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# Evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy

## Review of the Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme for educational practitioners: participant experiences 2011-2012

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## **Review of the Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme for educational practitioners: participant experiences 2011-2012**

January 2014

### **Arad**

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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## 1 Executive summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the findings of the review of the Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme (WLSS) conducted by Arad Research on behalf of the Welsh Government during the first half of 2013. The review focuses on measuring the impact of the Sabbatical Scheme, and is based on the views of participants who attended courses during the period January 2011 – December 2012. Their views were gathered through surveys and interviews. We also contacted a sample of line managers, *athrawon bro* and training providers in order to consider participants' comments in a wider context.
- 1.2 This review forms part of a wider research programme to evaluate the Welsh-medium Education Strategy (the Strategy) that was published by the Welsh Government in 2010. That evaluation will assess progress against the Strategy's aims and objectives and will aim to understand how effectively the various elements of the Strategy interconnect. We will use the conclusions of this review when considering the contribution of the WLSS to the aims and objectives of the Strategy as a whole.

### Findings

- 1.3 In broad terms, all of those who contributed to the review held very positive views about the quality and nature of the training delivered through the Sabbatical Scheme. The fieldwork suggested that the content of the courses at each level was appropriate.
- 1.4 A large number of participants reported increased confidence and enthusiasm as a result of the course, and the majority also greatly appreciated the opportunity to develop their language skills.

- 1.5 The Sabbatical Scheme has helped schools to strengthen their Welsh language ethos and introduce more incidental use of Welsh. Evidence of the impact on learners' skills levels is less apparent (and beyond the remit of this review). Interviews with local authority officers suggested that it may not be realistic for the Sabbatical Scheme alone to lead to measurable benefits in terms of the educational attainment of pupils taught by course participants.
- 1.6 The review highlighted that the journey from the initial recruitment to post-course support varies for participants, depending on how they came into contact with the WLSS, as well as on personal motivation and the school's motivation for participation.
- 1.7 The Sabbatical Scheme has been adapted and refined several times over the years, but one important element when seeking to build further on the success of the WLSS is the need to strengthen the post-course support offered to participants upon completion of the course.
- 1.8 This review outlines recommendations to help the Sabbatical Scheme respond to these challenges during the next phase of its development. The recommendations refer to the need to ensure effective joint-planning at national and local levels and in schools and colleges, in order that participants are recruited in a strategic and purposeful way.
- 1.9 One of the main challenges for the future is to ensure that the WLSS as a whole (including recruitment methods, the targeting of individual practitioners and schools) is implemented in a more strategic and targeted manner. A clear link between the WLSS and the priorities of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans must be established across local authorities and consortia.
- 1.10 There are also recommendations that refer to the need to improve post-course support for participants. Local authorities should ensure that priority is given to providing suitable and effective support for participants.

## **Acknowledgements**

1.11 We would like to thank all those who contributed to this review of the Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme. Special thanks go to course participants and to other school, college and local authority representatives for the valuable information presented, which has provided the basis for this report and its findings.

## 2 Introduction to the review

2.1 Arad was commissioned to conduct a review of the Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme (the WLSS), a programme which offers Welsh language and methodology training to practitioners in order to enable them to teach, lecture or train bilingually or through the medium of Welsh. This report outlines the evidence collated and the conclusions of the research process. It is intended for the review to lead to recommendations for implementing the WLSS in the future.

### Review of Sabbatical Scheme – Context

2.2 This review of the Sabbatical Scheme forms part of a wider programme of research to evaluate the Welsh-medium Education Strategy (the Strategy), published by the Welsh Government in April 2010.<sup>1</sup> Arad was commissioned to conduct a programme of research to consider the impacts of the Strategy as a whole, basing the work programme on the *Proposed Evaluation Framework for the Welsh-Medium Education Strategy*.<sup>2</sup> The Evaluation Framework provides a useful basis for addressing the objectives and the research questions noted in the research programme's specification.<sup>3</sup> These objectives include considering the progress made against the Strategy's aims and targets, in addition to considering whether the targets are still appropriate. It is also intended for the evaluation to consider the factors that are either obstructing or facilitating the realisation of the Strategy's vision, by researching the effectiveness of different activities in different areas and contexts. The outputs of the evaluation will

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government (2010). *Welsh-medium Education Strategy*  
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshmededstrat/?skip=1&lang=en>

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government (2011). *Evaluation Framework for the Welsh-medium Education Strategy*  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/120330welshededucationen.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Specification for an independent research programme to evaluate the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. Advertised by Welsh Government on the sell2wales website in July 2012.

include recommendations to the Welsh Government and other strategic partners, suggesting ways of adapting or improving plans to support the development of Welsh-medium education.

2.3 The Evaluation Framework was revised in early 2013 as part of the current research programme, building on the theory of change in that document, and a logic model was developed for the research programme. The questions identified as part of that process allow us to consider the significance of the Sabbatical Scheme in the context of the full evaluation of the Strategy. The questions below interpret the questions in the Evaluation Framework and link them specifically to the Sabbatical Scheme. Conclusions in relation to the questions below are outlined in sections 6.17-6.26.

- i. To what extent does the Sabbatical Scheme support the Strategy's aims, outcomes and objectives? Specifically:
  - o In what way has the WLSS improved/supported the process of planning provision?
  - o Has the project contributed to the aim of developing Welsh language skills amongst participants?
- ii. Does the WLSS link with/complement other programmes that are associated with the Strategy?
- iii. Would the developments seen in schools and colleges as a result of the Sabbatical Scheme have happened in the absence of the WLSS?

2.4 With this in mind, the research team will consider the evidence submitted and the analysis of the data through two lenses: firstly, there will be a focus on any 'lessons' for the future implementation of the WLSS; and, secondly, we will consider the Sabbatical Scheme's contribution to the Strategy's aims and objectives more widely.



## The Sabbatical Scheme and the Welsh-medium Education Strategy

2.5 Strategic objective SO4.3 of the Strategy refers to developing ‘a national infrastructure for regional delivery of in-service Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training for Welsh-medium/bilingual and Welsh-language skills for all sectors’. The objective outlined in the strategy is to ‘*Improve the linguistic skills of practitioners in all sectors by providing opportunities for training through different models of the Sabbatical Scheme in a national framework*’. The challenge for local authorities therefore is to ‘*improve the linguistic skills of practitioners by identifying priorities for training, correlating with planning processes at local and regional level*’.

### The context of planning Welsh-medium education and supporting schools

2.6 There have been recent changes to the context and structure of school improvement services that are relevant to this review. The four regional consortia are now responsible for school improvement services.<sup>4</sup> The consortia are also responsible for submitting applications for the Welsh in Education Grant in order to support activities ‘*aimed at achieving the outcomes of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy*’.<sup>5</sup>

2.7 Local authorities have a statutory responsibility for developing, introducing, revising and implementing Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.<sup>6</sup> However, the regional consortia have a role in assisting with implementing aspects of the Strategic Plans,

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<sup>4</sup> There are four regional consortia across Wales that form a basis for cooperation across those authorities that are responsible for ensuring effectiveness and raising standards in their authorities. When references are made to consortia or regional consortia in this report, this includes both the regional consortia and the local authorities that are part of them.

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government Written Statement - Welsh in Education Grant 2013-14 (19 September 2012). <http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2012/welshineducationgrant/?skip=1&lang=en>

<sup>6</sup> These are plans that outline how local authorities will achieve the aims and targets outlined by the Welsh Government in the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. Local authorities introduced their first Welsh in Education Strategic Plans in December 2011 on a non-statutory basis. Following the passing of The School Standards and Organisation Act in January 2013, these Strategic Plans will become statutory.

including those aspects that are linked to Outcome 5 of the National Strategy.

- 2.8 The consortia will also be working with course providers in future to identify participants and to provide post-course support (see section 5.22 onwards).

### Overview of the Scheme

- 2.9 The WLSS is a training programme for practitioners developed as a pilot in 2005 in order to achieve the objective set out in '*Iaith Pawb*'<sup>7</sup> of increasing the supply of practitioners that are able to teach and train through the medium of Welsh in a range of subjects pre- and post-16. Following an initial evaluation of the WLSS in 2006-07,<sup>8</sup> the pilot was extended for a further two years in order to allow sufficient time for its long term impacts to become clearer. The WLSS was subsequently extended until August 2010 in order to reflect the priorities of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. Following an evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the WLSS in the summer of 2010,<sup>9</sup> new contracts were established for the provision of courses during the period 2011-2014 in late 2010.
- 2.10 The WLSS offers periods of intensive study, away from the classroom, in order to develop Welsh language skills and develop confidence in bilingual and Welsh-medium teaching methodologies. A programme of Welsh language courses at entry, foundation and higher levels are delivered by providers across Wales under a contract with Welsh Government.
- 2.11 The Sabbatical Scheme covers the costs of supply teachers and participants' travel and subsistence costs to enable schools and colleges to release them to attend the training courses.

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<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government (2003). *Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales* <http://wales.gov.uk/depc/publications/welshlanguage/iaithpawb/iaithpawbe.pdf?lang=en>

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government (2007). *Evaluation of the National Practitioners' Training Programme and Sabbaticals Scheme*

<sup>9</sup> Welsh Government (2010). *Evaluation of the Extended National Practitioners' Training Programme Pilot* <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/100114nptpreporten.pdf>

2.12 Courses are held in locations across Wales. The table below (Table 1) summarises the different courses (by level) provided during the period January 2011-December 2012 along with the number of participants who attended the courses in the different locations.

2.13 The **higher level** course is aimed at those who can speak Welsh fluently, either as first language speakers or learners at a higher level, but lack the confidence or specialist Welsh terminology to use these skills in a professional setting. The courses are an opportunity to develop language skills; receive intensive language training combined with methodological training in teaching through the medium of Welsh; and to gain knowledge of specialist terminology. The higher level course is offered as:

- full-time twelve week block courses;
- twelve week distance learning courses with three obligatory residential periods;
- short courses comprising 12 days of language workshops for further education lecturers and subject teachers in Welsh-medium or bilingual secondary schools.

2.14 The Welsh Government reimburses the cost of 18-60 days of supply cover for these courses, depending on the type of course.

2.15 The **foundation level** course offers Welsh language training to Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 teachers who work in English-medium or bilingual schools, and who wish to: develop their Welsh language skills to foundation level; take the first steps on a recognised path to learn Welsh with the long term aim of teaching Welsh or teaching through the medium of Welsh; and contribute towards bilingualism in their schools in order to create a Welsh language ethos. The course is aimed at those who have a basic knowledge of Welsh and the motivation to commit to 11 weeks of intensive training. The Welsh Government repays the cost of 55 days of supply cover for this course.

2.16 The **entry level** course is the newest, and has been held in locations across Wales since 2011. This course, which lasts five weeks,<sup>10</sup> is for classroom assistants who work in English-medium or bilingual schools. The aim of the course is to provide classroom assistants with the necessary vocabulary and linguistic skills to support teaching colleagues. The Welsh Government repays the cost of 25 days' supply cover for this course.

Table 1: Number of participants on Sabbatical Scheme, January 2011-December 2012

<b>Higher course*</b>			
	Bangor	Cardiff	Carmarthen
Jan 2011	7 (distance learning)	12 (block)	
April 2011	9 (short courses)	8 (short courses)	12 (block)
Sept 2011	4 (block)	12 (block)	
Jan 2012	9 (distance learning)		
April 2012	6 (short courses)	7 (short courses)	12 (block)
Sept 2012	5 (block)	12 (block)	
Total on the higher level course during this period			<b>115</b>

<b>Foundation course</b>							
	Car-marthen	Cardiff	Swan-sea	Gla-morgan	Llysfasi	Gwent	Aber-ystryth
Jan 2011	11						
April 2011							
Sept 2011	12						
Jan 2012		12	11	12	7		12
April 2012						12	
Sept 2012	12						12
Total on the foundation level course during this period						<b>113</b>	

<b>Entry course</b>							
	Car-marthen	Cardiff	Swan-sea	Gla-morgan	Llysfasi	Gwent	Aber-ystryth
Jan 2011							
April 2011							
Sept 2011				10	8		11
Jan 2012	12	13					
April 2012							
Sept 2012			12	12	6	12	
Total on the entry level course during this period						<b>96</b>	

Source: Welsh Government

\* See Table 4 (page 21) for details of participants on the higher course, by sector

<sup>10</sup> The course was changed from being a four-week course to a five-week course in September 2012 following feedback from participants.

## Objective of the evaluation

2.17 The specification for the research programme noted the need for an evaluation *'to consider the impact of the Sabbatical Scheme on practitioners' ability to teach once they have returned to the workplace'*.<sup>11</sup> It was agreed that the work would focus on collecting evidence from participants who attended courses during the period January 2011-December 2012. It was also agreed that the research would consider the experiences of participants in the context of further evidence from the providers of different training courses and education advisers in local authorities. Finally, it was noted that the study should consider *'methods of measuring the impact in the future and the role of local authorities in ensuring that practitioners are supported once they have returned to their workplace'*.<sup>12</sup> These points are discussed in Section 6, *Conclusions and recommendations*.

## Overview of the methodology

2.18 This report presents the Welsh Government (the Client) with evidence of the Sabbatical Scheme's impact on the ability of participants to teach through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. Following the guidelines in the original invitation to tender and initial discussions with the Client, the evaluation methodology was based on a combination of desk research and field work that included the following tasks:

### *Survey of participants*

2.19 An e-mail was sent to 268 of the 324 participants who completed courses between January 2011 and December 2012, inviting them to complete an online survey. Current contact details or e-mail addresses were not available for 56 of the participants. 158 responses were received (59% of those who received the

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<sup>11</sup> Specification for an independent piece of research to evaluate the Welsh-medium Education Strategy, June 2012.

<sup>12</sup> As above.

questionnaire); further statistics relating to the questionnaire are found in Annex 1.

#### *Telephone interviews with participants*

2.20 Telephone interviews were conducted with 21 participants in order to enquire about their experiences in further detail. Further details are found in Annex 3, which outlines a series of case studies based on these interviews.

#### *Gathering opinions from line managers via e-mail / telephone interviews*

2.21 The line managers of the 21 participants interviewed were contacted, and four responses were received providing comments on the impact of the WLSS from the perspective of the school. The views of 12 Bilingual Champions in further education colleges were gathered, to find out about their thoughts on the WLSS and the way it has supported their work in colleges.

#### *Telephone interviews with providers and consortia*

2.22 In order to set participants' comments in a wider context, interviews were held with representatives of six training centres, and with four local authority education officers – one from each consortium. They were asked about planning and recruitment, post-course support and for their recommendations for the future of the WLSS.

#### *Desk research*

2.23 The field work was supported by desk research which consisted of reviewing a sample of application forms, post-course feedback forms, course moderation reports, Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and previous evaluation reports.

2.24 This review presents a combination of hard and soft outcomes. The report often describes soft outcomes, for example an increase in confidence or self-reported improvements in skills. These are supported by the comments of other individuals, including school head teachers and *athrawon bro* in order to try

and convey a more comprehensive picture of the impacts of the WLSS.

### 3 Survey results

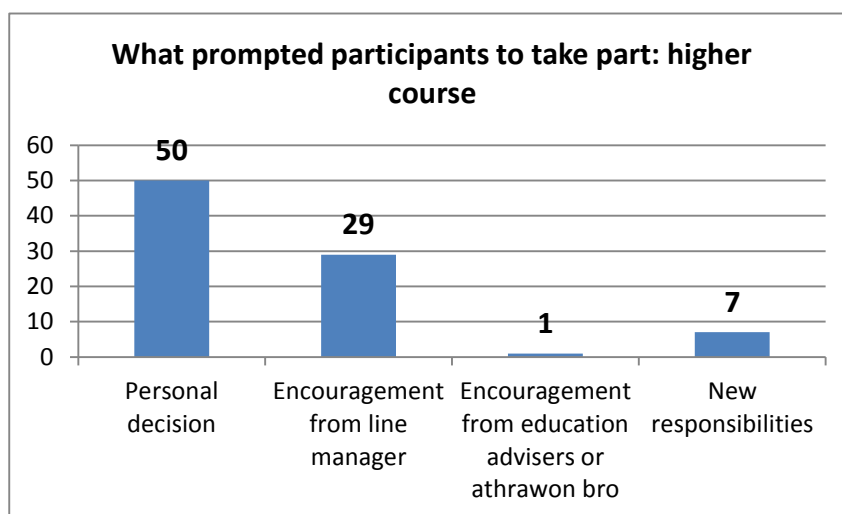
3.1 This section outlines the results of the survey of participants who took part in the Sabbatical Scheme between January 2011 and December 2012. One hundred and fifty eight full responses were received to the online questionnaire. Of these, 68 had attended the higher course, 64 had attended the foundation course and 26 had attended the entry level course (see Annex 1). Where appropriate, the results have been divided according to the level of the course.

#### Reason for taking part in the Scheme

3.2 Participants were asked to note what had motivated them to take part in the Sabbatical Scheme. In responding, they were able to tick more than one option (see the wording to this question in Annex 2, question 5).

3.3 Among participants who attended the higher course, 50 of the 67 who answered this question stated that attending the course had been a personal decision. Twenty nine answered by noting that they had received encouragement from their line manager. Only one of the participants who completed the survey had received encouragement from an education adviser or *athro bro*.

Figure 1: Answers of higher course participants to the question 'What prompted you to take part in the Sabbatical Scheme?'



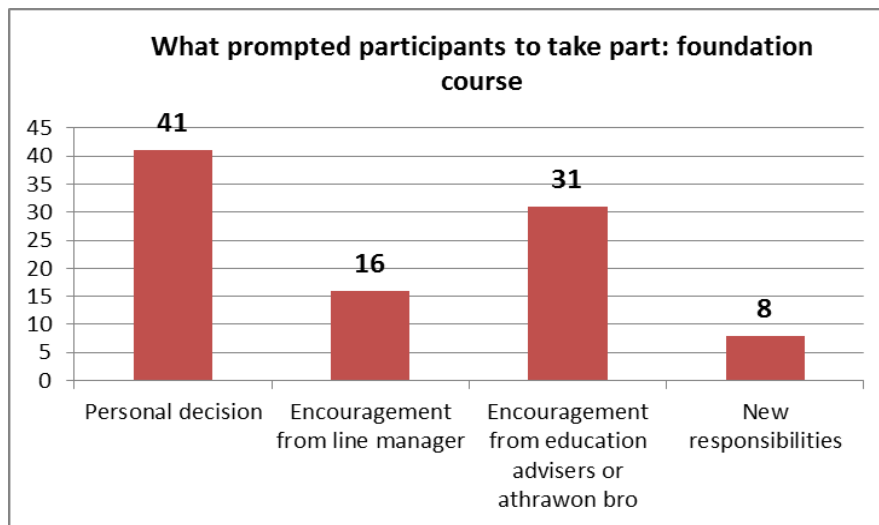
Source: survey of participants

n=67, higher course participants



3.4 Among participants on the foundation course, 41 out of 63 stated that attending the course had been a personal choice. In contrast to feedback from higher course participants, it seems that encouragement from local authority officers or from *athrawon bro* had been an important factor for about half (31 out of 63) of those who replied to the survey, as can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Answers of foundation course participants to the question “What prompted you to take part in the Sabbatical Scheme?”

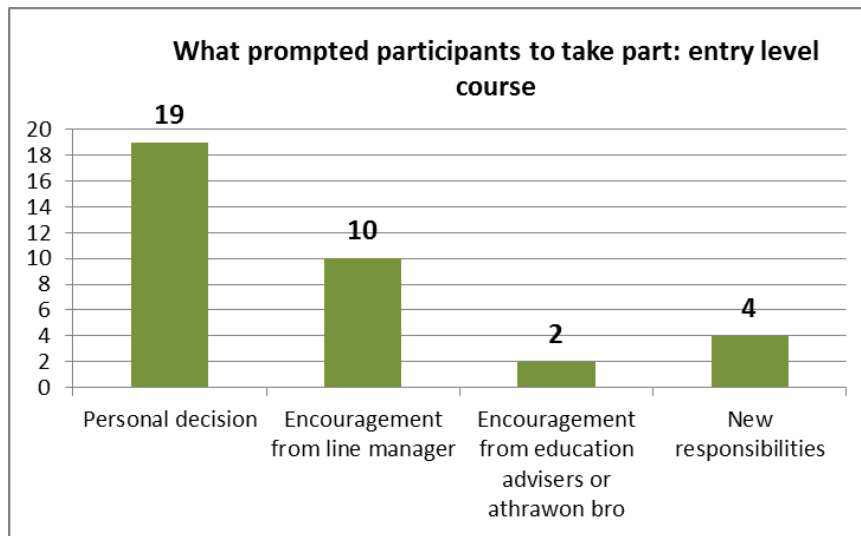


Source: survey of participants

n=63, foundation course participants

3.5 Fewer responses were received from participants who attended the entry level course (25 responses). Again, the majority (19 of the 25) noted that it was a ‘personal decision’, with 10 participants noting that they had been encouraged by their line manager.

Figure 3: Answers of entry level course participants to the question 'What prompted you to take part in the Sabbatical Scheme?'



Source: survey of participants

n=25, entry level participants

3.6 The data therefore shows that participants made a personal commitment by taking part in the course. Despite this, there are variations (across the different courses) in terms of the influence and encouragement of line managers and *athrawon bro*. It is likely that these variations are linked to the recruitment process for different courses e.g. as *athrawon bro* tend to work more with teachers they would be less familiar with classroom assistants who attend the entry level course and would therefore have less contact with them.

3.7 Encouragement from line managers was more evident on the higher course. It is clear from the written comments that a recommendation from someone who had previously attended the course was also an important factor for this group, whether by speaking with colleagues who had been on the course or by reading an article in a local newspaper about someone who had previously attended one of the Sabbatical courses. This is to be expected as the higher level courses have existed for longer than courses at other levels. As one participant explained:

*'Initially I had seen the course advertised in my local paper – a teacher had successfully completed and enjoyed the course. I*

*was then encouraged by my deputy head and a colleague from a neighbouring school who had both recently attended the course.'*

- 3.8 As expected, a combination of factors were responsible in many cases, with respondents often ticking more than one option:

*'We were told of this by our Welsh advisory teacher. My head teacher encouraged me to apply when he received an email about the course.'* (Primary teacher, foundation level)

*'My head teacher mentioned the course and when I looked into it I was excited at the possibilities and the professional development opportunities. I was given support and encouragement from the head and the athrawon bro team.'* (Primary teacher, foundation level)

- 3.9 The aim of improving Welsh language skills was at the heart of personal decisions to take part in the course for a number of participants across the different levels:

*'I enjoyed supporting delivery of Welsh in class and wanted to improve my own knowledge of the language so I could be more helpful in this area.'* (Classroom assistant, entry level)

- 3.10 Participants noted (in their responses to the survey and during interviews) a number of other issues that had prompted them to take part in the training scheme. Four participants referred to a link between the Sabbatical Scheme and their school development plans. In some isolated examples, schools seemed to consider the WLSS as a way of addressing strategic priorities (one respondent noted *'we were targeting the development of Welsh across the school as part of our Estyn Action Plan'*).

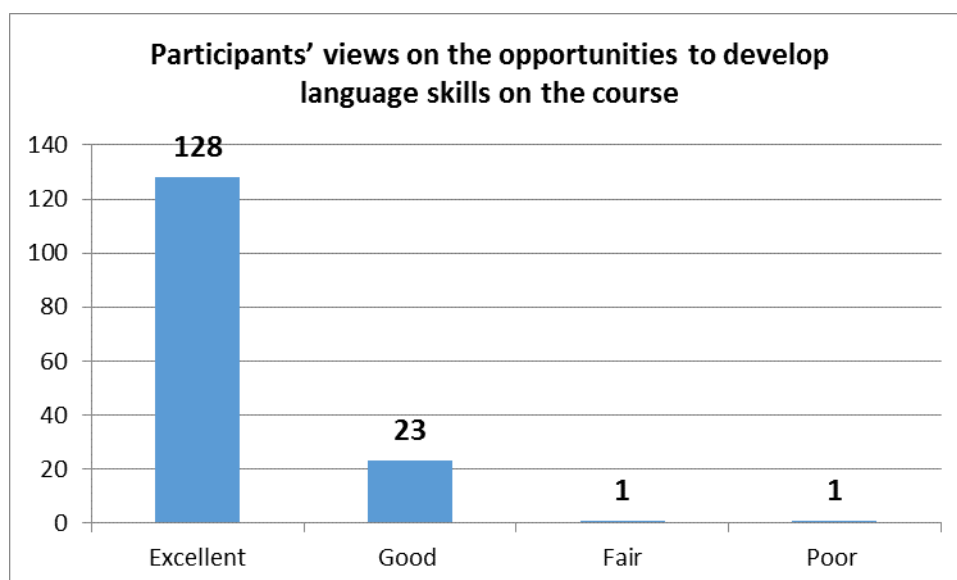
- 3.11 Other teachers suggested that a reduction in the level of support from *athrawon bro* in some counties means that teachers and senior managers are more eager to take advantage of any training to improve Welsh language skills.

## Views on the different elements of the course

3.12 There was a very positive response to the courses and their content from course participants at each level. The survey data reflects the positive responses seen in the sample of post-course feedback forms reviewed.

3.13 Participants were asked to rate different aspects of the WLSS. As the data below shows, the vast majority of participants who completed the questionnaire felt that the WLSS offers ‘excellent’ opportunities to develop language skills.

*Figure 4: Answers to the question: ‘How would you rate the following aspects of the WLSS?’*



Source: survey of participants

n=153, course participants, all levels

3.14 Similar to the pattern above, the majority of participants (92 out of 152) were also of the opinion that the course had offered an ‘excellent’ opportunity to learn specialist terminology and to present Welsh sessions in front of a group.

3.15 Opinions on the training on teaching methodologies, although positive, were more mixed. Although half rated it as ‘excellent’, 24 out of 150 felt that the training was only ‘fair’, with three participants feeling that this part of the course was ‘poor’. There were no significant variations according to course location, but

there was a tendency for higher level respondents to rate this element more positively than foundation level and entry level participants.

*Table 2: Participants' opinions on the training on Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching methodologies, according to course level*

	Higher	Foundation	Entry level	Total
Excellent	44	20	10	74
Good	9	27	13	49
Fair	10	12	2	24
Poor	1	2	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>150</b>

Source: survey of participants

n=150, course participants, all levels

3.16 A similar pattern is seen in responses to a question on opportunities to prepare resources, another central element of the course at all levels. Respondents who had attended the higher level course were very satisfied with the opportunities they had to create resources, with a very high percentage rating this element of the course as 'excellent' or 'good'. The opinions of foundation level participants were less positive, in comparison, with a number of respondents describing the opportunity to develop resources as 'fair' or 'poor' (although the majority noted that they had made use of the resources they had produced on the course – see Section 4.18).

3.17 A complaint expressed by participants was that the resources were unsuitable for their classes, and likely to be too difficult.

*'Very few resources would be suitable for use in my school unfortunately; they would be very useful for a Welsh-Medium primary school though.'* (Participant, foundation level)

*'I do know, though, that they are not appropriate for use in the classroom. The assessments during the course were not a true reflection of the needs of a class of 30 mixed-ability children.'* (Participant, foundation level)

*Table 3: Participants' views on the opportunity to develop resources, according to course level*

	<b>Higher</b>	<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Entry level</b>	<b>Total</b>
Excellent	44	14	8	66
Good	16	25	9	50
Fair	5	16	4	25
Poor	0	5	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>151</b>

Source: survey of participants

n=150, course participants, all levels

## 4 Impact

4.1 The Sabbatical Scheme is described on the Welsh Government's website as a programme which '*offers methodology and Welsh language training to participants who need the confidence and specialist terminology to teach, lecture or train through the medium of Welsh or bilingually, or who teach Welsh as a second language as part of the national curriculum*'. Therefore, it is a scheme with the potential to make a significant contribution to a number of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy's priorities and strategic aims, including:

- To ensure a Welsh-medium education workforce that provides sufficient numbers of practitioners with high-quality Welsh language skills (Strategic Aim 4);
- To improve the way in which provision is planned (Strategic Aims 1 and 2);
- To ensure that all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential (Strategic Aim 3) (even though this review does not cover this element).

4.2 This section of the report summarises the evidence collected from participants in relation to the outcomes and impacts of the Sabbatical Scheme by level, and focuses on:

- Participants' confidence in using Welsh;
- Additional hours of provision (participants on the higher level course who teach in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools);
- Use of incidental Welsh.

4.3 The analysis below considers the data collected from participants by course. It is based on the data collected through the survey and during interviews with participants and line managers.

## Impacts by course level

### Higher level courses

#### *Findings*

4.4 Responses were received from participants who had attended the higher level course from Welsh-medium secondary schools, bilingual secondary schools, further education colleges and work based learning providers. Table 4 below shows the response rate by sector for higher level course participants. The questionnaire was completed by two-thirds of the participants who had received the questionnaire. The table shows that the number of responses varies greatly with 32 responses from the primary sector compared to three responses from the work-based learning sector.

*Table 4: Higher course participants and questionnaire respondents by sector*

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Number of higher course participants</b>	<b>% of participants</b>	<b>Number of higher course respondents</b>	<b>Respondents as a % of all higher course participants (by sector)</b>
Primary	51	50%	32	62.7%
Secondary	20	19.6%	11	55%
Further education	25	27.4%	22	78.6%
Higher education	3	2.9%	0	0%
Work based learning	3	2.9%	3	100%
<b>Higher course total</b>	102	100%*	68	66.7%

Source: Survey of participants

n=102, number of higher course participants for whom e-mail contact information was held.

\* Percentages don't total 100% due to rounding

4.5 The response to the higher course was very positive, with participants reporting that they had observed progress and changes in several ways since completing the course. Following an analysis of the comments made during the survey, they can be grouped into a number of categories:

- Confidence in using oral Welsh;



- Confidence in teaching in Welsh;
- Strengthening / raising the profile of the Welsh language in school / college;
- Use of incidental Welsh;
- Use of Welsh with colleagues;
- Ability to create Welsh / bilingual materials.

### *Impact on provision*

4.6 Participants were asked to note the number of hours of Welsh-medium/bilingual teaching they provided before and after attending the higher level course. This data offers one way of measuring the impact of the scheme in some contexts. However, it is important to note that the medium and context of each institution determine to a considerable extent whether there are any opportunities to increase the number of hours of Welsh language provision. The very idea of 'hours' of provision differs between secondary schools compared with primary schools, where often there are no specific blocks of provision. Therefore, quantifying the exact number of hours in the primary sector can be more challenging. With that in mind, below is an outline of the data by sector and by medium.

- For those teachers who had attended the higher level course and who teach in **Welsh-medium schools (primary or secondary)** there is no expectation that the Sabbatical Scheme should lead to an increase in the number of hours of provision: these teachers already deliver through the medium of Welsh. However, responses to the questionnaire confirm that the scheme has improved language skills and strengthened teaching methods.

*'I have the confidence to write reports and prepare presentations without having to ask anyone else to check my work.'* (Teacher, secondary school, higher course)

*'Since completing the course, I'm much more confident when writing in Welsh. I now create far more resources to support the*

*teaching – for me personally and for other people in the department’ (Teacher, secondary school, higher course)*

- 18 out of 30 teachers who attended the higher level course and teach in **English-medium secondary schools** reported that there has been an increase in the number of hours of Welsh provision in their schools since they completed the course. In addition to increasing the provision of Welsh as a second language, the evidence suggests that attending the course has led to a wider use of Welsh across a range of subjects in a number of schools, varying from science lessons to physical education.
- All four of the teachers teaching in **bilingual schools** who attended the higher level course reported that there has been an increase in the number of hours of Welsh language provision. One teacher noted that his provision in Welsh had increased from two hours every week to four, as he explains:  
  
*‘I now teach one afternoon a week in the Welsh stream, leading physical education and information technology lessons through the medium of Welsh.’ (Teacher, secondary school, higher course).*
- Responses to the questionnaire were received from 22 participants from the further education sector who had attended the higher level course. Of these, six reported no increase in the number of hours of Welsh-medium or bilingual teaching. Fourteen of the participants reported that the number of hours of Welsh language or bilingual teaching they provided had increased, significantly so in some cases. Once again, it should be emphasised that a variety of factors can influence the opportunities available for participants to present modules or new units in Welsh. Despite this, the table below summarising the data presented by further education participants suggests that the Sabbatical Scheme can have a clear influence on the use of Welsh in colleges.

Table 5: Summary of the data from further education survey respondents who indicated an increase in the number of hours of Welsh / bilingual provision

Participant	Number of hours of Welsh / bilingual provision	
	Before attending course	After attending course
1	2	8
2	1	2
3	0	1
4	3	6
5	10	14
6	0	1
7	0	1
8	16	21
9	5	8
10	0	6
11	2	8
12	0	7
13	6	10
14	4	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: survey of participants

4.7 Of course, there are specific stories and situations behind all of these figures. The data collected through the survey does not enable us to fully understand the context in each case, even though the case studies in Annex 3 describe the experiences of some participants in the further education sector. Some of the respondents explain:

*'I have started to teach "Iaith ar Waith" lessons in the college.'*  
(Participant, further education, higher course)

*'New units have been introduced. I also try to include some Welsh in each lesson.'* (Participant, further education, higher course)

4.8 One observation to emerge from the analysis is that caution is needed when interpreting data on hours of provision. We cannot be certain how participants have interpreted 'hours of provision'. The data presented by participants, however, is clearly an indication that the Sabbatical Scheme does influence the use of Welsh in different contexts and sectors.

4.9 It is also significant that those participants who noted that they have not seen any increase in the hours of provision have

emphasised a wide range of positive outcomes, as noted in Section 4.5.

### *Developing resources*

4.10 Forty four out of 65 participants from the higher level course reported that they consider the opportunity to develop resources to be an 'excellent' aspect of the WLSS. It was a 'good' aspect according to 16 participants and 'fair' according to five.

*'There was plenty of time to develop support resources back in the classroom. I have developed a useful collection of resources following the course.'* (Teacher, secondary school, higher course)

4.11 Participants reported that they had developed a wide variety of resources across a range of subjects and key stages during or after the course.

*'I was preparing teaching resources regularly when doing the course and the tutor would check the language too. It was also an opportunity for us as teachers to share ideas and resources whilst in the University on the course.'* (Teacher, secondary school, higher course)

*'I was responsible for piloting an NVQ Welsh second language course and there were no resources previously. During the course I was able to develop a variety of resources e.g. reading exercises, writing frames, vocabulary booklets which helped support me in the delivery of the pilot course.'* (Teacher, secondary school, higher course)

4.12 The comments suggest that participants feel that enough time was allocated to develop resources on the higher course. No evidence was presented by participants (who took part in the block course, the short course or distance learning) to suggest that there had been a shortage of time to develop resources, something that was raised by a minority of the participants who studied the foundation course (see 4.20).

## **Foundation level courses**

### *Findings*

4.13 Responses were received from 64 Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 practitioners who had attended the foundation level

courses. These participants teach in English-medium schools. In schools where English is the main medium of communication, the Welsh language skills of pupils in the Foundation Phase are developed by implementing the Welsh Language Development Area of Learning.<sup>13</sup> The programme of study for Welsh as a second language in Key Stage 2 is provided in 'Welsh in the National Curriculum for Wales'.<sup>14</sup>

4.14 Similar to a number of the findings in relation to the higher level course, it was noted that the foundation course has succeeded in improving confidence, developing skills and has led to the further use of incidental Welsh and Welsh in informal situations in schools. Participants' comments referred to the following outcomes and progress:

- Greater use of incidental Welsh;
- Improvement in standards and accuracy of language;
- Use of Welsh across the curriculum;
- Increasing emphasis on starting conversations with pupils in Welsh;
- Increasing profile of Welsh / bilingualism in schools;
- The course has motivated others in the school to take part in Welsh language courses.

The comment below by one participant is characteristic of the response from teachers who took part in the foundation course:

*'There has been a huge increase in confidence in using spoken Welsh with children. I am also able to support colleagues and lead lessons and assemblies bilingually. Use of incidental Welsh without thinking.'* (Teacher, primary school, foundation course)

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<sup>13</sup> <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/welshdev/?skip=1&lang=en>

<sup>14</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/arevisedcurriculumforwales/nationalcurriculum/welshnc/?skip=1&lang=en>

4.15 Some comments suggested that the Sabbatical Scheme has also raised awareness amongst participants of the need to improve the quality of Welsh as a second language.

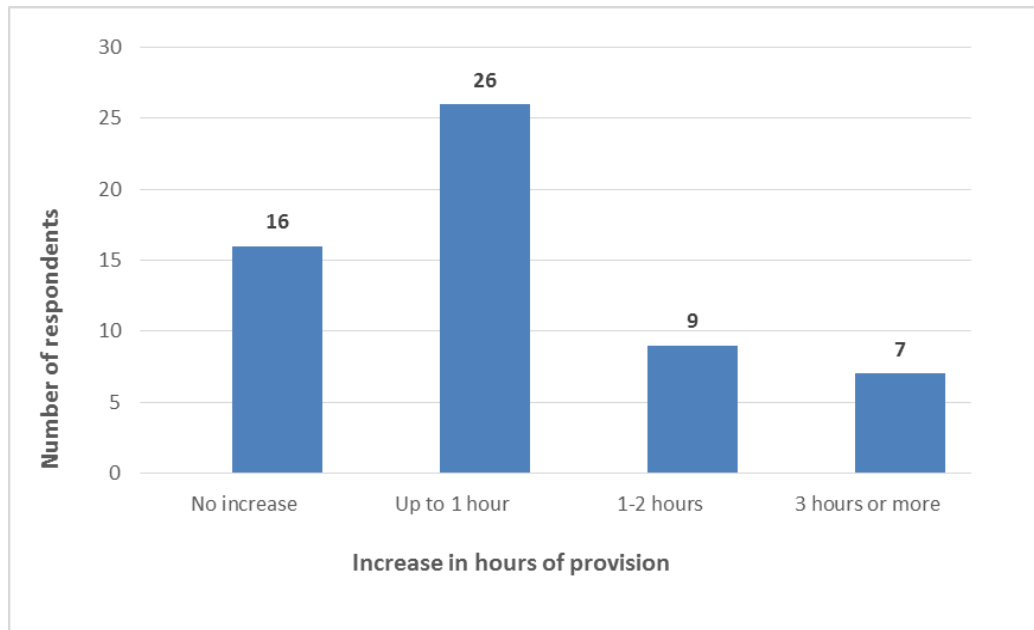
*'I have now been given joint responsibility for Second Language Welsh in school alongside another member of staff who has previously attended the course and we are currently looking into the changes we can make to improve on the levels throughout school.'* (Teacher, primary school, foundation course)

#### *Impact on provision*

4.16 Data was collected on hours of provision (pre- and post-course) in the same way as described in the previous section in relation to higher course participants. As expected, a more consistent picture emerged from the responses received from teachers who attended the foundation course, as they were all teachers in English-medium primary schools.

4.17 Of the 64 respondents who had attended the foundation course, 58 presented data on the hours of Welsh language provision provided before and after the course. Of these, 42 noted an increase in the number of hours taught through the medium of Welsh. Among the 16 responses that did not report an increase, comments often referred to other developments that had raised the profile or increased use of the language beyond structured Welsh lessons. The figure below demonstrates the increase seen in the schools after participants had completed the course. Based on the data provided by the 58 foundation course participants, this is equivalent to one additional hour each of Welsh provision after the course.

Figure 5: Increase in the number of hours of Welsh lessons among foundation course participants



Source: survey of participants

n=58, foundation course participants.

### Developing resources

4.18 Those who responded to the questionnaire appreciated the opportunity to develop resources during the course. The majority of respondents who attended the foundation course noted that they had made use of the resources produced. Respondents noted that they had also shared resources with other staff in the school.

*‘During the course I prepared lessons and supporting resources to teach using a bilingual approach. I have utilised some of the lesson plans and resources with my own class and shared others which would be better suited for use in other year groups.’*  
(Teacher, primary school, foundation course)

4.19 In addition to supporting the provision of Welsh as a second language, the course has led to the creation of resources for use across a range of subjects. Some participants also appreciate the fact that they have gained language skills that will enable them to develop additional Welsh and bilingual resources in the future.

*‘I produced teaching resources for science, maths and Welsh lessons suitable for classes in Key Stage 2. I also have the resources produced by the other members of the group. I have used Powerpoints and activities in my own classes and have*

*attempted to teach bilingual lessons. The resources however are of secondary importance as the primary aim of the course was to develop and acquire Welsh language skills. I would have been happy to prepare resources in my own time and am now able to prepare resources in Welsh as a result of the skills acquired on the course.'* (Teacher, primary school, foundation course)

4.20 A small minority of the respondents (four out of the 54 who provided written comments) expressed negative views in relation to developing resources, including a lack of time during the course to prepare resources.

*'Very little time to prepare resources on the course. Very few were relevant to the pupils I teach. The language was also difficult.'* (Teacher, primary school, foundation course)

## **Entry level courses**

### *Findings*

4.21 Twenty six classroom assistants who had taken part in the entry level course responded to the questionnaire. The evidence suggests that three principal outcomes were seen by participants on these courses. These are consistent to a great extent with the points reported by higher and foundation level participants.

- Greater use of incidental Welsh;
- Confidence when using the language;
- Improvement in language standards and accuracy.

4.22 Classroom assistants noted that their use of day-to-day Welsh had increased significantly. This includes the use of Welsh with pupils and colleagues. It also showed that the course had increased confidence among participants:

*'I'm able to use some form of Welsh during every lesson. I have greatly increased confidence and able to deliver Welsh language lessons to the age group I teach and to use a basic level of Welsh with Welsh speakers.'*  
(Classroom assistant)



## *Impact on provision*

4.23 Following from the above points, entry level participants were asked to note whether there had been an increase in the number of hours of Welsh-medium teaching in their schools since completing the course. This question was optional, but all 26 respondents in this category answered the question.

- Fifteen of the 26 noted that there had been an increase in the number of Welsh-medium teaching in the school;
- Eleven noted that no extra teaching hours were being provided. Of these, eight reported that incidental Welsh had increased.

4.24 Any data of this kind needs to be treated with caution, as it is possible that assistants have interpreted the question in different ways. The role of assistants varies, but tends to encompass a variety of tasks relating to supporting pupils and teachers rather than 'teaching'. However, there is evidence of some increase in provision (based on the qualitative comments) with a number of assistants explaining that they provide short Welsh lessons (e.g. a 10 minute session every day) since attending the course.

4.25 According to participants, the course has improved their language skills and accuracy. A number of respondents reported that their vocabulary had increased and that they had a better understanding of grammar since returning to the school.

*'I have gained a lot more knowledge of the Welsh language and use it throughout my working day from greetings, commands and whenever I can incorporate it into our focused activities.'*

*'[I have a] much improved use and understanding of grammar.'*  
(Classroom assistants)

It is also recognised that there are benefits to pupils as assistants improve the quality of their Welsh. A number of those on the entry level course noted that pupils benefit by hearing Welsh being used more correctly.

4.26 Evidence also suggests that the Sabbatical Scheme raised the profile and presence of Welsh / bilingualism across schools. One

assistant noted that the course had led to new Welsh events and a partnership with the Urdd.

*'I have started a Welsh Club up in the school; I have also built a relationship with Urdd this has meant that all of year 5 are going to go to Llangrannog this year. I am also taking out groups in Key stage 2 and working on their oral skills.'* (Classroom assistant)

### *Developing resources*

4.27 Eight of the 26 entry course participants who completed the questionnaire noted that they consider the opportunity to develop resources to be an 'excellent' aspect of the WLSS. It was a 'good' aspect according to nine and 'fair' according to another four. Five respondents reported that the opportunities to develop resources had been 'poor'. There were very few negative comments in relation to this aspect of the course and one participant noted:

*'I feel there should have been more direct reference to the curriculum, and direct links to the development of a specific scheme of work.'* (Teacher, primary school, entry course)

### **Views on continuous support: higher, foundation and entry courses**

4.28 Participants were asked '*does your institution continue to support your on-going development of Welsh language / bilingual teaching?*' The data in Table 6 (below) reveals some variations in the responses according to the level of the course. Across the WLSS, the majority of participants feel that support is available to some degree from their institutions. Among the participants who attended the higher course, over half (34 of the 65 who answered this question) reported that their institutions continue to offer strong support. Less than half of those who attended the foundation and entry level courses feel that 'strong' continuous support is available to them from their institutions. It is important to consider this data in the context of the discussion on support after attending the course, in Chapter 5 of this report.

Table 6: Overview of responses to the question ‘Does your institution continue to support your on-going development of Welsh language / bilingual teaching?’

	Higher	Foundation	Entry	Total
Yes strongly	34	20	10	64
Yes, to an extent	28	36	11	75
No	3	1	4	8
Don't know	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>148</b>

Source: survey of participants

n=148, course participants, all levels

## General comments on impacts

4.29 The evidence presented by participants suggests that the Sabbatical Scheme makes a difference to the individuals attending the course and makes a positive impression in terms of their desire to use the language. In fact, the clearest messages to emerge from the survey data is that the courses boost confidence and increase the use of the Welsh language.

*‘A more accurate use of Welsh, hopefully! I have the confidence to write reports and prepare presentations without feeling that someone else needs to check my work.’ (Participant, Secondary School, higher course)*

*‘I believe that the scheme is highly beneficial as the teachers who have followed the scheme have benefitted hugely from the experience and their written use of the language in particular has improved. Without a doubt they are much more confident when using the language.’ (Secondary school head teacher, participant had attended the higher course)*

4.30 In many cases, increased confidence among participants stems from the feeling that they use more correct Welsh, with several noting that they now feel more confident with both written and spoken Welsh, particularly those who attended the higher course. As one explained, *‘I tend to use the same amount, but I feel more confident in terms of its accuracy’*.

4.31 Others also noted that taking part in the WLSS had increased their confidence, which had in turn helped to raise the status of

the language generally in the school. Examples were noted where the training had led to persuading others to improve their Welsh language skills; extending the use of the language in internal communication, and leading more Welsh-medium extra-curricular activities:

*'I encouraged my NTA [non-teaching assistant] to develop her own skills by attending professional development training with the [...] Advisory Service and with an evening class. My class recently performed items confidently bilingually to parents during our St David's Day concert and a parent commented that the children's delivery was 'like being in a Welsh school class'. (Primary school teacher, foundation level)*

*'Welsh has featured heavily in our new school development plan. The profile of Welsh is very strong and visible from the entrance of the school. More staff and children use every day Welsh – the standards have risen.'* (Primary school teacher, foundation level)

4.32 Evidence from participants who teach in English-medium primary schools in particular reveals more widespread use of incidental Welsh. This, in turn, makes a difference to the profile of the language, and to an awareness of bilingualism amongst staff and pupils, according to comments made by participants. Comments made by line managers support the positive feedback from participants.

*'We endeavour to create a Welsh ethos, however, in order to develop this deeper, we feel that our member of staff has gained enormous confidence in her delivery from the sabbatical and is very excited at the new ideas etc. that she has developed. This enthusiasm is something we can all gain from. We aim to utilise this experience by in house training for support staff after half term and to increase the profile of Welsh across the school in all areas of the curriculum'. (Primary school head teacher, participant had attended foundation course).*

4.33 It seems that the Sabbatical Scheme has supported schools in their attempts to promote the use of incidental Welsh by including the language in a range of situations within the school, including in assembly, during registration and in the way staff greet pupils. A large number of participants referred to this increase in incidental use of the language, including those who had not reported an increase in the hours of Welsh taught. The comment

from one teacher who attended the foundation course noting that she was '*making wider use of bilingual guidance and incidental Welsh*' was characteristic of the observations made.

4.34 This evidence suggests that participants consider this as an important outcome of the course, and an increase in the use of incidental Welsh was noted in the qualitative comments of about half of those who responded to the questionnaire.

### **Case Study #1 (foundation)**

'I' teaches in an English-medium primary school where a number of the staff speak Welsh. She shares her time between teaching year 4 and teaching children with special educational needs.

Since the course, she is more confident in using the language in everyday situations and she understands a great deal more. She uses the language in the classroom now, not only in Welsh lessons, but in teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh. For example, she taught a mathematics lesson on calendars in Welsh, and in Geography lessons, she discusses the names of places and countries in Welsh. There is now more Welsh on the school walls and 'I' has changed from using bilingual commands in the playground to using Welsh only commands. She thinks that her use of Welsh has more than doubled, and says that the 'pupils' attainment level has certainly increased'.

In the past, Welsh has not been seen in a very positive light in the school, so there has been a big step change. These days, Welsh is a lot more fun for the children. The attitude of both children and staff towards the Welsh language has made the learning experience happier and more positive. She has had support from the *athrawes fro* and a course tutor came to the school when she asked for help. The head teacher is very supportive and another teacher is about to start on the course. It was a very positive experience and she would like to attend a further course.

4.35 Others – a small minority of all respondents – noted that the course had motivated them to attend other Welsh language courses (including Welsh for Adults classes) as they felt that there was still a need to improve their language skills before they can be fully confident when teaching in Welsh.

4.36 Participants' head teachers and line managers noted that they believed that the WLSS had contributed toward raising the standard of Welsh language skills amongst pupils as well as staff. It was reported that a combination of confidence when using the language and a keener awareness of effective Welsh teaching methods has led to an improvement in the quality of the provision

of Welsh second language in particular. As one head teacher noted:

*'Releasing staff to attend the sabbatical has had a profound impact on raised standards in W2L [Welsh second language] throughout the school. Teachers have come back from the course enthused and inspired to use as much Welsh as possible within their classrooms and around the school..... I have been able to plan for W2L to be an integral part of each teacher's timetable. A dedicated time each day is given for Welsh development and this again has proved to be successful. Levels of children achieving Level 4+ at the end of KS2 has risen significantly from 23% to 61%. (Primary school head teacher, member of staff had attended the foundation course)*

4.37 Although there is isolated evidence that suggests that the WLSS has resulted in higher standards, there isn't a strong basis of information that allows us to understand the impacts or general contribution of the WLSS to pupils' results or progress in Welsh. The evidence we have is 'soft' and often anecdotal. Whilst the evidence is fairly valuable, it suggests that there are gaps in the monitoring arrangements if we are to understand what difference the WLSS makes to the development of Welsh language provision and the Strategy's wider vision. Indeed, there are significant challenges associated with seeking to understand the Sabbatical Scheme's contribution to the National Strategy in the light of the numerous other factors that influence participants' ability to use their Welsh language skills in their schools and colleges.

4.38 Generally, there is a positive but, arguably, an incomplete picture of the Sabbatical Scheme's impact on participants, their use of Welsh and the profile of the language in their schools.

## 5 Effectiveness of delivery of the WLSS

5.1 As part of this review, the research team wished to understand the level of support for the WLSS from strategic partners, notably local authorities and the regional consortia, and how this links to the role of course providers. This section outlines the findings on the effectiveness of the implementation process, based on the comments of line managers in schools and colleges, course providers in the six training centres and four Welsh-medium education coordinators, one from each consortium.

### **The strategic planning context: Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Welsh in Education Grant**

5.2 Local authorities are asked to note in their Strategic Plans how they will realise the aims of the (national) Welsh-medium Education Strategy on a local level, whilst the Welsh in Education Grant (WEG) provides financial support for the four consortia in order to conduct activities that contribute to the operation of the Strategic Plans across the region. These activities include the support and training provided by *athrawon bro*. Ensuring a close link between the Strategic Plans and the work financed through the Grant, in addition to effective collaboration between local authorities and the regional consortia, is therefore essential to the Sabbatical Scheme's success.

### **Level of demand and awareness of the WLSS**

5.3 Course providers and consortia officers reported that there was a demand for the courses at all levels, but that it was strongest at foundation and entry levels. In order to maintain interest in the WLSS, a number of the *athrawon bro* and participants felt that further work was needed to persuade head teachers of the benefits and impacts of the course. The *athrawon bro* teams noted that arranging supply teachers is a problem in some schools.

- 5.4 Participants and staff from the various counties suggested that there was a demand for a short course or workshop for head teachers to raise awareness of the WLSS.
- 5.5 Some *athrawon bro* believed that the strong demand for places on entry level courses was connected to the fact that it is easier for head teachers to release a teaching assistant compared to a teacher. In the opinion of several *athrawon bro* who were interviewed, the shorter (entry level) course appealed more to a number of head teachers and participants. Despite this, it was noted that engaging with teaching assistants can be quite difficult in some cases as this group has less experience of attending continuous professional development courses and they can appear to lack confidence at times. Course providers and local authority officers reported that awareness of the WLSS is low amongst head teachers and senior managers. A few providers noted that it can be challenging to make contact with head teachers: it was emphasised that various methods should be used when advertising or marketing the Sabbatical Scheme, including publicity at national level and targeting schools at county level, in order to ensure that messages are communicated clearly and to the appropriate individuals.

### **Administrative processes**

- 5.6 Comments by senior managers and head teachers suggest that they welcome the fact that the WLSS is not too complex or onerous in terms of administrative arrangements. It was noted that the paperwork is relatively simple and repayments for supply staff and other costs are paid promptly.

### **Recruitment**

- 5.7 In general, the process of recruiting participants to the WLSS has been successful. However, a higher level course due to be held in Bangor was cancelled at the beginning of 2013, and in some areas, recruiting enough participants to attend higher level courses has been challenging. Interest remains very high for the



entry level and foundation courses: one coordinator noted ‘we could fill entry and foundation courses easily’.

5.8 There are three main elements to the recruitment process:

- central information on the Welsh Government’s website and newsletters;
- marketing materials published by the providers (websites with case studies and video clips; leaflets); and
- contact between the consortia’s Welsh language advisers and the schools.

5.9 It became clear through interviews with participants, providers and consortium officers that the recruitment process, particularly the role of the local authority in supporting recruitment, varies according to area. Although the situation in each individual authority was not examined in detail, interviews with a sample of authorities provide some evidence to suggest that strategic planning on a county level to target schools and participants is limited. This view was supported by providers.

5.10 Each local authority has provided a commitment on paper to support the WLSS and play a part in identifying and monitoring schools and participants in their annual Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. Despite this, the objectives seen in the Strategic Plans are often indefinite, with references to ‘*continuing to target schools*’ or ‘*continuing to mentor*’ without setting any targets for the number of participants or the number of hours of support for the WLSS; as a result there is, in general, a lack of coherence between the Strategic Plans, activities supported through the WEG and local authorities’ role in relation to the Sabbatical Scheme.

5.11 It appears that the recruitment process works effectively when relevant local authority officers have strong contacts with, and a good knowledge of their schools’ priorities and can, as a result, make detailed plans with an understanding of the schools’

reasons and motivation for sending a participant on the course. However, it was noted that authorities are free to set criteria for recruiting participants onto the courses: this is welcomed, on the whole, but it is felt that further guidance regarding who would benefit most from the course would be useful.

- 5.12 One of the providers supported this point by explaining that they also ask themselves a key question when dealing with requests:

*‘Should we prioritise those practitioners from schools where there is a commitment, or prioritise schools where there hasn’t been any interest in the scheme so far?’ (Sabbatical Scheme Training Centre Representative)*

- 5.13 Some *athrawon bro* noted that that they would appreciate further guidance regarding recruitment methods and opportunities to learn about effective methods from other consortia / local authorities.

- 5.14 Course providers noted that there were differences between the local authorities they dealt with and that some *athrawon bro* played a prominent role in the recruitment process whilst other local authorities did not put forward any names. It was clear from the interviews that a few authorities operate at arm’s length and that their contributions are limited to sending marketing materials to schools. It should be noted that the period under review in this study (January 2011-December 2012) had been a time of significant change in many areas. Moving to work as consortia has added to the workload and responsibilities of a number of officers and this has led to delays when determining functions.

- 5.15 The task of ensuring that the courses are fully subscribed has meant many hours of administrative work for local authorities and providers, including phoning around schools as and when needed. It was noted that communicating with schools was generally difficult as there was so much competition for their attention and time. Awareness and understanding of the WLSS is low in some schools even though they receive constant

information from many sources, according to local authority officers.

- 5.16 It was reported that the link between local authorities and providers was inconsistent. Not every local authority has an officer responsible for the WLSS who can contact providers. On the other hand, there are examples where there have been good links between authorities and course providers for some time, and there have been attempts to build on these links. In some areas, *athrawon bro* attend some elements of the course or even form part of the team providing the course. These examples of close collaboration between *athrawon bro* and providers could present ideas that could be built upon in future as a way of developing relationships with participants.
- 5.17 *Athrawon bro* noted that recruitment had been more inconsistent on the higher level courses, particularly in local authorities in north Wales. Some feel that head teachers are reluctant to release teachers who teach GCSEs and A-Levels and that they are concerned about the effect a period away from the school could have on pupils' attainment and progress.
- 5.18 There has been an increase in the number of participants from the further education sector who attend courses, mainly due to the introduction of the short courses in April 2011. Some short courses during the evaluation period were filled solely with further education participants. Providers report that there are clear advantages to being able to contact Bilingual Champions in order to identify suitable individuals. It was also noted that some further education institutions had expressed concerns about releasing staff members to attend the course as it can be difficult to find suitable supply staff.
- 5.19 Several interviewees reported that they would like to see national recruitment and marketing campaigns to raise awareness, to explain the aims and objectives of the Sabbatical Scheme and improve head teachers' perceptions about the courses.

## **The courses**

5.20 The opinion of local authority staff was consistent with the comments of participants and, without exception, they reported that they believe that the courses offer effective and suitable training. It was noted that there had been a few changes in recent years (for example, adding a week to the length of the entry course and offering a short course option on the higher level), that had further strengthened the provision.

5.21 The concerns raised were minor ones, and the only negative feedback that was consistent between the providers and a few of the participants related to the heavy assessment burden. Four teachers who had attended the foundation course noted that they felt there had been too much emphasis on assessment during their time on the course. (This point was not raised by participants who had attended the entry level or higher courses.) According to some, the content of the courses is so heavy that there is not enough time to reinforce and evaluate what was learned.

## **Post-course support**

5.22 Post-course support takes a number of different forms:

- a) Post-course support from the local authority / regional consortia;
- b) Support from WLSS providers;
- c) Support from the school / college.

Further information on the different kinds of post-course support is available below.

### ***Post-course support from the local authority/regional consortia***

5.23 Following most courses, the local authority or regional consortium is responsible for offering post-course support (in the case of block higher courses, 3 days of post-course support is delivered by the WLSS providers). They decide on the nature and detail of

the support, which varies from one area to another. The support includes:

- Specific visits from *athrawon bro*, tracking schools and monitoring performance of participants during visits;
- Monitoring during visits and assessments of *athrawon bro* in the schools;
- Additional materials and resources available on the website or *athrawon bro* portal;
- Some local authorities pay for a follow-up one-day course (and supply) from the providers;
- Informal post-course support – facilitating sessions / meetings to bring participants together after the course to chat in Welsh and share experiences.

5.24 The Welsh Government has published a progression pack providing guidelines on the stages of post-course support. Some local authority representatives explained that they did not have the capacity to implement these guidelines. Others referred to the fact that the workload of *athrawon bro* makes it hard to assign time to recruit and provide post-course support.

*'We had a post-course pack, and agreed with everything in it, but because of the merger [as a consortium], we haven't had the time to implement it'. (Athrawes fro)*

5.25 All of the local authority staff questioned recognised that post-course support was the Sabbatical Scheme's weakest element, and even in those areas where the post-course support was relatively intensive (e.g. regular visits to participants, identifying further courses, tracking results) there remained a feeling that they were not taking full advantage of all the possible post-course support methods that would be suitable. One *athrawes fro*, for example, said she would like to see a sum of money available to trial informal methods of offering post-course support such as social programmes/activities or a system to partner Welsh-

medium schools and non-Welsh-medium schools. It was also recognised that the post-course support offered to participants on the entry level course was limited: the *athrawon bro* do not tend to know or work with them, and it is difficult to track them as assistants move from one class to another.

### ***Support from WLSS providers***

5.26 Some providers and local authorities have trialled short progression courses or social evenings for participants. Although participants are initially motivated, there is a tendency for only a small number to take advantage of the offer once teachers re-engage with their responsibilities in school. A number of the interviewees would like to see case studies or scenarios of post-course support methods in other areas so that they can learn from those models.

### ***Support from the school / college***

5.27 Participants' opinions were sought on the support they received within their institution (school or college) and from others. The majority responded by stating that they had received support within their institution for their continuous development in relation to Welsh or bilingual teaching (43% strongly and 50% to an extent from among the 154 respondents). A small minority (5% or eight participants) noted that they had not received any support in their institution. One of these was from a further education college and the rest from primary schools, and from across all levels of the course.

5.28 Participants were also asked if they had faced any barriers when using their Welsh language skills after completing the course. Just under a quarter (34 of the 117 that answered) reported that they had. There were no clear patterns in the different sectors, and the foundation level participants were slightly more likely to have faced barriers. A lack of confidence in their skills was the main barrier for half the group (17 out of 34), but a lack of opportunities within their establishments (14 respondents) and a

lack of time to prepare sessions (15 respondents) were also noted as problems. The majority of those who had faced barriers noted that they needed more training (32 out of the 34 who responded).

- 5.29 The group of higher level course participants who were questioned were keen to continue to develop their language skills. Some suggested holding weekly lessons as a group to *'keep things fresh'*. Another suggestion was to arrange whole-term secondments to Welsh-medium schools (or workplaces) for those participants who were in English-medium schools *'in order to have the necessary 'immersion' experience'*. It was felt that further opportunities needed to be made available for those in non-Welsh-speaking workplaces to practise and use the language.
- 5.30 A number of participants expressed an interest in additional language training. Some wanted to see further language courses following the Sabbatical course, and referred to the need for a 'continuum' of courses to ensure progress.
- 5.31 Some providers suggested that a website or digital portal to share good practice, keep in contact or ask questions to other practitioners would be beneficial to some participants. Others questioned how much time the participants have to continue to improve their Welsh language skills once they have returned to school.
- 5.32 The evidence suggests that further clarity and consistency is needed in terms of post-course support. The process of returning to the school or college is seen as a separate or follow-up element of the WLSS in the eyes of many of the individuals who contributed to this report. Perhaps there is, rather, a need to consider the post-course period as a further element of the same process and that appropriate support for participants should be agreed and planned from the outset.

## 6 Conclusions and recommendations

- 6.1 In general, the review has found a positive view of the Sabbatical Scheme among participants and stakeholders: the vast majority of participants speak highly of the courses and report positively on the progress made in relation to their language skills and their use of Welsh after returning to their school or college. Participants attribute the success of the WLSS to the quality, depth and intensity of the courses provided. With regard to the implementation of the WLSS, once again the general opinion was positive, although some suggestions were made about ways in which the courses could be changed or improved.
- 6.2 The main message from all those who contributed to the review (participants, local authorities and senior managers) was that the WLSS is a valuable scheme and that there is a continuing need for such courses. It appears that this stems from a perception among senior managers, participants and local authority officers that a lack of Welsh language skills continues to be an issue requiring attention if schools and colleges are to be able to increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision.
- 6.3 The review has found that participants and line managers have seen direct and indirect outcomes as a result of the WLSS, despite the fact that some only attended the course very recently. The review has also found evidence of changes in practice, such as greater use of incidental Welsh; increased confidence in using written and spoken Welsh; and a more systematic approach to maximising opportunities to use Welsh in school.
- 6.4 It is important to differentiate between the hard and soft outcomes presented. Those described in this report are often soft, and to some extent, subjective outcomes – for example, increased confidence and self-reported improvements in skills. These observations were supported by comments made by some *athrawon bro*, who noted that they had witnessed improved Welsh language skills during their visits to schools. However, it



should be emphasised that there has been no analysis of pupils' and schools' results before and after practitioners' participation on the courses, as there was no intention to compare pre- and post-course attainment as a measure of the impact of the WLSS.

### *Success factors and difficulties*

6.5 The evidence collected suggests that the WLSS has met the needs of participants and their schools. The review considers that the following factors have played a key role in the success and effectiveness of the WLSS:

- It is based on a clear principle – that intensive training and support should be offered to participants to enable them to improve their Welsh language skills (in order to teach through the medium of Welsh or to teach Welsh as a second language), gain confidence in using the language and support teaching methodologies. This, in turn, has generated interest among a wide range of participants and schools in different parts of Wales and in different educational settings.
- All stakeholders, whether participants, line managers or local authority staff, considered that the training is of a high standard.
- The WLSS has been designed in a way that makes it as easy as possible for organisations to participate, with straightforward administrative procedures, and the costs of supply teachers and any other associated costs are reimbursed.
- The courses tend to attract participants who are interested in improving their Welsh, and from institutions where there is a commitment among the senior management team.

6.6 Although all respondents (participants, line managers, local authorities/consortia) very much welcomed the support, a minority of stakeholders expressed concerns about some aspects of the planning process. Some of those concerns are outlined below.

- The experiences of *athrawon bro* and local authority and regional consortia officers reveal that there is still some lack of awareness of the WLSS, partly because there is so much competition for the attention of school head teachers; ensuring that messages get through to them can be difficult.
- There was evidence of a lack of planning at local authority / consortium level in some areas, and some authorities expressed concern that they did not have the capacity to plan recruitment and post-course support sufficiently.
- Stakeholders agreed that the post-course support was the weakest element of the WLSS. Although the recent Welsh Government guidelines were helpful, there remained a lack of clarity about post-course follow-up and monitoring work.
- Participants wish to see more training, and many reported that they would like to attend a further course. In some cases participants had anticipated that the process of learning the language/improving their language skills would be a continuum, beginning with the Sabbatical course and extending to further opportunities after the course: in reality the WLSS does not form part of any such continuous pathway. Perhaps these expectations or aspirations reveal a misunderstanding about the aims of the WLSS among a small minority of participants. The Sabbatical Scheme aims to improve Welsh skills in order to increase and support the quality of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision. Although there is evidence that attending the Sabbatical Course has motivated some practitioners to attend Welsh for Adults classes, the WLSS is not a language course that should be compared with these courses.

#### *Methods of measuring impact*

- 6.7 There is room to improve mechanisms for monitoring and measuring the impact of the WLSS. In past evaluations of the Sabbatical Scheme there has been a tendency to depend heavily

on participants' feedback and reflections on their experiences, their satisfaction levels and their use of the Welsh language after the course. These are the methods adopted in this review also, and they undoubtedly offer valuable evidence on a number of levels. The emphasis on qualitative evidence enables us to identify a number of the successes of the WLSS (from the perspective of individual participants and also their schools or colleges) as well as the obstacles faced. However, a number of important considerations present themselves:

- In which context should the Scheme's impact be measured in the future? Should the impact continue to be considered at the level of individual participants / organisations?
- Should there be a more direct emphasis on the impact of the Sabbatical Scheme in the context of local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans?
- Is there a way of measuring the contribution of the WLSS, within the context of School Improvement Plans, towards raising levels of attainment among learners?

6.8 There are processes in place to measure the outcomes of the WLSS at participant / organisation level. It is possible to refer back to pre-course application forms and reports to understand the changes observed following the course in comparison with the original objectives identified. Nevertheless, this method provides a series of individual examples of the scheme's successes / challenges, rather than a model that allows us to consider and discuss the impacts of the WLSS in a wider strategic context. It is believed that further work is needed in order to fully develop this framework.

6.9 Welsh Government guidelines ask local authorities to provide details about their *'plan to support a strategic and systematic take-up of the Welsh Government's Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme courses (all levels) by teachers within your local*

*authority*. 'Strategic' and 'systematic' are clearly the key words in this regard.

- 6.10 Local authorities are therefore required to consider how the Sabbatical Scheme supports their strategic priorities for developing Welsh-medium education. Authorities should determine criteria and a rationale for selecting practitioners in specific institutions. It is not clear at present to what extent most authorities target schools or participants in a way that is strategic and consistent with the objectives of their local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. Authorities should be encouraged to consider (and record) what they would wish the Sabbatical Scheme to achieve (for the individual participant and also for the institution), in order to contribute to the aim of improving standards and increasing the use of the Welsh language. If local authorities – as well as further education colleges and work-based learning providers – are not already considering these questions when working with course providers, they need to do so, and the process of monitoring the Strategic Plans should ensure that this happens, insofar as that is possible.
- 6.11 Consideration must also be given to whether a more systematic method can be established to determine whether the WLSS has delivered what it was designed to achieve, and identify indicators of success at a local level (e.g. Welsh-medium provision in new subjects / the number of hours of Welsh as a second language / the number of schools that have taken part in the WLSS).
- 6.12 There is a need to strengthen the Sabbatical Scheme's planning and recruitment processes, and to insist that regional consortia and local authorities clarify how course participants' involvement in the Scheme is expected to contribute towards local strategic priorities.

- 6.13 ***Purposeful and strategic targeting: the Welsh Government should encourage local authorities to identify performance indicators for the WLSS, which support the priorities of their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.*** One important aspect that came to light during the review were the varying levels of strategic targeting by local authorities. The Welsh Government should ensure that local authorities use the Sabbatical Scheme 'strategically and systematically' as a means of supporting and realising the priorities included in their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. This includes establishing a framework to monitor and measure impact, which emphasises the role of the authority in offering strategic leadership in planning and targeting participation as well as the influence of the WLSS on learners' levels of attainment.
- 6.14 ***There is a need to improve the level of communication between local authorities / regional consortia and with course providers.*** There were examples of good practice in terms of close collaboration across consortia and between local authorities and providers. However, this appeared inconsistent, and some authorities reported that contact with providers was infrequent and that they lacked information about practice in other areas. It was suggested that case studies focusing on recruitment and post-course support should be shared, as well as the contact details of all WLSS stakeholders. The intention of ensuring that regional consortia work with providers in future to identify participants for the Sabbatical Courses and provide post-course support is an important opportunity to strengthen the WLSS.
- 6.15 ***Further steps should be taken to raise awareness among head teachers of the opportunities and advantages offered by the Sabbatical Scheme.*** Until now, there has been a demand for the courses but it was acknowledged that a number of those who would be eligible are not aware of the WLSS. There were many factors accounting for this, but mainly it was felt that capturing the

attention of head teachers was a significant obstacle. There was a feeling that communication channels should be strengthened through the creation and promotion of marketing materials using a number of different media (e-mail, paper, newsletters etc.). One suggestion was that a short course for head teachers on the subject of bilingualism in schools could be considered. It is possible that such a course could, in due course, generate further demand for places on courses from a wider variety of schools. However, it should also be ensured that any such developments are consistent with attempts to ensure that participants are targeted in a purposeful way which supports local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.

#### 6.16 ***Strengthening and focussing the post-course support.***

Concern and / or confusion about post-course support was a common theme throughout the field work. It was reported that post-course support was often dependent upon the commitment of individual *athrawon bro* but that a lack of money and capacity in several areas hindered the ability to offer a full post-course support package. Each local authority should therefore ensure that participants receive appropriate and effective support as a priority.

### **The significance of the conclusions in the context of the evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy**

6.17 The sections below consider the wider significance of the evidence on the impact of the Sabbatical Scheme in the context of the evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. It addresses the questions identified in Section 2.3 of this report, which links this review to the Evaluation Framework of the wider research programme.

Has the project contributed to the aim of developing Welsh language skills among participants?

- 6.18 As noted in Chapter 4 of this report, the Sabbatical Scheme's objectives clearly contribute to the strategic aims of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. Specifically, there is a direct link between the WLSS and Strategic Aim 4 which notes that ensuring '*a Welsh-medium education workforce that provides sufficient numbers of practitioners for all phases of education and training... is fundamental to the success of this Strategy*'. The aim of the WLSS is to develop Welsh language skills and increase the confidence of participants so that they can teach through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.
- 6.19 The WLSS has been tailored in order to offer opportunities to participants in every sector. By adapting the WLSS and making it relevant to practitioners from the Foundation Phase to further education, there is a recognition of the need to respond to the requirements of the workforce across the different stages of education and training. Other elements of the evaluation will offer an opportunity to look into any barriers that schools, colleges and local authorities face in recruiting practitioners with the necessary Welsh language skills at different phases of statutory and post-compulsory education.
- 6.20 As noted in Section 6.6 above, there was a feeling among a number of Sabbatical Scheme participants that they would wish to receive more training or further language courses. There is a need to consider whether there is evidence of a demand for continuous language training among the Welsh-medium education workforce more widely (as well as the extent to which the Sabbatical Scheme can meet any further needs) or whether there are calls for different models of training to support Welsh language skills. These issues will be examined in greater detail within other elements of the research programme.

In what way has the WLSS improved / supported the process of planning provision?

6.21 The evidence shows that the WLSS has enabled schools and colleges to improve the process of planning Welsh-medium provision, identifying opportunities to introduce new provision or to extend the use of incidental Welsh. However, the review concludes that there is scope to strengthen the link between the Sabbatical Scheme, the Welsh in Education Grant and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. Whilst a number of local authorities have measured practitioners' Welsh language skills over the years, each region was asked to conduct a consistent audit of the current workforce's Welsh language skills as part of the Welsh in Education Grant in the summer of 2013.<sup>15</sup> It is expected that this information will be used to identify those practitioners eligible to attend WLSS courses, and to provide a means of designing other training on a local and regional level. Other elements of the research programme will consider how local authorities plan workforce development and continuous professional development activity to support their Strategic Plans.

Does the WLSS link with/complement other programmes that are associated with the Strategy?

6.22 There was evidence of links between the Sabbatical Scheme and the work of Bilingual Champions in the further education sector. Bilingual Champions have encouraged individual tutors to attend the Sabbatical Courses, in some cases reflecting colleges' plans to develop provision in priority subject areas.

6.23 There were also examples of teams of *athrawon bro* collaborating with the Sabbatical Scheme providers in order to support the process of recruiting practitioners to the courses. *Athrawon bro* have also attended some elements of the courses. This

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<sup>15</sup> Welsh Government (2012). Welsh in Education Grant 2013-14 - Guidance <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130110welshedgranten.pdf>



demonstrates that some local authorities and regional consortia are keen to use the WLSS to complement local Strategic Plans and proposals to raise standards through the Welsh in Education Grant. The research programme to evaluate the Welsh-medium Education Strategy will consider to what extent local authorities and regional consortia identify opportunities to use programmes that are associated with the Strategy to support the priorities noted in their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and their applications for the Welsh in Education Grant.

*Would the developments seen in schools and colleges as a result of the Sabbatical Scheme have happened in the absence of the WLSS?*

- 6.24 The Sabbatical Scheme offers valuable opportunities for participants to develop skills, increase their confidence and receive specialist advice on Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching methodologies. The evidence shows that the WLSS has made a difference to participants in a range of ways, including more extensive use of incidental Welsh and Welsh across the curriculum. It was reported that the profile of the Welsh language had also increased in schools and colleges.
- 6.25 This raises questions about the difficulties associated with attributing changes or developments entirely to one factor or intervention – in this instance the Sabbatical Scheme. It could be concluded that the WLSS has had a positive effect on Welsh language skills and the use of Welsh. However, it is important to note that a combination of circumstances and factors also influence attitudes towards the Welsh language and institutions' Welsh language ethos. The existence of the national Welsh-medium Education Strategy, local Strategic Plans and curricular developments (e.g. The Foundation Phase, Welsh Baccalaureate) are some examples of factors that can influence Welsh-medium provision, standards and developments relating to the workforce.

6.26 In undertaking the research programme to evaluate the Welsh-medium Education Strategy, the complexity of factors involved and the interrelationship between them need to be recognised (e.g. new frameworks introduced to the curriculum, wider education policy developments, level of demand for Welsh-medium education locally, internal school policies and management, local linguistic context). To what extent do these different factors support or influence each other? Is there evidence that a combination of factors contribute to realising the aims and objectives of the Strategy? How does this vary according to the local context? These questions introduce broader themes to which we shall return as we examine other elements of the research programme.

## Annex 1: Statistics relating to the participant survey

### Note on the sample

A total of 324 participants attended the WLSS courses on all levels during the period in question (January 2011-December 2012). It was originally intended to invite every participant to complete an online questionnaire. However, there were no current e-mail addresses for 56 of the participants on the list sent by Welsh Government. On the 19th and 20th of February 2013, an e-mail was sent to 268 participants. We were unable to reach 43 of the 268 through their e-mail addresses, so the e-mail was re-sent to the schools' general email addresses or via the schools' website in 41 cases. This means that two participants were therefore lost from the sample.

Up to 266 participants could have received the e-mail, inviting them to take part. By the 4th March, 70 participants had answered, so a reminder was sent to the rest. 162 participants began answering the questionnaire however four of them did not go beyond the first page (background information). 158 answered the entire questionnaire or almost every question. The response rate is therefore 59.4% (or 158/266).

### Level of the course

Table 1a: Participants on the Sabbatical courses between January 2011 – December 2012 and respondents to the survey

Level	Number of participants	Percentage of participants	Percentage of respondents	Number
<b>Higher level</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>35.5%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>68</b>
<i>Higher level - block course</i>	69	21.2%	28.5%	45
<i>Higher level - distance learning</i>	16	5.0%	3.8%	6
<i>Higher level - short course</i>	30	9.3%	10.8%	17
<b>Foundation level</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>40.5%</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Entry level</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>29.6%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>26</b>
	n=324			n=158

Sources: Welsh Government data and survey of participants

Comparing this to the numbers that attended courses in the period between January 2011 and December 2012, it's apparent that the entry level participants are under-represented in the answers, although it should be noted that the gaps in contact details were most prevalent amongst this group.

### Sector

The majority of the participants who took part in the survey were from the primary sector, as can be seen from the data in the table below. Only participants from the primary sector attended the foundation and entry level courses. A cross-section of participants from different sectors attended the

higher course, and the respondents are noted according to sector in Table 4 of this report.

*Table 2a: Number of respondents according to sector (all courses)*

In which type of organisation do you work? (Survey respondents)		
Sector	percentage	number
Primary school	77.2%	122
Secondary school	7.6%	12
College	13.3%	21
Work-based learning	1.9%	3
		<b>n=158</b>

Source: survey of participants

### Location of the course

Responses were received from respondents from every location, with the distribution of responses broadly corresponding to the numbers that attended courses in those locations.

*Table 3a: Number of respondents to the questionnaire according to the location of the course*

Location of the course		
Answer options	percentage	number
Bangor	10.1%	16
Cardiff	22.8%	36
Carmarthen	17.7%	28
Coleg Powys	3.2%	5
Aberystwyth	8.9%	14
Coleg Gwent	2.5%	4
Glamorgan	10.1%	16
Llysfasi College	7.6%	12
Swansea	7.6%	12
Deeside College	9.5%	15
		<b>n=158</b>

Source: Welsh Government data and survey of participants

## Annex 2: Questionnaire

### EICH BARN AR Y CYNLLUN SABOTHOL

Mae gwerthusiad ar y gweill o'r Cynllun Sabothol Iaith Gymraeg - cynllun y buoch chi yn rhan ohono yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf. Fel rhan o'r gwerthusiad rydym yn awyddus i glywed eich barn a byddwn yn ddiolchgar pe allech gwblhau'r holiadur hwn, a ddylai gymryd ryw 5 munud.

Mae'r arolwg yn cael ei gynnal ar ran Llywodraeth Cymru gan gwmni ymchwil Arad. Os hoffech fanylion pellach yna cysylltwch â [REDACTED] ar [REDACTED] neu [REDACTED]. A fydddech cystal â dychwelyd eich atebion erbyn dydd Gwener y 15fed o Fawrth? Bydd yr holl ymatebion yn cael eu trin yn gwbl gyfrinachol a ni fyddwn yn eu rhannu gydag unrhyw drydydd parti. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

### YOUR VIEWS ON THE SABBATICAL SCHEME

An evaluation is underway of the Welsh-language Sabbatical scheme, a programme you took part in during recent years. As part of this evaluation we are keen to hear your views and would be grateful if you could take the time to complete this questionnaire, which should take no more than 5 minutes.

The review is being carried out on behalf of the Welsh Government by Arad Research. If you require further information please contact [REDACTED] at Arad on [REDACTED]. Please note that the closing date for submission of responses is Friday 15th of March. Your response will be treated in the strictest confidence and no details will be forwarded to third parties. Thank you very much.

#### 1. Eich enw / Your name

#### 2. \*Ym mha fath o sefydliad ydych chi'n gweithio? In which type of school or institution do you work?

Ysgol gynradd / Primary school

Ysgol uwchradd / Secondary school

Coleg / College

Dysgu seiliedig ar waith / Work based learning

Arall (nodwch isod) / Other (please specify)

#### 3. Lleoliad eich cwrs / Location of your course

Bangor

Caerdydd / Cardiff

Caerfyrddin / Carmarthen

Coleg Powys / Powys College

Aberystwyth

Coleg Gwent / Gwent College

Morgannwg / Glamorgan

Coleg Llysfasi / Llysfasi College

Abertawe / Swansea

**4. Beth oedd lefel y cwrs? / At what level was the course?**

Lefel uwch - cwrs bloc / Higher level - block course

Lefel uwch - dysgu o bell / Higher level - distance learning

Lefel uwch - cwrs byr / Higher level - short course

Lefel sylfaen / Foundation Level

Lefel mynediad / Entry Level

**5. Beth wnaeth eich cymell i gymryd rhan yn y Cynllun Sabothol? (ticiwch bob un sy'n berthnasol) What prompted you to take part in the Sabbatical Scheme? (tick all that apply)**

Penderfyniad personol (wedi gweld hysbyseb ayb) / Personal decision (having seen a notice etc)

Anogaeth gan reolwr llinell / Encouragement from line manager

Anogaeth gan ymgynghorwyr addysg neu athrawon bro'r sir /

Encouragement from county education advisers or athrawon bro

Cyfrifoldebau newydd / New responsibilities

Nodwch sylwadau i gefnogi eich ateb / Please provide comments to support your answer

**6. Pa baech wedi cael dewis, pa strwythur cwrs fyddai wedi bod orau gennych? Given the choice, which type of course would you have preferred?**

Cwrs bloc – drwy'r dydd bob dydd am gyfnod / Block course - daily course over a period of time

Diwrnod neu ddau yr wythnos dros gyfnod penodol / A day or two a week over a period of time

Cwrs ar-lein, gyda thiwtor yn ymweld yn achlysurol / On-line course with occasional visits from a tutor

Cwrs cyfunol, gyda rhai elfennau preswyl a gwaith ar-lein o bell / Combined course with some residential elements alongside on-line learning

Dosbarth wythnosol wedi ei gynnal yn yr ysgol neu'n lleol e.e. ar ôl oriau ysgol

Cyfes o weithdai ac aseiniadau ar themâu penodol / A series of workshops and assessments on particular themes

**7. Sawl awr o addysgu cyfrwng Cymraeg/dwyieithog oeddech chi yn eu darparu CYN MYNYCHU'R cwrs Sabothol? How many hours of Welsh/bilingual teaching did you deliver BEFORE ATTENDING the Sabbatical course?**

Oriau cyfartalog bob wythnos (neu nodwch unrhyw fanylion pellach) / Average hours per week (or note any further details):

**8. Sawl awr o addysgu cyfrwng Cymraeg/dwyieithog ydych chi'n eu darparu, ERS CWBLHAU'R cwrs Sabothol? How many hours of Welsh/bilingual teaching do you deliver now, SINCE COMPLETING the course?**

Oriau cyfartalog bob wythnos (neu nodwch unrhyw fanylion pellach) / Average hours per week (or note any further details):

**9. Nodwch yn y blwch isod unrhyw gynnydd neu newidiadau eraill ers cwblhau'r cwrs, er enghraifft gwneud mwy o ddefnydd o Gymraeg achlysurol neu ddefnyddio Cymraeg mwy cywir. Please use the box below to record any further progress or changes since completing the course, for example an increased use of occasional Welsh or more correct use of Welsh.**

**10.\*Sut byddech yn graddio'r agweddau hyn o'r Cynllun? How would you rate the following aspects of the Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme?**

Gwych/Excellent    Da/Good    Gweddol/Fair    Gwael/Poor  
Amherthnasol/NA

Y cyfle i ddatblygu sgiliau iaith / The opportunity to improve Welsh-language skills

Y cyfle i ddysgu terminoleg arbenigol / The opportunity to acquire specialist terminology

Hyfforddiant ar fethodolegau addysgu cyfrwng Cymraeg a dwyieithog / Training on using Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching methodologies

Cefnogaeth ar ôl y cwrs (e.e mentora, cefnogaeth gan athrawon bro neu gan yr ysgol) / Post-course support (e.g mentoring, support from the school or from athrawon bro)

Y cyfle i gyflwyno sesiynau cyfrwng Cymraeg neu ddwyieithog o flaen y grŵp / The opportunity to deliver Welsh or bilingual sessions in front of a group

Y cyfle i baratoi adnoddau / The opportunity to prepare resources

Nodwch sylwadau i gefnogi eich ateb / Please provide comments to support your answer

**11.Amlinellwch pa adnoddau a gynhyrchwyd gennych ar y cwrs a nodwch sut y mae'r rhain yn cael eu defnyddio (os yn berthnasol). Outline the teaching resources you produced whilst on the course and note how these are utilised or note if not relevant).**

**12.Ydy eich sefydliad yn parhau i gefnogi eich datblygiad parhaus addysgu iaith Gymraeg / dwyieithog? Does your institution continue to support your on-going development of Welsh language / bilingual teaching?**

Ydy yn gryf / Yes, strongly

Ydy i raddau / Yes, to an extent

Nac ydy / No

Ddim yn gwybod / Don't know

Nodwch sylwadau i gefnogi eich ateb / Please provide comments to support your answer

**13.A ydych chi wedi wynebu unrhyw rwystrau wrth ddefnyddio eich sgiliau Cymraeg ers cwblhau'r cwrs? Have you encountered any barriers to utilising your Welsh language skills since completing the course?**

Yes / No

**14.Ydy'r canlynol wedi eich rhwystro chi rhag defnyddio eich sgiliau ers cwblhau'r cwrs? (Ticiwch bob un sy'n briodol) Have any of the following**

**been a barrier to utilizing your new skills since completing the course? (Please tick all that apply).**

Diffyg hyder yn fy sgiliau Cymraeg / Lack of confidence in my Welsh language skills

Diffyg cyfleoedd o fewn fy sefydliad / Lack of opportunities within my workplace

Diffyg amser i baratoi sesiynau / Lack of time to prepare sessions

Diffyg cefnogaeth / Lack of support

Arall (nodwch fanylion os gwelwch yn dda) / Other (please specify)

**15. Oes angen mwy o hyfforddiant neu gefnogaeth arnoch? Do you need further training or support?**

Oes / Yes

Nac oes / No

Os ateboch 'oes', nodwch pa fath neu lefel / If 'yes' please note what type or level

**16. Diolch i chi am gwblhau'r holiadur hwn. Fel rhan o'r adolygiad efallai byddwn yn cysylltu â chi gydag ychydig yn rhagor o gwestiynau - a ydych yn fodlon i ni gysylltu â chi?**

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire. We may wish contact you with a few further questions - would you be willing for us to get in touch?**

Ydw / Yes

Nac ydw / No

**17. Os ateboch 'ydw' - sut ddylwn gysylltu â chi? If 'yes', how should we contact you?**

Rhif ffôn neu ebost / Email or 'phone number

Cliciwch 'Anfon' i orffen ac i gyflwyno'ch atebion / Click 'Submit' to finish and submit your responses.



## Annex 3: Case studies

The evidence collected during interviews with participants is considered in the body of this report. A short note of the individuals' experiences is presented here.

### Participant 'A', Secondary School Teacher, attended the block higher course

- **20 hours** of Welsh/bilingual teaching before the course; **25 hours** after the course.

'A' is a Biology Teacher who now teaches science entirely through the medium of Welsh – from year 7 to A Level. He has been teaching for 20 years. There are around 550 children in the school. The language of the school is English but by now, a third of children in year 7 are in the Welsh stream and are educated through the medium of Welsh. This compares with a quarter of the current pupils in year 11. As regards the staff, up to half of them have at least an understanding of Welsh.

Attending the course was a personal decision. He had some previous experience of teaching through the medium of Welsh, but he was keen to improve his Welsh and his confidence in his written skills. He was educated in English in the 80s and although a fluent Welsh speaker, he felt that he needed more information about the structure and grammar of the Welsh language. He had spoken to somebody who had previously attended the course, but there were also posters advertising the opportunity in the school as well as a high number of e-mails coming from the county via the management team.

He thought the course was 'excellent in every aspect' with regard to course content and the tutors. He is now far more aware of where people trip up linguistically. His language skills have improved and he is far more confident, especially in his written skills. He sees great advantages to bilingualism, and can see the effect on individuals. It is too early to tell whether the course has had an influence on pupils' attainment.

The tutors offered to visit him in the school but he has not got back in touch with the college. He has had a fair amount of support from the school's management team as they are aware of the importance of bilingualism in the school. More Welsh provision is needed in the school in order to meet the demand.

He sees that there is a lack of Welsh resources. He sees a lot of resources on YouTube in English but unfortunately, not in Welsh.

He is considering following a Welsh degree course in the future as he has earned a number of credits by following the higher course. He feels very positive after attending the course.

### Participant 'B', Secondary School Teacher, attended the short higher course

- **0 hours** of Welsh-medium/bilingual teaching pre-course; **0 hours** post-course.

'B' is Head of English in a Welsh school since 2003 and has been teaching in the school since 1995.

'B' had studied some Welsh in school and learnt Welsh as an adult. Her motivation to attend the course was a desire to develop her career and her head teacher suggested that she

attended the course so that she could better cope with duties that involved the school's senior team. She was not confident in her written Welsh skills before attending the course.

She really enjoyed the course, and it was a lot better than she had anticipated. She felt that the language used on the course was of an advanced level, whereas the Welsh skills of the participants varied significantly. Despite this, she felt that she had managed to follow the content of the course and that her understanding and her grammar had improved significantly. The homework was structured specifically for each student, and sometimes the tasks were directly related to the work they were currently doing in school, so it was both useful and practical.

She would have liked to have had more time, a longer course and some follow-up after completing the course. She teaches English in English, but since attending the Sabbatical course, she interacts with children in Welsh in the registration class, when teaching the Welsh BAC and on a PISA course. She also manages the department's staff and co-ordinates pupils' activities. She has taken on additional management duties since completing the course.

With regard to her skills, she is far more confident in speaking and writing Welsh since attending the course. She is now giving presentations to school staff.

She is able to keep in touch with tutors via e-mail but has not done so as she receives a great deal of support from the Welsh department – who are happy to offer advice and correct and edit her written work when necessary. She also uses special software to help her with her work.

She gets frustrated with mutations at times and tends to forget the rules – she would like to do a refresher course every now and then. She would like to emphasise that she is very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend the course. It has made a big difference to her. She is not worried in meetings now as she understands everything that's going on and can contribute confidently.

### **Participant 'C', Secondary School Teacher in an English-medium school, attended the higher block course**

- **4 hours** of Welsh-medium/bilingual teaching pre-course; now uses English and Welsh in all lessons.

'C' is Head of Modern Languages in an English-medium school, where about half the staff are Welsh-speakers. She learnt Welsh on an WLPAN course.

She was responsible for bilingualism in her previous role and she piloted a second language Welsh NVQ course in her previous school.

'C' saw the advert in the staff room, and for her, the appeal lay in the focus on professional language and school language, including how to speak to parents and staff.

She thought that the course was very good. A 3-month block course was far better than learning Welsh once a week. The tutors were good. There were four people on the course, each with different needs – 'C's needs focussed on grammar and the others wanted to improve their spoken Welsh. The tutors gave them different written work depending on their needs and interests. She thinks that the course should be compulsory for all, including head teachers and senior staff who come from outside Wales.

Since completing the course, she teaches two girls who speak Welsh in her GCSE German class and 'C' does a fair amount of work with them through the medium of Welsh. She enjoys the challenge involved in teaching the children. She encourages children in the classroom to do things bilingually, e.g. her year 7 French, and the children react very positively. She also promotes the Welsh language in her German and French classes.

She can now follow all staff conversations in Welsh, both informal and professional. She feels more of a part of the school's community. As a linguist, she enjoys grammar and having followed the course, has a greater understanding of the rules of the Welsh language. The course has helped her written skills.

She has been offered the opportunity to contact the University via e-mail but has yet to do so. The head teacher is supportive and the Welsh-speaking members of staff are pleased to be able to speak Welsh with her, but she would like to receive more training.

### **Participant 'Ch', Secondary School Teacher, attended the short higher course**

- **21 hours** pre-course; **21 hours** post-course.

'Ch' is a physical education teacher in a Welsh-medium school and her motivation to attend the course was a lack of confidence in her Welsh. Despite being educated through the medium of Welsh, she was not confident in speaking or writing Welsh. She spent a number of years teaching in an English-medium school prior to this role. She felt that she needed to learn the rules of the Welsh language. Other teachers had completed the course in the past, and there was a waiting list in the school for those teachers who wanted to go on the course.

She described the course as 'a fantastic course with excellent tutors who explained things well'. It was easy to approach them with questions and 'Ch' felt comfortable in their company. She enjoyed and learnt a lot.

She is now far more confident in marking the children's work – not only the content, but the language as well. She doesn't worry about speaking to other teachers, and finds herself not only correcting the children's language, but also her own, as she speaks. She now points things out to other teachers as well – and describes this as the course's 'ricochet' effect. She is convinced that it has had an impact on the children's Welsh language skills.

Having completed the course, she understands that she is able to contact the tutors but has not done so. The school now runs a language improvement course, which she is following. She also asks the Welsh department to look over her written work if she wants to send something out, but has had feedback to say that her work does not need much editing anymore. Having said that, she feels she will need to follow another course in order to reinforce what she has learnt.

On a personal level, she has two children and believes that they have also benefitted from her attending the course.

### **Participant 'D', Primary School Teacher, attended the foundation course**

- **1 hour** pre-course; **4 hours and three quarters** post-course.

'D' is a part-time year 1 teacher, and has been in her current role since 1989.

Nobody in the school speaks Welsh but all staff have attended the County's Welsh course. Most understand a certain amount of Welsh. Her head teacher told her about the course.

The head teacher suggested that she attend: *'my head teacher mentioned the course and when I looked into it I was excited at the possibilities and the professional development opportunities. I was given support and encouragement from the Head and the Athrawon Bro team'*.

She said that the course was excellent, but involved a lot of hard work. The tutors were all very supportive. The course taught Welsh to the participants but it didn't teach them to teach Welsh in the school. The best thing about the course was being able to take an entire term away from school to concentrate fully on the course.

'D' said that the course had affected her and that she now wanted to speak Welsh to everybody, but as everybody in the school is of a similar ability level, it is difficult to do. However, she would like to do more.

She is teaching a great deal more through the medium of Welsh than she did prior to the course and now understands mutations and much more about Welsh grammar in general. She feels that her contribution to the school has increased. In her questionnaire response, she explained, 'I use far more incidental Welsh in school. I use a far wider range of sentence patterns. I attend an evening class at Intermediate level and I join in with Welsh conversation activities on a regular basis'. She would like to think that it has had an effect on the pupils' attainment level, but it is very difficult to measure.

She has not had any support from her *athrawes fro*. When she asked, the *athrawes fro* replied that she had not been informed that she should offer support to those who had attended the course. She now attends a weekly evening class, which she finds difficult after working all day in school, but it is helping to increase her confidence. She says that short follow-up courses would be advantageous, especially if there was an opportunity to get further support or attend regular events with the same group of people that were on the course with her.

### Participant 'Dd', Deputy Head teacher in a Primary School, attended the foundation course

➤ **1.5 hours** pre-course; **2 hours** post-course (for a term before retirement)

'Dd' is a newly-retired deputy head teacher, who spent 22 years in an English-medium primary school with around 100 children. His head teacher and one other teacher in the school could speak a fair amount of Welsh.

His motivation to attend the course was his interest in the language and the encouragement of the *athrawes fro*. He has already been on specific courses on how to teach some subjects through the medium of Welsh, and had studied the O Level Welsh course years earlier.

He 'enjoyed the course immensely', but believed that the varying ability levels of those on the course was an obstacle, especially at the beginning. Some were pure beginners whereas others had a fair amount of understanding of the language, and one of the attendees had even passed their Welsh A Level. No difference was made between people of differing ability levels, even though the tutors were very supportive of everybody from the start.

He has gained a lot of confidence since completing the course, and has applied for part-time posts where they say that some knowledge of the Welsh language would be desirable – he would not have done so prior to the course. Since the course, he has been offered assistant teaching posts in Welsh-medium schools through an agency, but as yet has not accepted them as he would like to complete an intermediate Welsh course in the local college first.

On his return to the school, there was an increase in the number of hours he taught through the medium of Welsh. He contributed to the bilingualism of the school by changing all the school's English signs to bilingual ones; he introduced Welsh words in staff meetings; he helped members of staff with their Welsh grammar and he led all the morning assemblies in Welsh after completing the course. He does not believe that his presence on the course has had an effect on the pupils' attainment levels, but he does believe that the pupils' attitude towards the Welsh language has changed. However, he was only back in the school for a term before he retired. He hopes that other teachers in the school will have the opportunity to attend the course.

The post-course support was good. An *athrawes fro* came to the school every fortnight and offered a lot of help. She was also one of the course tutors. The head teacher was very supportive.

The course was very intensive and challenging and asked a lot of those who attended. Homework was set every day. Much of the work was group work, and this led to the filming of

two lessons by each attendee. This all helped with his language skills and confidence, but in reality, he was tired by the end!

### **Participant 'E', Primary School Head teacher, attended the foundation course**

- **1 hour** pre-course; **0-1 hour** post-course (now a non-teaching head teacher)

'E' is a head teacher in a primary school with 122 children. The school is in a very English-speaking area and none of the staff speaks Welsh. Two of the teachers have attended the Sabbatical course and 3 are attending evening classes. A language advisor also conducts weekly sessions with the teachers after school.

He had heard about other people going on the course and his incentive was a desire to improve his Welsh language skills. Although he does not speak much Welsh, both his parents are Welsh-speakers.

The course was very good, but not easy, and he is certain that it has improved his Welsh. He would have liked to have had more time on the course. The tutors were very good, but he noted that some of the students did not get on with all the tutors.

There have been changes in his use of Welsh, especially his incidental Welsh, e.g. morning assembly. He is far more aware of the language now. He believes that the children have benefitted and explained that he can now identify level 5 and can contribute to helping the children achieve this level. In the questionnaire, he explained that 'there is far more incidental Welsh and supportive influence on my school staff – I've been able to encourage one member of my staff to do the Sabbatical and a further 4 members of staff to enrol on Welsh courses (evenings / after-school)'.

With regard to post-course support, he explained that they have an excellent advisor who helps to develop skills in the school. A group from the Sabbatical Course came to observe him teaching but there has not been any other direct contact. The County suggested a scheme whereby Welsh schools twinned with English schools but unfortunately nothing came of it.

He believes that a course for head teachers would have been very useful. In the future, he would like to attend occasional one-day language refresher courses with the other members of the original group.

### **Participant 'F', Part-time Primary School Teacher, attended the foundation course**

- **1.5 hours** pre-course; **1.5 hours** post-course, but reported increased confidence and an improvement in skills

'F' is a part-time year 5 teacher and leads on Welsh and physical education in the school. There are 180 children in the school but none of the other members of staff can speak Welsh. There is a lot of incidental Welsh in the school but the teachers are very much lacking in confidence.

She was very keen to do the foundation course, and had been on a Welsh learning course in Lampeter 20 years ago. She explained her motivation as follows: 'I became the co-ordinator and realised I wouldn't be able to achieve Level 5 in the school unless I improved myself'.

She described the course as excellent, although some of the tasks were pointless and irrelevant. They were a mixed group of 3 junior school teachers and 9 nursery / infant school teachers, and this became a bit of a problem as they tried to create two sample lessons from

each member of the group. It would have been better if every group contained either junior school or infant school teachers.

Since completing the course, 'F' is much more confident when speaking Welsh and uses Welsh in the classroom. However, children come to her in year 5 with very little knowledge of the basics of the language, and 'F' is disappointed that the rest of the staff know so little Welsh. Any Welsh before year 5 is incidental Welsh only. The school is focussing on numeracy and literacy at the moment and the hope is that Welsh will be the focus of attention in the future.

With regard to post-course support, the head teacher is supportive. The County only provides one half-day Welsh course per teacher per year (it used to be each term). The tutors sent an e-mail offering support, but 'F' has yet to take up this offer. *Athrawon bro* do not visit the school due to a lack of funding.

She feels that the course has made a difference to her personally, but not really to the school as a whole. She attended a moderation meeting in the secondary school recently and noticed that other schools in the area are far more advanced as regards Welsh language skills. She would like to see more members of staff attending the course.

### **Participant 'Ff', Primary School Teacher, attended the foundation course**

- **1 hour** pre-course; **2 hours** post-course

'Ff' is a year 3 teacher in a school with around 155 pupils, and he leads on Welsh in the school. There are no Welsh speakers amongst the staff but one other member of staff does have some knowledge of the language.

As he leads on Welsh, he was keen to go on the course, which he described as a very enjoyable experience. He learnt a lot – not only how to teach Welsh as a subject, but also the grammar and mutations that he had ignored over the years. The tutors were excellent and very supportive. He had ample opportunity to teach lessons in front of the other members of the group, and also to observe in other schools. He explained that 'the opportunity to engage in teaching methodologies with other members of the course was a by-product, but a very rewarding aspect of the course.' However, some of the written activities on the course could have been more interesting.

He returned to the school with a greatly improved knowledge of the Welsh language and feeling very enthusiastic, and he now teaches Welsh to year 6. He now uses Welsh every day, and tries to speak the language as much as possible, including using his Welsh with other members of staff where possible. He now teaches Welsh for 2 hours a week, which is double the amount he taught before the course. He also monitors the use of Welsh across the school, e.g. in planning and in displays. He has set up a Welsh club in the school during lunch hour and arranges activities such as games on iPads.

It is difficult to tell whether the course has made a difference to the pupils' attainment level, but 'Ff' hopes that his enthusiasm will have an effect.

He is fortunate that he has ample opportunity to practice his Welsh as his wife is a Welsh speaker. He reads as much Welsh as possible and he would like to attend another course. He would appreciate follow-up sessions and he would also like to meet up more regularly with the people on his course in order to practise. An advisor visits the school once a month and the head teacher is very supportive.

### **Participant 'G', Primary School Teacher, attended the foundation course**

- **1 hour** pre-course; **2 hours** post-course and more incidental Welsh

'G' is a year 2 teacher in a school with around 300 pupils, where she has worked for twenty years. She is the Welsh language co-ordinator but there is very little Welsh amongst the staff – one can understand the language.

She has tried to learn Welsh in an evening class in the past but has found it very difficult. Her children are in Welsh-medium education. Her head teacher encouraged her to attend the course.

The tutors were good but parts of the course were heavy and very difficult, and there was a lot to fit into one term. She welcomed the opportunity to learn grammar patterns. It was far more difficult than she expected.

She also felt that there were too many assessments and there was also a mixture of abilities on the course – she would have liked it if everybody on the course was of equal ability.

She believes that the course has been of benefit, both to her and to the school. She speaks far more incidental Welsh now, and is trying to elicit an interest in others in the school. She uses the language patterns she learnt on the course every day, as well as ideas from the course. Other teachers ask for her opinion on issues about the language.

She has established a St David's Day Eisteddfod in the school, as well as school-wide "Da chi'n siarad Cymraeg" certificates. She understands far more Welsh now than before and the rules make more sense even though speaking Welsh remains very difficult.

With regard to post-course support, the head teacher is very supportive and she receives support from an *athrawes fro* once a fortnight. She is looking forward to a follow-up meeting with other members of the group in June but she would like more opportunities for follow-up work. She's considering attending another course in the future.

## Participant 'Ng', Deputy Primary School Head teacher, attended the foundation course

- **1-2 hours** pre-course; **2 hours** post-course

'Ng' is a deputy head teacher and has taught year 2 for 20 years. There are around 400 children in the school and she is responsible for Welsh and religious education. In the school, the teachers are all happy to learn Welsh and a number of them are fairly confident in the language. Before 'Ng' went on the course, one other teacher and a teaching assistant had been on the Sabbatical course. The *athrawes fro* brought the course to her attention.

She has a Welsh O Level, and did the WLPAN course a few years ago. Her Welsh-language ability was fairly good before the course but she was lacking in confidence.

The tutors were very good, and the group got along well. She enjoyed the course, and found it easy at the beginning but it became harder as time went by. The others found the course difficult. She felt that the varying abilities should have been addressed before the course as the range was too wide – some hadn't even done Stage 1 and 'Ng' thought that it was wrong to include them on the course. She felt there was too much pressure in relation to the assessments – especially when they were being filmed.

She believes that the children's attainment level has increased as a direct result of her enthusiasm e.g. an improvement in the abilities of the year 2 children when using the 1st and 2nd person, and male and female nouns. She uses far more Welsh in class now and tries to pass on ideas from the course. Other members of staff are trying to include more Welsh in the school assembly etc. She is keen to make it more visually obvious that this is a school in Wales. Welsh is now timetabled for 10 minutes a day for the whole school, and there are more resources available for everyone.

There has not been much support after the course. She is meeting with the rest of the group in June, and has met with some individuals socially. She started a Welsh evening class, but did not find it useful. She would have liked the university to have arranged follow-up in the form of evening classes.

She would certainly encourage others to go on the course.

## Participant 'H', Primary School Teacher, attended the foundation course

- **1-2 hours** pre-course; **at least 5 hours** post-course, and “there is now an element of Welsh in all my lessons”.

'H' teaches in a primary school with 75 pupils. It is an English-medium school but second language Welsh is strong there and three of the teachers are Welsh-speakers.

'H' wanted to improve her Welsh language ability and had heard about the course from colleagues in the area who had attended. The course was fantastic, the tutors were good and the length of the course was appropriate.

The element of preparing resources was good, although most of it related to Key Stage 2 and was not relevant to her. She would have liked to see more resources aimed at the Foundation Phase. Despite this, she explained in the questionnaire, *'I created 3 lessons during the course however when back in school the resources created are used in a number of lessons. I am able to re-use each resource with different learning objectives. The skills which I developed whilst creating the resources are transferable across the curriculum'*.

Her confidence in using Welsh has improved as a result of the course and she now spends more time teaching Welsh, and there has also been an increase in the use of incidental Welsh. Since attending the course, she has set up '15 minutes of Welsh' sessions across the school. She feels that the pupils are more enthusiastic about the language and she feels certain that the children's attainment levels have improved.

The other Welsh-speaking staff and head teacher are very supportive. She was about to attend a follow-up day in the university but she would like to have more follow-up days as well as getting the original group back together.

## Participant 'I', Primary School Teacher, attended the foundation course

- **1 hour** pre-course; **1-2 hours** post-course

'I' teaches in an English-medium primary school where a number of the staff speak Welsh. She shares her time between teaching year 4 and teaching children with special needs.

She had always wanted to go on a course like this, and she has been attending evening classes. The *athrawes fro* has been supportive. Her own children are in Welsh-medium education.

The course was 'fantastic' and she would have liked it to be a year-long course. The course became quite complex quite quickly. The tutors were good and a variety of teaching methods were adopted. There was a good balance between learning the language academically and focussing on teaching to suit the needs of primary schools. The coursework was good.

Since the course, 'I' is more confident in using the language in everyday situations and she understands a great deal more. She uses the language in the classroom now, not only in Welsh lessons, but in teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh. For example, she taught a mathematics lesson on calendars in Welsh, and in Geography lessons, she discusses the names of places and countries in Welsh. There is now more Welsh on the school walls and 'I' has changed from using bilingual commands in the playground to using Welsh only commands. She thinks that her use of Welsh has more than doubled, and says that the 'pupils' attainment level has certainly increased'.

In the past, Welsh has not been seen in a very positive light in the school, so there has been a big step change. These days, Welsh is a lot more fun for the children. The attitude of both children and staff towards Welsh has made the learning experience happier and more positive.



She has had support from the *athrawes fro* and a course tutor came to the school when she asked for help. The head teacher is very supportive and another teacher is about to start on the course. It was a very positive experience and she would like to attend a further course.

### **Participant 'L', Primary School Teacher, attended the foundation course**

- **2 hours** pre-course; **4 hours** post-course.

'L' is a teacher in a large primary school with 650 children. She has been there for 8 years and she is the science and literacy co-ordinator. There are 5 Welsh-speakers amongst the staff.

'L' was interested in improving her Welsh. She is interested in bilingualism and she has attended evening classes with the intention of completing an MA course in bilingualism. The *athrawes fro* suggested the Sabbatical course; she had not heard of it before then.

She described the course as 'fantastic' with good and supportive tutors, and it was great to be able to concentrate properly on Welsh. It was beneficial to learn Welsh through the medium of Welsh. She explained that the course 'teaches you to increase your expectations of what you can achieve'. However, she believes that the course could have been set at a slightly higher level, as she and a number of others in the group had already reached that level in the past.

She feels that the course focusses on teaching all subjects through the medium of Welsh, but there is a reticence to allow this in her school. As the school is close to the English border, some children and governors have said that they don't want the children 'speaking all this Welsh'. 'L' strongly believes that all head teachers and deputy head teachers should attend a similar course before being allowed to lead a school in Wales.

Since completing the course, she is more confident in using Welsh and she now understands mutations. She can now see the mistakes made in the past, and the course has enabled her to improve her teaching. Her level of Welsh has improved and she can pass this on to the children. She believes that her year 4 class has made excellent progress and that their attainment level has increased significantly. They have good reading and writing skills, and now there is work to do to improve their spoken Welsh.

Since the course, she has not received enough support from within the school. She is frustrated that schools are willing to send their staff on courses but aren't willing to take the next step towards developing the Welsh language within the school. She suggested that there should be 'demo' lessons for head teachers and senior staff so that they can see how Welsh works in other schools. In her school, she believes that the head teacher supports the opinion of parents and governors, and overall, she believes that schools are content with bilingualism but not with teaching through the medium of Welsh.

She has spoken to the tutors a number of times and students from other courses have been to the school to observe her teaching. *Athrawon bro* came to see her after the course, but they have not encouraged her further. She would have appreciated follow-up courses.

### **Participant 'LI', Primary School Teacher, attended the foundation course**

- **1 hour** pre-course; **1 hour** post-course, but more incidental Welsh.

'LI' is responsible for the Foundation Phase in a small rural school, which has 40 pupils and two teachers.

She had taken advantage of the local authority's Welsh training for teachers over the years but when the peripatetic service downgraded the school to a category that was to receive less support from the *athrawes fro*, she decided to go on the Sabbatical course. There was a fair amount of incidental Welsh in the school but 'LI' alone had to teach Welsh. An *athrawes fro* comes once a term.

It was a challenging course that encompassed a lot in a short time. A lot of the work on the units was packed in towards the end, but she felt that her head was full of information by this point. The tutors were excellent and the course was interesting. There was a lot of homework and preparatory work, and not enough time to prepare during the day. As 'LI' lives far away from where the course was held, and it took a long time for her to travel to the course, she had less time to prepare at home.

There was pressure to perform well when providing the sample lesson in front of the other attendees.

There were not enough resources for the Foundation Phase and she felt that not enough attention was given to the needs of Foundation Phase teachers on the course. She would also like to see Welsh learning resources that she could use in her local library.

She is quite a bit more confident in Welsh now, but there is nobody available in the school to check her Welsh. She is able to speak a little Welsh to the only first-language Welsh parent at the school.

She is keen to create a Welsh language ethos and environment. All the displays are now bilingual and for the first time they held a *Cymanfa Ganu* (Welsh hymn singing service) on St David's Day. 'LI' hopes that the children will build on their Welsh language skills. She feels that their Welsh speaking skills have improved significantly, but there is still only one Welsh lesson a week in the school.

She has had a lot of support from the *athrawes fro* and the County arranged a reunion for everybody who attended the course. Her head teacher is very supportive. She is still nervous about the skill level of year 2 children, but she is receiving help from the *athrawes fro*.

In reality, she is not using all the Welsh she learnt on the course and ideally she would like to attend another course in order to reinforce what she has already learnt. She was keen to pass on the message: "don't forget about us!".

## Participant 'M', Primary School Assistant, attended the entry level course

- **1 session** pre-course; **1 session** post-course, but more incidental Welsh.

'M' is a reception class and year 1 assistant. The head teacher encouraged her to attend the course and she was keen to learn more Welsh.

She enjoyed the course and the tutors were good. However, she did have some criticisms:

A lot of time on the course was spent on making displays and resources, but in her school, only children's work is displayed so these posters / materials were of no use to her.

Although the time spent on the computer was good, too much time was spent comparing websites.

She would have appreciated more encouragement to speak Welsh.

She now has more confidence in using Welsh with the children and she enjoys singing Welsh songs with them. She and the other assistant mainly teach Welsh in the year group and she believes that she has been able to contribute to the increase in the children's attainment, and the pupils are quite a bit more enthusiastic about Welsh. Almost all the displays are now bilingual and she is using a lot more incidental Welsh. She has introduced 'sentence of the week' throughout the school since attending the course.

The *athrawes fro* is a great help and the head teacher is supportive. She is able to contact the tutors via e-mail. She would like to attend Welsh top-up days if possible, and she would very much like to attend more training, although finding the time would be a problem.

## **Participant 'N', Primary School Assistant, attended the entry level course**

- **2 hours** pre-course; **8 hours** post-course.

'N' works as an assistant across the school and her duties include teaching Welsh to year 6. There are 230 pupils in the school and one member of staff is a fluent Welsh-speaker.

She has an A Level in Welsh but has not used the language since then. She had a career change a few years ago and she wanted to learn a vocabulary that would be appropriate for children as well as improving her language skills. She is also currently studying for a BA degree.

She enjoyed the course but felt that some elements were missing – there should be more of an emphasis on singing and learning new songs. A wider range of materials could have been used and the course could have been more practical – e.g. by visiting a Welsh-medium school. The course was not all-encompassing and it should have included more relevant subjects and the vocabulary around those subjects.

Since the course, she is using a lot more Welsh, and in school, she is seen as somebody who is knowledgeable about the Welsh language. She has rediscovered a lot of her Welsh language skills and she has a better understanding of the language. She teaches 5 minutes of Welsh to a number of classes every day and she believes that the skill levels in year 6 have improved. She has set up a 'Clwb Hwyl a Sbri' and has arranged for year 6 to visit Llangrannog. Outside the classrooms, the Welsh language is more visible in displays around the school. 'N' has also introduced a 'language token' system throughout the school. There has been a campaign to encourage teachers to use more incidental Welsh due to the school improvement plan as well as her influence since attending the course – 'it's all about enjoying the language and being able to use it in the community'. Other teachers have since asked to attend the course.

She has not received any formal post-course support and the only contact she has had with the centre was when she was asked to do a presentation for the next wave of course attendees. The head teacher is very supportive and is keen for her to make the most of her new skills.

She would like to attend more Welsh courses in the future and ideally there would be a higher level course available for teaching assistants. She would like to formally record her thanks to Welsh Government for providing the course and the incentives.

## **Participant 'O', Primary School Assistant, attended the entry level course**

- Incidental use of Welsh pre- and post-course.

'O' is a classroom assistant in the reception class and has been working in this city school for 24 years.

The head teacher always encourages the staff to use incidental Welsh and teaching in Welsh was always on his to-do list. When the college contacted the school to inform them of the course, she took up the offer.

The course was very good with excellent tutors. 'O' believed that a residential course would have been better in order to have been fully immersed in the Welsh language for a period of time.

Since attending the course, 'O' always greets the children in Welsh and encourages them to answer in full sentences. 'O' is using more incidental Welsh and believes that the children's attainment has improved and that they respond well in Welsh. Since the course, 'O' has also introduced 'Welsh speaker of the week' throughout the school.

Help is available from the tutors over the phone or e-mail if necessary and she receives invites to events at the college related to the course and learning Welsh. 'O' would like to attend a further course.

### **Participant 'P', Further Education Lecturer, attended the short higher course**

- **0 hours** pre-course; **7 hours** post-course.

'P' is a lecturer in Information Technology and has been teaching at his college for 13 years.

Before the course, apart from having difficulty with his mutations, he was generally quite confident in his skills but felt that he needed to improve his Welsh overall. He knew of people who had attended the course in the past and had been keen to attend for quite a while. He had told the Bilingual Champion that he was interested in attending the course.

The course was excellent and he had nothing negative to say about it. The teaching was very good and the feedback had been fantastic; the staff were great. Everybody was treated as an individual on the course and work was set for each of them as individuals. The course was suitable for teaching methods in further education and they had an opportunity to teach in front of the other attendees. The length of the course was appropriate and there were no problems either in being released to attend the course or in arranging cover. The college had been very supportive.

Since the course, he has started teaching Welsh for Adults and is teaching on the Welsh BAC course. Where he has had time and opportunity, he has put more emphasis on bilingualism. He teaches slightly more in Welsh in the classroom. When he gets the chance, he teaches bilingually; but will often work with Welsh-speaking individuals in the class through the medium of Welsh. He tends to make more use of Cysill and Cysgair since attending the course.

It would have been good to have follow-up sessions after the course. He has had e-mails from the tutors offering help but has not yet taken advantage of these offers. When we spoke to 'P', his certificate had not yet arrived and he felt he needed evidence that he had completed the course.

### **Participant 'Ph', Further Education Lecturer, attended the short higher course**

- **3 hours** pre-course; **6 hours** post course.

'Ph' is a land use engineer lecturer on a very Welsh-speaking campus. He teaches some agricultural classes through the medium of Welsh and some bilingually. Welsh language resources are available to everybody on the course if they wish.

'Ph' had himself been through Welsh-language education 30 years ago. He knew a few people who had attended the Sabbatical Course in the past and was keen to attend himself. His line manager was also keen for him to attend and in addition, he received encouragement from the Bilingual Champion.

The course was very good. He received 'a lot of help from the tutors and they pointed the practitioners in the right direction. 'Ph' believed that the course had changed over the years. It used to be a 3-month block course, and he would not have been able to attend a course that took him out of the college for such a long period. As it was, it was quite difficult to find a 'time slot' to attend the course, but there had been no problems in arranging cover while he was on the course.

He now uses more Welsh in his work and is translating much of the course content. His grammar is more correct. 'Ph' doesn't consider that there has been a change in his spoken

Welsh skills. He likes to think that his students' standard of Welsh has improved since he has been on the course. Also, since attending the course, he has become a member of the college's bilingualism board, which meets every month.

With regard to post-course support, he receives e-mails from university staff offering help but he is yet to take advantage of this. He receives a fair amount of support and help from the Bilingual Champion. He sees clear advantages of attending the course, and on a personal level, it has also helped him with his own children.

## **Participant 'R', Further Education Lecturer, attended the higher block course**

➤ **18 hours** pre-course; **18 hours** post-course.

'R' is a BTEC Lecturer in Children's Care, Learning and Development for young students. She usually teaches bilingually but this year, everybody on the course is able to speak Welsh.

She learned to speak Welsh as an adult when she moved to live in Wales and she was worried about the standard of her written Welsh. In the past, she attended a language refresher course, where tutors were available to correct her work. But after the course ended, she needed somebody to correct her language and remind her of grammar rules.

The Bilingual Champion did not encourage her to attend the course, but she knew somebody who had attended it and heard about it through the college. She had been considering doing a course for a while, but courses in the past had meant distance learning and working on her own, and she preferred the structure of this course – a full week at the beginning and end and individual days in between. Managers were more than content for her to attend the course and were pleased that staff wanted to improve their language skills.

The course was very good. She appreciated being able to get an immediate response from the tutors about her work, and it was easy to ask them questions at any point. The course was suitable for further education lecturers; and it was also suitable for the teaching she does out in the community.

She does not think that there has been a change in her language skills since attending the course, but she does consider that she has a better understanding of providing a bilingual education. She has learnt a lot with regard to the written work.

Despite this, she avoids writing in Welsh as much as possible because it takes so much time to make sure that the work is correct. She's more prepared to adapt and try new things since attending the course. She hopes that the students' attainment level has improved since she has been on the course. There was talk of the college using her as a role model to show what's possible in terms of learning Welsh, but this has yet to happen.

Support is available if necessary, and if she requests it; but nobody has spelled out "what is available". The champions don't offer specific support other than general e-mails advertising courses. It is fortunate that there are plenty of opportunities to speak Welsh in the college: 'it's a social language and you can hear it spoken everywhere'. It would have been good to have a catch-up session after the course in order to hear the suggestions of others who had been on the course.

She has recently encouraged a teacher friend of hers to attend the course, and would recommend that everybody completes the course.