



Call to reverse near-extinction of classics in Scottish schools

Classical studies is not 'a dead white man's game', argues academic

By Emma Seith 29 March 2018



Leading education figures have met in Glasgow in a bid to halt the “almost complete extinction” of classical studies in Scottish state schools.

It has also emerged, as part of this drive to revive the classics, that the University of Edinburgh's [Moray House School of Education](#) is planning to start training teachers to deliver Latin – something that has not happened in Scotland for almost a decade.

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The event held yesterday at the University of Glasgow's [Hunterian Museum](#) is part of a UK-wide campaign to help reintroduce the study of the classical world into all schools.

It was organised by Matthew Fox, professor of classics at the University of Glasgow. He said there was "a mythology" that existed around classical studies that it was "elitist" and "a dead white man's game that has no place in the modern curriculum".

Last year in Scotland there were 429 entries for the classical studies [Higher](#) and 286 entries for Higher Latin. In comparison, there were 759 entries for Higher philosophy and 9,319 entries for Higher modern studies.

Professor Fox argued the subject provided an "amazing mental training", particularly when it came to citizenship and historical and cultural awareness.

He said: "Far too few children are being educated about the ancient Greeks and Romans at secondary school. We are hoping to help bring the study of classical civilization to Scottish schools, which over recent decades has experienced an almost complete extinction of the subject in the state sector. We want to see a sea change and an expansion of the increasingly narrowing curriculum available to Scottish pupils.

"Classical subjects have been shown to equip pupils with new skills in critical thinking, and cultural and historical awareness. The ancient world grips the popular imagination, but also has great potential to train minds. We believe that there are great benefits for students in regenerating the subject."

The University of Glasgow, in partnership with Glasgow City Council, is already running *The Literacy through Latin* project, teaching Latin in primary schools in the city.

The aim of the project is to help children improve their English by learning Latin, as well as being taught about Roman civilisations. The council will extend the scheme to 400 primary school children later this year.

The campaign behind yesterday's event is led by Advocating Classic Education, which is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.



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