

## Foreign Language Learning and Inclusion: Who? Why? What? – and How?

### Abstract

Ever since 'integration' became 'inclusion' educators have been trying to ensure no child is denied access to the full curriculum. This includes, of course, access to foreign language learning (FLL); but we are still trying to make a sound case for including it in the curriculum of every child. Who hasn't heard arguments like: 'Do we really mean *every* child? Even those who are having difficulty with English?' 'Why make them do a subject that is too difficult for them?' 'It's not as if they all *want* to do it; many of them can't see the point.' Parents, too, say things like 'But he'll never need to speak another language', and 'There are more important things for her to learn.' Some of these arguments seem very persuasive, so we need to be very sure that it IS the right thing to do. What's the purpose of language learning? What is it for? What expectations do we have of learners? What benefits are we offering? And when we have answered all these questions satisfactorily, what about the courses we offer? Are they fit for purpose? Will the experience prove to have been worthwhile?