FCSE SP grade	Did GCSE	Did not do GCSE	Total
D	116	216	332
M	42	151	193
P	17	149	166
U	5	22	27
Total	180	538	718
Subtable 1			
FCSE SP grade	Did GCSE	Did not do GCSE	Total
P	17	149	166
U	5	22	27
Total	22	171	193
Subtable 2			
FCSE SP grade	Did GCSE	Did not do GCSE	Total
D	116	216	332
M	42	151	193
Total	158	367	525
Subtable 3			
FCSE SP grade	Did GCSE	Did not do GCSE	Total
D/M	158	367	525
P/U	22	171	193
Total	180	538	718

Relationship between FCSE participation and GCSE performance

AQA language GCSEs

To investigate the relationship between FCSE participation and candidates' performance at GCSE, retrospective analyses were performed on the common FCSE–GCSE candidates' scores and outcomes. Tables 8 and 9 show the results, for French and Spanish respectively, of applying the cohort ability profiles for the common FCSE–GCSE candidates to the corresponding GCSE outcomes (see Tables A3 and A4 in Appendix). Comparing the generated post-hoc outcomes to the actual outcomes for the common candidates gave an indication of the relative value added. The differences, as can be seen in the bottom rows, were substantial (>1% in absolute value). The positive differences in Table 8 suggested that the FCSE French candidates did much better than the value added relationship for all candidates sitting GCSE French would have suggested, particularly at Grade C. Conversely, Table 9 suggested that the FCSE Spanish candidates did much worse than the equivalent relationship suggested for GCSE Spanish. Moreover, it is important to note that over 50 *per cent* of the common FCSE–

GCSE candidates, for both French and Spanish, were in the bottom three ability categories (Tables A3 and A4). Although the intention of centres is unknown, this could suggest that some centres were using the FCSE to encourage weaker candidates to progress to GCSE.

Table 8: Differences between actual GCSE French outcomes of FCSE 2008 candidates and post-hoc outcomes generated by AQA GCSE French 2010 cohort.

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Post-hoc	5.81	17.50	35.79	65.22	85.92	95.05	98.72	99.82	100.00
Actual	5.36	15.67	41.87	76.79	90.08	96.63	99.21	100.00	100.00
Difference	-0.45	-1.83	6.08	11.57	4.16	1.58	0.49	0.18	0.00

Table 9: Differences between actual GCSE Spanish outcomes of FCSE 2008 candidates and post-hoc outcomes generated by AQA GCSE Spanish 2010 cohort.

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Post-hoc	5.55	17.68	35.70	62.30	83.13	93.58	98.11	99.80	100.00
Actual	6.74	14.04	26.40	54.49	78.65	88.76	94.38	100.00	100.00
Difference	1.20	-3.63	-9.30	-7.81	-4.48	-4.82	-3.73	0.20	0.00

All four GCSE French and Spanish specifications in 2010 had a maximum of 360 marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS)⁵. An ANCOVA was conducted to compare the AQA GCSE French UMS scores of those candidates who had done FCSE French (504 candidates) to those who had not (73518 candidates) whilst controlling for ability (described by mean GCSE grade). There was a significant difference between doing an FCSE and not doing an FCSE ($F(1, 74018) = 33.50, p < 0.05$). The unadjusted means (see Table 10) indicated that GCSE score was lower for FCSE candidates (mean score = 228.85; SD = 53.45) than with non-FCSE candidates (mean score = 235.70; SD = 62.63). However, this seems to be due to the influence of the covariate (mean GCSE score) since the adjusted for the two groups indicate that the FCSE candidates did better (mean score 240.41; 95% CI = [237.37, 243.45]) than the non-FCSE candidates (mean score 235.60; 95% CI = [235.36, 235.85]), with non-overlapping confidence intervals.

This, along with Table 8, suggests that although the ability of FCSE candidates is lower than GCSE language candidates, the FCSE has benefited such candidates when it comes to continuing to GCSE. The effect size is small, however, ($\eta^2 < 0.001$) and the difference between the adjusted mean scores for the two groups ($240.41 - 235.70 = 4.71$) represents 12 *per cent* of a grade. Hence the meaning of the benefit to candidates is rather conservative and does not necessarily imply a relationship between FCSE participation and GCSE grade, although it may have increased FCSE participation.

An ANCOVA was also conducted to compare the AQA GCSE Spanish UMS scores of those candidates who had done FCSE Spanish (178 candidates) to those who had not (29645 candidates) whilst controlling for ability mean GCSE grade. There was no significant difference between doing an FCSE and not doing an FCSE ($F(1, 29819) = 3.68, p = 0.055$). The unadjusted means (Table 10) indicated that GCSE score was much lower for FCSE candidates (mean score = 204.45; SD = 66.53) than with non-FCSE candidates (mean score = 241.88; SD = 65.12). The adjusted mean for the FCSE candidates (mean score = 231.39; 95% CI =

⁵ A scale wherein each grade corresponds to an equal number of marks, in this case 40 marks per grade (A* = 320 UMS, A = 280 UMS, etc.).

[225.20, 237.58]) was still lower than that for the non-FCSE candidates (mean score = 241.73; 95% CI = [241.30, 242.16]) – a difference of 10.34, equivalent to 26 *per cent* of a UMS grade. As this result was not significant, the differences seen in Table 9 could therefore just be random fluctuations and a result of the relatively low candidate numbers entering the Spanish. There was no meaningful relationship between FCSE participation and GCSE score hence a conclusion that FCSE Spanish reduces GCSE score was therefore not supported.

Table 10: Table of means, adjusted means with 95% confidence intervals and SDs for AQA GCSE French and Spanish (2010) UMS scores split by FCSE (2008) participation.

		French	Spanish
All cands	No. cands	74022	29823
	Mean	235.65	241.66
	Adj. mean	238.00	236.56
	SD	62.58	65.19
Did not do FCSE	No. cands	73518	29645
	Mean	235.70	241.88
	Adj. mean	235.60	241.73
	Adj. CI	[235.36,235.85]	[241.30,242.16]
	SD	62.63	65.12
Did do FCSE	No. cands	504	178
	Mean	228.85	204.45
	Adj. mean	240.41	231.39
	Adj. CI	[237.37,243.45]	[225.20,237.58]
	SD	53.45	66.53

All awarding body language GCSEs

The same analyses on candidates taking a language GCSE with any awarding body were also conducted. Scores were not available with all-board data and hence grades were converted to a linear scale in the same way that GCSE mean grades were calculated, i.e. A*=8, etc. The value added analyses yielded similar results to above and the post-hoc outcomes can be found in Tables B1 and B2 in the Appendix. These outcomes were obtained by considering the main language taken by GCSE candidates, where ‘main’ means that the GCSE language equalled the FCSE language and any other language GCSE was discounted. This was consistent with the GCSE trends seen in Figures 5 and 6 (i.e. that the most popular GCSE language with FCSE candidates equals the FCSE language), with the aim of comparing like with like.

In contrast to the results for the AQA GCSEs, the ANCOVAs for all-board language GCSEs yielded a significant effect ($F(1, 250954) = 20.20, p < 0.05$) for FCSE Spanish in the direction of negative effect to candidates GCSE scores. The effect for FCSE French was less ($F(1, 250954) = 5.09, p < 0.05$) than seen above in the positive direction. The significant effect for Spanish, compared to the marginal non-significant effect found before, was likely to have occurred because of the much larger number of candidates entering the analysis and the use of GCSE grade instead of GCSE score. This was a much rougher scale than using UMS scores and may

have affected the reliability of the results⁶. It can be hypothesised that had all-board GCSE scores been available then the result for Spanish may have been similar to that already seen.

Summary

In this section, value added analyses were performed on common FCSE–GCSE candidates' GCSE outcomes. This was done separately for the AQA French and Spanish GCSEs and the all awarding body all language GCSEs. It was found there was a positive relationship between FCSE French participation and GCSE French outcomes, most noticeably at grade C, whereas for FCSE and GCSE Spanish there was a negative relationship. The subsequent ANCOVA analyses supported this result for FCSE French although the relationship with actual achieved grade was minimal. The ANCOVA analyses did not support the result for FCSE Spanish. This may have been due to the relatively low number of common FCSE–GCSE candidates for Spanish and may also be related to the lack of candidates at the bottom of the ability spectrum in the particular sample used.

Discussion

FCSEs were introduced in 2007 to 'fill the gap' at KS3, where there had previously had been no specific language qualification targeted to 14 year olds, and 'bridge the gap' at KS3 in response to the removal of the compulsory study of GCSE MFLs in 2004. Having steadily increased over the past four years, the FCSE has become the most popular alternative accreditation to GCSE in languages at KS3. At KS4, however, it remains less popular alongside the ELC and behind OCR's Asset Languages and NVQ language units, suggesting that the FCSE has found its niche.

The present study has demonstrated that the FCSE has been used in many ways and, most interestingly, that it is used to foster the uptake in GCSE Modern Foreign Languages. Over 35 *per cent* of the FCSE French (2008) cohort and over 37 *per cent* of the FCSE Spanish (2008) cohort continued to a GCSE language in 2010. Furthermore, there is evidence that a higher FCSE grade is related to progression to GCSE.

The methodology is limited by the data available, particularly that only one set of common FCSE–GCSE candidates (2008–2010) was analysed. Additionally, it was not possible to split the common FCSE–GCSE candidates into further groups because the prior intentions of the FCSE candidates were not known. For example, a student who did FCSE French and then GCSE Spanish may have studied both French and Spanish at KS3 but, without the FCSE, he/she would not have a qualification at all in French. However, he/she may have always intended to drop French after KS3; he/she may have taken the FCSE because of the centre's policy, and doing so has then had the consequence of restoring their confidence. The student has then chosen to study a different language (Spanish) to GCSE; hence, the FCSE was used to encourage longer language learning. It is also unknown which languages, if any, were offered for study at KS3 or which languages they learned at KS2, although CILT reported that 79 *per cent* of Year 7 students in 2010 had studied a language at KS2. Research has also suggested that bilinguals have an advantage in learning a third language over monolinguals (Sanz, 2000), but it was also unknown which languages candidates speak at home. Overall, there were likely to be several complex reasons why the FCSE was used. In addition to these candidate level

⁶ For comparison, the ANCOVAs for the AQA GCSEs were conducted again but using only grades instead of scores. The effect for French was reduced ($F(1, 74018) = 26.72, p < 0.05$) and a large effect was found for Spanish ($F(1, 29819) = 5.85, p < 0.05$), demonstrating that the rougher grade scale did indeed have an impact on the result. Therefore, the conclusion for FCSE Spanish was again not fully supported.

drivers this includes centre level differences in strategy as indicated in the small sample of case studies presented.

This study has shown that some FCSE candidates continue on to GCSE in an MFL, in either the FCSE language or a different language. A small number of these candidates even progress to two MFL GCSEs. The results of the value added analyses for common FCSE–GCSE candidates suggested that candidates who took FCSE French did better than expected in their chosen GCSE language. This was also supported by the results of an ANCOVA analysis, comparing GCSE language candidates who did an FCSE to those who did not, whilst controlling for ability. This was unsubstantiated for FCSE Spanish due to a lack of FCSE–GCSE candidates across the complete ability spectrum. This raises a question about why particular Spanish candidates entered for FCSE. This could have been a result of GCSE French being the more ‘traditional’ language in schools in the sense that it attracts candidates from a broader range of abilities, compared to Spanish, especially at the very bottom of the lowest ability category (the most populated FCSE ability category). Additionally, because the samples used in the analyses were from the first year of the inception of the FCSE, the full picture may not yet have been uncovered.

This study is relevant to the debate about how GCSE languages are being used. During the past few years, there has been a dramatic fall in GCSE language uptake but conversely, and concurrently, a dramatic rise in FCSE uptake. As demonstrated here, studying an FCSE has had some success at propelling those candidates to GCSE. It has been noted that a clear proportion of students who take a GCSE language are young (aged less than 16). These students take only a handful of GCSEs in any one year, and may be using the GCSE because they are gifted and talented; that is, taking the language GCSE because they have an inherent flair for languages, which can be expected in certain subjects, with Music as another example. Such students may always form a certain proportion of GCSE language entries but of central interest is the future of the more general candidature for GCSE languages in light of the new EBacc certificate (which includes GCSE MFL). The expectation is that numbers will increase, but what could this mean for the FCSE? The FCSE candidature may also rise, in line with GCSE trends, but it may fall if the value of the FCSE is questioned over that of the GCSE.

Conclusions

In line with the increased FCSE uptake in the years following 2008, there has been an increase in FCSE candidates continuing on to language GCSEs. However, the situation is now more complex with, for example, the common FCSE–GCSE candidates who obtained the GCSE in 2011 coming from two separate FCSE years (2009 and 2010). These common candidates represent a much smaller proportion of the total FCSE entry than those for the 2008–2010 common candidates, suggesting that the FCSE is not being promoted as fostering GCSE uptake. Given this, and the evidence presented in the previous sections, it is recommended that AQA’s FCSE qualifications be reviewed and reimaged to reflect their demonstrated use as an introduction and pathway through to GCSE. In light of the EBacc’s introduction, it would now also be timely for the FCSEs to be demonstrated as being well-positioned qualifications for nurturing language learning, especially for propelling students through to GCSE.

With regards to other subject areas, it could be that in subjects such as Design and Technology, where students may study a variety of technologies to KS3 but only continue to GCSE with one of them, the option of gaining qualifications for the three years of study they have undertaken would be welcomed by centres. In fact, many 14 year olds are already reported as using the GCSE D&T Short Course qualification in order to fulfil this. This could also apply to Humanities

subjects where students would traditionally drop Geography or History study after KS3. If such qualifications were available, there could be an argument that this is attempting to reintroduce KS3 testing 'through the back door'. Indeed, these qualifications could act as an 'aptitude check' at the end of KS3 for students considering moving to a University Technical College (UTC) or studio school, which could be perceived as leading to 'selection at 14'. However, the aim of this paper has been to make a step towards showing the contrary: that FCSE participation can have a positive relationship with students' future GCSE results, rather than just testing for the sake of testing. It can do this by providing accreditation for several years of study to those who want it, improving the GCSE performance of lower ability candidates and improving student engagement, focus and motivation. Furthermore, the FCSE could also provide a function in a wider setting, such as at Adult Education Colleges or in industry, particularly for Chinese Mandarin within the globalised marketplace.

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Appendix

A: AQA Language A and B specifications

The major difference between the two Language A and Language B specifications in 2010 was that the available options resulted in twelve possible routes to certification in Language A but only four in Language B. As a consequence, written coursework could be avoided in Language A but not in Language B. In order to use the two separate AQA GCSE Language A and Language B specifications it was necessary to make comparisons between their standards. In the same way as discussed in Methods section, post-hoc outcomes for each of the Language A and Language B GCSEs were generated from the combination of the two, denoted as Language A&B. These post-hoc outcomes were then compared with the actual outcomes and the differences were small overall (<1% in absolute value, see Tables A1 and A2). This confirmed that the standards were the same across the two specifications allowing for the Language A&B combination to be used, capturing more candidates for the subsequent analyses.

Outcome matrices used to generate post-hoc outcomes for AQA-only language GCSEs:

Table A1: The AQA GCSE French A&B 2010 outcome matrix (inside solid box) used to generate the individual French A and French B post-hoc outcomes (PHO) by applying the respective shaded ability profile column. These are compared to the actual outcomes and the difference reported.

GCSE Cat	No. Candidates			A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
	A	B	A&B									
1	7450	462	7912	70.60	96.16	99.72	99.97	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
2	5657	551	6208	26.10	76.26	96.94	99.84	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3	5750	667	6417	11.08	52.72	89.34	99.21	99.89	99.98	99.98	100.00	100.00
4	5118	657	5775	4.73	32.38	77.30	97.51	99.86	99.98	100.00	100.00	100.00
5	6240	882	7122	1.88	19.14	61.51	94.61	99.62	99.97	100.00	100.00	100.00
6	4568	738	5306	1.26	10.42	46.63	89.86	98.98	99.91	99.96	99.98	100.00
7	4162	789	4951	0.61	6.02	34.05	83.56	98.44	99.82	99.96	100.00	100.00
8	5945	1099	7044	0.55	3.61	21.17	73.10	96.34	99.62	99.99	100.00	100.00
9	6478	1366	7844	0.42	1.76	12.53	59.38	92.11	99.09	99.92	99.99	100.00
10	15377	3850	19227	0.27	1.01	3.52	22.97	58.42	83.38	95.40	99.34	100.00
TOT	66745	11061	77806	10.98	26.21	46.01	71.94	88.37	95.74	98.85	99.84	100.00
PHO				5.68	16.49	34.29	63.01	83.96	94.04	98.38	99.77	100.00
Actual				5.01	17.29	34.17	62.23	82.83	92.98	97.96	99.81	100.00
Diff				-0.67	0.79	-0.12	-0.79	-1.13	-1.07	-0.43	0.04	0.00
PHO				11.86	27.82	47.95	73.42	89.11	96.03	98.93	99.85	100.00
Actual				11.97	27.69	47.97	73.55	89.29	96.20	99.00	99.84	100.00
Diff				0.11	-0.13	0.02	0.13	0.19	0.18	0.07	-0.01	0.00

Table A2: The AQA GCSE Spanish A&B 2010 outcome matrix (inside solid box) used to generate the individual Spanish A and Spanish B post-hoc outcomes (PHO) by applying the respective shaded ability profile column. These are compared to the actual outcomes and the difference reported.

GCSE Cat	No. Candidates			A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
	A	B	A&B									
1	3393	128	3521	70.80	97.19	99.72	99.94	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
2	2497	135	2632	28.50	80.89	97.64	99.81	99.92	99.96	100.00	100.00	100.00
3	2602	147	2749	11.24	60.28	90.94	99.13	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4	2227	141	2368	5.95	42.69	80.83	97.21	99.83	99.96	100.00	100.00	100.00
5	2674	202	2876	4.21	27.64	67.98	93.81	99.44	99.90	100.00	100.00	100.00
6	1956	185	2141	2.52	17.33	53.39	89.12	99.30	99.91	99.95	100.00	100.00
7	1780	177	1957	1.89	11.55	42.36	82.93	97.50	99.80	99.95	100.00	100.00
8	2491	242	2733	1.54	7.21	29.13	72.12	95.17	99.45	99.89	99.96	100.00
9	2729	287	3016	1.79	4.18	17.64	59.48	90.62	98.81	99.73	99.97	100.00
10	6561	863	7424	1.43	3.35	7.14	25.96	57.81	81.87	94.46	99.33	100.00
TOT	28910	2507	31417	13.07	32.41	51.82	73.51	88.44	95.52	98.65	99.83	100.00
PHO				7.65	21.90	39.92	64.45	83.65	93.54	98.05	99.76	100.00
Actual				6.62	21.18	40.45	64.30	82.09	92.34	97.57	99.68	100.00
Diff				-1.03	-0.72	0.52	-0.15	-1.56	-1.19	-0.48	-0.08	0.00
PHO				13.54	33.32	52.85	74.29	88.85	95.69	98.70	99.84	100.00
Actual				13.63	33.39	52.81	74.31	88.99	95.79	98.74	99.85	100.00
Diff				0.09	0.06	-0.05	0.01	0.14	0.10	0.04	0.01	0.00

Table A3: The GCSE French A&B 2010 outcome matrix (inside solid box) used to generate the post-hoc outcomes of common FCSE–GCSE candidates (PHO) by applying the shaded ability profile column. These are compared to the actual outcomes and the difference reported.

GCSE Cat	No. Candidates		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
	FCSE	A&B									
1	19	7602	70.17	96.01	99.71	99.97	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
2	33	6042	25.75	75.85	96.86	99.83	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3	36	6163	10.87	52.04	89.08	99.20	99.90	99.98	99.98	100.00	100.00
4	29	5605	4.59	31.92	77.15	97.45	99.86	99.98	100.00	100.00	100.00
5	40	6930	1.75	18.85	61.23	94.53	99.61	99.97	100.00	100.00	100.00
6	27	5115	1.13	10.24	46.22	89.72	98.94	99.90	99.96	99.98	100.00
7	31	4853	0.62	5.93	34.00	83.47	98.43	99.84	99.96	100.00	100.00
8	66	6855	0.53	3.46	20.96	72.84	96.29	99.62	99.99	100.00	100.00
9	71	7533	0.36	1.61	12.17	58.71	91.88	99.06	99.92	99.99	100.00
10	152	17324	0.26	0.91	3.31	23.10	59.37	84.24	95.81	99.41	100.00
TOT	504	74022	10.99	26.36	46.51	72.70	89.09	96.16	99.00	99.86	100.00
PHO			5.81	17.50	35.79	65.22	85.92	95.05	98.72	99.82	100.00
Actual			5.36	15.67	41.87	76.79	90.08	96.63	99.21	100.00	100.00
Diff			-0.45	-1.83	6.08	11.57	4.16	1.58	0.49	0.18	0.00

Table A4: The GCSE Spanish A&B 2010 outcome matrix (inside solid box) used to generate the post-hoc outcomes of common FCSE–GCSE candidates (PHO) by applying the shaded ability profile column. These are compared to the actual outcomes and the difference reported.

GCSE Cat	No. Candidates										
	FCSE	A&B	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1	5	3326	70.05	97.02	99.70	99.94	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
2	10	2571	28.32	80.75	97.59	99.81	99.92	99.96	100.00	100.00	100.00
3	4	2646	10.92	59.94	90.82	99.09	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4	10	2305	5.77	42.34	80.61	97.14	99.83	99.96	100.00	100.00	100.00
5	11	2808	4.13	27.53	67.74	93.77	99.43	99.89	100.00	100.00	100.00
6	17	2080	2.26	17.12	53.13	89.09	99.28	99.90	99.95	100.00	100.00
7	20	1909	1.83	11.42	42.27	82.77	97.43	99.79	99.95	100.00	100.00
8	13	2681	1.38	6.83	28.61	71.80	95.11	99.44	99.89	99.96	100.00
9	25	2880	1.35	3.65	16.63	58.54	90.31	98.75	99.72	99.97	100.00
10	63	6617	1.27	2.99	6.83	25.81	58.35	82.61	94.83	99.46	100.00
TOT	178	29823	12.87	32.52	52.30	74.22	89.10	95.93	98.81	99.87	100.00
PHO			5.55	17.68	35.70	62.30	83.13	93.58	98.11	99.80	100.00
Actual			6.74	14.04	26.40	54.49	78.65	88.76	94.38	100.00	100.00
Diff			1.20	-3.63	-9.30	-7.81	-4.48	-4.82	-3.73	0.20	0.00

B: All board languages

Outcome matrices used to generate post-hoc outcomes for all-boards and all-language GCSEs:

Table B1: The all-board all-language GCSE 2010 outcome matrix (inside solid box) used to generate the post-hoc outcomes of common FCSE French – any language GCSE candidates (PHO) by applying the shaded ability profile column. These are compared to the actual outcomes and the difference reported.

GCSE Cat	No. Candidates										
	FCSE	All lang	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1	67	23311	62.32	94.93	99.68	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
2	74	19968	21.13	72.84	96.06	99.78	99.99	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.00
3	74	20729	8.87	49.29	88.01	99.13	99.95	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.00
4	53	18864	4.10	31.54	76.16	97.46	99.88	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.00
5	71	23582	1.96	18.41	61.56	94.36	99.59	99.96	99.99	100.00	100.00
6	56	17709	1.40	10.88	46.56	89.80	99.16	99.93	99.97	99.99	100.00
7	57	16925	0.92	6.42	34.39	83.14	98.36	99.85	99.96	99.99	100.00
8	94	23814	0.80	4.05	23.56	73.89	96.50	99.64	99.95	99.99	100.00
9	101	25793	0.64	2.13	13.34	60.10	92.71	99.14	99.89	99.98	100.00
10	210	60263	0.55	1.43	4.22	25.52	63.01	86.20	96.32	99.42	100.00
TOT	857	250958	9.13	24.93	45.91	72.87	89.81	96.54	99.09	99.86	100.00
PHO			8.33	23.62	44.02	71.67	89.48	96.46	99.07	99.85	100.00
Actual			7.93	22.52	47.96	79.58	92.18	97.08	99.30	99.88	100.00
Diff			-0.39	-1.10	3.94	7.91	2.70	0.63	0.23	0.03	0.00

Table B2: The all-board all-language GCSE 2010 outcome matrix (inside solid box) used to generate the post-hoc outcomes of common FCSE Spanish – any language GCSE candidates (PHO) by applying the shaded ability profile column. These are compared to the actual outcomes and the difference reported.

GCSE Cat	No. Candidates		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
	FCSE	All lang									
1	8	23311	60.72	94.77	99.68	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
2	15	19968	19.84	72.33	96.03	99.78	99.99	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.00
3	12	20729	8.57	48.78	87.90	99.13	99.95	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.00
4	19	18864	3.99	31.12	75.83	97.43	99.88	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.00
5	21	23582	2.12	18.02	61.08	94.29	99.59	99.96	99.99	100.00	100.00
6	27	17709	1.52	10.95	46.05	89.68	99.18	99.94	99.98	99.99	100.00
7	30	16925	1.08	6.48	33.88	83.00	98.35	99.85	99.96	99.99	100.00
8	26	23814	0.92	4.17	23.55	73.69	96.49	99.63	99.95	99.99	100.00
9	26	25793	0.74	2.24	13.28	59.92	92.68	99.13	99.89	99.98	100.00
10	79	60263	0.61	1.51	4.32	25.55	63.01	86.18	96.31	99.41	100.00
TOT	263	250958	8.92	24.82	45.77	72.81	89.81	96.54	99.09	99.86	100.00
PHO			4.45	15.87	36.41	67.38	87.50	95.70	98.87	99.82	100.00
Actual			6.46	17.11	34.60	63.88	84.41	92.02	95.82	100.00	100.00
Diff			2.01	1.24	-1.81	-3.50	-3.09	-3.68	-3.05	0.18	0.00