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Evaluation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes – Interim Report

Research Summary

Social research

Number: 69/2015

The evaluation is based on a 3 year programme of evaluation activity designed to investigate how the NLNP has been interpreted and how the various activities related to the NLNP are being implemented.

The findings presented are based on the first year of evaluation activity, undertaken by the contractor SQW from September 2013 to December 2014, using a number of different sources of evidence including: interviews with key stakeholders, an e-survey sent to all senior leaders in primary and secondary schools in Wales, an e-survey of all identified Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and/or Numeracy, area based case studies involving case-study visits to 20 schools across four LAs and two thematic case studies exploring the impact of the NLNP on NQTs and the impact of reforms to literacy and numeracy provision within ITET. Evaluation activity is ongoing and will continue into 2016.

Findings:

- There was evidence of a high level of engagement amongst education professionals in seeking to implement the LNF.
- The introduction of the LNF and National Tests led to changes in strategic planning in most settings.
- Awareness and take-up of the NSP was high amongst surveyed school leaders, although there was initial perceived lack of clarity around the eligibility of special schools.
- Awareness and take up of guidance and resources to support schools in implementing the National Tests was reasonably high amongst case-study schools.
- There has been widespread agreement around the need to introduce a more cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. The strategies taken by primary and secondary schools have varied considerably.
- There is evidence to suggest that many schools have made progress in implementing a more cross-curricular approach, although, perhaps unsurprisingly, most of the education professionals indicated more work was required before the approach would be fully embedded.

Dadansodi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy

Further Findings

- The LNF appears to have been more influential in terms of strategic planning than the National Tests which were used more for assessing learner progress.
- In terms of the National Tests it is encouraging to note that senior leaders in schools indicated they were resisting the adoption of approaches that might encourage 'teaching to the tests'.
- Awareness of the MEP was high amongst the recently qualified teachers we interviewed, and the schools that employed them.
- Practitioners considered a barrier to the implementation of the LNF and the National Tests had been what they saw as a lack of initial guidance on how the Welsh Government expected them to put it into practice and support to help them do so.
- The introduction of the National Tests appears to have had an impact on administrative processes in schools (in particular the need for schools to support the marking, and moderation of tests scripts)
- Impact of the National Tests on pedagogical practice appears limited, although some changes were evident (particularly in terms of school development planning).
- All of the schools we spoke to had taken steps to embed the LNF and the National Tests within administrative processes.
- Common approaches for seeking to support learning across the curriculum approach have included:
 - re-mapping the school curriculum to support the LNF
 - changes to lesson planning to promote the inclusion of literacy and/or numeracy tasks across the curriculum
 - an increased focus on the development and delivery of cross-curricular or 'Rich Tasks'.
- Within ITET Centres, the desire to encourage ITET students to adopt a more cross-curricular approach to their teaching has been coupled with a perceived need to improve the personal literacy and numeracy skills of staff and students. Centres have responded to these priorities in a number of ways:
 - changes to existing workforce development activities
 - changes to guidance governing the assessment of students, and
 - to prioritise the development of their personal literacy and numeracy skills and the quality of

their teaching of literacy and numeracy

- Where schools have accessed support from NSP subject specialists, this is perceived to have been of a good quality and has been effective in helping them respond to the introduction of the LNF in particular.
- Most schools welcomed support from the NSP, but felt that it had not fully met their expectations
- It was not expected at this early stage that robust evidence would be available to show that the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests has supported an improvement in pupil outcomes.
- Although senior staff in education settings were unable to quantify a measurable improvement in the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy at their school arising from the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests, there was a perception that they had encouraged schools to take steps that would lead to an improvement over time.

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