

Welsh Language Development in the Foundation Phase

January 2013



Estyn


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Dyma ni yn gwisgo make up, wi wedi cael amser da.

INTRODUCTION

This report is produced in response to a request for advice in the Minister's annual remit letter to Estyn for 2011-2012. Its purpose is to:

- report on the implementation of the Welsh Language Development Area of Learning in the Foundation Phase in schools and non-maintained settings; and
- highlight examples of best practice.

The report is intended for the Welsh Government, headteachers, leaders and managers of non-maintained settings, practitioners (teachers, learning support assistants and other support staff) in schools and settings, local authority officers and advisers, and church diocesan authorities. The report may also be of interest to institutions that train practitioners.

The report draws on the range of evidence noted in Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND

The Foundation Phase was introduced for children aged under five in September 2009 and for children aged five to six years of age in September 2010. The final stage of the Foundation Phase, for children aged from six to seven years of age, was introduced in September 2011.

Welsh Language Development is one of the seven Areas of Learning in the Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning. This Area of Learning is only delivered in schools and settings where English is the main medium of communication. The Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning states:

"In schools and settings where English is the main medium of communication, children's Welsh language skills should be progressively developed throughout the Foundation Phase by implementing the Welsh Language Development Area of Learning.

During the Foundation Phase, children should learn to use and communicate in Welsh to the best of their ability. Children should listen to Welsh being spoken and respond appropriately in familiar situations, using a range of patterns. They should be encouraged to communicate their needs in Welsh and should be increasingly exposed to Welsh. Skills are developed through communicating in a range of enjoyable, practical planned activities, and using a range of stimuli that build on and increase children's previous knowledge and experiences, in safe and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments. The children's oral experiences should be used to develop their reading skills and they should be encouraged to choose and use Welsh reading materials. They should listen to a range of stimuli, including audio-visual material and ICT interactive software in Welsh. Children should be given a range of opportunities to enjoy mark-making and develop their writing skills in Welsh. Language skills learned in one language should support the development of knowledge and skills in another.¹"

¹Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales 2008, Page 27

The Welsh Government set out its vision to see the Welsh language thriving in Wales in 'A living language: a language for living' in 2012. The 'Welsh-medium Education Strategy' published in 2010 supports this vision. It notes:

"Strategic aim 3: To ensure that all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential and encourage sound linguistic progression from one phase of education and training to the next.²

An additional aim of this Strategy is to see all learners in English-medium settings benefiting from opportunities to develop language skills, which enrich their experience of living in a bilingual country.³"

It also states that:

"The Strategy also allows for the possibility that some learners will access Welsh-medium education at a stage after the age of three. This may occur through later entry points (late immersion opportunities). In other cases, initial experiences of Welsh-language provision through the Foundation Phase may, over time, provide the basis and impetus for children to transfer to the Welsh-medium sector before the age of seven.⁴"

To ensure that this transfer to the Welsh-medium sector before the age of seven can happen, schools and settings need to deliver high-quality Welsh language teaching throughout the Foundation Phase and track pupils' progress accurately.

²Welsh-medium Education Strategy, April 2010, Page 15

³Welsh-medium Education Strategy, April 2010, Page 9

⁴Welsh-medium Education Strategy, April 2010, Page 8

MAIN FINDINGS

In the majority of English-medium schools inspected during 2010-2012, most children make suitable progress in speaking and listening to Welsh in the Foundation Phase, particularly during whole-group sessions. Children have a positive attitude towards learning Welsh. Their speaking and listening skills are developing well but reading and writing are generally underdeveloped in the Foundation Phase. In one-in-ten schools, children make excellent progress in acquiring Welsh language skills. In these few schools, nearly all children have a good understanding of their Welsh work across the curriculum. They use a wide range of words and sentence patterns correctly and by the end of key stage 2 can read accurately and with expression.

While standards have also improved overall in English-medium non-maintained settings during 2010-2012, children's progress in Welsh is a concern in over a third of these settings. In these settings, children generally lack confidence in using Welsh outside short whole-group sessions, such as registration periods or singing sessions. They do not use Welsh in their play or learning without prompts from adults.

Welsh Language Development is good in the majority of the schools and settings visited during this survey. In most of these schools and settings, Welsh is an integral part of daily routines. Nearly all children enjoy learning Welsh and learn to use a variety of Welsh words and phrases with each other. The most effective schools and settings develop children's Welsh by improving their confidence, self-belief and attitudes to learning Welsh. Practitioners (teachers and other support staff) plan a range of opportunities for all children to learn Welsh in class and outdoors. The most effective work draws on opportunities to introduce Welsh in the other six areas of learning of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Children make the best progress in speaking and listening to Welsh. At best, they ask and answer simple questions accurately and confidently, but they do not often use Welsh in their play activities outdoors. Children generally make less progress in reading and writing Welsh. This is partly due to the appropriate focus on developing good oral skills in early Welsh language learning. A minority of schools visited are introducing systematically planned Welsh reading and writing activities, which often mirror the children's progress in reading and writing in English. When children write for 'real reasons', such as making shopping lists

before they go to the shops or inviting friends to their party, they are highly engaged and make good progress in writing Welsh.

In most schools inspected in 2010-2012, provision for Welsh second language in the Foundation Phase is good. However, in a minority of schools staff do not devote enough time to teaching Welsh. In a few of schools and settings visited, staff are not devoting enough direct teaching time to deliver Welsh Language Development effectively. Practitioners do not practise and repeat new Welsh words regularly or offer children enough opportunities to practise their Welsh. In sessions where the quality of Welsh teaching is excellent, teachers fire children's imagination, activities are stimulating, and children respond enthusiastically, extend their vocabulary and become more confident in using Welsh.

Generally, when practitioners' own Welsh is fluent, children's progress in learning Welsh is better. These practitioners use Welsh consistently across all areas of learning. Where there are no confident Welsh-speaking practitioners in a school or setting, the use of Welsh by staff is usually more limited. This means that children hear less Welsh and have less opportunity to practise it. Where there are gaps in practitioners' knowledge, particularly in the grammar, intonation and pronunciation of Welsh, children can learn to speak or pronounce incorrectly. In a few cases, practitioners cannot sustain using Welsh long enough and use a very limited amount of incidental Welsh⁵ with the children. Most settings and schools have very few fluent Welsh-speaking practitioners and many use Welsh television programmes or DVDs to try to compensate for this, so that children can hear more spoken Welsh. However, this approach does not secure sustained progress in learning.

Schools are not required to record individual children's progress in Welsh Language Development and there is no formal assessment data available at school, local authority or national level. This means that there is no way to track children's progress in Welsh from the beginning of their education to the end of the Foundation Phase and onwards to key stage 2.

⁵ Incidental Welsh refers to interactions between adults and children that arise naturally in an unstructured situation where adults transmit new information or give children practice in developing a communication skill.

The quality of leadership and management is at least good in most of the settings and schools we visited. Effective leaders implement Welsh Language Development thoroughly in the Foundation Phase. A minority of schools and settings visited use a consistent approach to teaching Welsh. Practitioners are fully engaged in ensuring that all children learn to speak, read and write Welsh confidently.

Leaders do not receive enough support and training on how to evaluate the effectiveness of Welsh Language Development teaching and learning. Very few local authorities offer training for headteachers and senior leaders to evaluate standards and provision in Welsh in the Foundation Phase.

Where practitioners in schools receive regular training and support, they are more confident in teaching Welsh. However, there is a wide variation in the amount of training available to practitioners in different authorities. In the best cases, practitioners receive regular update training and support, but many have received only limited training to develop their Welsh during the past few years. Welsh training opportunities for practitioners in most settings are very limited, often due to difficulties in releasing staff to attend training and the cost of paying for staff to attend training outside their normal working hours. Not all local authorities share good practice in Welsh Language Development well enough with schools and settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools and settings should:

- R1** ensure that enough time is devoted to the direct teaching of Welsh;
- R2** plan good opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in other areas of learning and in outdoor activities;
- R3** increase the level of skills input to develop pupils' writing in Welsh;
- R4** monitor provision and progress in Welsh Language Development; and
- R5** provide practitioners with opportunities to improve their Welsh language skills and language teaching skills.

Local authorities should:

- R6** provide support and training in Welsh Language Development for headteachers, Foundation Phase leaders and lead practitioners;
- R7** provide better access to Welsh language support and training for practitioners, especially in non-maintained settings; and
- R8** share good practice in Welsh Language Development.

The Welsh Government should:

- R9** review whether the Foundation Phase Outcomes Indicator should capture children's progress in Welsh Language Development;
- R10** develop additional Welsh language and pedagogy training for practitioners in non-maintained settings; and
- R11** provide more exemplar materials of good practice in Welsh Language Development.

STANDARDS AND PROGRESS

It is still early in the implementation of Welsh Language Development in the Foundation Phase to judge fully its impact on standards. There is no quantifiable assessment data available to identify its effects. The findings for this survey are based on inspection reports and visits made by HM Inspectors to schools and settings.

During 2011-2012, Estyn inspected 218 primary schools, nearly two-thirds of which are English-medium. In the majority of English medium schools, pupils' Welsh second language skills are good. In the Foundation Phase, most pupils make good progress during whole-group sessions and have a positive attitude towards speaking Welsh. However, standards in key stage 2 are improving slowly but, in a minority of schools, pupils do not continue to develop their Welsh skills well enough. Often in these schools, teachers do not devote enough time to the delivery of Welsh second language and many lack confidence in teaching Welsh, particularly to older key stage 2 pupils. In less than one-in-ten schools, pupils make excellent progress in acquiring Welsh language skills. In these very few schools, nearly all pupils have a good understanding of their Welsh work across the curriculum. They use a wide range of sentence patterns accurately and effectively and, by the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils read accurately and with expression.

Estyn also inspected 146 non-maintained settings in 2011-2012, just over a half of which are English-medium settings. While standards have improved overall, there remain concerns about children's progress in Welsh in over a third of English medium non-maintained settings. Children generally lack confidence in using Welsh outside short, whole-group sessions, such as registration periods or end of session singing sessions. They do not use Welsh in their play and learning without prompts from adults.

In the Foundation Phase, many children achieve higher standards in speaking and listening in Welsh than in reading or writing. This is because learning to read and write is dependent on their spoken language skills. Usually, children develop reading skills sooner and faster than their writing skills.

When children write for 'real reasons', such as making shopping lists before they go to the shops or inviting friends to their party, they are highly engaged and make good progress in their Welsh writing skills.

Children's learning does not benefit as much as it should from direct teaching of Welsh⁶. In addition, not enough use is made of continuous and enhanced provision to consolidate and extend children's learning. The lack of clear structure in practitioners' planning hampers children's progress in these schools and settings.

In a few schools and settings, practitioners' lack of skills in Welsh hinders children's learning. In particular, children's standards of speaking in Welsh are lower than they need be. Practitioners have neither maintained enough direct teaching of Welsh nor given children sufficient opportunities to develop their language skills across the curriculum.

⁶ A systematic method of teaching where the practitioner leads the children in a carefully constructed step-by-step lesson. The glossary, at the end of this report, gives a detailed explanation of this term.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Nearly all children clearly show enjoyment and commitment and have fun when learning Welsh in schools and settings. Most children's achievement in listening and speaking is stronger than in reading and writing. This is partly due to the strong focus on developing good oral skills when children begin to learn Welsh. Most children generally listen well and respond enthusiastically in nearly all sessions observed during this survey. Most children ask and answer simple questions accurately but do not often use Welsh spontaneously in their play.

In the best sessions observed, nearly all children are willing and confident speakers and have good Welsh pronunciation and intonation. They understand each other speaking in Welsh and most speak with an acceptable level of accuracy. This is often due to good support given to children by practitioners who are either Welsh speakers or confident Welsh learners. Where the teaching of speaking and listening is very effective, children get a chance to speak in class activities and in groups, and have role-play opportunities to practise their oral skills. They are eager to speak because they have something to say. In a few sessions, children lack confidence to speak Welsh and are reluctant to use more than a few simple Welsh phrases.

Set out below are a few examples of how practitioners have successfully developed children's Welsh speaking skills. The case studies illustrate characteristics of good practice either from individual schools or settings or an amalgamation of the good practice seen in several schools. Pupils' names have been changed in these examples to preserve their anonymity.

Role-play and the use of puppets

Many practitioners make good use of role-play to consolidate children's learning and use it effectively in group work. Often practitioners use the role-play area in the classroom to enable children to practise phrases introduced in a whole-class session in a fun environment.

Many practitioners use puppets effectively in their classrooms. The use of puppets increases children's concentration and imagination and encourages a more spontaneous use of Welsh. In the best practice, puppets offer opportunities for creative pair work and give children confidence to 'have a go' in using Welsh. In a few classes, practitioners make effective use of commercial puppets from well-known Welsh Foundation Phase DVDs to consolidate Welsh phrases introduced on the DVD. Often shy children become more confident and vocal when they can interact with a puppet, rather than with another person, so that even the shyest child is happy to speak Welsh.

SHOPPING IN THE FRUIT SHOP

The class fruit shop provides a useful way to strengthen children's speaking and listening skills and their vocabulary. One group of Year 1 children in the class fruit shop bought and sold fruit in Welsh.

- Child 2:** Bore da, ga i helpu chi?
Child 1: Ga i pump oren, os gwelwch yn dda?
Child 2: Dyma ti. Un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump oren.
Deg ceiniog, os gwelwch yn dda.
Child 1: Dyma ti.
Da boch chi.
- Child 2:** Bore da, ga i helpu chi?
Child 3: Faint ydy'r afalau, os gwelwch yn dda?
Child 2: Pump ceiniog.
- Child 1:** Ga i un afal, os gwelwch yn dda?
Child 2: Dyma ti!
Child 1: Diolch yn fawr.

This role-play enabled the children to practise greetings, ask simple questions and discuss the cost of individual fruits. Children also had the opportunity of counting money in Welsh.

THE TELEVISION WEATHERMAN

In one Year 1 class, one child played the role of the weatherman in front of the class. The boy had a map of Wales behind him.

Child 1: Bore da.
Nawr am y tywydd i Gymru.
Mae hi'n heulog ac mae hi'n wyntog,
Ond dyw hi ddim yn bwrw glaw.
Mae'n wlyb ac mae'n bwrw eira yma. (he points to North Wales on the map)
Mae hi'n gymylog yma. (he points to west Wales on the map)
Ond mae hi'n heulog yng Nghasnewydd. (he points to Newport on the map)
Da boch chi.

This role-play showed that the boy knew different types of weather and could describe a range of weather conditions around Wales. He also used an extended sentence using two positive phrases and one negative phrase. He used the nasal mutation 'yng Nghasnewydd' – 'in Newport' correctly.

Welsh rhymes and songs

Most practitioners in settings and schools offer children good opportunities to sing Welsh songs in their classrooms. In most schools and settings, children know a good variety of Welsh songs, which they sing regularly. Children in a few settings and schools also say or sing a prayer in Welsh before eating their snack. Repeating songs helps to reinforce familiarity with words and phrases that can be used in other contexts.

Welsh rhymes and songs are useful learning tools as many of the rhymes and songs learned in childhood often stay with us for the rest of our life. Most children enjoy the patterns and rhythms of Welsh songs and rhymes and they often hum the tunes and sing the words at home or during play. This gives children frequent opportunities to use Welsh words and phrases. Some songs also provide children with access to more complex Welsh language phrases.

Introducing Welsh hymns, songs and rhymes help to develop young children's working memory⁷, which is another essential tool in language learning. Children who see the Welsh hymns on the interactive whiteboard during assembly have a good opportunity to look at and use Welsh texts regularly. Learning Welsh hymns and songs is also a good way of introducing children to aspects of Welsh culture.

Welsh language games

In most schools and settings, practitioners often use a range of games with groups of children to reinforce Welsh words and phrases introduced during a whole-class teaching session. Welsh language games are repeated frequently so children soon become familiar with the rules. When children are confident that they know what to do, these games are played independently as reinforcement activities during the week. Vocabulary is changed regularly to suit the class topic.

Welsh language games also help children to work together in different ways and to develop important social skills, such as turn-taking. Often the motivation to win can be a valuable way of enabling less confident children to participate.

⁷ The term 'working memory' refers to the ability to store and manipulate information simultaneously.

WELSH LANGUAGE COUNTING GAMES TO DEVELOP EARLY NUMERACY SKILLS

In an early years class, children work together in a group around a table with their teacher on a mathematics counting game.

Teacher: Pwy sy' nesa?
Child 1: James sy nesa
Child 2: Fi sydd nesaf
Teacher: Sawl un?
Child 3: Pedwar
Teacher: Rhifwch gyda fi. Un, dau, tri, pedwar.

The children then count with the teacher.

Nearly all the children are confident in using their Welsh skills to count and this in turn helps to consolidate their numeracy skills. Nearly all attain good standards.

READING

Overall, most children's progress in reading in Welsh is not as good as their speaking skills. During our school visits, we saw a few good examples where schools make reading in Welsh a particular focus and use resources such as 'big books', readers, home-made books and the use of interactive whiteboards to help children read in Welsh. However, practitioners do not often develop children's reading skills systematically from an early stage. Schools are often reluctant to introduce reading in Welsh until children master the mechanics of reading in English.

In the most effective settings and schools, practitioners offer a range of pre-reading activities in Welsh to ensure that children have a wide exposure to print, for example noticing Welsh labels and words on displays. Practitioners offer children opportunities to hear and see Welsh texts when they read simple Welsh stories and interesting non-fiction materials. Well before children can read in Welsh, they understand that print carries a message that can be read independently, for example from following attractive storybooks.

In the best sessions, practitioners teach how the letters of the alphabet, singly or in combination, represent the sounds of spoken language. Often, Welsh-speaking practitioners and practitioners who are confident Welsh learners show children how to blend these sounds to read words and break up the sounds in words to spell Welsh words correctly. In the best-observed sessions, practitioners teach reading in Welsh systematically, regularly and explicitly.

Practitioners promote children's Welsh reading skills in the Foundation Phase by ensuring that the reading material is appropriate. They help beginning Welsh readers to select texts that are well within their reading ability in Welsh. If a text has more than one or two unknown words per page this might make the text too difficult to understand and may discourage the beginning reader from reading the text independently. The success of early reading in Welsh depends largely on enticing children to read and it helps if they can choose what they want to read. Where practitioners offer a variety of reading material on a wide range of topics at the right level for the child, most enjoy reading in Welsh.

Set out below are a few examples of how practitioners have successfully developed children's Welsh reading skills. The case studies illustrate characteristics of good practice either from individual schools or settings or an amalgamation of the good practice seen in several schools.

USING A WELSH BIG BOOK AS A STIMULUS FOR DEVELOPING ORAL SKILLS

One Year 2 teacher in an infant school used a 'big book' to tell a Welsh story 'Parti Pen-blwydd Wini'. This story was used as a stimulus for a variety of oral activities.

To start the activity, the whole class read the book together, repeating words and phrases they saw on the interactive white board. Nearly all pupils engaged in reading the story. The teacher's use of gestures, change of voice and tone helped the children to identify the characters in the story. Nearly all of the children mimicked the voices and gestures of the characters well. They used new words and phrases enthusiastically in their oral work.

The two learning support assistants took an active role in this activity. One assistant dressed up as a 'witch' and made a dramatic entrance half way through the session. This helped to engage the children in the story and enabled the children to participate on a question and answer session:

Child: Beth wyt ti eisiau Wini?
Assistant: Dw i eisiau trefnu parti pen-blwydd.

Having been given the opportunity to ask questions, children could take the lead in pair and group work, rather than just responding to questions asked by practitioners or learning support assistants. This context enabled children to practise the new vocabulary they had learned during the session and to consolidate other words and phrases they had previously learned.

The teacher and the learning support assistants offered the children a range of interesting follow-up activities. These activities were appropriate, well differentiated and built on children's knowledge and understanding of the story. In the enhanced activities, one group had a role-play session in the class shop. This group had to buy party food for the party. Individual children had to buy specific ingredients.

- Child 1:** Ga i greision, os gwelwch yn dda?
Child 2: Cewch
Child 1: Faint ydy'r creision, os gwelwch yn dda?
Child 2: Deg ceiniog
Child 1: Un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump, chwech, saith, wyth, naw, deg ceiniog.
Dyma ti!
Child 2: Diolch yn fawr.

This activity also included counting money in Welsh, using well-rehearsed words and phrases, and asking and answering questions.

Another group of children decided to bake a birthday cake for Wini. Each member of this group was involved in measuring ingredients, with the help of a learning support assistant. All of the children had to read the recipe and follow the instructions in Welsh.

A third group wrote a simple invitation to Wini's party.

The class teacher used Welsh phrases consistently throughout the session to ensure that the children understood all of the Welsh words and phrases introduced.

As children learn to master early reading skills in Welsh, the best practitioners give children reading material that is easily within their reach. Early Welsh reading books are often designed to incorporate regular text, which children can decode using the reading skills they have already secured in their first language. This enables them to gain confidence from reading a whole book, since books written for Welsh learners at this stage are usually short and have repetitive phrases and vocabulary. Often reading such books in Welsh helps children to develop confidence and an appetite for reading more widely.

In a few schools and settings, practitioners do not give children sufficient opportunity to read in Welsh in a wide enough variety of situations.

DEVELOPING ORAL AND READING SKILLS IN ASSEMBLY

In one infant school, there is a weekly whole-school assembly, which is held in Welsh. One week, as children entered the hall, there was Welsh traditional music playing in the background. The assembly started with one child introducing a Welsh hymn. The whole school sang this hymn enthusiastically. Then the headteacher introduced the Year 1 class who had arranged this assembly. They explained that the theme of their assembly was what foods are good for you. All the children had prepared paintings of different fruits; they showed their pictures in turn and then read a description that they had prepared to say in Welsh explaining why that fruit is particularly good for you. Then the headteacher read a prayer and the whole school recited prayer in Welsh. The assembly ended with another Welsh hymn. Both hymns had a repetitive pattern that the children 'learned' from memory (or they could read the Welsh words on the interactive whiteboard). All of the children left the hall to the strains of Welsh traditional music.

WRITING

The Annual Report for 2010-2011 states that writing is the least developed of the three Welsh language skills in most settings and schools. This matches the findings from visiting schools and settings for this survey. In a few schools, children's writing is good and this is evident through the variety of sentences children are able to write in Welsh. Where children write more than single words, this work often links well to their reading. However, in most schools and settings, children's writing is limited to copy writing, filling in gaps on worksheets and writing simple words and phrases.

Set out below are a few examples of how practitioners have successfully developed children's Welsh writing skills. The case studies illustrate characteristics of good practice either from individual schools or settings or an amalgamation of the good practice seen in several schools.



MEGAN IN YEAR 1 WRITES:

Dwi wedi gwisgo pyjamas i helpu Plant mewn Angen.

Translation

I have worn pyjamas to help Children in Need.

Megan uses the past tense accurately. Her spelling of simple everyday Welsh words is correct. She also uses a capital letter and a full stop.

Her teacher marks her written work using positive Welsh comments.

WRITING SHOPPING LISTS

In one Year 1 class in an infant school, the practitioner asked the class to write a shopping list to make sandwiches. Children used a Welsh picture dictionary to devise the list.

Here is a copy of one shopping list:

**Bara gwyn
Jam mefus
Menyn
Cig
Caws
Cyw iâr
Tiwna**

Nearly all the children wrote an accurate shopping list using a Welsh dictionary confidently to find the Welsh names for familiar sandwich ingredients.

CONSOLIDATING READING AND WRITING SKILLS THROUGH THE CHILDREN'S OWN WORK

A group of seven children in Year 1 was given a task of writing letters in Welsh. The children used a good range of simple vocabulary and phrases, which had been taught through the 'Fflic a Fflac' scheme. Although the extent of their vocabulary was limited, they succeeded in writing letters that contained three or four simple sentences.

The practitioner then invited single children in the group to read out their work clearly to the group using the 'Fflic' character puppet. All of the other children listened carefully and understood what had been written. They all read their letter in turn to other children in the group.

In a few schools, children are sufficiently confident to write notes, invitations, diary extracts and simple letters in Welsh. Here are a few examples:

WLB Skill: - organising communicate by using symbols, pictures, words, phrases and short sentences. W/c 31.10.11

Fy Rhestr siopa
bara gwyn
jam mefus
menyn
cig
caws
cyw iâr
tuniau
⑤ ✓ * wrote shopping list
* used dictionary
② think about what you have
to do next time

HARRY IS IN YEAR 1

He has written a Welsh shopping list to make sandwiches. He has used a Welsh dictionary to find the Welsh words for common foods. His Welsh spelling is generally accurate.

His teacher has used two positive comments and the way forward to improve the work.

WRITING AN INVITATION TO A PARTY IN WELSH

In one infant school, a Year 1 pupil has written a simple invitation to a party:

Enw: Oliver
Ble: Dosbarth Mynydd bach
Amser: tri o'r gloch
Dyddiad: 3 Tachwedd
Oddi wrth: Jacob

This invitation shows that Jacob understood the task well.







WRITING A SIMPLE LETTER IN WELSH

In one infant school, a Year 2 pupil has written a simple letter to Father Christmas requesting a present:

Annwyl Sion Corn,
Wi'n hapus, sut wyt ti?
Diolch am yr anrheg nadolig diwetha.
Ga i Maxi Girl am y Nadolig os gwelwch yn dda?
Hwyl fawr,
Love from Maxine

This letter shows that Maxine can use greetings and familiar phrases such as 'Sut wyt ti?' and 'Hwyl fawr' accurately. She also has a good understanding of punctuation and often uses capital letters, question marks and full stops correctly.

Wyt tin hoffi ?

Wyt tin hoffi?  mefus ✓	Wyt tin hoffi?  pinafal ✓
Wyt tin hoffi?  gellygen ✓	Wyt tin hoffi?  grawin ✓
Wyt tin hoffi?  afal ✓	Wyt tin hoffi?  lemwn x

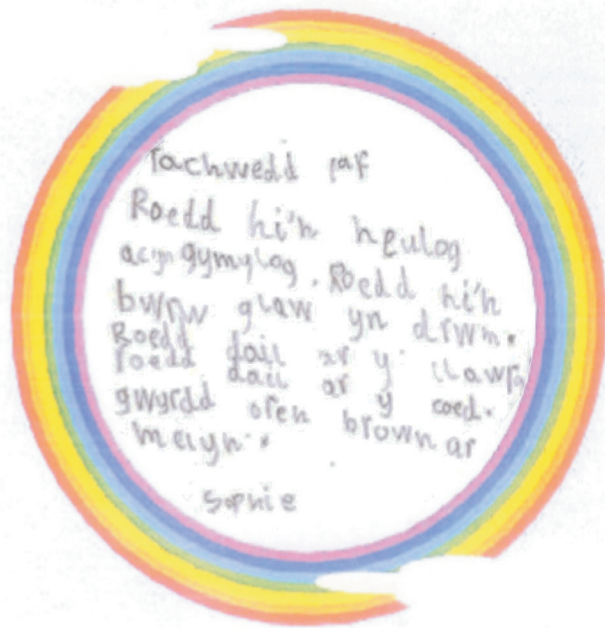
WYT TI'N HOFFI?

Emily in Year 1, has prepared a simple questionnaire about fruit for her friend to complete. She asks the question:

'Wyt tin hoffi?' (Do you like?)

and draws a picture of each individual fruit and labels the fruit in Welsh. She uses the question mark correctly in her work. Her friend has then completed the questionnaire to express her likes and dislikes.

However, the correct form of the question is 'Wyt ti'n hoffi?', which has been mistyped in the title of the work.



Diary Extract

GEMMA, IN YEAR 2, WRITES A DIARY EXTRACT:

"Tachwedd 1af

Roedd hi'n heulog ac yn gymylog. Roedd hi'n bwrw glaw yn drwm. Roedd dail ar y llawr. roedd dail ar y coed gwyrdd oren brown ar melyn."

Translation

"November 1st

It was sunny and cloudy. It was raining heavily. The leaves were on the floor. There were leaves on the trees green orange brown and yellow."

Gemma writes confidently and accurately in Welsh. She uses the past tense well and spells all the Welsh words correctly. She has a good grasp of colours in Welsh. Gemma can extend simple sentences, for example:

'Roedd hi'n bwrw glaw' by adding 'yn drwm'. It was raining **heavily**.

She uses capital letters and full stops for the most part correctly.

Newyddion Dydd Llun 21

Tachwedd,

wi wedi bod yn chwarae gyda ffrindau
chwaer fi. Dyma ni yn gwisgo make
up. wi wedi cael amser da.



LILY IS IN YEAR 2:

She has written a few sentences in Welsh confidently. She uses past tense accurately in Welsh. She also uses full stops correctly and her command of capital letters is developing well. Her use of 've' instead of 'fi' in the picture shows that she has a good grasp of Welsh sounds, but has not yet mastered Welsh orthography.

Newyddion
Dydd Llun 21 Tachwedd
wi wedi bod i weld sôn corn
yn Llanelli gyda mami a Dadi a
Steffan. Roedd lot o carnifal loris yn
Llanelli. Wi wedi mynd i'r
Glamorgan arms. Roedd hyn hwyf!



MIA, IN YEAR 2, HAS WRITTEN ABOUT HER VISIT TO LLANELLI.

“Wi wedi bod i weld Sôn Corn yn Llanelli gyda mami a Dadi a Steffan. Roedd lot o carnifal loris yn Llanelli. Wi wedi mynd i'r Glamorgan arms. Roedd hyn hwyf.”

Translation

“I’ve been to see Father Christmas in Llanelli with mami and Dadi and Steffan. There were lots of carnival lorries in Llanelli. We went to the Glamorgan arms. It was fun.”

Mia uses the past tense confidently. She writes most Welsh words accurately and varies her sentence structures. She is using full stops correctly and her use of capitals is developing well.

Writing stories

In a few schools, confident practitioners support children to write stories in Welsh. These stories are often based on much loved Welsh or English reading books. Children write the stories using familiar phrases and sentences previously introduced in class. Often these simple Welsh stories are illustrated by children's drawings and are a treasured class resource. Children often enjoy reading these original Welsh books.

In summary, in the best sessions, children:

- listen, understand and respond to familiar commands;
- listen and respond to simple questions;
- listen carefully to DVDs and respond appropriately;
- speak clearly, using simple words, greetings and expressions;
- speak with developing confidence and accuracy;
- express their likes and dislikes in Welsh;
- use simple Welsh phrases spontaneously in role play situations;
- read simple words and phrases accurately;
- understand Welsh stories that are read to them;
- write simple Welsh phrases accurately;
- write Welsh lists, letters and diary extracts;
- use information and communication technology to analyse and interpret data in Welsh; and
- write their own simple stories in Welsh.

In sessions where there are shortcomings, children:

- are reticent to take part in whole-class discussions;
- have a limited range of vocabulary and sentence patterns;
- lack confidence in speaking Welsh and need to be constantly prompted to contribute answers;
- do not use Welsh spontaneously; and
- do not listen to or read Welsh stories or develop their writing skills in Welsh.

2 PROVISION

TEACHING

Teaching is good in nearly all the sessions observed during this survey. Inspection outcomes for 2010-2011 showed that in non-maintained settings:

“in a quarter of settings, there are weaknesses in how practitioners develop children’s early reading and writing, Welsh language and information and communication technology skills”.⁸

In the primary and infant schools inspected in 2010-2011, we found that:

“In many schools, provision for speaking and reading Welsh second language is good in Welsh lessons. However, in key stage 2, provision for writing in Welsh and the use of the language in other lessons is limited.”⁹

The best teaching observed during this survey fires children’s interest, often by engaging them in a variety of interesting activities that draw upon a mix of stimulating resources. Practitioners use praise effectively to encourage children to ‘have a go’ in using their Welsh skills. Nearly all children respond enthusiastically to teaching in such sessions. For example, they show good speaking skills; they are confident communicators and show positive attitudes to reading and writing when given the opportunity. Teaching in the best lessons is dynamic and a brisk pace of work is maintained throughout the session. There is often a well-planned variety of activities with good focus on developing Welsh oral skills.

In a few sessions, practitioners do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of Welsh and do not set high enough expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Where standards are adequate or lower in Welsh Language Development, practitioners do not set appropriate expectations about children’s achievement in oral, reading and writing skills. They do not offer children sufficient opportunities to consolidate their learning or challenge their learning further. Work to challenge more able children, in particular, is not well planned.

⁸ The Annual Report of HMCI for Education and Training in Wales 2010-2011 Section 2, Settings for children under five, Page 38

⁹ The Annual Report of HMCI for Education and Training in Wales 2010-2011 Section 2, Primary schools, Page 6

Schemes of work

The best settings and schools plan well and have detailed schemes of work. A few of these schemes have been adapted from the schemes of work prepared by the local Athrawon Bro service.

The best Welsh schemes of work are detailed and cover the requirements for Welsh Language Development in the Foundation Phase. They enable practitioners to plan and deliver high quality teaching which builds on previous learning. Practitioners know exactly what they have to teach and learning objectives are clear. They identify teaching approaches such as whole-class activities, group work, pair work or individual work. They also clearly identify resource requirements.

In many local authority Welsh advisory services, the Athrawon Bro teams support schools by preparing detailed schemes of work for Foundation Phase practitioners. These schemes are often linked to local and national resources, often on DVD. However, not all practitioners adapt their schemes sufficiently, for example to meet the needs of mixed-age classes or higher-attaining children. Although reading and writing feature in the schemes of work, they do not always transfer effectively into classroom practice.

Planning for progression

Planning for progression in children's Welsh language skills is underdeveloped in most schools and settings. This means that children repeat the same work even when children have mastered a particular topic. Conversely, children do not have enough long-term consolidation as they progress to higher levels. Very few of the schools and settings visited have detailed planning for progression in their Welsh language learning.

Curriculum time

Although most schools and settings devote a suitable amount of time to teaching Welsh, a few do not. In these schools and settings, the time dedicated to Welsh Language Development varies too much. There is not enough direct teaching of Welsh within focussed activities or in continuous and enhanced activities.

Information and communication technology

Information and communication technology offers many opportunities for pupils learning Welsh. It raises pupils' self-confidence and motivation in reading Welsh. It can motivate pupils to play an active part in the learning process.

During our visits, practitioners in schools use interactive whiteboards well to present work and to engage children in the session.

Sessions that are judged to be at least good in the use of information and communication technology in Welsh are characterised by practitioners who offer children:

- regular opportunities to practise their skills in Welsh using a range of media, such as Welsh stories on CDs, interactive games, television programmes and DVDs;
- regular opportunities to use interactive whiteboards to practise reading and writing skills;
- opportunities to hear good models of Welsh pronunciation and intonation;
- up-to-date reading materials through the use of resources from the national grid for learning; and
- opportunities to draft and redraft their written work using a word processor.

MY FAVOURITE SANDWICH

In one Year 1 class in an infant school, the children were given a challenge to devise a questionnaire about their favourite sandwich. The children asked each member of the class a series of questions in Welsh.

- Child 1:** Bore da, pwy wyt ti?
Child 2: Hannah ydw i.
Child 1: Wyt ti'n hoffi brecheddanau caws?
Child 2: Ydw.
Child 1: Wyt ti'n hoffi brecheddanau cyw iâr?
Child 2: Ydw.
Child 1: Wyt ti'n hoffi brecheddanau wyau?
Child 2: Nac ydw. Ych a fi!
Child 1: Diolch yn fawr.

When the children completed the questionnaire, they entered all the data into a database to produce a simple bar chart.

The practitioner marked the work using the assessment for learning technique of two positive comments and a new target.

Using incidental Welsh throughout the day

Incidental language teaching refers to interactions between adults and children that arise naturally in an unstructured situation where adults transmit new information or give children practice in developing a communication skill. Often these interactions may be questions, such as:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 'Wyt ti eisiau...?' | Do you want...? |
| Wyt ti'n hoffi | |
| 'Ga i...?' | May I have...? |

Many practitioners use incidental Welsh regularly and well in their classrooms. The majority of children understand a range of familiar commands and respond accurately in most classes observed.

USING INCIDENTAL LANGUAGE IN OUTDOOR PLAY IN A NURSERY

In one nursery, practitioners at the setting regularly use incidental language in the outdoor area for a planned play activity.

Practitioners invited children to play on a variety of large play resources to develop the children's gross motor skills. All of the practitioners worked with small groups and gave a range of commands, such as:

Rhedwch – Run
Cerddwch – Walk
Sgipiwch – Skip
Eisteddwch – Sit
Stopiwch – Stop

All of the children listened attentively and followed the instructions well. They all enjoyed the activity and had fun in playing on the yard.

Many practitioners introduce simple words and phrases incidentally during the course of children's play. This vocabulary is practised regularly and consolidated throughout the session within the daily routine of the class. For example:

'Bore da blant'	Good morning children
'Mae'n amser tacluso'	It's time to tidy things away
'Mae'n amser chwarae'	It's playtime

Practitioners usually keep the incidental language phrases short and often give additional prompts if children are unsure or do not understand. The use of incidental Welsh is often planned and recorded in the Welsh Language Development medium term plans. However, very few schools and settings build progression into incidental language and in primary schools; in particular, children often hear the same phrases throughout their time in primary school.

REGISTRATION IN WELSH

In a reception class in an infant school, pupils' registration is carried out as a song. Children sing their answer to the teacher's question. They also repeat language patterns sung by the teacher for example:

- Teacher:** Jac?
Child: Yma, Miss Jones.
Teacher: Oliver? Ble mae Oliver?
Child: Mae Oliver yn absennol.
Mae Oliver yn Awstralia.
Teacher: Ble mae Megan?
Child: Mae Megan yn absennol.
Mae Megan wedi mynd i'r ysbyty.

All the children respond appropriately. The teacher then proceeds to ask if children want lunch in school and they reply. She also varies the question according to the confidence of the individual child in speaking Welsh:

- Teacher:** Wyt ti eisiau cinio Daisy?
Child: Ydw
Teacher: Cinio neu brechdanau Harry?
Child: Ga i ginio, os gwelwch yn dda?
Teacher: Oes bocs bwyd gyda ti Lucy?
Child: Oes
Teacher: Oes bocs bwyd gyda ti Jacob?
Child: Nac oes, ga i ginio os gwelwch yn dda?

These oral exercises are repeated every morning, and enable the children to build up a good range of relevant vocabulary and responses in the context of the classroom's daily procedures.

Another successful scheme that practitioners implement in many classes in schools is the 'helpwr heddiw' system. A 'helpwr heddiw', (today's helper) helps the teacher for the day. He or she helps the practitioner with the usual classroom routines, often by giving and collecting books and generally helping around the class using words and phrases they hear adults in class using.

'HELPWR HEDDIW' – TODAY'S HELPER

Every pupil within the class has the opportunity to be 'helpwr heddiw'. The 'helpwr heddiw' often wears a badge to show the importance of this role.

The 'helpwr heddiw' assists the class teacher to direct activities through the medium of Welsh. The child asks a set of familiar questions and uses commands to direct the rest of the class. As children progress through the Foundation Phase, the 'helpwr heddiw' questions become progressively more challenging to ensure progression in their language learning.

Many practitioners are making better use of the outdoors as an exciting and stimulating additional learning environment where children can develop their skills across all areas of learning. When Welsh outdoor activities are introduced as fun activities, children enjoy the activities and learn new Welsh phrases well.

USING THE OUTDOORS TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILLS: PLANTING FLOWERS IN THE NURSERY GARDEN

In one setting, the practitioner introduced the activity of planting flowers in the nursery garden by telling a simple Welsh story, written by the practitioner. All the words used in the story had been introduced in a previous session. All of the children listened attentively and answered simple questions about the contents of the story and knew the key vocabulary of 'palu', (to dig) 'plannu', (to plant) and 'dŵr' (water). They also sang a song about gardening using the same vocabulary. In small groups, the children then went into the garden and planted the flowers with either a learning support assistant or the lead practitioner.

All of the children enjoyed this practical activity and could use a range of simple Welsh words and phrases confidently and accurately.

During our classroom visits, a few practitioners in schools used drilling exercises effectively in introducing new Welsh words or phrases. Drilling exercises give the class, either individually or as a group, an opportunity to practise new language forms. It can be as simple as repeating a word or phrase, or repeating entire sentences several times to help children to memorise new Welsh language patterns. Effective drilling can help develop children's listening skills. It can also help children to get their tongues around new Welsh phrases, sounds and words. Drilling gives children opportunities to get immediate feedback on the accuracy of their pronunciation from practitioners.

ASSESSMENT

There is a requirement for schools to assess and report to parents on Welsh Language Development at the end of the Foundation Phase. However, schools are not required to collect data on individual children's progress in Welsh Language Development. There is no standard assessment data available at school, local authority or national level. The only formal assessment of children's progress in Welsh as a second language occurs at the end of key stage 2. There is no systematic reporting mechanism to track children's progression in Welsh from their early education in settings to the end of the Foundation Phase and onwards to the end of key stage 2. This has implications for tracking pupils' progress in Welsh second language.

The Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy allows for the possibility that some learners will access Welsh-medium education at a stage after the age of three. This may mean that children's initial experiences of Welsh-language provision through the Foundation Phase could provide the basis and impetus for children to transfer to a Welsh-medium school before the age of seven. To enable children to make this transfer smoothly, schools need to monitor children's progress accurately in Welsh Language Development.

DEVELOPING A WRITING PORTFOLIO FOR WELSH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

In one school, practitioners have collected a wide variety of samples of children's work that demonstrates children's progress in developing knowledge and skills in Welsh Language Development. This portfolio provides useful information and valuable evidence for practitioners to keep track of what learners know and can do in Welsh.

The portfolio includes samples of children's written work such as letters, simple stories and worksheets. Practitioners use this portfolio well to analyse children's learning and progress, as well as exemplifying the different types of writing introduced in Welsh from nursery to the end of the Foundation Phase. Practitioners also use the portfolio as a guide to the levels of work they should expect from pupils of different abilities and to assist with standardising and moderating children's work.

The portfolio is an important source of evidence used by key stage 2 staff to plan Welsh language progression.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Assessment for learning can be described as any assessment activity that informs the next steps of children's learning. This type of formative assessment focuses on the learner's achievements and ways in which he or she can move forward. In Welsh Language Development, children should know where they are, where they need to go and how best to get there. All practitioners use praise and encouragement to motivate their children in learning Welsh in the sessions observed.

Many practitioners in the schools visited use only a few assessment for learning techniques appropriately. Assessment for learning is one of the weakest aspects of the teaching of Welsh. For instance, practitioners are not always aware of what stage children have reached in previous sessions and there is no clear link between children's learning and lesson planning. Children have little idea of how well they are progressing in the different skills in Welsh and how they might improve.

Where practitioners are confident with assessment for learning techniques, children often make good decisions about their learning. In many schools visited, the 'Two Stars and a Wish' (two positive comments and a new target) system provides a useful structure to support children in learning the skills of peer and self-assessment. This results in useful information that can then feed back into the teaching and learning cycle.

In summary, in sessions where provision is judged to be at least good, practitioners:

- have clear objectives that focus on ensuring that children gain Welsh Language Development knowledge and skills;
- have well-planned schemes of work that develop children's oral, reading and writing skills;
- have a good knowledge of the Welsh content to be taught;
- use clear and precise pronunciation of Welsh words and phrases, which provides a good model for children and supports their oral skills;
- have efficient classroom organisation and management, including effective support from learning support assistants in whole-class lessons;
- use planned short teaching sessions and limited new content to cope with the shorter concentration spans of young children;
- use puppets or objects to add fun and an element of surprise in the session;
- use action songs and rhymes to encourage a physical response;
- use stories in Welsh to develop children's listening skills;
- frequently revise and consolidate previously taught Welsh phrases and skills;
- clearly direct questioning, feedback and praise;
- use a good, often brisk, pace to teaching and learning;
- give opportunities for children to work in pairs and groups to support each other's learning;
- use a range of assessment for learning techniques; and
- use a range of good resources.

Where provision is judged to be only adequate, practitioners:

- do not revise previously taught Welsh vocabulary and phrases sufficiently well to consolidate children's learning;
- do not repeat or practise new Welsh words and phrases sufficiently so that children are often unsure how to pronounce Welsh words correctly;
- give only limited opportunities to children to apply their newly acquired Welsh language in new situations;
- have low expectations or lack challenge in what children can achieve in the session;
- do not give children enough opportunities to practise their Welsh language skills outside the classroom;
- have imprecise or inaccurate Welsh pronunciation;
- use a limited range of resources; and
- do not use their learning support assistants effectively to enhance learning.

3 LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is at least good in most settings and schools visited and this is also reflected in the Annual report for 2010-2011, which said:

“Leadership is good or better in most settings inspected. In the very few settings where leadership is excellent, leaders encourage staff to reflect on their own practice and to find better ways of doing things.”¹⁰

In primary and infant schools we noted:

“Leadership is good or better overall in three-quarters of the schools inspected. In around one-in-ten, leadership is excellent. In these schools, leaders have high expectations and focus strongly on improving standards and quality.”¹¹

Most senior leaders and managers visited are committed to teaching Welsh effectively, and most subject leaders or co-ordinators in schools are aware of what their roles entail and know how to deliver Welsh across the school. However, a few headteachers and leaders are unsure of how to monitor progress in Welsh. This is often due to their own lack of expertise in Welsh and in Welsh teaching methods.

In the best schools and settings, a senior member of staff takes the lead on Welsh Language Development. This role often includes taking an overview of the provision in the Area of Learning, which is well informed by regular monitoring. This monitoring looks at issues such as inconsistencies in current practice and informs the process for setting targets and for school self-evaluation.

¹⁰ The Annual Report of HMCI for Education and Training in Wales 2010-2011
Section 2, Settings for children under five, Page 6

¹¹ The Annual Report of HMCI for Education and Training in Wales 2010-2011
Section 2, Primary schools, Page 8

GOOD PRACTICE IN USING SELF-EVALUATION ACTION RESEARCH

One nursery school in south-west Wales developed an action research approach to self-evaluation. This provides the school with an effective vehicle to focus on specific aspects of its provision and standards. For example, during the autumn term, the concept of 'drilling' language patterns was discussed at a staff meeting. Staff developed a whole-school strategy and approach and practitioners began to implement the strategy immediately. The headteacher visited each class around a month later with the advisory teacher for Welsh to monitor provision.

An 'action research question' emerged from the outcomes of the class observations and ensuing discussions. The following focus was agreed by the whole staff:

To what extent are we providing for continuity, differentiation and progression in Welsh Language Development?

To answer the question, school leaders carried out focused observations, provided staff with questionnaires and interviewed groups of pupils. Staff analysed and discussed observations and identified specific targets for each class. These findings will inform the school's next training session.

The headteacher reported that sometimes the evidence can be ambiguous and it is a challenge to 'unpick' the main messages to identify themes and priorities. Although it is too early to measure the impact of this action research approach, the school is establishing a clear understanding of provision and standards in Welsh Language Development. The clear focus enables the schools to identify what it needs to do to improve standards, including identifying staff training needs, inconsistencies in planning, teaching issues and groups of pupils requiring further support.

The best schools and settings visited are characterised by their consistent approach to ensuring that every practitioner fully supports all children in learning to speak, read and write Welsh confidently.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP TO DELIVER WELSH THROUGHOUT THE DAY IN A NURSERY SCHOOL

In a nursery school in a Communities First area in north-east Wales, the whole senior leadership team share a vision of raising standards in Welsh. Staff share this vision and are committed to improving children's Welsh language skills. All staff, irrespective of their own level of proficiency in Welsh, make an excellent effort to speak Welsh throughout the day.

There is a clear focus on planning for the development of all three Welsh skills. The school provides very good support material for staff that are not as confident as others.

There is a positive Welsh ethos in the school. All children are aware of what it means to be Welsh, live in Wales and are keen to learn the language. The work produced at the end of the Foundation Phase is of a very good standard.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN PROMOTING WELSH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

In another infant school in south-west Wales, the headteacher provides very strong leadership. She is committed to ensuring that pupils across the school gain deep insight and understanding of the Welsh language and their heritage. She conveys this message consistently to existing parents and to parents applying for places at the school. Parents and prospective parents are clear about the school's aims and its emphasis on Welsh.

The school has strong links with parents to support Welsh Language Development. For instance, the school provides a pamphlet outlining the main words and phrases used by the children and parents are encouraged to practise the words at home with their children.

Welsh Language Development is part of the school's self-evaluation cycle and there is a regular focus on evaluating standards and provision every two years. One significant element in the school's improvement strategy is the modelling of good practice by practitioners. There is regular dissemination of good practice in delivering effective Welsh Language Development in twilight sessions. Staff are trained on paired and guided reading in Welsh, drilling Welsh language patterns, and developing Welsh writing skills.

Many schools and settings build a strong partnership with parents and carers to support Welsh Language Development learning. Often the schools and settings inform parents during 'meet the teacher' evenings of the importance of learning Welsh and the positive ethos that the school aims to create towards learning Welsh. Parents and carers are often encouraged to support their children's learning through the use of 'character sacks' of Welsh characters, such as Tedi Twt, Dafydd y ddraig and Tomos, which are sent home to reinforce the Welsh patterns that they have learnt in school. The school's website also provides parents/carers with a list of Welsh sentence patterns/ role-play scenarios that the children are learning.

WELSH CLASSES FOR PARENTS

In one infant school in south-west Wales, the headteacher teaches two Welsh evening classes a week at the school for parents and other members of the community. This enables parents to understand the Welsh words and phrases introduced in Welsh Language Development sessions in class. It also helps parents to support their children's learning by giving them confidence to read to and with their children at home.

PREPARING WELSH SUPPORT MATERIALS FOR PARENTS

One setting for parents in north-east Wales has prepared a detailed booklet for parents to help them understand the Welsh words and vocabulary that the setting uses. This booklet consists of a range of simple Welsh phrases that are used daily at the setting, a range of Welsh songs and phrases about the weather. The booklet enables parents to support their children's learning at home.

In summary, where senior leaders are committed to introducing Welsh effectively, they set high expectations for children's progress through ambitious and realistic targets for Welsh by ensuring that there is:

- strong support from senior management and governors;
- a high priority given to Welsh Language Development;
- a strong focus on Welsh Language Development in whole-school planning, with a clear and targeted programme of work;
- sufficient resources (time and staff) allocated to deliver Welsh Language Development successfully;
- relevant training for all practitioners who teach Welsh, based on clear auditing, to improve the quality and consistency of teaching;
- accurate self-evaluation and clear action plans in place for improvement;
- established assessment procedures being applied to Welsh;
- effective use of national frameworks and guidance;
- high-quality resources, including information and communication technology; and
- a monitoring process for both the quality and consistency of teaching Welsh Language Development and its outcomes (as part of the school's normal monitoring arrangements).

Where there are shortcomings in leadership and management, inspectors find that:

- leaders and managers do not feel confident enough to judge Welsh language provision;
- there is limited planning for Welsh Language Development;
- there is limited monitoring and evaluation of Welsh provision;
- there is limited use of assessment;
- the school shows over-reliance on the services of the Athrawon Bro service to deliver teaching sessions;
- there is a lack of Welsh training opportunities for practitioners; and
- there is no clear strategy to build up capacity within the school to teach Welsh through training or recruitment.

4 TRAINING AND SUPPORT

TRAINING

There are three interdependent aspects of Welsh training that schools and settings should consider:

- the confidence of practitioners in their own use of Welsh;
- the quality of initial training and induction; and
- the range of in-service training and professional development of all those responsible for Welsh Language Development to update their skills and knowledge.

To establish high-quality work in Welsh Language Development, settings and schools require regular training. There is a clear link between quality of training and its impact on teaching Welsh Language Development. Where practitioners in schools and settings receive regular training and support, they often feel more confident in teaching Welsh.

The Welsh Government has established the Sabbaticals Scheme, which offers Welsh-language and methodology training to practitioners who need to develop the confidence and specialist terminology to teach Welsh as a second language. The Foundation Level course offers Welsh language training to teachers in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 who wish to:

- develop their Welsh language skills to Foundation level;
- take the first step on a recognised path to learning Welsh with the long term aim of teaching Welsh or through the medium of Welsh; and
- contribute to bilingualism in their schools and the creation of a Welsh language ethos.

The Sabbaticals Scheme is aimed at those with a basic knowledge of Welsh and with the motivation to commit to 11 weeks of intensive training. The Welsh Government will reimburse up to 55 days' supply costs for this course. The scheme is open to primary teachers across Wales and 114 have completed

the new Foundation course.

The Welsh Government has also developed a month-long, entry-level course for classroom assistants who work in English-medium or bilingual primary schools. The course provides classroom assistants with the vocabulary and linguistic skills necessary to support their teaching colleagues. The Welsh Government reimburses up to 20 days' supply costs for this course. A total of 57 classroom assistants have completed the course.

Another Foundation Phase initiative funded by the Welsh Government is the 'Geiriau Bach' project that is designed for early years' workers who either speak no Welsh or lack confidence in using the language. It offers practitioners an opportunity to acquire basic Welsh language skills and learn how to use the language in stimulating play with children. This scheme is run across Wales and in 2011-2012 a total of 285 practitioners attended the course.

Where Welsh Language Development training is delivered in-house in schools, this includes:

- demonstrating high-quality teaching in class with practitioners either observing or team teaching with the advisory teacher;
- sharing planning and resources in twilight sessions or on training days;
- providing training and advice for practitioners and learning support assistants who are working with groups of children to develop their oral skills in a variety of situations including outdoor play; and
- supporting new practitioners, such as newly qualified practitioners and experienced staff from elsewhere who are unfamiliar with the school's or the setting's approach to delivering Welsh Language Development, through support for planning and resources.

Not all practitioners in schools receive enough support in delivering Welsh in their classrooms. Many practitioners reported that they have had only limited training opportunities to develop their Welsh skills. Practitioners' access to Welsh training in many settings is very limited, often due to difficulties in releasing staff to attend. The cost of paying practitioners to attend training outside their normal working hours can also be a problem in small settings.

In recent years, rising numbers of support staff, especially classroom assistants, have played an increasingly important role in the teaching of Welsh Language Development. Where support staff receive Welsh training,

they develop their skills well.

In many schools, audits are conducted of the knowledge and Welsh skills of school staff. However, it is not always clear how this information is used to inform future training needs.

A few local authorities arrange courses for Welsh co-ordinators in order to improve leadership in this Area of Learning. These sessions are often organised in-house by the local authority. There are a few instances of effective training through networking where a cluster of schools work together. Other local authorities have developed professional learning communities to develop specific aspects of Welsh Language Development. However, this aspect of training is not fully developed in all authorities and training for settings is generally limited.

SUPPORT

Many of the schools visited receive specialist support from local authority advisory teachers and from the local Athrawon Bro service. The Athrawon Bro service is a specialist team of Welsh language teachers, employed by local authorities who work with practitioners, in primary schools. Athrawon bro have an important role in challenging and supporting schools to raise standards. During our visits many schools reported that children respond naturally and enthusiastically to the visits made by members of the local authority's athrawon bro service. However, most practitioners consider that such visits are too infrequent.

In a few of the schools visited, the athro bro is the lead person in monitoring and evaluating standards and this is a major aspect of his role. The athro bro can give a good outside perspective on standards and provision in Welsh Language Development. He may also identify good practice within the school and encourage its dissemination. However, by transferring the lead monitoring role to the athro bro, leaders and managers do not understand the strength and areas for improvement in relation to Welsh Language Development in their school. As a result, some schools become over-dependent on the teaching and guidance of the athro bro. The school can cease to build its own expertise in Welsh, and may suffer a dilution of in-house capacity to improve provision and standards.

In other schools visited, the athrawes fro takes on a supporting role and focuses on practitioners needing extra support or newly qualified practitioners. These schools find this is a good use of her time. However, this is not sustainable on a weekly basis.

Generally, very little regular specialist Welsh language support is available for settings. Where support is available, settings use it well to enhance their Welsh Language provision. However, not all authorities have enough staff available to share best practice in the delivery of Welsh Language Development with all settings. As a result, the development of this Area of Learning in the Foundation Phase is hindered by a lack of staff expertise.

APPENDIX 1:

EVIDENCE BASE

The findings and recommendations in this report draw on:

- inspector visits to a representative sample of 14 settings, nursery and primary schools across Wales. During visits inspectors undertook a range of activities to gather evidence, including interviewing senior leaders and practitioners, observing Welsh Language Development and other sessions and scrutinising samples of children's written work and school documentation;
- discussions with 15 headteachers and senior leaders;
- discussions with local authority advisers in two authorities and the inspection reports of the 22 local authorities; and
- information from 238 primary and nursery schools and 115 settings that were inspected between September 2010 and July 2011.

APPENDIX 2:

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EVALUATION TO PROMOTE IMPROVEMENT IN WELSH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The questions that follow have been designed to assist leaders, managers and practitioners in reviewing the Welsh Language Development area of work in the Foundation Phase.

STANDARDS

Are children able to:

- listen, understand and respond to a range of familiar commands accurately;
- listen and respond to a range of simple questions;
- view and listen carefully to DVDs and respond appropriately;
- speak clearly, using simple words, greetings and expressions with developing confidence and accuracy;
- use simple Welsh phrases spontaneously in role play situations;
- read simple words and phrases accurately;
understand Welsh stories that are read to them;
- write simple Welsh phrases accurately;
- write in a range of genres, for example lists, letters and diary extracts in Welsh;
- use information and communication technology to analyse and interpret data in Welsh;
- write their own short stories in Welsh;
- build on their previous Welsh learning successfully, broaden their knowledge and understanding and develop new Welsh skills in a range of contexts;
- be creatively involved in their own learning and put their own ideas into practice;
- experience first-hand learning in Welsh, in imaginative, stimulating and challenging ways in both the indoor and outdoor environment;
- acquire, develop, practise, apply and refine their Welsh skills in a variety of contexts across the other six Areas of Learning; and
- progressively develop and gain independence in their Welsh oracy, reading and writing skills?

TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Do practitioners:

- have high expectations for children’s achievements in Welsh Language Development;
- work closely together to support children’s learning needs, such as planning together and sharing Welsh assessment information;
- plan and identify the Welsh Language Development learning potential of activities in the other six Areas of Learning;
- link oral skills with reading and writing activities in Welsh Language Development so that children learn that these modes are interdependent;
- teach Welsh Language Development skills explicitly and provide work so that children have opportunities to apply what they have learnt for themselves;
- scaffold children’s Welsh Language Development learning through approaches such as drilling vocabulary, group and pair work to consolidate language learning;
- use Welsh as an incidental language regularly throughout the Welsh Language Development session;
- use motivating resources, including DVDs, big books, the outdoor environment, library and information and communication technology, to help children become enthusiastic learners;
- monitor children’s progress in developing Welsh Language Development skills, particularly fluency, accuracy and confidence;
- provide guidance and feedback to individual children so that they know what they are learning and how well they are doing;
- provide opportunities for children to assess their own and others’ work; and
- closely monitor children’s development and progress, use assessment information to inform day-to-day planning and help children to understand how well they are doing and how they can improve?

CURRICULUM PLANNING & THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Do practitioners make certain that:

- they plan for effective use of the indoor and outdoor learning environment in Welsh Language Development;
- such plans build effectively on children's previous learning and ensure progression to the next stage in their learning;
- work is well matched to children's learning needs and challenges those who are more able;
- plans for Welsh Language Development integrate the learning and teaching of oracy, reading and writing, have clear teaching objectives and the specific knowledge, understanding and skills that children should gain; and
- Welsh oracy, reading and writing tasks and activities are interesting, varied and relevant?

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Do leaders and managers:

- have sufficient Welsh skills to monitor children's progress in Welsh Language Development;
- ensure that all practitioners have sound Welsh Language Development expertise and knowledge;
- ensure that all practitioners receive regular and relevant training for teaching Welsh Language Development;
- have a well-planned programme to review and evaluate the impact of Welsh Language Development initiatives and use the findings to plan for further improvement;
- ensure that there is a strong partnership with parents and carers to support Welsh Language Development learning;
- make regular evaluations/audits of the range of children's work to make certain that all children have full, rich and challenging experiences of oracy, reading and writing in Welsh Language Development;
- make certain that the learning and teaching of oracy, reading and writing in Welsh are as good as they can be; and
- have a designated practitioner who leads, advises, supports and challenges work in Welsh Language Development?

GLOSSARY

Areas of Learning

Seven Areas of Learning (or six Areas of Learning where Welsh* is the main language of communication) describe an appropriate curriculum for three to seven-year-olds in the Foundation Phase. They must complement each other and work together to provide a cross-curricular approach to form a practical relevant curriculum. The Areas of Learning include:

- creative development.
- physical development; personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- Welsh Language Development;
- mathematical development;
- language, literacy and communication; and
- personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity.

Assessment for learning

An important influence on children's educational achievement is their understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to make progress. When children are actively involved in formative assessment processes, such as setting targets, undertaking peer or self-assessment, recognising progress in their written work etc, they improve their motivation, independence, confidence and attainment. Known as Assessment for Learning, this powerful tool enables children to improve their own learning and occurs at all stages of the learning process.

Athrawes fro

A member of the Athrawon Bro service, often translated as an area advisory teacher.

Athrawon Bro

The Athrawon Bro service is a specialist team of Welsh language practitioners working with practitioners in schools in most local authorities. They promote best practice and high quality teaching and learning in Welsh by giving practical support for schools in teaching Welsh and using Welsh as a medium for communication. They also deliver in-service education and training courses and develop a range of Welsh teaching and learning resources.

Direct teaching

The direct teaching of Welsh in the Foundation Phase means that practitioners:

- give most classroom instructions to children in Welsh;
- teach everyday Welsh vocabulary and sentences;
- develop children's oral communication skills by building up carefully organised question and answer exchanges between staff and children;
- emphasise correct Welsh pronunciation;
- ensure that children speak approximately 80% of the time during the session; and
- encourage children to ask questions as well as answer them at the earliest opportunity.

Outdoor learning

There is a strong emphasis on outdoor learning in the Foundation Phase. The outdoor learning environment should be an extension of the indoor learning environment. Generally, taking account of health and safety matters, children should be able to move freely between the indoors and outdoors.

Oracy

The development of listening, speaking and viewing skills.

Practitioners

This generic term refers to the adults that work with children in the Foundation Phase. The term includes practitioners and classroom assistants.

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