

### **Highlights**

#### **Introduction**

The review argues that WoLLoW can be usefully conceptualised as a theoretically informed language-awareness and plurilingual curriculum that responds constructively to several persistent challenges in primary languages provision. Rather than treating WoLLoW as a finished or universally transferable solution, the report positions it as a promising curriculum model whose value lies in making language diversity visible, discussable, and educationally meaningful within primary classrooms.

it situates WoLLoW within these wider debates in order to consider how the programme contributes to contemporary discussions about the purposes and possibilities of primary language education.

Across these themes, the review develops four linked arguments. First, recent research has increasingly questioned monolingual assumptions in language education. Translanguaging, plurilingual education, and language-awareness approaches differ in their theoretical foundations and pedagogical priorities, yet they generally emphasise learners' linguistic repertoires and the relationships between languages as potentially valuable resources for learning.

This suggests that initiatives such as WoLLoW may be evaluated most appropriately through a broad account of educational value, including pupils' engagement with language diversity, their developing language awareness, and their orientations towards future language learning.

Pupils may enjoy language-aware and multilingual activities while also drawing on wider social ideas about which languages are perceived as useful, familiar, prestigious, or marginalised (Lange & Polat, 2025; Peyer et al., 2022). Parents may value multilingualism for educational mobility, heritage maintenance, cultural identity, or academic achievement, while also navigating tensions between these aims. These findings suggest that WoLLoW should be examined not only as a curriculum, but also as a context in which different stakeholders interpret the educational value of languages.

Current scholarship links multilingualism to recognition, belonging, identity construction, participation, and social cohesion. WoLLoW appears significant within this literature because it introduces multilingual perspectives to all pupils, including those who may not identify as multilingual. In doing so, it may help position linguistic diversity as a shared educational concern rather than as an issue relevant only to pupils labelled as bilingual, multilingual, or English as an additional language (EAL). This is a potentially important contribution because it broadens the relevance of multilingualism within primary language education.

Overall, the report suggests that WoLLoW occupies a distinctive and constructive position within multilingual education research. Its contribution may lie not in replacing conventional

language learning, but in broadening what primary language education can mean: an encounter with language as structure, history, identity, communication, culture, and social practice.

**Key Takeaway 1: Primary language education may require a broader account of effectiveness.**

Research suggests that limited curriculum time in primary schools can make high levels of target language proficiency difficult to achieve (British Council, 2024, 2025; Muñoz & Spada, 2019). A defensible account of primary languages may therefore include not only early communicative foundations, but also metalinguistic awareness, curiosity, confidence, and willingness to continue language learning. WoLLoW appears to align well with this broader account because it foregrounds language comparison, linguistic curiosity, and awareness of language histories.

**Key Takeaway 2: Multilingual pedagogy should not be treated as a single method.**

Translanguaging, cross-linguistic, and language-awareness approaches differ in their aims, mechanisms, and likely outcomes. Recent systematic review evidence distinguishes between the kinds of outcomes associated with different multilingual pedagogies, including cognitive outcomes such as vocabulary development and metalinguistic awareness, and socio-affective outcomes such as confidence, belonging, and classroom relationships (Veerman et al., 2025). This distinction is relevant to **WoLLoW because the programme aims to develop language awareness, curiosity, and engagement with linguistic diversity, rather than only proficiency in a single target language. WoLLoW would therefore be most appropriately evaluated through a multidimensional framework rather than through a single outcome measure.**

**Key Takeaway 6: Language learning may have wider social and civic purposes.**

Current research suggests that language education can contribute to intercultural understanding, social participation, identity reflection, and mutual understanding when it is framed as engagement with linguistic and cultural diversity rather than only as vocabulary acquisition (Byram, 2008; Council of Europe, 2020). This is relevant to WoLLoW because the programme invites pupils to connect language with history, migration, belonging, communication, and social life.

**Recommendation 1: Evaluate WoLLoW through a broad understanding of educational outcomes.**

**Recommendation 2: Support teacher enactment through professional learning.**

**Recommendation 3: Include pupils' and families' perspectives in future evaluation.**

**Recommendation 4: Continue building the evidence base for WoLLoW.**

**Recommendation 5: Develop a progression framework consistent with WoLLoW's aims.**

**Introduction**

WoLLoW offers a distinctive curriculum that introduces pupils to language families, scripts, etymology, grammar, multilingualism, home languages, and intercultural understanding, encouraging them to explore language as a historical, cultural, and social phenomenon

rather than solely as a vehicle for communication. By positioning language itself as an object of enquiry, the programme raises broader questions about the purposes of primary language education and how language learning can respond to the multilingual realities of contemporary schools.

The educational context in which WoLLoW has developed has changed substantially over recent decades. Primary schools in England are increasingly characterised by linguistic diversity, with many pupils using languages other than English at home, drawing upon community and heritage languages, and moving between different linguistic repertoires in their everyday lives. At the same time, multilingual education research has challenged approaches that conceptualise languages as separate systems or evaluate multilingual learners against monolingual norms. This reconceptualisation has broadened educational thinking beyond communicative competence to include language awareness, cross-linguistic comparison, multilingual identity, intercultural understanding, and engagement with linguistic diversity as valuable educational outcomes. These developments provide the principal theoretical context for understanding the educational ideas reflected in WoLLoW.

Policy developments have reinforced the relevance of these discussions. National evidence continues to identify uneven provision in primary languages, variation in teacher expertise, and challenges in progression between primary and secondary education (British Council, 2024, 2025). The Curriculum and Assessment Review Interim Report likewise raises questions concerning the coherence, purposes, and effectiveness of primary modern foreign language education (Curriculum and Assessment Review Panel, 2025). Increasingly, debates concerning primary languages extend beyond questions of curriculum coverage or target-language attainment to consider what pupils should understand about language itself and how language education can reflect increasingly multilingual classrooms. WoLLoW contributes to these discussions by foregrounding language awareness and linguistic diversity within mainstream primary education and by encouraging all pupils to engage with language as a shared educational resource.

Although WoLLoW has only recently begun to receive direct scholarly attention, the educational principles underpinning the programme are situated within a substantial and well-established body of research. Studies of multilingual education, language awareness, plurilingual pedagogy, translanguaging, multilingual identity, stakeholder attitudes, and teacher beliefs provide a rich evidence base for understanding the ideas reflected in the curriculum.

The literature reviewed in this report suggests that WoLLoW is most appropriately understood as **a language-awareness and plurilingual curriculum that broadens the purposes of primary language education beyond target-language proficiency alone**. Situating the programme within contemporary scholarship provides a clearer understanding of the educational ideas that underpin it, the educational context in which it has emerged, and its contribution to ongoing discussions about language learning in multilingual primary schools.

## Questions

The review was guided by four interconnected research questions:

1. What does existing research suggest about effective approaches to language learning in multilingual primary school contexts?
2. What insights does the literature provide into the attitudes of teachers, pupils, and parents towards language learning and multilingualism in primary education?
3. How does current research conceptualise the relationship between multilingualism, pupils' educational experiences, identity, belonging, inclusion, and social cohesion?
4. How can WoLLoW be situated within these bodies of research, and what does this reveal about its educational rationale and contribution to primary language education?

These questions were intentionally broad because WoLLoW engages not only with language learning, but also with multilingualism, language awareness, identity, intercultural understanding, and the wider educational significance of linguistic diversity.

**The review draws on five overlapping strands of scholarship.**

The first is the **multilingual turn**, which challenges monolingual assumptions in language education and argues that learners' linguistic repertoires should be treated as resources rather than problems. This strand is important because **it reframes primary language education as more than the acquisition of one target language.**

**The second is translanguaging research**, which examines how multilingual speakers draw flexibly on their full linguistic repertoires in communication and learning (García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2015). While WoLLoW is not a translanguaging intervention in a strict sense, it shares with translanguaging scholarship **a critique of rigid language separation and a commitment to valuing pupils' linguistic resources.**

**The third is language-awareness research, which is the strongest theoretical home for WoLLoW.** This tradition positions language itself as an object of inquiry and encourages pupils to notice patterns, structures, histories, scripts, variation, and relationships between languages (Hawkins, 1984). WoLLoW aligns closely with this tradition because it foregrounds **curiosity about language, cross-linguistic comparison, etymology, language families, scripts, and language change.**

**The fourth is plurilingual and intercultural education**, which emphasises learners' developing repertoires across languages and **cultures** (Candelier et al., 2012; Council of Europe, 2020). This strand is important because it helps position WoLLoW as a curriculum that **supports a multilingual outlook rather than simply knowledge of discrete languages.**

**The fifth is multilingual identity and belonging research**, which examines how learners understand themselves and others in relation to language (Ayres-Bennett & Fisher, 2022; Forbes et al., 2021; Gayton & Fisher, 2022; Rutgers et al., 2024). This strand is particularly relevant because WoLLoW engages not only with linguistic knowledge but also with home languages, identity, recognition, and pupils' experiences of language diversity.

**Together, these strands provide the conceptual framework for the review. They suggest that WoLLoW is best understood not as a conventional primary foreign-language**

programme, nor as a direct EAL intervention, but as a language-awareness and plurilingual curriculum that connects linguistic knowledge with identity, inclusion, and social understanding.

## **Appraising the strength of claims.**

A central methodological principle of this review is that different claims require different levels of caution. The literature provides relatively strong support for the claim that multilingual and language-awareness pedagogies can support pupil engagement, participation, metalinguistic awareness, and positive orientations towards language diversity when they are carefully implemented.

The evidence is less conclusive regarding long-term effects on attainment, sustained language-learning motivation, progression into secondary language study, or broader social cohesion. These outcomes are harder to measure and are less frequently examined through longitudinal research. Consequently, the review avoids presenting multilingual pedagogy or WoLLoW as automatically effective. Instead, it treats WoLLoW as a theoretically well-aligned and promising curriculum whose impact requires further empirical investigation.

## **Summary**

The evidence base suggests that WoLLoW is most appropriately understood as a language-awareness and plurilingual curriculum that responds to several current concerns in primary language education: the need to value pupils' linguistic repertoires, develop curiosity about languages, support metalinguistic awareness, engage teachers and families, and connect language learning with identity, belonging, and social understanding. At the same time, the evidence base also indicates that WoLLoW's distinctive contribution remains an important area for future empirical research, particularly in relation to teacher enactment, pupil identity development, family perspectives, progression, and long-term educational impact.

### **3.1 From monolingual assumptions to multilingual repertoires**

Research on language learning in multilingual primary contexts has moved increasingly away from monolingual models that treat languages as separate systems and learners as incomplete versions of monolingual speakers (Cook, 1992; Grosjean, 1985). Cenoz and Gorter (2015), drawing on earlier work on multicompetence and holistic bilingualism, argue that multilingual learners' linguistic knowledge should be understood through the relationships between the languages and resources in their repertoires. This means that a pupil's knowledge of one language may shape how they notice patterns, infer meanings, understand grammar, or make connections in another language. For primary education, this shift matters because young learners encounter language through overlapping domains: home, community, media, school literacy, formal foreign language instruction, and digital communication. Effective language education in multilingual classrooms may therefore involve more than increased exposure to a target language. It may also involve helping pupils notice relationships between languages, recognise linguistic diversity, and use existing linguistic knowledge to support new learning. This is consistent with Cummins' (2018) argument that home-language resources need not disadvantage learners unless schools fail to build bridges between those resources and academic development. The multilingual turn also changes how effectiveness is conceptualised. If language education is judged solely by

progress in one named language, primary provision with limited curriculum time may appear relatively weak. If language education is judged more broadly by pupils' curiosity, metalinguistic awareness, confidence, language-learning strategies, and willingness to continue language learning, then the goals of primary languages can be understood differently.

The British Council's Language Trends England reports indicate that primary languages provision continues to be uneven. French remains the most frequently taught language in responding state primary schools, while around half of responding primary schools report having no contact with local secondary schools in relation to language learning, highlighting continuing challenges for progression and transition between phases (British Council, 2024,2025). Such evidence suggests that the issue is not only which pedagogy teachers use, but also whether primary languages are supported through coherent staffing, curriculum progression, and transition structures. Within this context, WoLLoW provides a free, structured, and adaptable curriculum.

### **3.2 Translanguaging**

WoLLoW can be linked to translanguaging scholarship, but the connection should be carefully framed. The programme shares translanguaging scholarship's critique of rigid language separation, particularly through activities that value home languages and compare linguistic systems (García & Wei, 2014; WoLLoW, n.d.). However, WoLLoW is not primarily a translanguaging intervention in the sense of systematically organising classroom communication across pupils' full repertoires. It is better understood as a language-awareness and plurilingual curriculum that may create conditions for translanguaging-informed reflection. This distinction matters because conceptual alignment is not equivalent to pedagogical enactment or demonstrated impact.

### **3.3 Language Awareness**

Hawkins (1984) defined language awareness as explicit reflection on language as a system, a means of communication, and a social phenomenon, arguing that pupils benefit from noticing language structures, variation, and diversity rather than treating language learning simply as the memorisation of vocabulary and phrases in a single target language. From this perspective, learning about language complements learning through language by encouraging pupils to recognise relationships between languages and to develop a more reflective understanding of linguistic diversity.

These approaches shift the emphasis from mastering individual languages towards developing broader understandings of language as a shared human resource. This perspective has particular relevance for primary education because language awareness naturally connects with literacy, grammar, oracy, history, geography, and wider social understanding (Hawkins, 1984; The Bell Foundation, 2024).

Among the multilingual pedagogies discussed in this review, language awareness provides the strongest theoretical foundation for understanding WoLLoW. Rather than teaching one target language or organising classroom interaction through pupils' full linguistic repertoires,

WoLLoW foregrounds language itself as an object of inquiry through activities exploring scripts, etymology, grammatical terminology, language families, multilingualism, and the historical development of English (WoLLoW, n.d.). This orientation invites all pupils—not only those identified as multilingual—to investigate language as a historical, cultural, and social phenomenon. In doing so, WoLLoW aligns closely with the language-awareness tradition by positioning linguistic diversity as a shared educational resource rather than a characteristic of particular groups of learners.

### **Empirical evidence for language-awareness approaches is promising but remains uneven.**

The British Academy's (2024) response to England's Curriculum and Assessment Review reinforces the relevance of this broader perspective. Rather than reducing primary languages to an early version of secondary language learning, the Academy argues that Key Stage 2 should support both initial progress in a target language and the development of a multilingual outlook. This formulation avoids presenting language proficiency and language awareness as competing educational aims. Instead, it suggests that primary language education can simultaneously introduce pupils to a new language while developing broader understandings of how languages relate to one another and to society. Taken together, this literature suggests that WoLLoW is best understood not as an alternative to conventional language learning, but as a curriculum that broadens what primary language education can achieve. Its principal contribution may lie less in producing immediate gains in target-language attainment than in creating opportunities for pupils to develop language awareness, curiosity, crosslinguistic understanding, and more inclusive orientations towards linguistic diversity.

### **3.4 Oracy, literacy and curriculum links**

The Bell Foundation (2024) argues that oracy is an important area for pupils who use EAL because spoken interaction supports participation, curriculum access, and confidence. While WoLLoW is not an EAL intervention, its discussion-based and exploratory design may provide opportunities for pupils to talk about language in ways that connect to literacy development, vocabulary knowledge, grammatical terminology, and classroom dialogue.

WoLLoW lessons on etymology, cognates, scripts, codes, and language histories may support pupils' understanding of English vocabulary and grammar while also introducing them to other languages (WoLLoW, n.d.). For example, work on etymology can help pupils understand that English words have histories and may be connected to Latin, Greek, French, Arabic, or other languages. Work on scripts can connect language learning with history, geography, religion, and visual culture. Work on codes and communication systems can connect language with computing and problem-solving. These examples help to explain what is meant by WoLLoW's cross-curricular potential: language can become a shared object of inquiry across different areas of the primary curriculum. However, these links should be framed carefully. It would be too strong to claim that WoLLoW automatically improves literacy or oracy. A more evidence-sensitive claim is that WoLLoW creates plausible opportunities for literacy-related and oracy-related learning because it makes explicit links between words, meanings, histories, structures, and uses. Future evaluation could examine whether pupils who study WoLLoW become more confident in using grammatical

terminology, explaining word origins, comparing structures across languages, or discussing language diversity.

This cross-curricular potential is relevant in primary settings where curriculum time is limited. If language awareness can connect with English, history, geography, classics, religious education, or computing, schools may find it easier to justify sustained curriculum space for language learning.

### **3.5 Rethinking effectiveness**

multilingual approaches may support certain kinds of educational experience and awareness when they are carefully planned, contextually appropriate, and embedded in supportive school cultures (Dlugaj & Fürstenau, 2019; Veerman et al., 2025). WoLLoW therefore sits productively within the current rethinking of primary languages. It does not simply offer another target-language curriculum but reframes languages as a whole-school and cross-curricular field of inquiry (WoLLoW, n.d.). Its potential value lies in this reframing: it offers non-specialist teachers a structured way to discuss language diversity, pupils a language-learning experience not confined to one language, and schools a possible bridge between home languages, literacy, and future language study. Its limitation is that the extent and durability of its impact remain open empirical questions.

#### **Teachers' attitudes**

'the literature suggests that teachers' beliefs are necessary but insufficient conditions for multilingual pedagogy. Although support for multilingualism appears increasingly widespread, effective classroom enactment depends upon professional learning, school cultures that legitimise multilingual practices, and pedagogical confidence in working with pupils' diverse linguistic repertoires (Cummins, 2007; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; García & Wei, 2014). For WoLLoW, this distinction is particularly important. The programme's structured, dialogic and language-awareness approach may reduce some of the uncertainty experienced by non-specialist teachers, but its educational value will ultimately depend on how teachers facilitate discussion, respond to linguistic diversity and connect multilingual inquiry to broader curriculum aims (Vauzour, 2026).

#### **Pupil attitudes**

the literature suggests that pupils' responses to multilingual education are generally characterised by curiosity, openness and willingness to engage with linguistic diversity, but these dispositions remain socially situated rather than universally positive. Children's understandings of multilingualism are shaped through interactions with teachers, families and wider language ideologies, meaning that educational programmes cannot assume that multilingualism will automatically be regarded as valuable. For WoLLoW, this distinction is important. The programme's potential contribution lies not simply in encouraging positive attitudes towards languages, but in creating structured opportunities for pupils to compare languages, reflect upon multilingual identities and critically examine language hierarchies.

#### **Parental attitudes**

Taken together, the literature suggests that parental attitudes towards multilingualism are neither uniformly supportive nor resistant but are continually negotiated through family language policy, educational aspirations and wider sociopolitical contexts (Curd-Christiansen, 2018; Spolsky, 2012). Rather than viewing families as external influences on multilingual education, contemporary research positions them as central participants in children's language learning whose everyday language practices shape multilingual identities, language maintenance and educational engagement (King et al., 2008; García & Wei, 2014). Future evaluations of WoLLoW would therefore benefit from examining how families interpret the programme and whether participation influences language practices and conversations beyond the classroom.

## **Attitudes**

This synthesis also highlights an important finding that runs consistently throughout the literature: positive attitudes alone appear insufficient to produce meaningful multilingual educational practice. Teachers may value multilingualism yet remain uncertain about how to enact multilingual pedagogies within existing curriculum structures. Children may enjoy discussing languages while continuing to reproduce assumptions about which languages are more valuable or prestigious. Families may express strong support for multilingualism while simultaneously prioritising the dominant language of schooling in response to educational or economic pressures. These recurring tensions suggest that multilingual education cannot be understood simply through stakeholder attitudes. Instead, attitudes become educationally meaningful only when supported by institutional conditions, pedagogical practices and opportunities for sustained engagement with linguistic diversity.

For WoLLoW, these findings have important implications. The programme should not be understood simply as a curriculum designed to promote positive attitudes towards languages. Rather, its potential educational significance lies in creating opportunities through which teachers, pupils and families collectively negotiate the meanings of multilingualism. By encouraging discussion of home languages, language histories, multilingual identities and linguistic diversity, WoLLoW has the potential to position multilingualism as a shared educational resource rather than as a characteristic of particular groups of learners.

## **5. Multilingualism, identity and social understanding**

Rather than treating multilingualism as relevant only to pupils who use multiple home languages, contemporary research increasingly presents multilingualism as an ordinary feature of education that all learners can engage with through opportunities to compare languages, reflect upon linguistic diversity, and recognise the social significance of language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; de Jong, 2022). From this perspective, language-awareness pedagogy becomes important not simply because it develops knowledge about languages, but because it encourages learners to recognise language as a social and educational resource shared across the whole classroom. Within this literature, recognition is increasingly discussed as an important mechanism linking multilingual education with pupils' sense of belonging.

Activities that merely display different languages or celebrate cultural diversity may increase pupils' curiosity and enjoyment but do not necessarily change whose linguistic knowledge is treated as valuable during learning. By contrast, language-awareness pedagogies that encourage learners to compare grammatical systems, investigate language histories, analyse borrowing, or contribute their own linguistic knowledge position multilingual repertoires as resources for inquiry rather than simply as markers of cultural diversity (Candelier et al., 2012; Cenoz et al., 2022; Gayton & Fisher, 2022). Recognition therefore becomes embedded within classroom participation rather than remaining a symbolic gesture of inclusion. This distinction provides an important foundation for understanding multilingual identity and social understanding. Recognition creates opportunities for participation, while language-awareness activities encourage learners to reflect on their own linguistic experiences and those of others. Together, these processes may contribute to the development of multilingual identity and encourage learners to question broader language hierarchies operating within education and society. Consequently, multilingual education has the potential to contribute not only to pupils' immediate experiences of belonging but also to broader educational aims related to critical reflection and social understanding.

This interpretation has particular relevance for WoLLoW. The programme introduces all pupils—not only those officially identified as multilingual—to opportunities for language comparison, discussion of home languages, investigation of language families, etymology, borrowing, and language change (WoLLoW, n.d.). Such activities position language as a shared object of inquiry while recognising pupils' diverse linguistic experiences as legitimate contributions to classroom learning. In this respect, WoLLoW appears conceptually aligned with contemporary multilingual education scholarship because it creates opportunities for recognition, participation, reflection, and language awareness across the whole classroom rather than treating multilingualism as the concern of particular groups of pupils.

### **Multilingual identity as an educational outcome**

Multilingual identity therefore develops not through multilingual experience alone but through educational opportunities that enable learners to recognise, value, and reflect upon their own linguistic repertoires.

language-awareness pedagogies create opportunities for all learners to engage with multilingualism, recognise the diversity of their own linguistic experiences, and position themselves within broader multilingual communities.

Identity is therefore constructed not simply through language use but through participation in classroom practices that legitimise learners' linguistic experiences and encourage them to see themselves as multilingual participants in learning. Recognition and participation may consequently function as educational processes through which multilingual identity develops rather than as automatic consequences of multilingual experience.

This body of research suggests that multilingual identity is constructed through recognition, participation, reflection, and language awareness rather than through language knowledge alone. Identity develops as learners interpret their own linguistic experiences within broader understandings of multilingualism, enabling them to recognise educational value in diverse

linguistic resources regardless of their individual language profiles. Multilingual identity therefore represents not simply an outcome of language learning but an ongoing process through which learners develop new ways of understanding themselves in relation to language.

This interpretation has particular relevance for WoLLoW. The programme introduces all pupils—not only those officially identified as multilingual—to opportunities for language comparison, discussion of home languages, investigation of language histories, and reflection on linguistic diversity (WoLLoW, n.d.). Such activities create opportunities for recognition and participation while encouraging pupils to reflect upon their own relationships with language through structured language-awareness activities. In this way, WoLLoW appears conceptually aligned with contemporary multilingual education scholarship because it creates opportunities for recognition, participation, reflection, and language awareness across the whole classroom rather than treating multilingualism as the concern of particular groups of pupils.

Activities that simply introduce pupils to different languages or cultures may increase curiosity and enjoyment but do not necessarily encourage learners to examine why languages differ in prestige, visibility, or social value. By contrast, language-awareness pedagogies that encourage learners to investigate borrowing, migration, colonial histories, language contact, writing systems, and language change position languages as products of historical, political, and social processes. Reflection therefore extends beyond learning about languages towards examining how language hierarchies influence whose linguistic knowledge is recognised, whose voices are heard, and whose experiences become visible within education and society.

Language awareness contributes to social understanding not simply by recognising linguistic diversity but by encouraging learners to question whose languages are valued, whose linguistic knowledge counts, and how educational institutions contribute to these judgements. This interpretation has particular relevance for WoLLoW. The programme encourages pupils to investigate language families, etymology, scripts, borrowing, multilingualism, and the historical development of English while inviting discussion of home languages and linguistic diversity (WoLLoW, n.d.). Such activities create opportunities for recognition, participation, and reflection by positioning language as evidence of historical movement, cultural exchange, migration, and social change. In this respect, WoLLoW appears conceptually aligned with contemporary multilingual education scholarship because it creates opportunities for language awareness across the whole classroom rather than treating multilingualism as the concern of particular groups of pupils.

Taken together, the studies reviewed in this section provide stronger evidence that language-awareness pedagogies are associated with recognition, participation, reflection, and engagement than that they produce sustained changes in pupils' understanding of language hierarchies or broader social understanding.

## **5.4 Synthesis**

The literature reviewed in this section suggests that multilingual education is best understood not simply as the teaching of multiple languages but as a pedagogical process through which learners develop new relationships with language, with one another, and with the wider social world.

Recognition provides a foundation for these processes. When pupils experience their linguistic repertoires as legitimate within classroom learning, opportunities arise for meaningful participation in dialogue, collaborative inquiry, and shared learning (Aleksić & García, 2024; Van der Wildt et al., 2017). Participation, in turn, creates opportunities for reflection through which learners connect language awareness with their own linguistic experiences (Gayton & Fisher, 2022). Rather than remaining abstract knowledge about language, language awareness becomes educationally meaningful as pupils compare languages, recognise linguistic diversity, and interpret their own repertoires within broader understandings of multilingualism (Candelier et al., 2012; Cenoz et al., 2022). Together, these interconnected processes provide conditions through which multilingual identity may develop as an educational outcome. Language-awareness pedagogies may therefore contribute to social understanding by encouraging learners to reflect on the historical, political, and cultural processes through which languages acquire different values within education and society.

WoLLoW appears well aligned with contemporary multilingual education research. Rather than positioning multilingualism as relevant only to pupils already identified as multilingual, the programme introduces language awareness as a shared educational experience for the whole classroom (WoLLoW, n.d.). By creating opportunities for recognition, participation, reflection, and collaborative inquiry into language, WoLLoW has the potential to support the development of multilingual identities while encouraging pupils to develop more critical understandings of language hierarchies and broader social understanding.

### **WoLLoW in contemporary research**

The evidence reviewed above suggests that WoLLoW is theoretically well aligned with current scholarship, particularly with work on language awareness, pluralistic approaches, and multilingual identity. At the same time, its direct evidence base remains at an early stage. WoLLoW should therefore be positioned neither as a proven solution to the challenges of primary languages provision nor as a conventional language course, but as a promising, research-informed curriculum model whose contribution requires further empirical examination. The programme's strongest contribution lies in its reframing of primary language education. Rather than treating language learning solely as progression in one target language, WoLLoW invites pupils to investigate how languages work, how they are related, how they move across histories and communities, and how they shape identity and social life (WoLLoW, n.d.). This broadened rationale is consistent with the literature reviewed in the preceding sections, but it also creates an important evaluative challenge: WoLLoW's success cannot be judged adequately through target-language attainment alone. It requires attention to language awareness, cross-linguistic reasoning, multilingual identity, teacher enactment, and pupils' developing understandings of linguistic diversity.

WoLLoW is most convincingly understood as a language-awareness and plurilingual curriculum rather than as either a conventional modern foreign languages programme or a translanguaging intervention. A conventional primary languages curriculum normally centres on one named language and seeks to build early communicative competence. Translanguaging pedagogy, by contrast, often foregrounds pupils' flexible use of their full linguistic repertoires for learning. WoLLoW overlaps with both traditions, but its central orientation is different: it makes language itself the object of inquiry (WoLLoW, n.d.).

The programme's value therefore lies not simply in exposing pupils to many languages, but in helping them think with and about language. Its activities connect linguistic structures with histories, scripts, etymologies, home languages, cultural exchange, and future learning (WoLLoW, n.d.). This makes WoLLoW theoretically rich, but also methodologically demanding to evaluate. Evidence of pupil enjoyment, while important, would be insufficient; so too would a narrow test of vocabulary learning. A more appropriate evaluation would examine whether pupils become better able to notice linguistic patterns, compare languages, explain relationships between languages, and reflect on language as a social and cultural phenomenon.

### **Mainstreaming multilingualism.**

A distinctive feature of WoLLoW is that it positions multilingualism as relevant to all pupils, not only to those formally identified as bilingual, multilingual, or EAL learners. WoLLoW seeks to broaden this perspective by making linguistic diversity a shared curriculum concern (WoLLoW, n.d.). Pupils who speak only English at home are invited to explore borrowing, scripts, etymology, language families, codes, and patterns across languages, while multilingual pupils have opportunities to connect their home and community languages with classroom learning. In this way, the programme encourages all pupils to investigate how languages change, influence one another, and acquire different social meanings. From this perspective, **WoLLoW has the potential to position multilingualism as part of mainstream primary education rather than as a concern associated only with particular groups of learners. This may represent one of WoLLoW's most significant contributions to contemporary multilingual education research.** Much existing research examines how multilingual pedagogies support learners who already possess multilingual resources. WoLLoW raises a complementary question: what happens when all pupils are invited to understand linguistic diversity as relevant to their own learning?

### **Connecting languages across the curriculum**

WoLLoW can also be understood as a bridge between curriculum areas that are often separated in school organisation and educational research. In many primary settings, modern foreign languages, English, EAL, literacy, classics, history, geography, PSHE, and computing are treated as distinct areas of learning. WoLLoW's curriculum cuts across these boundaries. Work on Greek and Latin roots may support vocabulary development and classics; lessons on scripts may connect with history, geography, religion, visual culture, and computing; activities exploring multilingualism may create links between modern foreign languages, EAL, PSHE, citizenship, and classroom belonging; and lessons on codes can connect language, logic, and digital communication (WoLLoW, n.d.). This cross-curricular orientation is potentially

valuable in primary schools, where generalist teachers work across multiple subjects and curriculum time for languages is often limited (British Council, 2024, 2025). It also reflects continuing challenges in primary languages provision, including uneven teacher expertise and inconsistent transition between primary and secondary education (British Council, 2024, 2025). By treating language as a broad field of inquiry rather than as a single specialist subject, WoLLoW may provide an accessible route into language education for teachers who do not feel confident teaching one particular foreign language extensively.

A curriculum that connects with many subject areas may become diffuse unless its core learning aims are clearly articulated. WoLLoW's future development could therefore benefit from a more explicit progression framework specifying what pupils are expected to notice, compare, explain, and reflect upon over time. For example, pupils might progress from recognising that languages vary, to comparing simple linguistic features, to explaining language contact and borrowing, and eventually to reflecting critically on language status, identity, and linguistic diversity. Such a framework could strengthen the programme's coherence, support teacher planning, and provide a clearer basis for future evaluation.

### **Teacher enactment and confidence**

WoLLoW's position within contemporary research also depends on how the programme is enacted in classrooms. The programme is designed to be accessible to non-specialist teachers (WoLLoW, n.d.), which is particularly significant given the continuing variability in primary languages provision and the persistent challenges associated with staffing, teacher confidence, and curriculum time. Its structured and exploratory design may reduce some of these barriers because teachers are not expected to be fluent in every language discussed. Instead, they are encouraged to facilitate comparison, noticing, and inquiry rather than provide expert instruction across multiple languages (WoLLoW, n.d.). However, this should not be interpreted as suggesting that teacher expertise is unnecessary. WoLLoW still requires teachers to manage uncertainty, respond sensitively to pupils' linguistic contributions, compare languages responsibly, and avoid positioning pupils as representatives of whole language communities. Research on teacher beliefs and multilingual pedagogy suggests that positive attitudes towards multilingualism are unlikely to be sufficient without appropriate professional knowledge, institutional support, and opportunities to develop multilingual pedagogical practice.

Future research should therefore examine WoLLoW as an enacted curriculum rather than only as a written curriculum. Important questions include whether teachers use the materials as prompts for inquiry or reduce them to factual worksheets; whether they invite pupils' linguistic knowledge in meaningful and voluntary ways; whether they connect lessons with English, modern foreign languages, EAL, classics, history, geography, or PSHE; and whether professional development influences teacher confidence and pedagogical practice. These questions are important because WoLLoW's educational value is likely to depend as much on classroom enactment as on curriculum design.

### **Assessment**

WoLLoW raises important questions about assessment because its educational aims do not fit comfortably within conventional target-language proficiency frameworks. If assessment focuses only on vocabulary, pronunciation, or grammatical accuracy in a single language, much of WoLLoW's intended learning is likely to remain invisible. Conversely, if evaluation focuses only on enjoyment or general attitudes, it may fail to capture whether pupils are developing more sophisticated understandings of language, multilingualism, and linguistic diversity.

A more appropriate approach would assess multiple dimensions of learning that reflect the programme's aims. These might include metalinguistic awareness, pupils' ability to compare languages, understanding of language histories and language contact, confidence in discussing linguistic diversity, and reflection on multilingual identity. Evidence could be gathered through portfolios, language portraits, reflective writing, pupil-created language maps, classroom dialogue, oral explanations, and structured comparison tasks. Such approaches would be more closely aligned with WoLLoW's exploratory and dialogic aims than reliance on a single standardised measure.

The challenge is therefore to develop assessment approaches that preserve the curriculum's dialogic character while providing credible evidence of learning over time.

### **Language hierarchies**

WoLLoW's curriculum creates opportunities to engage with these questions through language-awareness activities (WoLLoW, n.d.). Lessons on etymology may help pupils explore how English has developed through contact with other languages while opening discussion of migration, trade, conquest, empire, and cultural exchange. Work on scripts may introduce different writing systems while also encouraging discussion of literacy, accessibility, public visibility, Braille, sign languages, and the representation of languages in public life. In this way, language-awareness activities have the potential to move beyond appreciation of linguistic diversity towards reflection on language history, status, legitimacy, and power. From this perspective, WoLLoW's potential contribution lies in creating opportunities for both appreciation and critical reflection. The programme can make linguistic diversity visible and intellectually meaningful while also encouraging pupils to consider why languages are valued differently in particular social and educational contexts. However, the studies reviewed in this chapter do not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that language-awareness activities alone produce greater social cohesion or reduce linguistic prejudice. These therefore remain important questions for future research on WoLLoW.

### **Research gaps for WoLLoW**

The wider literature provides strong conceptual grounds for understanding why WoLLoW may be educationally valuable. Research on language awareness, pluralistic approaches, multilingual identity, teacher beliefs, and pupil perspectives all supports the plausibility of its aims. However, direct evidence on WoLLoW remains limited. Vauzour's (2026) pupil voice study is an important starting point, showing that pupils may value opportunities to discuss languages, linguistic diversity, and multilingual experiences. Yet the evidence base is still too small to establish the programme's effects across different school contexts or over time.

Overall, WoLLoW occupies a distinctive but still emerging position within contemporary multilingual education research. Its significance lies in bringing language awareness, plurilingual thinking, curriculum breadth, and multilingual identity into mainstream primary education. The existing literature supports WoLLoW as a coherent and promising curriculum model, but not yet as a fully evidenced intervention. Its future research value may therefore be as important as its immediate curricular value: WoLLoW provides a concrete context for investigating how language-awareness education can be enacted, experienced, assessed, and sustained in multilingual primary classrooms.

### **Implications for WoLLoW**

The first concerns implementation. If WoLLoW is to realise its educational potential, it needs to be enacted as an exploratory curriculum rather than as a sequence of isolated facts about languages. Lessons on scripts, etymology, grammar, or language families are likely to be most meaningful when pupils are encouraged to compare, question, explain, and connect ideas with their own experiences. The teacher's role is therefore central. Teachers need to create a classroom environment in which pupils feel able to contribute linguistic knowledge without feeling exposed, corrected, or expected to represent an entire language community.

The second implication concerns progression. A curriculum such as WoLLoW should not assume that exposure to multiple languages automatically leads to deeper language awareness. Pupils may enjoy encountering different languages without necessarily developing transferable understanding. A learner model of progression would specify how pupils move from curiosity towards increasingly sophisticated explanation and reflection. For example, early learning might involve recognising that languages differ in their scripts and sounds, while later learning could involve comparing grammatical patterns, explaining language contact and borrowing, or reflecting on language status and identity. Such a progression framework could help preserve WoLLoW's exploratory character while providing greater conceptual coherence and clearer evidence of learning over time.

The third implication concerns evidence. Existing research suggests that WoLLoW shows promise, particularly in relation to pupils' engagement and the value of creating opportunities to discuss multilingualism (Vauzour, 2026). However, stronger conclusions require research that examines the relationships between pupil experiences, classroom enactment, and longer-term educational outcomes. A mixed-methods evaluation could include pre- and post-measures of language attitudes and multilingual identity, classroom observations, pupil language portraits, teacher interviews, parent focus groups, and analysis of pupils' work. Such a design would not reduce WoLLoW to a single outcome measure but would instead examine the multiple processes through which the programme is intended to operate.

The fourth implication concerns assessment. WoLLoW aims to develop curiosity, language awareness, connections between languages and literacy, intercultural understanding, and multilingual identity (WoLLoW, n.d.). These aims do not fit comfortably within conventional assessment models. Nevertheless, schools require ways of understanding whether pupils are making progress. Portfolios, reflective journals, structured comparison tasks, oral

explanations, and pupil-created language maps could provide evidence of progression while preserving the curriculum's exploratory and dialogic character.

The fifth implication concerns equity. WoLLoW has the potential to make linguistic diversity a shared classroom resource, but this depends on how home and community languages are incorporated into classroom learning. Pupils should be invited, rather than expected, to share their linguistic knowledge. Teachers should avoid positioning pupils as representatives of particular languages or cultures unless pupils choose to take on that role (Aleksić & García, 2024; Dlugaj & Fürstenau, 2019). Schools should also recognise that some pupils may have complex relationships with heritage languages because of migration histories, family language practices, or experiences of discrimination. Sensitive implementation therefore requires balancing affirmation with choice, curiosity with respect, and celebration with critical reflection.

The sixth implication concerns WoLLoW's broader educational purpose. The literature reviewed in this report suggests that the programme can be understood not only as supporting primary language education but also as creating opportunities for pupils to discuss language in relation to identity, community, migration, belonging, and mutual understanding. This broader purpose could be made more explicit in programme documentation and future evaluation. Such a framing would connect WoLLoW with wider discussions of intercultural education and democratic participation.

## **Conclusion**

Within this broader landscape, WoLLoW appears to occupy a distinctive and theoretically well-supported position. Rather than functioning primarily as a conventional modern foreign languages curriculum or a translanguaging intervention, it is most appropriately understood as a language-awareness and plurilingual curriculum that encourages pupils to explore language as structure, history, communication, identity, and social practice (WoLLoW, n.d.). Its contribution may lie in broadening the purposes of primary language education by making linguistic diversity relevant to all pupils and by creating opportunities for cross-linguistic comparison, reflection, and discussion. However, this interpretation should be understood as one of theoretical alignment rather than demonstrated effectiveness, since direct empirical evidence relating specifically to WoLLoW remains at an early stage. The review therefore concludes that WoLLoW is well situated within contemporary multilingual education research while also highlighting important opportunities for future investigation. Rather than assuming educational impact, future research should examine the conditions under which WoLLoW may contribute to developments in language awareness, multilingual identity, engagement with linguistic diversity, and pupils' understanding of language in society. In this respect, WoLLoW offers not only a promising curriculum model but also a valuable context through which broader questions concerning language awareness, multilingual education, and the purposes of primary language learning can continue to be explored.