FORWARD WITH CLASSICS

CLASSICAL LANGUAGES IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Edited by
Arlene Holmes-Henderson, Steven Hunt and Mai Musié
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EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Mary Beard is one of Britain’s best-known Classicists – Professor at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Newnham College. She has written numerous books on the Ancient World, including the Wolfson Prize-winning Pompei: The Life of a Roman Town; has presented highly acclaimed TV series, Meet the Romans and Rome – Empire without Limit; and is a regular broadcaster and media commentator. Mary is also Classics editor of the Times Literary Supplement and writes a thought-provoking blog, A Don’s Life. Made an OBE in 2013 for services to Classical scholarship, her recent books include the critically acclaimed SPQR – A History of Ancient Rome and Women & Power. Mary is one of the presenters for the BBC’s new landmark Civilisations series.

Evelien Bracke was Senior Lecturer in Classics at Swansea University. She taught and researched ancient languages and their applications in modern education. She was Chair of the Cymru Wales Classics Hub, which supports and promotes the teaching and learning of Classics in Wales.

John Bulwer has taught Classics in the European Schools in the Netherlands and Belgium and in the UK. He has been active in Euroclassica for many years and is currently its president.

Paula da Cunha Corrêa is Associate Professor of Greek Language and Literature at the University of São Paulo. She is also Research Scholar of the Brazilian National Research Council researching Greek poetry. In addition, Paula has been responsible for ‘Projeto Minimus: Grego e Latim no Ensino Fundamental’, an outreach programme of the University of São Paulo in which undergraduates and graduates teach Latin and Greek to approximately 200 students (fourth and seventh graders) at the Desembargador Amorim Lima public school since 2013.

Rowlie Darby is Course Leader of the Classics Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) at the University of Sussex, the teacher in charge of Classics at Patcham High School and the Classics for All Hub Coordinator for the South-East Hub (Brighton and Hove). Using Classics for All funding, he initiated Latin provision for other comprehensive schools in the Brighton and Hove area. He served the Joint Association of Classical Teachers (JACT) for five years both as a council member and as a member of the Examination Committee. He has been a moderator and examiner for Ancient History and Latin exams.

Emma-Jayne Graham is Senior Lecturer in Classical Studies at the Open University (OU). She is involved in the production and teaching of a range of OU Classical Studies modules at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and is especially interested in exploring ways to integrate active discovery-led pedagogies into distance learning materials. Her main areas of research concern the archaeology of Roman Italy, the ancient body, mortuary practices and the treatment of the human body in death, anatomical votives and the materiality of religion.
Editors and Contributors

Edith Hall is Professor of Classics at King’s College London (KCL). She is co-founder and Consultant Director of the Archive of Performances of Greek & Roman Drama at Oxford and Chairman of the Gilbert Murray Trust.

Arlene Holmes-Henderson leads research for the Classics in Communities project. She taught Classics in UK schools and has trained teachers at home and abroad. She advises qualification bodies on policy, curriculum and assessment in classical and modern languages. She is a board member of the Association for Language Learning (Language Futures) and the British Curriculum Forum. Arlene has conducted comparative educational research in the United States, Australia and New Zealand as a visiting professor. Now an academic at the University of Oxford, she has an extensive list of publications in the fields of language education policy, pedagogies and practice.

Steven Hunt is Senior Teaching Associate at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, where he has been subject lecturer for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education course in Latin and Classics since 2008. He is President of the Association for Latin Teaching and a member of the boards of several classical associations, including the Classical Association Teaching Board, Cambridge School Classics Project Management Committee and LACTORs. He is Editor of the Journal of Classics Teaching and his book Starting to Teach Latin was published by Bloomsbury Academic in 2016.

Lucy Jackson is Research Fellow at King’s College London. (KCL) She has taught at KCL and Oxford University, where she completed her doctorate on the chorus in ancient Greek drama. Her current research focuses on the afterlife of Greek drama in the Renaissance and in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Lucy acted as a consultant for the National Theatre’s production of Medea (2014), the Almeida Theatre’s Iliad (2015) and the Oresteia at Shakespeare’s Globe (2015).

Aisha Khan-Evans taught for several years in comprehensive schools in and around London. After an MA in Education at King’s College London (KCL), Aisha combined part-time work on the PGCE there with teaching in a sixth-form college, before becoming subject director for the King’s College London (KCL) Classics PGCE in 2006.

Jane Maguire studied German and French at university and then taught modern languages in state comprehensive schools in Norfolk (The Hewett School, Norwich, and North Walsham High School) for twenty years. As the Gifted and Talented Strand Co-ordinator for the Great Yarmouth Excellence Cluster (2005 to 2011), she introduced Latin to a number of primary schools in rural Norfolk. She currently trains others how to teach Latin, working with Classics for All and the Primary Latin Project.

Emily Matters has been teaching Classics for nearly fifty years, mainly in secondary schools. She is the current president of the Classical Languages Teachers’ Association to which nearly all Australian Latin and Greek teachers belong. Her immediate mission is to promote the teaching of Latin in primary schools and she has completed the first Classical Greek textbook to introduce the language to young beginners in an Australian context.

Xavier Murray-Pollock is Teacher of Classics at Merchant Taylors’ School in London.
Editors and Contributors

Mai Musié is co-founder of the Classics in Communities project and Alumni Relations Manager at Pembroke College, University of Oxford, UK. She has recently completed her PhD thesis on Representation of Persians in the Ancient Novel. She did her BA in Classical Civilisation and Master's in Ancient History at Swansea University. Mai has years of experience in access and outreach work with Higher Education (HE) institutions and statutory bodies, including running the Outreach Programme for the Faculty of Classics at Oxford, and has organized and coordinated mentoring and literacy programmes, summer schools and employability projects.

Nicola Felton, formerly Neto was Head of Modern Foreign Languages at Sidney Stringer School in Hillfields, Coventry. A chance conversation with the principal at the school led to her developing a full Classics Department at Sidney Stringer from nothing, which fitted well with the school's and her own energetic agenda to raise aspirations among students and to enrich the curriculum for all. Starting with Latin, Nicola forged strong links with Oxford University, the Cambridge School Classics Project, Classics for All and Warwick School to improve her own subject knowledge and to learn the subject pedagogy thoroughly to teach an initially small band of enthusiastic students. Soon she was offering Classical Greek as well and had persuaded her first students to sign up for A level Latin. In a school which had for many years previously been considered ‘failing’ and which had burnt down and been beautifully rebuilt, the Classics curriculum offer was extraordinary: a non-selective state school, in one of the most deprived wards of Coventry, with a Classics department to rival those of the private sector! Very sadly, Nicola passed away suddenly in the summer term 2017; but she has left behind a legacy of personal ambition and determination to achieve the highest standards for her many young classicists.

Peter Olive is a teacher of all four Classical A levels, as well as teaching Latin language at Royal Holloway, University of London.

Francesca Richards completed her AHRC-funded doctorate ‘Dangerous Creatures: Children’s Adaptations of the Odyssey in English 1699–2013 at Durham University in 2015. Her interest in how the Homeric poem has been interpreted for young people grew into three years of developing public engagement projects with arts partners and schools in County Durham. She is now Research Impact Officer for the Social Sciences Division at the University of Oxford, advising academics across more than fifteen departments on a wide range of knowledge exchange, public engagement and impact projects, in both the UK and internationally.

Lorna Robinson founded the educational charity The Iris Project and Iris magazine to promote Classics in state schools in 2006, and runs Latin and Greek projects in state schools across the UK. She has taught Latin and Greek at Cheney School, a large comprehensive school in East Oxford, since 2006. In 2013, she set up the Iris Classics Centre at Cheney, a community hub for all ages to engage with Classics. In 2015, she founded the Rumble Museum, which is working towards being the first Arts Council Accredited museum within a state school in the UK. Lorna has also written a Latin course, Telling Tales in Latin (2013), Distant Lands: Telling Tales in Latin Part Two (2016), and a Classical Greek course, Telling Tales in Greek (2017), all published by Souvenir Press.
Editors and Contributors

**James Robson** is Senior Lecturer in Classical Studies at the Open University, where his teaching specialisms include the literature and social history of Classical Athens and Classical Greek and Latin languages. He is particularly interested in the use of ICT to support Greek and Latin learners, especially at beginner’s level. His previous publications include *Aristophanes: An Introduction* (Duckworth/Bloomsbury, 2010) and *Sex and Sexuality in Classical Athens* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013). More recently, he has co-edited *Sex in Antiquity: Reconsidering Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World* (Routledge, 2015).

**Patrick J. Ryan** graduated from the National University of Ireland (University College Cork) with a BA in Archaeology and Ancient Classics in 1997 and an MPhil, awarded for his research on Roman reaction to Greek precedent, in 1999. He served as National Chairman of the Classical Association of Ireland from 2004 to 2006 and is currently its general secretary. An archaeologist by profession, he has a particular interest in fostering the revival of Greek and Latin language and drama in community settings.

**Olivia Sanchez** is Teacher of Latin and Classics at St Paul’s Way Trust School in East London.

**Corrie Schumann** has a Bacalaureus majoring in Afrikaans and Latin and a Secondary Education Diploma from Stellenbosch University. In 1984, Corrie became a legal Latin lecturer at the University of Pretoria and established the ‘Academia Latina Centre’ a few years later. Corrie has received numerous awards for her teaching and her dedication to outreach work including the Arthur Patch McKinlay from the American Classical League (1999), the Silver Chalice Award from Ablemedia (2000) and the Award for Excellence in Teaching Research from the Classical Association of South Africa (2001).

**Michael Scott** is Associate Professor of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Warwick. He has written extensively on ancient Greek religion and sanctuaries, as well as on ancient global connectivity. Over the last five years, he has also been his department’s Admissions, Outreach and Widening Participation Officer. He is now its Impact Officer. He has had significant experience in the public communication of the ancient world via books, magazines and newspaper, radio and TV.

**Emma Searle** is a doctoral student at Merton College, Oxford, currently completing her DPhil thesis on the domestic consumption of art in Roman Italy. She did her BA in Classical Archaeology and Ancient History at Wadham College, Oxford, and worked as a field archaeologist specializing in Roman material culture before doing an MSc in Classics at the University of Edinburgh. For her doctorate, Emma returned to Oxford where she also teaches Roman history and material culture as well as Latin language and literature. In addition, Emma has extensive outreach experience, having been involved in various widening participation programmes at both college and university level including the Oxford Latin Teaching Scheme (OxLAT), an outreach programme of the Faculty of Classics at the University of Oxford.
Editors and Contributors

Kathryn Tempest is Senior Lecturer in Roman History and Latin Literature at the University of Roehampton. Her research concentrates on the literature, history and political life of the late Roman republic, with particular interests in oratory and rhetoric, all aspects of Cicero, ancient letters and biography. She is the author of Cicero: Politics and Persuasion in Ancient Rome (Continuum, 2011; reprinted by Bloomsbury, 2013); Hellenistic Oratory: Continuity and Change (Oxford University Press, 2013), which she co-edited with Christos Kremmydas; and Brutus: The Noble Conspirator (Yale University Press, 2017).

Lana Theron has a Bacalaureus Legum Civilium and Honores in Humanities and Classical Languages from the University of Pretoria. From 1984 until 1989, Lana taught law students as a legal Latin lecturer at the University of South Africa. In 2012 Lana became the assistant to Corrie Schumann at the Academia Latina Centre. In 2014 Lana was made the Online Course Coordinator for the Medical Terminology course.

Zanna Wing-Davey read Classics at King’s College, Cambridge, but got her taste for Latin while she attended Camden School for Girls. She has been with The Latin Programme from the start as a dynamic teacher and Director of Latin and as Executive Director for the last eight years. She has also taught Latin and Classical Greek at South Hampstead High School in North London.
A decade or so ago, I bravely – or foolishly – agreed to appear on a reality TV show to teach elementary Latin to a group of sixteen-year-olds who had failed to achieve what was then the government target of 5 GCSEs (including English and Maths) at grade A to C. Called ‘Dream School’, it was the brainchild of the well-meaning celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, who hoped to show that if you exposed a clutch of bored and unsuccessful youths to some celebrity teachers – from Cherie Blair to Simon Callow and Robert Winston, plus the obligatory old Latin lady (me) – you might just inspire them to greater things.

The programme had its popular and controversial moments, notably when David Starkey, the history teacher, chose to call one of the kids, to his face, ‘fat’ (whether Starkey’s play to the gallery with a knowing bit of political incorrectness was worse than the cries of outrage from some equally knowing politically correct viewers, I still haven’t decided). But the truth was that if the aim had been to educate the pupils, the people who learnt most were those of us hired to be the teachers. True, most teachers don’t have to cope with the television cameras on the back row, or with a savvy group of kids well aware that the way to launch a career from reality television is to behave very badly indeed. But most of us untrained enthusiasts soon learned that making a lesson work in the face of juvenile disenchantment, or of the seductions of new technology (to make our job that bit harder the TV company had issued every pupil with an iPad), was almost beyond us. I was only one of these ‘pretend’ teachers who went away with an intense admiration for the ‘real’ teachers of the ‘real’ classroom.

But I learned more than that. I struggled through a couple of hours with modest success on David Beckham’s Latin tattoos (I think that most of the kids sensed that the teacher’s heart was not quite in it, though the cameras loved it). I secured almost zero attention when I tried to introduce them to some ‘real Latin’ (most of them, understandably, thought that it was at best quaint, at worst laughable, that we were about to read some of the real words of Martial written 2,000 years ago: so what … ?). I had, however, two surprising and instructive successes that were sadly never shown on television.

The first was when I turned to the names of British towns. Had they noticed, I asked them, how many ended in something like ‘ … chester’ or ‘ … caster’? Indeed they had, and could reel off the names of Lancaster, Manchester, Doncaster and so forth. Did they know why? Did they know that all these place names came from the Latin castra (for ‘military camp’) and that centuries ago they had all been ancient Roman forts? Of course, they didn’t.

I have always been a bit sniffy about the pleasures of etymology. But I couldn’t help being just a little moved by the sight of these children having – as the cliché would have it – a ‘light-bulb’ moment. Something they had vaguely noticed, but never thought actually to ask about, now fell into place. I nerved myself to say that one day they would explain this factoid to their own children, and probably tell them a bit about that quirky old Latin teacher on the television
programme they were once on. For the first time, most of them smiled with some degree of warmth.

The second was even more surprising. In some desperation, for one of the last lessons I planned to do Roman numerals, and I had not expected much interest. But, in fact, I presented the intricacies of the Is, the Vs, the Xs, up to the Ls and Cs and Ds, to the closest thing to a wrap audience that I had seen in the whole series of lessons. When we had finished, and the cameras were off, I said to them words to the effect of: ‘You have texted, played on your iPads, chatted and messed around almost every time we have met, and then we do this boring session of Roman numbers and you sit there quietly and write it all down, could you please explain?’ ‘That’s easy,’ said one, ‘the date of television programmes is written at the end in Roman numbers – if you don’t understand them, you don’t know when the programme was made.’ Simple, eh?

There are any number of reasons for engaging with the ancient world and classicists, as this book demonstrates, are eloquent in arguing the case: ranging from the excitement of getting to grips with the stunning and challenging literature to uncovering the day-to-day eating habits of the inhabitants of the Roman empire (on the basis of their lavatory contents) or the political challenges laid down by Plato or Cicero. But, even if few people would now put the intricacies of Roman numerals high on their list of priorities, what those naughty pupils were expressing so succinctly – half-engaged as they appeared to be – was one basic tenet of the subject: that those who have the opportunity to study the ancient world find themselves not only looking back into a far distant past but also looking at themselves and their own culture in a new way. Of course, the cultural traditions of the West do not owe everything to the Greco-Roman past and its interpretations. Happily we are a much more diverse culture than that, with many more inheritances, both ancient and modern (none of us would want to return to antiquity, thank you very much). But Classics opens up a debate with some of the foundations of our own certainties. What does democracy mean? Why do we represent the human body as we do? Or even what makes us laugh? Knowing about the numerals at the end of a television programme, or the roots of the geopolitics of Britain, is part of that.

That said, classicists have to confront all kinds of misleading myths. One of the most strident is that Classics has always been for ‘toffs’, a weapon of the elite for keeping the lower orders in their place by excluding them from the study of ‘dead’ languages. The fact is that Greek language may always have been on the agenda of only a small minority, partly, but not entirely, defined by wealth and status. But (as Edith Hall’s essay shows in a slightly different way) Classics has always been a part of popular culture, classical literature has always been read by millions in translation and everyone – yes everyone – still knows more about the ancient world than they often claim. The success of popular ancient movies, stretching back a century or more, shows that (‘I don’t know anything about Rome’, says someone; ‘yes you do; you have seen Gladiator’, we reply). This myth sometimes takes the alternative form that Classics is a difficult subject, and therefore only for the very clever. That is not true either. To be sure, there are some extremely difficult things written in Latin and Greek. Parts of Thucydides are virtually untranslatable, and I have often thought that getting learners to read Tacitus after a couple of years of Latin was the equivalent of making Finnegans Wake a set book for beginners’ English. But that does not put the more general challenge and pleasure of exploring the ancient world out of the reach of anyone. Classics is no harder, or easier, a subject than any other.
Foreword

Then there is the politics. Another myth is that the Roman empire underpinned the British empire and that therefore Classics is somehow inseparably linked to imperialism and exploitation, the intellectual arm of a past that we would rather forget. There were, of course, British imperialists who saw a correlation with the Roman version of world power. But many Roman writers themselves were concerned to subvert, not promote, the very idea of empire. Or, to put it another way, the most effective criticisms of Roman imperial power came from Romans (‘they make a desert and call it peace’, as Tacitus put it in the second century AD, a better summation of ‘conquest’ than anyone has come up with before or since). The related stereotype is that Classics has always been deeply conservative, a bastion of the Right versus the Left. Again, it is true that the old and new Right have often tried to claim Classics for themselves sometimes powerfully (and they are doing so vociferously now). But the long history of Classics challenges that. For every Goebbels, with his enthusiasm for Greek tragedy, there is a Marx, whose doctoral dissertation was on ancient philosophy. It is important not to forget that many of the biggest social political reforms in the West, from universal suffrage to gay rights, have been launched (for good or, occasionally, bad motives) on classical principles.

And, more than that, Classics as an educational discipline has been one of the best of all at radically reinventing itself with new questions and new audiences. It is true that there is an occasional chorus of gloom that presents the heyday of classical learning as lost in the past, and the subject as in slow but terminal decline. Indeed no one who has classical interests at heart should be remotely complacent about the position of classical subjects in the school curriculum across the world. But anyone who fondly imagines that Classics in (say) the late nineteenth century was in better shape than now would be well advised to go and take a look at some of the exam papers sat by university students at the time, which to be honest often appear easier, less challenging and far less interesting than our own. In some ways, the subject is flourishing as it has never done before. At my own university more students are studying Latin and Greek than ever (to be sure, Classics is studied by a smaller proportion of our undergraduates, but in terms of raw numbers it is at an all-time high – partly thanks to a relatively new pathway open to students who have not had the opportunity to study ancient languages at school). And the contributions to this book offer exciting glimpses into the initiatives that lie behind the subject's success, in many countries of the world, whatever the difficulties it may face: from new methods of teaching at every level and in new media, to a glorious commitment to set no limit on the places and people that the subject can and should reach – far beyond my own efforts, valiant and occasionally enjoyable as they were, with place names and Roman numbers.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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What is ‘Classics in Communities’?

The Classics in Communities project is a partnership between the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge and the Iris Project. It was set up in response to the primary curriculum reforms, which were implemented in England from September 2014. In the key stage 2 (KS2) Languages curriculum policy, for the first time, Classical Greek and Latin can be chosen for study by pupils aged six to eleven in place of a modern language. The project particularly targets schools where classical languages have not previously featured on the curriculum. It has twin aims: to equip teachers in primary schools with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach these languages; and to conduct parallel research to determine the impact of classical language learning on children's cognitive development.

Activities of the Classics in Communities project

Website

The Classics in Communities website (classicsincommunities.org) acts as a hub for teachers interested in introducing Latin and Greek in their classrooms. It includes a summary of published resources for classical languages, an overview of the funding available from various sources, details of university departments offering outreach around the UK, as well as resources requested by teachers including skill progression grids for primary Latin, 'how to get started' guides for Latin on the curriculum and as a club, and pedagogical videos to support teachers in their professional practice.

Conferences

The project held a launch conference at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in November 2013. This event attracted a wide range of participants including primary teachers, secondary teachers (of Classics, Languages, History and English), academics, trainee teachers, outreach officers, subject association representatives, educational policy advisors and school leaders. More than 100 delegates attended, including colleagues from South Africa, the United States and Europe. Keynote speeches were given by Professor Edith Hall (KCL) and Dr Michael Scott (University of Warwick), both of whom are contributors to this volume. In addition to plenary sessions, parallel sessions covered a wide range of Classics education topics, including working with museums, teaching literacy using Greek literature in translation, empowering older students to lead junior Latin clubs, collaboration with Classics teachers across Europe and boosting community cohesion through Greek drama.
Forward with Classics

A second Classics in Communities conference was hosted by the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Classics in September 2015. Again, more than 100 participants came from a variety of contexts, including adult educators, publishers and charity representatives. Some delegates had travelled from Australia, the United States, Ireland and Sweden to be part of the one-day event. Professor Tim Whitmarsh (University of Cambridge) and Tom Holland (celebrated author and broadcaster) gave the keynote addresses. High on the agenda for this event was the sharing of strategies to widen access to the study of classical languages and civilizations for all learners. In addition to an open roundtable discussion, we heard from teachers setting up new Latin hubs in Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Coventry, as well as representatives from Classics for All and the Kallos Gallery who want to support the learning and teaching of Classics at all levels. Many of the projects discussed at the conference are explained in more detail in this volume.

Celebration of Greek language and culture education

Together with the Greek ambassador to the UK and the High Commissioner of Cyprus to the UK, the Classics in Communities project hosted a ‘Celebration of Greek’ event in summer 2016 in London. This event raised the profile of teaching Greek in schools with the aim of boosting the number of children with access to the language and its associated rich historical, literary, philosophical and visual culture. The event brought together those people currently teaching some form of Greek in diverse contexts. These included classicists, theologians, philosophers, ancient and medieval historians, modern Greek linguists and members of the Hellenic community in the UK. For more information about the strategies identified to promote and extend the reach of Greek language and culture education, see Mitropoulos and Holmes-Henderson (2016).

Classical languages regional teacher-training workshops

Given that the KS2 Languages curriculum reform expressly named Latin and Greek as languages suitable for study in the primary phase, the Classics in Communities project sought to equip primary teachers, through training events, with the subject knowledge and confidence they needed to teach Latin and Greek in their schools. In 2014–2015, one-day teacher-training workshops were held at KCL, the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, Lordswood School Birmingham, the University of Glasgow and Queen's University Belfast. These training days brought together those primary teachers interested in (but hitherto unfamiliar with) teaching Latin and Classical Greek with experienced teachers and academics. This cross-sectoral structure was selected to ensure a degree of self-sustainability in the regions – it was crucial for primary teachers to meet experienced teachers and academics so that they felt supported in their new classical adventure. Equally, secondary teachers and academics in universities enjoyed the opportunity for dialogue and were keen to establish open channels of communication for knowledge exchange across educational phases. The events were publicized to the local educational authorities by the local university, by the University of Oxford outreach team and by the Classics in Communities project (by email and through social media). Full bursaries were available for teachers, thanks to the generosity of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies. Glasgow was the most
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A popular venue, with twenty-two participants. Belfast had the fewest attendees, just ten. The training day was broadly divided into two: Latin in the morning and Greek in the afternoon.

After a welcome from the local host and an introduction from the Classics in Communities team, the benefits of teaching Latin in the primary classroom were discussed, as were some of the challenges of setting up a new language in a school. Participants had the opportunity to try out some Latin learning of their own and asked a number of questions about which pedagogical approaches were suitable for teaching a classical language. One of the sessions included a thirty-minute talk from a local primary teacher who outlined their top tips for introducing Latin at key stage 2. The cascade of this information from a fellow teacher who had actually been through the process was particularly valuable for participants and allowed them to have many practical questions answered.

The afternoon was spent introducing teachers to the Classical Greek alphabet and helping them transliterate accurately. Exercises exploring vocabulary, derivations and present tense verbs gave them a flavour of the content of Classical Greek at key stage 2. Various resources were shared and their suitability for use with children at key stage 2 were discussed.

Feedback from the workshops, together with more information about the subsequent implementation of Latin and Greek in primary schools, can be read in Holmes-Henderson (2016).

Educational research

Alongside its training focus, the Classics in Communities project is conducting an educational research study into the impact of learning Latin on children’s cognitive development. It is a longitudinal study in which quantitative attainment data are being collected from a number of schools, in partnership with the Iris Project and the Latin Programme. In order to get a better understanding of the impact of learning Latin beyond baseline and progress measures of cognitive attainment, qualitative research methods are being used in school visits to hear the situated perspectives of key stakeholders including pupils, teachers, school leaders and parents.

Initial analysis of the data reveals positive trends in the development of literacy skills, when a classical language is used as the medium for (or supplement to) literacy learning. The impact of learning Latin on children’s development of critical skills and global awareness is also being explored. Data collection and analysis are currently ongoing and detailed results will be published in due course.

Digital resources

In response to requests from teachers, teaching resource videos have been produced to help less experienced teachers of classical languages to see the content and pedagogical elements of a ‘model lesson.’ These exist for teaching Latin cases, teaching Latin verb tenses, teaching the ablative absolute, teaching the indirect statement, introducing the Greek alphabet and teaching the definite article in Greek. They can be viewed on the Classics in Communities website. Making these freely available online has been beneficial to teachers currently delivering Latin in their schools but has been particularly useful to those without previous experience of teaching Latin and Greek. Teachers have welcomed the opportunity to learn about effective pedagogy from experienced practitioners.
Forward with Classics

*International collaboration*

Since 2013, the editors have collaborated with teachers and academics in the United States, New Zealand, Australia, Portugal, Brazil, Canada and South Africa. International visits have been made, conference presentations have been delivered and the chapters contained herein provide a flavour of the collaborations undertaken to date.

Hunt provides an overview of the social justice agenda in UK politics over the last decade and describes its influences on Classics education in policy and practice. Hunt, in a second chapter, investigates the comprehensible input (CI) approach to Latin teaching and considers why it has grown in popularity in the United States yet remains little practiced in the UK.

Searle provides an overview of ‘access agreements’ between UK higher education institutions and the Office of Fair Access aimed to increase participation from under-represented groups into higher education. Searle offers the Oxford Latin Teaching Scheme as an example of how university Classics departments can engage effectively and successfully with the access and outreach agenda.

Jackson describes a knowledge exchange fellowship in which she provided specialist consultancy to the National Theatre in London for its production of *Medea*.

Scott evaluates the positive influence of the ‘impact’ policy agenda within UK higher education on public engagement and outreach. He describes various initiatives undertaken by the Faculty of Classics at the University of Warwick to engage local young people in the study of the ancient world.

Matters explains the developments in curriculum policy affecting the uptake of Classics in Australian schools.

Corrêa discusses the establishment and development of a Latin course for young children in São Paulo. She explains how teachers in local schools were supported by students and staff from the University of São Paulo.

Bulwer provides an overview of the teaching and learning of classical subjects in Europe. He identifies countries where Classics is supported by curriculum policy and showcases a range of creative initiatives in those countries where Classics is marginalized by educational policy.

Bell reflects on the impact of the *Minimus* series of books on the learning and teaching of Latin and Classics for young children in the UK and worldwide.

Wing-Davey describes the work of the Latin Programme, which provides Latin teaching for pupils in schools in London.

Maguire summarizes the results of introducing the teaching of Latin to primary schools in Norfolk, England.

Darby provides a personal reflection on the possibilities and pitfalls of teaching Latin as a ‘non-specialist’ teacher in Brighton and Hove, England.

Robinson charts the creation and development of the Iris Classics Centre at Cheney School and its busy calendar of Classics-related activities.

Olive and Murray-Pollock describe the establishment of the East End Classics Centre at BSix College in Hackney, London. They reflect on the challenges and triumphs of this endeavour and provide advice for others who may wish to pursue similar goals.

Sanchez and Felton highlight the educational benefits of teaching Latin on the curriculum in a socially and ethnically diverse London borough and Coventry.
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Schumann and Theron chart the creation and development of the Academia Latina Centre at the University of Pretoria, which aimed to introduce Classics into South African schools and prisons.

Ryan explains how the performance of classical drama can promote community cohesion, with specific reference to the Orchard Yard players in County Tipperary, Ireland.

Richards provides a commentary on a university research project which sought to take Greek literature to the local community in North-East England.

Bracke describes a project to widen access to the study of Classics for children and their parents in Wales.

Khan-Evans researched what factors affect sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds when choosing subjects for study. She shares findings which suggest that Classical Civilisation has a broad appeal in England.

Robson and Graham describe the design and delivery of an open access digital Latin course for learners of all ages as part of the Open University’s commitment to widening access to Classics.

Holmes-Henderson and Tempest interrogate the contribution of Classics to the cultivation of twenty-first-century skills. These are the skills required for school pupils and university students to flourish as citizens, employees and lifelong learners.

Hall details the history of Classics education in British schools and comments on the relationship between social class and access to Classics.

References
