



# Getting Classics into Secondary Schools: Three Case Studies

by Steven Hunt

Despite the challenges which are involved, some secondary schools show determination to get Classics onto the timetable and into their curricular provision. The following three case studies draw on interviews with the people directly involved in doing so: the Principals and the teachers themselves. These experiences were captured at the time when they were getting Classics into their schools. The first is derived from an interview with a qualified specialist Classics teacher, ‘Rachel’, working in London. Latin already had a presence there from when the school had employed a part-time teacher; the remit was the development of a full Classics department. The second is based on interviews with the school head teacher and a non-specialist Modern Languages teacher ‘Yvonne’ who had been employed to start a Classics department from scratch in a school in the Midlands. The third is based on an interview with the Principal of an academy which had decided to introduce Latin not only into her own school with a new teacher ‘George’, but also into one that was not yet built. The respondents’ real names have, of course, been changed.

While nearly all other school subjects are enshrined in the school curriculum by law, classical subjects stand still without its protection. Schools are free to offer them, or not, and to be able to withdraw them at a moment’s notice. There are no nationally-agreed guidelines for the amount of time that should be allocated

for their study and no national curriculum content specifications – except that which is given by the examination boards for GCSE and A level. Provision is, therefore, extremely varied from school to school. The purpose of the article is to draw out some common themes and to offer guidance to other teachers and school head teachers who intend to introduce classical subjects into their own schools. The article also offers a warning: the precarious nature of the employment situation of the teachers themselves and the sometimes capricious decisions made by senior leadership can make or break the provision of classical subjects. It is often only through the teachers’ personal determination and perseverance that they can make a success of the venture.

## London case study: a girls’ non-selective state-funded converter academy in Inner London

Interview with the Classics teacher, Rachel

The academy<sup>1</sup> had had a part-time teacher of Latin, of near-retirement age, who had taught a very small number of students per year to GCSE<sup>2</sup>. With her retirement imminent the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) made the decision to support the development of classical subjects in the school and to appoint a specialist, trained Classics teacher – Rachel – to take the lead.

In the first year Latin was offered to a small number of Year 8 students. These students had already started studying Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in Year 7. In Year 8 they were expected to start a second MFL. Year 8s who intended to start Latin would therefore be ‘lost’ to the second MFL. This situation was not supported by the MFL teachers who perceived that their best students were being taken away from them.

Despite the commitment shown towards offering Latin in the school by the SLT, there was a lack of forethought about how to achieve it. There was no designated classroom (it had to be shared with other subject teachers and/or Rachel became peripatetic around the school). There was a perception from the SLT that Latin should only be offered to the most able students rather than for everyone. Latin was not offered as a timetabled subject originally, but after protests from Rachel, a limited amount of timetabled teaching was offered; however, students were expected to take some lessons off-timetable still. Despite the lukewarm support offered by the SLT, Rachel showed real commitment to the development of classical subjects in the school: she could easily have walked away and got a job in a more secure environment.

Meanwhile, at A level, the number of students choosing Classical Civilisation was large and healthy. Over the next five years, the Latin classes in Years 7 to 11 built up and ‘joined up’ with the A level

Classical Civilisation classes in Years 12–13. The growth of students through from Year 7 to Year 13 was an attraction to the specialist teacher who felt ‘locked in’ to seeing the development through and mitigated against the lack of appeal of the poor timetable provision and accommodation. The rapidly-established A level classes at the upper end of the school and the year-by-year increase in the number of students at the lower end secured the financial viability of the Classics department for the school. Students could identify a clear pathway from key stage 3, through GCSE and up to A level and beyond right from the start. The knowledge that they could pursue their studies, just like any other subject, incentivised them to stick to the course.

It was good that the academy made the decision to offer Latin. It was unclear, in retrospect, if they were aware of how much time would be necessary for teaching it. The SLT assumed that the subject was challenging and decided that it would only be suitable for and taken by students identified under the Gifted and Talented scheme then operational in British state schools. They had not recognised that the subject content of Latin is very large (comprising language which is much more complex than that which is employed in MFL) as well as knowledge and understanding about Roman literature and civilisation. They did not take into account that learning the Latin language is a time-consuming process – it’s a skill, which requires lots of time and frequency of practice. While there may be comparisons made between French and Spanish, the extra challenges of Latin mean that what one learns is considerably in excess of that which is studied in a MFL. Doing this off timetable – even with Gifted and Talented students – would be a very big challenge to deliver successfully and ensure the students would get the grades which they would probably get in their other subjects.

Rachel started making links with MFL and other subject areas for protection and support.

In the first year Rachel found that establishing the presence of Classical subjects in the school had not been thought through. There had been no way of formally telling students in Year 7 that Latin was available to them in Year 8 and how they should choose to do it – let alone what it comprised. Classical

Civilisation at A level was not mentioned in the school prospectus: therefore students did not know that they were able to choose it; and students who joined the sixth form from places outside the school did not know until they arrived at the school itself at the start of term in September and found out only through talking to their new friends that it was on offer at all. Rachel did not think that the SLT was deliberately making her life difficult, but merely not thinking the situation through. It is something worth considering: as classical subjects are infrequently offered in state-funded schools, the ‘collective memory’ that exists for other subject areas is lacking: students simply do not know that they can study Classics.

Rachel started GCSE Ancient Greek as an enrichment course at Year 12 for extra preparation for those who were considering a university Classics course or just for general interest. She also started to mentor teacher trainees with the local teacher training institution, thus helping to fulfil part of the school’s commitment to training and continuing professional development of its own and other schools’ teachers as its remit to Teaching School status.

Then SLT offered to put the Year 8 Latin classes on the timetable, but with the proviso that the timetable allocation was to be shared with philosophy, which was to be taught by a different teacher. Originally the timetable was arranged so that students studied one hour of philosophy and one hour of Latin per week in alternate weeks. This made it very hard for Rachel to maintain consistency between lessons: the fortnightly gap (sometimes more, due to holidays) made it difficult to sustain progress in language learning, because it requires regular lessons for the accumulation of language knowledge and the development of language skills. For the study of philosophy, however, it was less problematic as the subject was felt by the philosophy teacher to be much more topic-based in content and it could be delivered in discrete units. In response to the difficulty of the infrequency of language lessons Rachel tried a different approach the following year: she arranged for Latin and philosophy to be taught in blocks of lessons. This meant that some of the beginners’ Latin lessons would be taught by the philosophy teacher and not

by herself, and some of the philosophy lessons were to be taught by her. Rachel trained herself in the philosophy skills necessary at this level, but it also meant that she had to teach outside her own specialism. This was a good thing for the students who had had a better deal in Latin lessons because they had been able to make better progress over a sustained period of time. It had also encouraged Rachel herself to be adaptable – something the SLT admired. But she could not help but feel that she had been put upon to do this.

#### *Commentary:*

The SLT shows commitment to the development of the classical subjects. After the retirement of the previous part-time teacher, they could have decided not to offer any of the subjects at all. What is noteworthy is the lack of stability offered from one year to the next as the SLT struggled to reconcile their vision with practical ways of establishing the new subjects in the curriculum. The timetable allocation was whimsical and unprotected and the teacher had to be adaptable and creative from one year to the next. Staff development was not well thought through after the initial appointment of a Classics specialist and it was through her determination and tenacity in making links with other teachers and providing her own professional development for her colleague that a sensible arrangement was eventually found<sup>3</sup>.

It is important to think through how the two ‘ends’ of the classics curriculum might ‘knit together’ while the department is under development in key stages 3 and 4. The employment of a full time Classics specialist is a large expense. A sixth form class of Classical Civilisation or Ancient History at A level (neither of which requires students to have had any prior knowledge of the study of the ancient world) can be a sufficient attraction to a Classics teacher to stay in the school while they build up the classes in Latin and another classical subject among the younger students. Getting it right early in the Year 7 or Year 8 curriculum is vital in order to provide the student numbers which will lead to viable classes at GCSE and above.

The historic tag of Latin as being suitable only for the most academically

able students further problematises the SLT's views on curriculum provision<sup>4</sup>. The SLT seems to have found it a challenge to allocate enough time on the curriculum for students to undertake to do Latin properly even if it is offered to the more academically able students. The SLT seems unaware that the subject content of Latin GCSE is large and not comparable to that of a stand-alone two year GCSE<sup>5</sup>. The SLT also does not appear to recognise that the Latin GCSE examination is a particularly challenging one<sup>6</sup>. Latin is not just a language. Students may find the similarities between GCSE French and GCSE Spanish (for example) mean that they are able to take an extra language at GCSE in less time than they have studied the first. The fact that Latin GCSE includes not just language work, but also the study of the civilisation and original literature of the ancient world does not seem to have been fully understood.

## Midlands case study: a mixed, non-selective sponsored academy

Interviews with the Principal and the Classics teacher Yvonne

The details here are drawn from two interviews held at the school with the school Principal and the non-specialist Classics Teacher Yvonne who had trained as an MFL teacher before becoming the Head of English as an Additional Language. The school is a sponsored academy with around 1200 students, aged 11–18, located in a deprived urban district of a large city in the Midlands. The majority of students are drawn from second- or third-generation established immigrant families from the Indian subcontinent. MIDYS scores were low; the number of students receiving free school meals was high; Fischer Family Trust predicted grades were poor. The original school had been rebuilt and taken over by a small Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) and exam results had much improved. Ofsted<sup>7</sup> rated the academy as Outstanding in 2013. The MAT Executive Principal at that time saw Latin as an offer to the students beyond the curriculum and asked the teacher to take it on. Yvonne, a languages specialist with A level Latin, agreed. To improve her Latin knowledge she undertook a Summer School in Latin.

Yvonne started with a mixed Year 10–11 class of around a dozen selected students. As an Academy, the school is allowed to vary from the National Curriculum. Therefore she was legally able to take the students from their MFL class and allocate them five lessons per week in Latin instead. The *Cambridge Latin Course* was used with the intention of the students taking the WJEC Level 2 Certificates in Latin Language and Roman Civilisation as a first step to getting the department up and running. At the same time Yvonne started a Year 8 Latin class, again by invitation and in place of MFL. 13 students had started.

Meanwhile, in order to promote the subject to the wider school community and to develop her students' and her own subject knowledge, Yvonne forged strong connections with outside institutions, including several university Classics departments, local private schools (which were the only other schools in the locality which offered Classics), and with other organisations such as the Cambridge School Classics Project. She welcomed visitors to the classroom to give talks and presentations and picked their brains about how to move on.

When I interviewed the current Principal, although she did not have such a positive attitude to Latin as the Executive Principal had when Latin had been set up, nevertheless she was happy to continue to support Yvonne and Classics provided that she made Latin less exclusive in the academy. The Principal reckoned that the value of Latin lay in its role as a support for English. She underscored the importance that the subject counted in the EBacc subject list as that gave it validity and scored performance points in the national school league tables (important if one was in a MAT because one needed to show that progress was being made to Head Office and the Department of Education). She wanted to offer the subject to a broader range of more academic students than those with which Yvonne had started. The Principal was keen on the WJEC Latin as it was equivalent to a GCSE in terms of performance points and awarded two qualifications – Language and Literature.

Yvonne was clearly doing good work: of the nine students who (at the time of interview) had continued to Year 11 with Latin, six had chosen to continue to A

level (with two leaving the school, this showed a near 100 per cent continuation).

Future developments included ancient Greek. This would be offered to the Year 8 students who were studying Latin in the half term after February. As Yvonne herself had no ancient Greek, the class would be taught by a PhD student from a local university. There would be one lesson per week on a trial basis. Yvonne would attend the lessons in order to learn for herself. She also wanted the introduction to the classical world, particularly the richness of mythology and history, which she felt Greek would bring. She liked the idea of the alphabet as a code-breaking game. Having taken one of the Year 8 English lessons she was developing a language awareness course – 'English grammar through Classics'. Yvonne was also keen to develop a literacy course for the sixth form, to help students with their university applications where she felt they might be at a disadvantage in comparison with those from private schools.

Financial sustainability was the Principal's biggest concern. She needed to make the numbers stack up, especially at A level: four committed students for AS with two extra 'possibles' would be expensive – especially if they did not all go on to A2. The academy would support such small numbers in MFL and maybe History; there would be a trade-off between big numbers being taught in vocational subjects against small classes. But she was concerned how realistic it would be that they would get sufficiently high grades to want to carry on to A level. Yvonne pointed out that her students in Year 11, who had not yet taken the real exams, had scored seven A\*s and 2 As when an external marker had had a look at their mock WJEC exam papers. Success breeds success and she believed that they would continue.

The Principal enthused about how there was the full range of ability in the academy. She pointed out, by way of example, that a maths student had recently won a place at Oxford, adding:

There's the potential to be amazing; others are still learning English, and there are those with learning difficulties. One of the nice thing about students here is that there is so much diversity that there is no sense of any one group predominating or

being seen to be the odd one out. Latin fits into that – we offer Latin and NCF qualifications in drug use. We personalise the curriculum, and support for the students.

The curriculum was outstanding, according to Ofsted. The flexibility offered by being an academy meant that the GCSE could be offered as a one-year or two-year course, or starting as early as Year 9. A three-year KS4 ‘allows flexibility and practice’. The size of the school helped. They also had innovative vertical teaching groups for the smaller options (as had been demonstrated with the Year 10 and Year 11 combined Latin class). The Principal continued:

The students are EBacc-aware from Year 7.60 per cent are on pupil premium. Value-added is high. We don’t want to cream off. We want to see more students doing it, once the top sets have had their chance to show the way. This is a new venture for them. Latin is a selling point for the high achievers – promotion, in the newspapers. Some people think it’s elitist, but in the end it’s what is in the best interests of the students – it might attract the higher attainers. Parents are always looking in – and [we have] Further Maths. It’s offered even for only two or three students. We are in competition with other students in other schools.

For the Principal, though, merely having Latin on the curriculum was insufficient. Her students would have to fight for recognition to get into the highest-ranking universities. Latin was part of the pathway. However, there were practical obstacles which the academy tried to circumvent:

The school values its close connections with [local] universities. The Pro Vice-chancellor of [the city’s] university is the chair of governors. A big issue for the students is finance: they prefer to stay at home; some go to [a nearby university city]. They sometimes get surprised by the ethnic range (or lack of it) in other universities or towns.

The academy sent students out to local universities to promote aspiration and to

sixth form conferences. But although these conferences were often free to the students, the cost of getting the students there could be prohibitive. Other ways of getting experience and expertise – and a different, outside ‘voice’ – for the students was by bringing in external speakers and also teacher trainees from other universities. She hoped that one of the teacher trainees might want to stay and support the Classics programme in the academy.

*Commentary:*

The Principal seems to share an anxiety that the students of Latin may not be awarded the grades to go on to A level. Even if they do, the academy needs convincing that small classes must be allowed to happen, otherwise they will never be able to get to the best universities because they will never be able to take these subjects. Yvonne is perfectly aware that these universities are desperate to offer places exactly to the sorts of student that she is teaching - highly articulate, first generation university students from under-represented groups. Would she be doing the students a disservice by entering them for an untested qualification with the risk that it would scupper their chances of getting into a good university? The Principal was exercised about the size of the class as well. Nevertheless this worry did not seem to extend towards the provision of MFL, which was so valued that the academy would still offer it even for equally small numbers. It was difficult to understand why this should be so.

The academy needed to be able to find curriculum space to offer Latin. Academies have the freedom to offer a more flexible curriculum than that which local authority maintained schools have to follow. Yvonne was well-supported in her experiment by the SLT. But she needed to show that her students succeeded in the unequal race for places in universities against those who had been privately educated. The academy had no internal benchmark to see how well her students were performing. Regular meetings with teachers from the local private schools provided informal ways of making comparisons between their and her students. This served to validate her own and her students’ achievements and provide a commentary of success to use with the SLT.

Without this freedom, it is questionable whether the academy would be willing to find space on an otherwise very crowded curriculum. In addition there was another felicitous circumstance: Latin was an EBacc subject. The SLT was therefore able to swap a group of students over from MFL to Latin instead. One of the criteria whereby schools are judged by Ofsted is by how many of the students study the five EBacc subjects. At the time of the interview Ofsted had awarded the academy a hard-won Outstanding grade but the Department for Education had begun to intimate that schools which did not have 90 per cent of their students studying the five EBacc subjects would not be able to be graded Outstanding in the next round of inspections. To be ‘downgraded’ would cause the academy considerable reputational damage.

Yvonne wanted validation for her efforts from external organisations. Without the experience of Latin being in the school before, she did not know how ‘good’ her teaching was or her students’ knowledge and understanding. For the students themselves it was a shot in the dark: they had none of the experience of their older brothers and sisters or friends from other schools saying how to prepare for assessments, or what to expect. Yvonne had tracked down a number of organisations which were very good at creating this sense of establishment-with a series of professional development courses, a university training programme, a director of education at the end of the telephone line, and the provision of an examination which seemed to reflect the learning interests and curriculum provision of her students. Without these, she would have been on her own.

## Essex case study: a mixed, non-selective state-funded sponsored academy

### *Interview with the Principal*

The academy was one school in a very large MAT stretching across London and containing secondary and primary schools. The MAT had sponsored the old school and was in the process of improving the education standards of the

students. The Principal, an MFL specialist, was very positive towards Classics in the academy. Latin would always be on a relatively small scale in her academy, but would also be part of the future curriculum of the new academy that the MAT was building further away in a new housing development. She had allocated four hours' teaching of Latin per fortnight for the Year 7s. Students would be selected for the class based on their SAT scores, with average score of 110 out of 120 in order to be able to be considered for Latin. The students would not do MFL in Year 7 but then do an accelerated course in MFL at a later time. Parents would need to be informed - there had been some problems this year when parents wanted their children withdrawn from Latin and returned to the MFL class. Some of the present students had found the situation 'a bit odd', but the Principal considered Latin as a 'brilliant foundation' for MFL. She was aiming for a cohort of 20–30 in the next year. Currently there were nine in Year 7. In the following year (2017), 27 students have started Latin in Year 7). While Latin was supported on timetable at key stage 3, at key stage 4 it went off-timetable. The Principal seemed happy to allocate more than two hours per week for this, bearing in mind the change required between the WJEC Level 2 language-only certificate and the new GCSE (9–1)<sup>8</sup>. She appreciated that there had been an increase in the size of the material to be studied in the new Latin GCSE (9–1), and as an MFL teacher recognised the challenge of teaching literature in the original to mixed-ability classes.

Prior to the employment of the specialist Latin teacher George the academy had employed a tutor in the academy straight from university: without teaching qualifications. He had used a very traditional course book designed for preparatory schools which had not been engaging the students. However, due to the fact that students are really high achieving they were able to grasp the main grammatical concepts of Latin. The last Year 10 students who had their most developed knowledge in Latin they expressed the wish to finish the Latin course in that year by giving the available and most appropriate at that time exam of WJEC. A significant impediment in this process was the fact that the students were not familiar with understanding and

translating the sorts of longer stories that were more common with the GCSE examination. George himself was very committed to developing his own department, travelling for an hour and a half each way to school, often arriving at 7.30 in the morning and leaving after 6 in the evening.

The Principal wanted Latin to be a 'proper subject' and 'not a club at all'. However, she was anxious that small numbers at the start in Year 7 might feed into even smaller numbers at GCSE and thereby make the course at key stage 4 financially unviable. There had been some discussion on ways to improve take-up in year 7 in the future. One possibility featured thinking about George getting into the primary school feeders and raising awareness of what Latin is. The academy had its own feeder primary on site. George was due to start teaching Latin there to the Year 6s. It was unclear which course he was going to use. The lessons which George was going to offer would be after school. However, after discussing the matter with the primary school Principal and explaining all the benefits of the subject, George was successful in introducing Latin in the primary school as a mainstream lesson. The Principal was keen for Latin to be introduced in the primary school as she felt that it 'certainly backs up the literacy angle'. To help him prepare for teaching the younger age groups, George has visited some other schools to observe lessons. The Year 5 and 6 students are doing Latin one hour per week. But what about training the non-specialist primary school teachers who will take on the work when George has a full complement of Year 7–11 students? She was anxious that there might not be sufficient 'buy-in' to take it forward.

For the future the other brand-new academy building was yet to be completed. But in the meantime it would open early, with just Year 7 students, on the top two floors of the new attached primary school next door which had not yet received its full complement of students. Thus the Principal hoped that this new academy's Year 7s too could learn Latin and when they went to the new school site there would be a Latin GCSE available there too. The ethnic mix, she said, would be quite large with many black African and Asian immigrant families with aspirations wanting to join.

Having George at this one site was manageable; when the new academy opened fully in its new buildings, the Principal anticipated that it would lead to there being a need for a Latin teacher at that academy too.

#### *Commentary:*

The Principal was completely behind the teacher and very supportive. From a purely pragmatic view one can see that the Principal needed to account for the long-term financial sustainability of the Classics department. As an MFL teacher she also had a strong sense of the academic demands of the Latin GCSE and the amount of time that the students needed to be able to complete the course. However, while she was willing to allocate a generous timetable in key stage 3, she was unwilling to put Latin onto timetable for GCSE in case numbers were low: financial accountability trumped too much risky experimentation. Nevertheless, she saw that providing students with more experience of Latin at primary school might lead to a greater demand when they joined the secondary; and the provision by George of a parallel class in the yet-to-be-built academy provided economies of scale. In the future one can see that two departments will eventually develop, each of which will be financially viable.

A negative consequence of these arrangements is, of course, that George is under great pressure to succeed and in quite challenging circumstances. He has two Year 7 classes, one Year 8, Year 9 and 10 (after school, as they are part of the older Latin project), and a primary school to be going on with – with the promise of more to come until the new academy takes off.

## Some final thoughts

Academies have more flexibility in what subjects they offer to their students and the amount of time that they may allocate to them, compared to local authority maintained schools. However, the EBacc regulations, the requirement to take particular GCSE and A level qualifications whose specifications must be approved by Ofqual<sup>9</sup>, and the new performativity measures of Progress 8

and Attainment 8<sup>10</sup> have between them created a cat's cradle of difficulties for all school types to negotiate. This is a considerable challenge to a SLT to offer a subject such as a classical one that is not a mainstream subject, which has no history within the school – or, indeed, the city – and for which there is little reliable or obvious external information available as to what to consider.

In the interviews the Principals and teachers occasionally mentioned the role that Latin might play in the general education of their students. This seemed to revolve around the idea that learning Latin might improve students' English literacy or build foundations which might help with the learning of modern languages. Such arguments have long been made. Whether they are true or the right ones to be made is open, perhaps, to wider debate<sup>11</sup>.

What seemed to be much more of concern was the need for approved qualifications. There seemed to be something of the element of chasing an ever-changing examination: non-specialist teachers or nascent departments needed a qualification which was achievable and which provided excellent results. Taking students out of the standard curriculum and lining them up for failure was unacceptable. However, there was confusion over the different qualifications on offer and the removal of performance points from the WJEC Level 2 certificates was but one difficulty among all the other difficulties that needed to be overcome<sup>12</sup>. Exam marks and performance points mattered. There is no surprise in this – one need only ask a teacher in any UK school today. But it seems especially so for the sponsored academy where the MAT is constantly demanding to see evidence of progress, lest it lose its students, its schools and its source of income. The new Latin GCSE (9-1) was an unknown even for established departments. How much more of an unknown was it for those teachers and students who had never done an *old* GCSE before and who lacked the collective memory of colleagues in an established department? The loss of different pathways to qualifications in Latin and the other classical subjects remains one of the bigger challenges to grow the subjects in schools in the UK today.

Despite the challenges, the teachers and Principals continued to try new approaches to getting Classics into their

schools and were meeting with no small measure of success. I hope readers will have found this article instructive.

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<sup>1</sup>A note on types of schools. Primary schools are those which educate students aged between four and ten. Secondary schools educate those between 11 and 18. Most of this article concerns secondary schools. Secondary schools can be state-maintained or private (or 'independent'). The ones referred to in this article are state-maintained. State-maintained schools may be funded by directly elected Local Authorities, which receive funding for schools from the Department of Education, or directly by the Department of Education itself, as is the case of the three schools in this article. Schools which are directly funded are called 'academies'. Some schools chose to become

academies for the improved financial incentives and semi-autonomy on offer and because of the flexibility they have in curriculum and staff conditions: such academies are called ‘converter’ academies, and only schools previously judged by Ofsted (see note VII below) to be Outstanding or Good are allowed to convert in this way. Some schools that were judged by Ofsted to be underperforming (as measured by the GCSE pass grades of the students) have been forced to become academies and have been taken over by external sponsors – the so-called Multi-Academy Trusts or MATs. These academies are called ‘sponsored’ academies. Academisation is an ideologically-driven policy by which the Government hopes to ‘raise standards’ in all state-funded schools, even those which are not academies at all (Department of Education, 2018a). The Government has an ambition for all schools to be academies (Department of Education, 2016) although the rate of academisation seems to have slowed (Times Educational Supplement, 2017). Evidence for the success of this policy has been patchy (BBC, 2015). As of January 2018 there were 2,220 secondary academies in operation in England (1,540 converter and 680 sponsored), representing 64.7% of the total (Department of Education, 2018b).

<sup>2</sup>Nomenclature is complicated. Students start secondary school in Year 7 at age 11. They complete their secondary education at Year 13 at age 18. Years 7–9 are collectively known as key stage 3 and students usually study a range of subjects dictated by the requirements of the National Curriculum, enshrined in law by the Department of Education. Secondary schools which are academies, however, have the legal flexibility not to follow the National Curriculum. Some, therefore, restrict or expand on the number of subjects at key stage 3. They are also allowed, if they wish, to reduce the period of key stage 3 to two years – Years 7 and 8. At the end of key stage 3, students elect to continue with a smaller range of subjects in Years 10 to 11. The Department of Education has recommended that students study around eight or nine

subjects, of which five are from a preferred list – the so-called EBacc (‘English Baccalaureate’) subjects. The list includes the classical subjects Latin and Ancient Greek and Ancient History, as well as other non-classical ones (for details, see the Department for Education (2017)). At the end of key stage 4, students take GCSE examinations for each of the subjects studied – typically eight or nine. After this, students who are not in employment or training stay at school for a further two years in key stage 5 (or ‘sixth form’) where they study A levels (or vocational equivalents). Usually students study three or occasionally four A levels, which qualifications provide the traditional (but not only) access route to university.

<sup>3</sup>For a similar experience in providing one’s own continuing professional development, see Hogg’s recent partially autobiographical study for professional development at his own school (Hogg, 2017).

<sup>4</sup>For critical views on Latin as a subject worth study only by the ‘Gifted and Talented’, see Hunt (2016), Lister (2007), Bell (2003) and Gibb (2003). For views on the continuing media discourse of Latin as an elitist or challenging subject, see Hunt (2014) and Goddard (2013).

<sup>5</sup>A survey carried out by CSCP suggested that many Classics teachers did feel that they did not have sufficient time to teach the GCSE in their timetable allocation. In a memo to teachers, based on its own survey of teachers’ actual experiences in teaching the old GCSEs and Level 2 certificates in Latin, the Cambridge School Classics Project (CSCP) recommended that students would need 240 hours of teaching to be able comfortably to achieve the new GCSE (9-1) in Latin even though the Department for Education itself recommended that a GCSE should need only 120 hours (Cambridge School Classics Project, 2015). CSCP also found in a random survey of 253 respondents that the majority of schools were offering students one to two hours of Latin in key stage 3 and three to four hours in key stage 4 (Cambridge School Classics Project, 2016).

<sup>6</sup>Coe’s research suggests that Latin GCSE is one of the most difficult for students to get a grade A or A\* (Middleton, 2015).

<sup>7</sup>Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education) inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

<sup>8</sup>Until 2017 the WJEC Level 2 Certificate attracted student performance points in the same way as the Latin GCSE did. However, the Department for Education has decreed that from 2018 ‘vocational equivalents’ such as the certificates would no longer ‘count’ in the same way as they used to. Schools which want to show student progress from key stage 2 through to key stage 4 for the purpose of school accountability through the Progress 8 and the Attainment 8 measures therefore tend to prefer to offer the GCSE qualifications.

<sup>9</sup>Ofqual (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

<sup>10</sup>Progress 8 and Attainment 8 are the current preferred performance measures of the Department of Education. The headline measures which appear in the 2017 performance tables are progress across eight qualifications (Progress 8) and attainment across the same eight qualifications (Attainment 8) (Department of Education, 2014).

<sup>11</sup>There have been many articles which have suggested that the study of Latin improves students’ literacy and affinity for learning other languages. For critical discussions on these matters, see Hunt (2016, pp. 33–34), Lister (2007, pp. 22–28), Woff (1990) and Corson (1982). Bracke and Bradshaw’s (2017) survey of the available literature makes interesting reading: in essence, there is no available evidence that learning Latin makes students better learners of English or any other language (Bracke & Bradshaw, 2017).

<sup>12</sup>For a further discussion on this problem, see Hunt (forthcoming, 2018).