

Latin Teaching in the European Schools

1. General Objectives of the European Schools

The European Schools have the two objectives of providing formal education and of encouraging pupils' personal development in a wider social and cultural context. Formal education involves the acquisition of competences – knowledge, skills and attitudes across a range of domains. Personal development takes place in a variety of spiritual, moral, social and cultural contexts. It involves an awareness of appropriate behaviour, an understanding of the environment in which pupils live, and a development of their individual identity.

These two objectives are nurtured in the context of an enhanced awareness of the richness of European culture. Awareness and experience of a shared European life should lead pupils towards a greater respect for the traditions of each individual country and region in Europe, while developing and preserving their own national identities.

The pupils of the European Schools are future citizens of Europe and the world. As such, they need a range of competences if they are to meet the challenges of a rapidly-changing world. In 2006 the European Council and European Parliament adopted a European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. It identifies eight key competences which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, for active citizenship, for social inclusion and for employment:

- 1. communication in the mother tongue*
- 2. communication in foreign languages*
- 3. mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology*
- 4. digital competence*
- 5. learning to learn*
- 6. social and civic competences*
- 7. sense of initiative and entrepreneurship*
- 8. cultural awareness and expression*

The European Schools' syllabuses seek to develop all of these key competences in the pupils.

Latin makes its particular contribution to the development of the key competences in the following manner:

1. The teaching of Latin offers pupils a unique opportunity to understand the way their own mother tongue functions: the relations between Latin and the mother tongue, through different ways of translating, which serve to consolidate and reinforce the lexical and syntactical bases leading to a firmer mastery of the mother tongue.

2. In addition, the teaching of Latin is a valuable and effective aid to the learning of third and fourth languages, and to developing methodically the linguistic competences of the second language (general and specialised vocabulary, syntax).

3. The teaching of Latin (a language with declensions and a grammar that is both rigorous and flexible) always confronts its learners with situations demanding care and precision. The pupil must formulate analytical hypotheses, and find or construct accurate connections between disparate parts of a sentence. Along with Greek, Latin illuminates most scientific vocabulary, particularly that of medicine, as well as the origin of many academic and scientific areas.

4. Latin teaching, which has recently been radically overhauled, now makes extensive use of new technologies in fresh approaches to language-learning, in information data-bases, in knowing how to select the most relevant material, in producing texts and documents individually or in groups.

5. As Latin is not primarily a language of oral communication, this can lead to a more reflective and distanced approach to language. Latin requires a precise attention to the details of words in all their dimensions, to their expression and meaning. It is an effective training in precision.

As Latin has this particular position, its teaching provides creative learning situations which lead to independence of thought.

The teaching of Latin provides a continuous cross-curricular approach through its interactive use of several disciplines at the same time; and as it is multidisciplinary by nature, Latin incorporates language, literature, history, and philosophy. As a result the knowledge and skills which develop Latin are transferable to other subject areas.

6. Learning Latin permits us to understand the contemporary world better: it brings unequalled insights, it compares our societies to ancient ones and it provides key insights into the economy, the law, religion, and social and political life.

Europe today maintains relations of both cultural difference from, and identity with the Roman world: learning Latin, therefore, contributes to the development of this sense both of identity and of difference in the collective life of a more complex society.

Such knowledge enables the pupils to define more precisely the points of conflict in the contemporary world: this excursion to antiquity permits them to put the present into perspective, to relativize, and to free themselves from the tyranny of the present. It is a

training in critical thinking. It is also a factor in the development of tolerance, as it involves an advanced level of knowledge of different types of society and religion.

7. To engage in the learning of Latin is a sign of taking an independent step: a sign of autonomy and originality, reaching beyond fashion and conformity, and far from a utilitarian view of education.

8. For the European Schools in particular, Latin (as well as Greek) is specifically an international language of culture: it particularly encourages the perception of the convergences and points of comparison between the cultures of Europe; it invites pupils to explore the foundation texts which have nourished and which continue to nourish the culture, the imagination and the arts of Europe and the world, yesterday and today. Beyond the acquisition of their cultural heritage, pupils taking Latin are encouraged to exercise their creativity in the performing arts, the visual arts and other art forms (ceramics, cinema, graphics, etc.).

from 2014-01-D-35-EN-3

