

ESRC Festival of Social Sciences

1+2: Learning languages in Scotland's primary schools

12th November 2015, 4 – 7pm, Stirling Court Hotel

As Scotland prepares to introduce a second 'foreign' language into the curriculum in primary schools, this event will invite members of the public to critically engage with the government's policy and consider the benefits of language learning for children in different social and educational contexts.

The linguistic landscape in Scotland is rich. As well as English, Scots and Gaelic are spoken in a number of communities. Likewise, 'heritage' languages, such as Urdu, Panjabi, Arabic and Polish, are used by migrant groups who have tended to settle in urban areas. In primary school, children have been learning a foreign language since 1992, generally French, German, Spanish or Italian with Chinese recently growing in popularity. In addition, there is renewed interest in the secondary sector in the classical languages, Latin and Greek, to support the development of intellectual skills and academic learning. The guidance from the Education Scotland leaves the choice of second language to individual schools to decide. Which language should they choose? And how should they make the decision?

This public, twilight discussion event will offer a unique opportunity for the audience to engage with social scientists working in the fields of multilingualism and multiculturalism, as well as with educational policy makers and language experts with insight into language learning in Scotland.

We are delighted to welcome the following speakers to Stirling:

Professor Alison Phipps, University of Glasgow
Joanna McPake, University of Strathclyde
Fhiona Fisher, SCILT
Dr. Arlene Holmes-Henderson, University of Oxford
Louise Glen, Education for Scotland
Fan Lin, Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools

After Professor Phipps examines language policy and practice in Scotland, speakers will outline the different contexts in which children learn particular languages and how these languages can benefit children, and perhaps Scotland's future prosperity.

To complement the talks, art with a languages theme will be on display from the University of Stirling's Art Collection. Art curators will be on hand to explain the work's link to language. Light refreshments will be served.

To book your free place, and for queries, please contact: festivalofsocialsciences@stir.ac.uk

From the ESRC:

The 13th annual Festival of Social Science takes place from 7-14 November 2015 with over 200 free events nationwide. Run by the Economic and Social Research Council, the Festival provides an opportunity for anyone to meet with some of the country's leading social scientists and discover, discuss and debate the role that research plays in everyday life. With a whole range of creative and engaging events there's something for everyone including businesses, charities, schools and government agencies. A full programme is available at www.esrc.ac.uk/festival. You can also join the discussion on Twitter using #esrcfestival.