Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Response to the Estyn thematic report on Welsh at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
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Report title:

Welsh in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools.

Report details:

Estyn was asked to review standards, provision and leadership in Welsh in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools, examining a range of factors including teaching and learning experiences and leadership and management.

Summary of main findings:

The key findings of the report are that:

Standards

The standards of Welsh of most pupils in the primary schools and many pupils in the secondary schools that were visited as part of this review are good.

This is also true on the whole for the Welsh-medium or bilingual schools that have been inspected over the last two years. They talk, read and write well in Welsh, and many use their language skills confidently in different contexts across the curriculum.

Many pupils have the ability to use the Welsh language effectively in formal and informal situations. However, a few pupils do not develop their oracy skills to the best of their ability.

Many primary school pupils write meaningfully in a wide range of extended genres and adapt the style and content of their work for different purposes and audiences.

Teaching and learning experiences

In most of the schools visited as part of this review, provision for Welsh-medium provision is good, and is excellent in a minority.

The standard of Welsh teaching is at least good in most schools. Teaching includes excellent features in a minority of lessons.

Successful schools plan in detail and effectively to develop their pupils' oracy, reading and writing skills and ensure an appropriate inter-relationship between them. Due attention is given to elements of literacy and language accuracy.

The language centres visited in Gwynedd have very effective arrangements for pupils who join Welsh-medium or bilingual schools without much previous competence in the Welsh language. Arrangements are not as good in most other local authorities.

Leadership and management

Most head teachers of the primary, secondary and all-age schools visited have a clear vision for Welsh. The core of this vision is that all pupils make the best progress possible while developing their Welsh language skills and foster a strong sense of their Welsh identity.

Standards in Welsh and promoting their pupils' sense of Welsh identity are priorities in the majority of schools' improvement plans.

The majority of schools benefit from beneficial professional learning arrangements to strengthen Welsh provision further.

Recommendation 1

Schools should focus on developing pupils' oracy skills as a basis for developing their other skills, particularly writing.

Welsh Government Response: **Accept**

Welsh Government also notes that the emerging Curriculum for Wales supports the emphasis on developing oracy skills alongside reading and writing in Welsh and across all languages.

Recommendation 2

Schools should introduce strategies to help pupils to eliminate the common language errors made by a minority of pupils both spoken and written.

Welsh Government Response: **Accept**

Welsh Government also notes that the draft 'What Matters' statements for the

Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience recognise the importance of accurate communication, and of using and adapting language in different contexts. The 'What Matters' statements for each Area of Learning and Experience will, in due course, form the basis of classroom practice across all schools.

Recommendation 3:

Schools should ensure that experiences provided for pupils in Key Stage 3 build systematically on provision in Key Stage 2.

Welsh Government Response: **Accept**

Welsh Government also notes that the cross-curricular strand relating to experience and enrichment will look at how best to emphasise coherence from one progression step to the next. This strand of the new curriculum is about offering informal opportunities that improve pupil engagement with their learning. For the Welsh language, it is an expectation that schools will be able to work with partner organisations to ensure pupils are given regular opportunities to use their Welsh language skills in an informal context in accordance with the Welsh Language Charter.

Recommendation 4:

Schools should provide training to improve the language skills of teachers and teaching assistants.

Welsh Government Response: **Accept**

Welsh Government is currently working with the Regional Education Consortia to undertake a Welsh language skills audit of teachers. We are also continuing to support the Welsh Sabbatical Scheme which provides intensive opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to develop their Welsh language skills. The regional consortia are also receiving funding to deliver a programme of professional learning to enable practitioners to develop their Welsh language skills in accordance with the new professional standards.

Recommendation 5:

Schools should plan purposefully to increase secondary school pupils' desire and confidence to use the Welsh language in informal situations.

Welsh Government Response: **Accept**

Welsh Government response as set out in recommendation 3.

Recommendation 6:

Local authorities and regional consortia should ensure specialist support and assistance for schools to develop pupils' language skills.

Welsh Government Response: **Accept**

Developing oral, reading and writing skills simultaneously and ultimately to the same standards, is already a consideration within the emerging curriculum.

Within the new curriculum for Languages, Literacy and Communication, learner progress will be measured against a defined continuum for languages which will also offer consistency for assessment purposes.

Local authorities and regional consortia are key partners in supporting the development and sharing of good practice in these areas across all schools. Regional consortia received additional funding in 2017-18 to develop approaches that support improving oracy.

Recommendation 7:

Local authorities and regional consortia should ensure effective provision for pupils who wish to transfer from English-medium education to Welsh-medium education during Key Stages 2 and 3.

Welsh Government Response: **Accept**

Local authorities are required to consider how to increase late immersion opportunities for learners to transfer from English-medium to Welsh-medium during Key Stages 2 and 3 in their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.

Recommendation 8:

Local authorities and regional consortia should ensure that pupils who have been assessed in Welsh at the end of Key Stage 2 continue to develop their skills in the most effective way in Key Stage 3.

Welsh Government Response: **Accept** Welsh Government response as set out in recommendation 6.
Publication details: The report was published on Estyn's website on 9 May 2018: www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports