
Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response

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Background information about Estyn

Estyn is the Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, Estyn is independent of the Welsh Government.

Estyn's principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, Estyn must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by education and training providers in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Estyn's remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and teacher education and training.

Estyn may give advice to the Assembly on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, Estyn has set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

Introduction

Estyn welcomes the opportunity to take part in the call for evidence for the Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry, 'Speak for Change'. It supports the focus on pupils' oracy, as an important strand of literacy.

Since 2009, Estyn has produced several thematic reports, which include references to the provision for oracy¹ (see appendix 2 for a list of relevant thematic reports) and standards of learners' skills in schools in Wales. These reports consider the impact of national policy developments on pupils' standards and the quality of schools' provision for oracy education, such as:

- the introduction of the foundation phase² for pupils aged three to seven (Welsh Government, 2008)
- the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework³ (Welsh Government, 2013)
- funding for schools through the pupil development grant⁴ to improve the attainment and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils
- new qualifications, for example the Welsh Baccalaureate⁵, and
- strategies to promote the use of the Welsh language⁶.

A list of the reports (2009-2019) and a synthesis of the key recommendations for settings, schools and colleges in Wales relevant to this Inquiry, are included in Appendix 2.

Summary

- Evidence from inspection and thematic reviews shows there have been improvements in provision to develop pupils' literacy skills in Welsh and English in Wales in non-maintained settings, nursery, primary and secondary schools in the past ten years. Generally, this has had a positive impact on pupils' standards, particularly in oracy and reading⁷.
- Overall, schools across Wales now have a stronger focus on reducing the impact of poverty than at the beginning of Estyn's previous inspection cycle (2010-2017).
- In recent years, there has been a better balance of learning experiences for pupils in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- In general, provision to develop pupils' speaking skills is good in the primary phase and this is particularly strong in Welsh-medium schools.

¹ Estyn uses terminology in line with Welsh Government policy for curriculum and standards at the time of reporting. The Welsh Government's definition of literacy includes oracy (see appendix 1). Estyn refers to 'oracy', 'communication' and 'speaking and listening' in its publications.

² Research suggests that children do not benefit from extensive formal teaching until about the age of six or seven and the foundation phase framework sets out to provide an active and experiential approach to learning. The foundation phase approach emphasises the importance of the child being at the centre of all learning and the significance of children's wellbeing. It advocates a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities that should take place within indoor and outdoor environments. Oracy is given a high priority in the foundation phase.

³ Welsh Government (2013). *The National Literacy and Numeracy Framework*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

⁴ Previously called the 'Pupil Deprivation Grant' and renamed in March 2017.

⁵ Estyn (2018). *New qualifications*. Cardiff: Estyn.

⁶ Welsh-medium Education Strategy (2010); Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011; *A living language: a language for living – Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17* (2012); *A living language: a language for living – Moving forward* (2014); *Taking Wales Forward 2016–2021* (2016); *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* (2017).

⁷ Estyn (2018). *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2016-2017*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

- While most children make good progress from their starting points in oracy during their primary education, the language development between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged pupils tends to widen rather than narrow as they progress through school.
- In the secondary sector, a minority of schools do not develop pupils' oracy well enough. Reasons for this include weak teaching and a greater focus on subject knowledge than skills, particularly at key stage 4.
- At school level, the provision to develop pupils' oracy skills can be impeded by barriers such as insufficient time being made available and priority being given to other tasks such as writing and examination preparation.
- There has been a lack of professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop their approaches to supporting the development of pupils' oracy skills in the secondary sector.
- A range of contextual issues, such as absence, additional educational needs and poverty, contribute to inequality in accessing oracy education.

The Speak for Change Inquiry consultation questions

i) Value and impact: What is the impact of oracy education at different life stages from early years through to employment, and how can the delivery of effective oracy education contribute to individual and societal outcomes?

- 1 Words are part of meaning-making experiences from very early in a child's development. Vocabulary development is exponential in early childhood, with new word learning being rapid at age two where children acquire around ten new words daily (Goswami, 2015, p.12)⁸. Language development shows marked variation in early childhood, where the quality and quantity of talk to young children is developmentally important. Hart and Risley's landmark study (1995)⁹ identified 'remarkable differences' in the early vocabulary experiences of young children. By age 3, children from families with high socio-economic status knew, on average, 600 words more than children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition, they knew a fewer number of word meanings and less about each word's meaning. By age 10 or 11, this gap had widened to an average of around 4,000 words (Biemiller and Slonim, 2001¹⁰; Hart and Risley, 2005).
- 2 Language development is critical to cognitive development (Goswami, 2015)¹¹. Research emphasises the importance of talk for stimulating children's cognitive development (Mercer et al, 2017)¹², helping learners to develop their ideas and acquire

⁸ Goswami, U. (2015) *Children's Cognitive Development and Learning*. York: Cambridge Primary Review Trust.

⁹ Hart, B. and Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*. Baltimore: Brooks.

¹⁰ Biemiller, A. and Slonim, N. (2001). 'Estimating Root Word Vocabulary Growth in Normative and Advantaged Populations: Evidence for a Common Sequence of Vocabulary Acquisition'. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 93 (3), 498 – 520.

¹¹ *Op.cit.*

¹² Mercer, N., Warwick, P. and Ahmed, A. (2017). *An Oracy Assessment Toolkit: linking research and development in the assessment of students' spoken language skills at age 11-12*. Cambridge: The University of Cambridge.

understanding, to explore and make sense of their world (Estyn, 2009)¹³, and to engage in society.

- 3 Speaking and building vocabulary (along with listening and understanding words) are the vital foundations that enable children to learn to read (Save the children, 2015)¹⁴. Research studies show that vocabulary development and vocabulary knowledge are critical to supporting academic success because they are highly predictive of future reading comprehension ability (Christ and Wang, 2011)¹⁵. Less vocabulary knowledge means pupils are more likely to experience difficulty with reading comprehension and in their learning in other curriculum subjects (Hart and Risley, 1995¹⁶; Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin, 1990¹⁷; Biemiller, 2001¹⁸). Evidence shows that, alongside socio-economic status, vocabulary is one of the most significant factors in pupils achieving a grade A* - C at GCSE in mathematics, English language and English literature (Spencer et al, 2017)¹⁹. Improving pupils' oracy raises attainment in literacy and performance across subject areas. This also influences pupils' subject choices at higher levels of study, their future employment prospects and their life chances.
- 4 The purposeful teaching of speaking skills throughout a child's early years, primary and secondary education cannot be over-emphasised. Pupils need to learn *to* talk and they need to learn *through* talk, if they are to become confident and successful learners, critical thinkers, effective communicators and active citizens. The most effective schools use rich and varied contexts to teach pupils 'how' to talk. They plan relevant learning experiences that help pupils to think carefully and deliberately about the types of language they use. They support pupils to express and structure their thoughts and ideas effectively for different purposes and audiences. When teachers provide authentic and engaging opportunities for learning, pupils deepen their understanding of subjects and concepts *through* talk. They learn to discuss complex ideas, challenge and build upon each other's thinking, analyse, evaluate and reflect.
- 5 Where schools encourage and support pupils to appreciate the importance of their 'voice', those pupils generally do so confidently, appropriately and sensitively. Estyn's website (<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice>) contains many case studies of settings and schools in Wales that have improved pupils' oracy successfully.

ii) Provision and access: What is the current state of provision of oracy education across the UK, who is missing out and what factors create unequal access to oracy education?

- 6 Improving pupils' literacy, including oracy, was a priority in Wales throughout the 2010-2017 inspection cycle. The introduction of the foundation phase for three-to-seven year

¹³ Estyn (2009). *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged five to seven years*. Cardiff: Estyn.

¹⁴ Save the Children (2015) [Ready to Read: Closing the gap in early language skills so that every child in Wales can read well](#). [Online]. [Accessed 8 July 2019]

¹⁵ Tanya, C. and Wang, X.C. (2011). 'Closing the Vocabulary Gap?: A Review of Research on Early Childhood Vocabulary Practices'. *Reading Psychology* 32 (5), 426-458.

¹⁶ *Op.cit.*

¹⁷ Chall, J. S., Jacobs, V. A., and Baldwin, L. E. (1990). *The reading crisis: Why poor children fall behind*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

¹⁸ *Op.cit.*

¹⁹ Spencer, S., Clegg, J., Stackhouse, J. and Rush, R. (2017). 'Contribution of spoken language and socio-economic background to adolescents' educational achievement at aged 16 years'. *International Journal of Language Disorders* 52, 184-196.

olds²⁰, the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (Welsh Government, 2013)²¹ and revised national curriculum programmes of study (Welsh Government, 2015)²², have generally supported improved planning for learning in literacy in many schools in Wales. In 2016-2017, we identified that over the seven-year period, there had been a more systematic approach to planning opportunities for pupils to learn, apply and practise their literacy skills across the curriculum (Estyn, 2017, p.6)²³. Overall, this has had a positive impact on pupil standards, particularly oracy and reading (Estyn, 2017, p.19)²⁴.

- 7 In 2017-2018, when our new inspection cycle started, we identified most primary-aged pupils make good progress in developing their oracy skills from their relative starting points in the language of the setting or school. Notably, in many of the Welsh-medium settings, nursery and primary schools, practitioners are good language role models and develop pupils' vocabulary well. They are particularly effective in supporting those who come from non-Welsh speaking homes by introducing new vocabulary regularly and modelling specific language patterns carefully. In many Welsh-medium schools, pupils develop their communication skills equally well in both English and Welsh by the end of key stage 2 (Estyn, 2018, p.24).²⁵
- 8 In general, the foundation phase for three-to-seven year olds in Wales has supported a strong emphasis on developing pupils' oracy skills. The most effective settings and schools provide daily opportunities to develop pupils' speaking across all areas of learning. As a result, most younger pupils communicate well with each other and adults, extend their vocabulary and talk confidently about their experiences in school and at home in the language of the setting or school.
- 9 In key stage 2, most pupils continue to develop their use of spoken language well in the language of the school. In schools where standards of literacy are good or better, most pupils use vocabulary effectively to add detail when speaking about specific subjects. They often choose their words carefully to present an argument or point of view.
- 10 There are important shortcomings in the provision for Welsh language teaching as pupils move through key stage 2 in English-medium schools. As a result, too many pupils begin to lose confidence in their ability to speak the language. Pupils' transition from English-medium primary to secondary schools leads to a further decline in their progress in speaking. In three-quarters of secondary schools, pupils do not develop their Welsh speaking skills well enough in Welsh lessons or in other contexts (Estyn, 2018, p.39)²⁶.
- 11 Many pupils in Welsh-medium secondary schools talk well in Welsh, and many use their language skills confidently in different informal and formal contexts across the

²⁰ Welsh Government (2008). *The Foundation Phase for three-to-seven year olds in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

²¹ Welsh Government (2013). *The National Literacy and Numeracy Framework*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

²² Welsh Government (2015). *The English Programme of Study for Key Stages 2 and 3*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Welsh Government (2015). *Curriculum for Wales: Foundation Phase Framework (revised 2015)*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

²³ Estyn (2018). *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2016-2017*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ Estyn (2018). *Welsh in key stage 2 and key stage 3 in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools*. Cardiff: Estyn.

²⁶ *Ibid*

curriculum (Estyn, 2018)²⁷, although a few do not develop their oracy to the best of their ability. A few bilingual schools do not ensure that pupils make suitable progress from key stage 3 to key stage 4²⁸.

- 12 In further education colleges (Estyn, 2017)²⁹ many learners who learn in Welsh or bilingually have good oral Welsh language or bilingual skills. They speak confidently and correctly, and show a good grasp of vocabulary and subject terminology. However, around a third of learners say that they are only fairly confident orally at best, despite following courses in Welsh or having attended Welsh-medium schools. In the better examples, learners and their teachers converse informally in Welsh during classes and around the college. In a few cases in work-based learning training providers, reviews and assessment are undertaken in Welsh. However, this is often dependent on the geographical location and the provider's capacity in having Welsh speaking staff.
- 13 In English-medium secondary schools, only a majority of pupils develop strong oracy skills. These pupils listen and respond to others carefully. They use a wide general and subject-specific vocabulary and communicate their ideas clearly. They respond well to their teachers' or peers' questions and offer reasoned responses. In the few best cases, pupils engage well with one another in lively, well-natured discussions. They exhibit curiosity and ask as well as answer questions to develop their knowledge, understanding and critical thinking.
- 14 At A level (Estyn, 2018)³⁰, in school sixth forms and colleges in Wales, many learners speak confidently and make perceptive, well-considered points in class discussions. They engage maturely in debates and discussions and come to well-reasoned conclusions. A minority are particularly articulate and express sophisticated viewpoints based on a balanced consideration of evidence. These learners develop valuable debating and discussion skills that will benefit them in the future. Most learners listen carefully to their teachers and peers, and many are thoughtful in their responses to others' viewpoints. A majority of learners ask intelligent questions which reflect their sense of curiosity and their interest in the subjects that they study. These learners are confident in challenging the information that they receive and offer alternative interpretations which show their ability to approach their learning from different angles. A few learners are too passive and tend to accept information without due consideration or rely too heavily on the interpretations of others.
- 15 In work-based learning training providers, the majority of learners develop strong speaking and listening skills. Most learners regularly use these skills in their workplaces when conversing with colleagues, managers and customers. In other further education college programmes, many learners speak clearly and with confidence. However, in a minority of cases, learners do not practise and develop their literacy skills well enough through their vocational and academic programmes. In these cases, teachers do not always do enough to engage these learners to help develop their verbal communication skills. As a result, they do not always develop the communication skills required by employers.
- 16 There are a number of common factors evident in those schools where there is evidence of inequality to access effective provision for developing oracy. The most influential of these is weak teaching and, in particular, shortcomings in teachers' questioning skills. In the best cases, teachers ask incisive questions, which probe

²⁷ *Ibid*

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ Estyn (2017) *Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching and learning in further education*. Cardiff. Estyn.

³⁰ Estyn (2018) *A levels in sixth forms and further education colleges*. Cardiff. Estyn.

pupils' subject understanding, but simultaneously challenge them to develop their verbal responses. However, in too many cases, teachers are overly reliant upon closed questions, which are useful for establishing pupils' recall and knowledge, but which present insufficient opportunity for them to develop their oracy skills.

- 17 This is also the case in post-16 settings, such as with A level learners in sixth forms and colleges (Estyn, 2018)³¹. Many teachers pose thought-provoking questions to the whole class and follow this up with probing questions targeted at individuals. They offer high-quality verbal feedback during questioning sessions and while circulating. In a few cases, teachers' questioning does not challenge learners sufficiently or encourage them to expand on their answers. In addition, these teachers tend to answer their own questions or explain answers rather than leading learners through the process of coming to a conclusion. As a result, a few learners become too passive and do not develop their thinking skills well enough. Generally, across post-16 sectors, teachers use questioning techniques well to test learners understanding and knowledge, although they often miss opportunities to further develop learners' knowledge, confidence and progress.
- 18 Facilitating independent learning successfully is a particular strength of many A level teachers. For example, teachers plan activities that require learners to independently make connections and transfer their skills between different aspects of their course. In other examples, teachers make learners responsible for 'teaching' specific sections of a lesson to their peers or give them specific roles in order that they run their own debate. In these lessons, learners make strong progress. However, a few A level teachers do too much for learners and do not enable them to learn for themselves. These teachers also let a few pupils, generally the more able, dominate the lesson in terms of answering questions and leading discussions. As independent learning skills are crucial to success at A level, this hampers learners' progress.
- 19 Currently, in a few primary schools and a minority of secondary schools, pupils do not have enough worthwhile opportunities to take part in lessons that focus specifically on 'talk'. As a result, they do not develop and improve skills, such as questioning, challenging and building on the contributions of others, debating and speaking publicly. Further weaknesses in teaching include situations where teachers avoid, or at best limit, the use of group work or discussions in case it results in them losing control of the class.
- 20 Less effective schools view speaking solely as a skill that supports reading and writing, rather than as a skill which needs to be developed in its own right. In these schools, there is often a lack of explicit vocabulary teaching. Frequently, teachers' interventions and comments focus on what pupils are talking about rather than how they are saying it. Too many secondary teachers believe themselves to be under pressure to produce something tangible from pupils' learning. As a result, they focus upon writing and, at key stage 4 in particular, examination preparation.
- 21 Opportunities for pupils to develop their oracy skills are also limited in schools where there is a lack of effective coordination of provision for the development of literacy skills. This is most commonly where there have been changes in staffing, where the initiative is not supported robustly enough by senior leaders or where shortcomings in teachers' professional knowledge and skills have not been identified and addressed well enough. There remains a need for more effective specific professional learning opportunities for all teachers in oracy, particularly in the secondary sector.

³¹ *Ibid*

- 22 Schools in Wales are increasingly giving pupils a stronger and more influential voice in decisions that affect broader, whole school issues. Nearly all schools in Wales have a range of pupil groups, which represent other pupils and influence decisions within schools. In the most effective special schools, staff ensure pupils use a range of skills including speech, signing, eye-directed technology and a picture exchange system to communicate their opinions and ideas.
- 23 Participation in these groups has given pupils across Wales, valuable opportunities to develop their communication skills in more formal situations, such as presenting to the school's governing body or giving formal speeches to parents, visitors and people in public office. These varied contexts emphasise the importance of communication for taking an active role in society. It raises their awareness of the needs of others within their community and the wider world.
- 24 The four purposes of the curriculum, as set out in *Successful Futures* (Donaldson, 2015)³², have guided the design and development of Curriculum for Wales 2022. In response to the new curriculum, many primary schools are using the views and ideas of pupils to develop the school's curriculum and pedagogy, which means that pupils are getting more involved in what and how they learn. Pupils take pride in the strong voice that they are given. In the best examples, meaningful opportunities contribute to deepening pupils' understanding of learning through high-quality dialogue with their teachers and peers (Alexander, 2006)³³. They help them to develop as confident speakers and to become articulate in expressing their ideas and views.

iii) Barriers to improving oracy education: What are the barriers to provision of a quality oracy education for all, and what is the role of government and other bodies in incentivising provision?

- 25 A range of contextual issues contributes to inequality in accessing oracy education. In 2018, one-in-twenty pupils were absent for more than one fifth of the school year and Wales had the highest rate of pupils educated other than at school since 2010. In addition, pupils eligible for free school meals are over three times more likely to be excluded than their peers, and those with special educational needs at least five times more likely. Twenty percent of the population in many deprived areas of Wales are skilled to less than a level two qualification³⁴.
- 26 Poverty in Wales remains higher than the rest of the United Kingdom. While pupil attainment has risen, there has not been enough progress in narrowing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. A minority of settings and schools report a high proportion of children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, whose spoken language is

³² Donaldson, G. (2015). *Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

The four purposes of the curriculum are:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

³³ Alexander, R. (2006). *Towards Dialogic Teaching: Rethinking Classroom Talk* (3rd edition). York: Dialogos.

³⁴ Level 2 qualifications are: CSE - grade 1, GCSE - grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 or grades A*, A, B, C, intermediate apprenticeship, level 2 award, level 2 certificate, level 2 diploma, level 2 ESOL, level 2 essential skills, level 2 functional skills, level 2 national certificate, level 2 national diploma, level 2 NVQ, music grades 4 and 5, O level - grade A, B or C.

weak when they start school. While most children make good progress from their starting points in oracy during their primary education, the language development between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged pupils tends to widen rather than narrow as they progress through school.

- 27 Since the introduction of new GCSE specifications in 2016, the gap between the performance of those pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers has increased in most of the main performance indicators. In addition, Welsh Government's changes to school performance measures for GCSE examinations in 2017 placed a sharper focus upon reading, writing and oracy in English. This revealed a greater gap in the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals compared with their peers, than in previous years.
- 28 The new English and Welsh language GCSE qualifications in Wales emphasised the importance of controlled assessments of oracy as part of the qualification. The qualification sets a requirement of 20% for oracy controlled assessment in English and 30% in Welsh. The greater proportion of oral assessment for Welsh reflects the importance of speaking and listening skills in promoting the use/development of the Welsh language.
- 29 A key Welsh Government strategy has been to provide schools with funding through the pupil development grant. Since 2014, Estyn has reported on how well schools make use of that grant. In recent years, the proportion of primary schools who have used the funding to support the development of vulnerable pupils' spoken language has increased, particularly in the early years. However, most secondary schools target pupils' reading and writing skills, rather than their oracy. In general, too many secondary schools use the funding for 'catch-up' programmes at key stage 4 rather than developing pupils' skills throughout all the stages of their secondary education.
- 30 The pupil development grant has helped schools to improve outcomes for these pupils and their wellbeing. However, the attainment gap between those eligible for free school meals and their peers remains, with the gap widening during pupils' secondary education. The relative lack of progress in reducing the educational attainment gap in Wales for vulnerable pupils provides a strong case for the need for the suite of educational and curriculum reforms taking place in Wales currently, which Estyn supports. This includes the national review of evaluation and improvement (accountability) arrangements for Wales (Welsh Government, 2019)³⁵.
- 31 In Estyn's inspection reports on post-16 providers in further education and work-based learning, a common recommendation in recent years has been to improve the focus on developing learners' Welsh language skills as an employability skill. Across the post-16 sector, leaders and managers have not clearly linked the benefits of using the Welsh language to employment opportunities. However, particularly in a number of geographical regions and learning areas, Welsh language is in demand. This is notably the case in health and care sectors, especially in the care home sector. It is also a very desirable employment skill for learners on vocational programmes who visit the homes of Welsh-speaking or bilingual customers to undertake work.
- 32 Estyn welcomes the proposed integration of Welsh, English and international languages in one area of learning and experience, 'Languages, literacy and communication' in the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022. We recognise the ambition in the experiences,

³⁵ Welsh Government (2019). Draft evaluation and improvement (accountability) arrangements for Wales. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

knowledge and skills identified for pupils aged 3 to 16, which emphasise the development of pupils' speaking skills strongly.

- 33 Professional learning must be matched to this ambition. There is a significant challenge ahead for primary and secondary schools to improve the knowledge, skills and confidence of practitioners to develop learners' oral fluency in Welsh, English and international languages and to ensure all learners make good progress as they move through school. It will be essential for staff in all school settings to feel confident in their knowledge of linguistic skills and approaches to learning and teaching, which are age-appropriate, if Wales is to meet the expectations set out in the draft area of learning and experience document. Improving pupils' standards of spoken Welsh, particularly in key stages 2, 3 and 4, continues to be an important area for development in English-medium schools in Wales.
- 34 We recommend professional learning for all school-based staff should build upon the firm foundation of the work undertaken by the Global Futures Steering Group and link to existing regional networks, for example current regional consortia initiatives and UK-wide projects assisted by leading universities.

Appendix 1: Definition of literacy

The Welsh Government's definition of literacy includes oracy:

Literacy describes a set of skills, including speaking, listening, reading and writing, which enable us to make sense of the world around us...It is about the skills needed to understand written and spoken language, to interpret what has been written or said, and draw inferences from the evidence that surrounds us. It is also about being able to communicate in our turn – fluently, cogently and persuasively. Literacy is based on reading, writing and oral language development across all subject areas. The literacy component [of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework] is designed to assess learners' abilities to use the oracy, reading and writing skills they have learned, to address realistic and age-appropriate tasks and problems (Welsh Government, 2013, p.16).

Welsh Government (2013). National Literacy and Numeracy Framework: Information document no: 120/2013. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Appendix 2: An overview of Estyn's thematic reports (2009-2019), which are relevant to this Inquiry

- Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged 7 to 14 years (2008)
- Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged five to seven years (2009)
- Play and active learning: a toolkit for Foundation Phase practitioners (2009)
- Improving modern foreign languages in secondary schools in Wales (2009)
- Literacy and the Foundation Phase: An evaluation of the implementation of the Foundation Phase for five to six-year-olds in primary schools, with special reference to literacy (2011)
- The Skills Framework at key stage 2 (2011)
- Literacy in key stage 3 (2012)
- The impact of family learning programmes on raising the literacy and numeracy levels of children and adults (2012)
- Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools (2012)
- Working together to tackle the impact of poverty on educational achievement (2013)
- Welsh in the Foundation Phase: Developing Welsh as a first language in primary schools and the non-maintained sector (2013)
- Religious education in secondary schools (2013)
- Pupil Deprivation (2014)
- English in key stages 2 and 3 (2014)
- Linguistic progression and standards of Welsh in ten bilingual schools (November 2014)
- Literacy in key stage 3: An interim report (2015)
- Best practice in teaching and learning in the creative arts at key stage 2 (May 2015)
- Moderation of teacher assessment at key stage 2 and key stage 3: a review of accuracy and consistency (2016)
- Best practice in the creative arts at key stages 3 and 4 (2016)
- Modern foreign languages (2016)
- Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching and learning in further education (2017)
- Active and experiential learning: Effective foundation phase practice in delivering literacy and numeracy in Year 1 and Year 2 (2017)
- Science at key stage 3 and key stage 4 (2017)
- Science and design and technology at key stage 2 (2017)
- Good practice in the humanities (2018)
- Religious Education at key stage 2 and key stage 3 (2018)
- Involving parents – Communication between schools and parents of school-aged children (2018)
- Welsh in key stage 2 and key stage 3 in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools (2018)
- New qualifications (2018)
- A levels in sixth forms and further education colleges (2018)
- The impact of the Learning and Skills Measure on vulnerable learners (2018)
- Supporting more able and talented pupils (2018)

A summary of the relevant key recommendations from these thematic reports

For settings, schools and colleges (where relevant):

- Continue to raise standards in English and Welsh by giving attention to the development of pupils' oracy skills to support their progress in learning to read and write (2009)
- Continue to improve teaching and assessment by ensuring oracy, reading and writing are linked effectively together (2009)
- Plan more challenging activities to develop communication skills across the areas of learning (in the foundation phase) (2011)
- Map opportunities for oracy, reading and writing across the curriculum in key stage 3, particularly in improving pupils' extended writing and the accuracy of their written work (2012)
- Ensure specific opportunities for pupils to develop and use their speaking, reading and writing skills [in Welsh] across areas of learning and in different activity areas in the foundation phase (2013)
- Tackle the underperformance of pupils entitled to free school meals in English in key stages 2 and 3, including for more able pupils, by targeting and matching support to their individual learning needs (2014)
- Provide challenging work in English to stretch all pupils in key stages 2 and 3, particularly the more able (2014)
- Make more use of oracy in secondary schools prior to reading and writing, in order to help pupils to develop and extend their understanding and improve the quality of their work (2014)
- Provide professional learning opportunities for all foundation phase staff to make sure that they have the skills, understanding and confidence to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills (2017)
- Plan regular opportunities for all pupils in the foundation phase to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in enhanced and continuous provision areas, both indoors and outdoors (2017)
- Focus on developing pupils' oracy skills [in Welsh] as a basis for developing their other skills, particularly writing (2018)
- Provide training to improve the language skills of teachers and teaching assistants [in Welsh in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools] (2018)
- Have high expectations that all learners in schools and colleges studying new qualifications contribute orally especially in Welsh (2018)

For local authorities and regional consortia:

In 2016, following an examination of the effectiveness of cluster moderation and standardisation procedures in securing reliable end of key stage 2 and 3 teacher assessment, Estyn made a recommendation for local authorities and regional consortia to develop training opportunities for schools. This was to ensure:

- consistency in the judgements for oracy
- sufficiency of the evidence base for oracy
- better application of the 'best fit' method of teacher assessment for oracy, and
- moderation of work on the borderline between national curriculum levels in schools across Wales.