



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Learn Welsh Cardiff

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by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Learn Welsh Cardiff

Learn Welsh Cardiff (LWC) was established in 2016 as a result of sectoral restructuring and establishing the National Centre for Learning Welsh (NCLW). LWC is one of 11 of the Centre's providers and is responsible for providing Welsh for Adults courses in the City and County of Cardiff. LWC is situated within the School of Welsh, Cardiff University and the Director of LWC is accountable to the Head and Board of the School of Welsh. All of the provider's staff are employed by the university.

LWC has around 1,500 individual learners over a rolling period of around three years, with the numbers rising to 1,824 in April 2023. The provision receives £966,347 through a core grant from the NCLW. In addition to mainstream provision, LWC is responsible for providing supplementary projects, for example working within Cardiff's new communities, such as refugees and asylum seekers, working with families and schools and providing courses to various organisations.

A comprehensive programme of face-to-face and virtual courses is provided, which vary in terms of duration and intensity. An attractive programme of supplementary courses and learner support events is also provided, in order to facilitate the journey from learner to active speaker.

Twenty-three core members of staff are employed, including 14 full-time tutors, in addition to 35 associate tutors. The Director of LWC is responsible for leading the provision both strategically and operationally, and she has a management team of three senior tutors to support her, who are responsible for Standards of Teaching and Learning, Quality, Curriculum and Training. Work is supported further by the Marketing and Learner Support Manager; the Business Manager, the Administrative Manager and two administrators.

Summary

LWC is an inclusive and supportive community where staff respond appropriately to the needs of learners in the capital city and beyond. Tutors foster supportive relationships with learners, which supports them successfully to develop their skills to speak Welsh increasingly confidently and at length. On average, the provider's learners are 34 years old.

A range of mainstream courses are provided from entry to advanced level, including intensive and blended courses. By working highly successfully with a variety of partners, project courses are also provided that are tailored skilfully to meet the needs of specific learners effectively. For example, courses are provided for staff at Welsh Government and the Football Association of Wales to support them to communicate in Welsh in their day-to-day jobs. Staff at Cardiff School of Medicine also learn Welsh in lessons that equip them with specific vocabulary and syntactical patterns so that they can use them when dealing with patients. Through this broad offer, learners across the provision develop their Welsh language skills effectively and use them increasingly actively in a variety of work and social contexts.

One of the provider's strengths is the way in which full-time and associate tutors act diligently to improve effective teaching and learning practices. Through purposeful planning, tutors are given an opportunity to discuss and emulate effective teaching practices through the Quality, Curriculum and Training Committee and through the successful peer observation approach, for example. On the whole, this has a positive effective on developing and ensuring consistency in effective teaching and learning practice across the provision.

Tutors use the target language highly effectively and facilitate learning skilfully to motivate learners to use the Welsh language without fear of failure. This, in turn, support learners to participate regularly to develop their oral skills highly successfully. Tutors provide learners with beneficial time to think and recall vocabulary and syntactical patterns, which encourages them to persevere and gives them the confidence to speak Welsh spontaneously. Overall, tutors develop learners' reading and writing skills appropriately, which has a consistent effect on improving their speaking skills over time.

Tutors identify learners' learning and well-being needs highly effectively as part of the inclusive provision. Arrangements for communicating and seeking learners' views on different aspect of the service are effective, which promotes their desire to learn and nurtures their well-being skilfully, for example through the 'virtual feedback box' method. Tutors encourage learners to engage fully with supplementary events, for example through the 'Siarad' scheme, where learners are paired with members of the community so they can practise speaking Welsh in natural conversations. Informal activities are also organised to promote learners' use of the Welsh language widely, for example by organising a 'reunion' at the Tafwyl festival.

A notable element of the provider is the way in which the service is led by a passionate director who implements her vision highly effectively with all partners. Through appropriate plans and a dedicated team of staff, improvement priorities are implemented and evaluated highly effectively to improve tutors' teaching and improve

learners' experience. For example, priorities are developed effectively through an purposeful range of professional learning and develop tutors' teaching skills well. Through robust support from tutors, most learners make sound progress in their learning, with the provider's completion rates having increased significantly over the past three years.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Well-being and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

Recommendations

R1 Continue to share effective teaching practices across the provision

R2 Develop learners' reading and writing skills further to support them to achieve to the best of their ability

What happens next

The provider will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the provider to prepare a case study on its work in relation to highly effective leadership, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Nearly all of LWC's learners contribute enthusiastically to their lessons. They interact well with visitors who are first language Welsh speakers and explain clearly their reasons for learning Welsh. Many learners develop as active speakers who take appropriate advantage of opportunities to improve and use their linguistic skills. Overall, most learners on intensive courses make strong progress or better.

A strong feature is the fact that most learners speak Welsh with their tutors and fellow learners spontaneously, without turning to English. They speak with increasing confidence and are willing to attempt at words and various syntactical patterns without fear of making mistakes. Most are able to recall previous learning successfully and apply this knowledge to different situations, in line with their level.

Nearly all learners at different levels listen attentively to the tutor and each other. Most learners at entry and foundation level make valuable progress in developing their oral skills. They gain the confidence to learn and use basic patterns and strive independently to extend the content of their answers. However, a few learners lack confidence and are shy when giving answers. They also have difficulty pronouncing some unfamiliar words.

Most learners, from intermediate level onwards, make strong progress in developing their oracy skills. They enjoy speaking independently about topics such as the weekend's events. By the time they reach higher levels, these learners communicate in Welsh with increasing fluency. Most hold discussions confidently in pairs and as a whole group, questioning and answering their partner's questions in a fun way and talking freely and at length about a number of different topics, for example, 'would a four-day working week be beneficial?'. Many pronounce Welsh sounds and words

correctly and clearly. On the whole, very few use English phrases as part of their natural conversation.

A strong feature is the progress that learners make in the workplace, which include BBC Wales, various organisations such as the Museum of Wales and Welsh at Home courses in schools. These learners take advantage of the lessons that are tailored for them and learn and use useful vocabulary and patterns that help them with their daily tasks. As a result, they gain the confidence to communicate in Welsh at work.

Many learners develop their reading skills beneficially. In line with their level, they read aloud suitably and pronounce appropriately on the whole. Many learners at entry and foundation level make suitable progress when reading short sentences and simple dialogues, while more experienced learners make consistent progress when reading and discussing a wide range of factual and fictional texts. Many learners enjoy reading and the reading clubs at all levels are popular and promote learners' reading skills effectively.

Many learners across the different levels develop appropriate writing skills. Many learners at intermediate level succeed in writing for wider purposes effectively, such as descriptive pieces and presentations for different social and professional situations. On the whole, a few learners across all levels are less confident with mutations, for example by not mutating an adjective after 'yn' or using a soft mutation after a preposition. Many learners at advanced and proficiency level write with increasing accuracy to express an opinion on local issues, for example the effect of industry on their area. They also create pieces in different genres, such as poems about Christmas or recounting local legends, such as 'The Witch of Porthkerry'. In the best examples, learners at these levels write exceptionally maturely, with an individual writing a short novel or succeeding in literary competitions, such as local eisteddfodau.

On average, over the last three years, more than 1,500 learners register on the provider's courses each year. The provider's data shows that enrolment numbers have increased consistently on mainstream courses during the same period, with an increase of 21% on new starter courses at entry level.

Over a three-year period, there has been a significant increase in completion rates, with many learners completing their courses as a result of strengthening support for learners. All tutors receive a detailed analysis, by course and by learners, of attendance rates each half term. Many learners now complete their courses, with most moving on to continue their learning on subsequent courses that are delivered by the provider. This is firm evidence of the meaningful progress that learners make and evidence of the dedication and confidence of learners to develop their Welsh language skills further. Many learners attend their courses regularly, with attendance improving since the introduction of the 'catch up' systems.

The number of eligible learners who choose to sit an examination has decreased over the last three years, from around half to a third by 2022, where a full suite of Welsh for Adults examinations was held by WJEC for the first time since the pandemic. However, nearly all learners who have sat examinations have succeeded in gaining a qualification, with many gaining distinction at the higher levels.

Well-being and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all learners enjoy learning in lessons and value the interesting and stimulating range of supplementary and informal activities. They value the passion and continuous support of staff, who give them the confidence to try and gain confidence in speaking Welsh. Nearly all learners are also enthusiastic about their learning and are appreciative of the guidance of tutors, who succeed in creating a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in lessons.

Nearly all learners value the support that is provided through key administrative systems that support their well-being and development while learning Welsh. They benefit from appropriate and purposeful internal structures to ensure that there are several opportunities for them to present key information about their needs and significant personal circumstances. Information is shared between relevant staff smoothly, which means that the learner is not required to repeat sensitive information when registering on a new course. Nearly all learners also take advantage of completing an annual audit of their learning needs, which supports leaders to plan resources and training for staff.

Most learners benefit from arrangements that reinforce their attitudes towards their well-being and development while learning at all levels. They value the investment in an online booking system, which enables them to arrange a convenient time to receive support, for example a 'level check' session or when receiving an individual support session with a tutor to revise missed work. This responsibility is shared across the teaching team, with all tutors allocating an hour a week to ensure support service availability. Nearly all learners are glad of this support, which supports learning at all levels and supports their well-being effectively.

Many learners take advantage of the 'virtual feedback box' to share feedback, submit enquiries or issues of concern. The service is in addition to the regular communication between tutors and learners. Most learners appreciate that their voice is heard by the provider, and tutors inform learners about the way in which comments and ideas have been responded to, in order to improve provision and support learners regularly.

Nearly all learners agree that tutors provide good guidance and meet their needs regularly and know that they can turn to them to help when necessary. This is planned formally through specific or informal meetings by using social media platforms. Most learners value the appropriate handbooks that have been adapted for them for particular courses, along with handy version in the form of a digital magazine and accessible video clips to direct them to the most suitable course for them.

Learners come from a wide range of backgrounds, origins and cultures and most benefit from being a member of the Welsh learning community where they respect each other and interact positively. This, in turn, creates a valuable and supportive service for all learners.

Nearly all learners demonstrate a positive attitude to learning Welsh and are highly appreciative of the tutors and fellow learners, showing respect, understanding and sympathy within lessons. They work together on tasks in a constructive and fun

manner and respond proactively without judging those learners who experience difficulties or those who, possibly, have not managed to attend their classes regularly.

Many learners set appropriate objectives for themselves when learning Welsh. Many benefit from supplementary provision, such as *'Sadwrn Siarad'* and *'Coffi a Chlonc'*, which support them to speak Welsh increasingly spontaneously. The events of other organisations are promoted, such as the Welsh language initiative, which also improves learners' experience of learning Welsh through social networks. Learners value the warm welcome and come to feel part of the buzz of a wider Welsh-speaking community.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

The provider plans a wide offer of face-to-face and virtual Welsh learning courses at the university and in a few locations for residents of the capital city and beyond. By doing so, the needs of learners are met effectively while engaging and holding their interest in courses that are delivered at times and periods that are convenient for them to learn. The provider offers mainstream courses from entry to advanced level, including intensive and blended provision successfully.

One of the provider's strengths is the ability to offer Welsh lessons that are tailored to learners in the workplace, which include Cardiff Council and the Football Association of Wales. The robust partnership that has developed as part of the project provision with various organisations, such as the Crown Prosecution Service and Wales Millennium Centre, is also provided effectively by supporting learners to use the Welsh language as a natural part of their day-to-day work. Engagement with learners who are hard to reach, for example from the asylum seeker and refugee community, is successful as families move to various suburbs across the capital. As a result, purposeful planning and successful marketing support learners at all levels to enjoy and make progress in their Welsh language skills.

The provider's workforce includes full-time tutors and associate tutors who are led skilfully by a hardworking team of staff. One of the provider's most prominent features is the way in which leaders take continuous action to develop and ensure consistency in teaching practices and effective learning. For example, leaders prioritise monthly themes, such as effective drilling methods, as part of staff discussions at the Quality, Curriculum and Training Committee. Associate tutors are also placed with a mentor who works for the provider on a full-time basis to support them with different aspects of pedagogy. This, in turn, supports tutors to improve their teaching skills continuously in a supportive culture.

A notable quality of tutors' teaching skills is the way in which they facilitate learning in a supporting learning environment. This encourages most learners to develop their skills without fear of failure. Tutors identify learners' well-being and learning needs effectively, which helps them to adapt and refine provision to meet their needs in full. For example, tutors use the target language highly effectively and enrich learners' knowledge of language subtly, as they deepen their understanding of the characteristics of formal and informal language when discussing the film *'Y Sŵn'*. On the whole, many tutors promote learners' reading skills regularly by discussing contemporary articles, for example. Learners' writing skills are developed

appropriately, usually in homework tasks. Overall, provision does not support all learners to refine and improve their oral skills further through beneficial reading and writing activities.

On the whole, many tutors help learners to pronounce words correctly by varying their teaching methods, for example through repetition in pair and group activities. They encourage learners to participate fully in learning and boost their confidence in listening and emulating language patterns, for example by singing nursery rhymes accompanied by a ukulele. This supports learners to immerse themselves further in lessons and to persevere and enjoy learning.

All tutors have high expectations for progress in all learners' skills. For example, they question learners skilfully and support progress in learners' speaking skills highly effectively by providing time for them to think and recall vocabulary and syntactical patterns. This valuable time, alongside the tutors' unwavering expectations, supports learners to communicate solely in Welsh throughout the lesson. Overall, written feedback supports learners to improve their skills, for example by helping learners to write an e-mail in Welsh as part of their duties at work.

A wide range of supplementary and informal activities are provided that encourage learners to practise speaking Welsh online and face-to-face. For example, tutors support learners to use their oral skills while keeping fit and to learn about the history of Cardiff beneficially through interesting guided tours. Learners are also given an opportunity to appreciate the experiences of famous people of learning Welsh by interviewing them as part of the television programme, '*Stori'r Iaith*', for example. As the number of Welsh learners increases each year, a 'reunion' is provided for them at the Tafwyl festival as part of the effective partnership between the provider and Menter Caerdydd. As a result, learners develop their speaking skills in less formal situations, which promotes relationships with their fellow learners successfully in a close-knit and inclusive community.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Tutors have a thorough knowledge of their learners, their interest and their progress across the level range. Leaders facilitate the work of sharing information about learners' progress effectively, for example when learners transfer from one course to another during the year. They encourage tutors to discuss learners' development objectives as an integral part of their work. This is an effective means of promoting learners' awareness of their progress, increasing their confidence and celebrating their success and supporting their well-being effectively.

The provider gives full consideration to the different needs of learners. During the registration period and throughout the year, learners receive beneficial support to share information about any additional support they feel would be beneficial to them. The provider responds sensitively and proactively to these aspirations by offering formal and informal support sessions to discuss the needs of individual learners.

Staff provide highly effective support for learners with additional needs, for example by adapting skilfully to meet their needs as they cope with sensory challenges. Tutors adapt the teaching methods creatively to ensure a service that is inclusive for all.

Learners also benefit significantly from the wider support available to Cardiff University students in important areas such as mental health and anxiety support.

Leaders provide highly effective support for learners who find it difficult to cope with the requirements of classroom learning for different reasons. For example, they facilitate the process of joining a different group or joining a virtual class, rather than attending face to face. Learners value this helpful support and say that it ensures that they are still able to engage with the service and enjoy learning Welsh.

Leaders play particular attention to engaging with learners in the community. They share information regularly, for example through websites, pamphlets and a useful digital newsletter. As a result, many learners convey that they engage fully with Welsh language events across the capital. A notable example of this is the '*Cynllun Siarad*', where tutors pair learners with members of the community so that they can converse naturally in a social situation. This promotes the confidence and well-being of learners, who participate highly successfully.

The provider promotes the 'contingency fund' effectively to ensure that provision is accessible for all learners who are keen to use the service. Leaders refer prospective learners, whatever their background or personal circumstances, to potential financial sources to attract them and encourage them to learn Welsh. For example, tutors respond to the requirements of learners who are affected by digital poverty by referring them to specific funds to ensure appropriate devices to support learning. Tutors also provide free textbooks and do their best to support all individuals who are keen to learn with the provider.

The provider's vision is clear and based on expanding opportunities to learn the language and participate in Welsh culture. The awareness of leaders and tutors of the importance of reaching out to various communities is an excellent feature of their work. There are opportunities available for new audiences to experience and enjoy the Welsh language. For example, mothers from Muslim backgrounds are supported to learn the language and assimilate into their communities in the capital.

Procedures for learners to express an opinion about the service are embedded firmly. The use of the 'virtual feedback box', which is available to learners through a user-friendly electronic system, is a highly effective feature. It provides an opportunity for learners to share any comments or concerns. This structure has a direct influence on management elements of the service. For example, where a concern is raised about standards of teaching, this information is referred directly to leaders who are responsible for teaching and training.

LWC supports a strong culture of safeguarding. The provider's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Excellent

Leaders have an ambitious and robust vision to provide a high-quality service, along with a clear strategy that promotes the aims and objectives of the NCLW very effectively. The Director leads passionately and has very high expectations of herself, the leadership team, tutors and learners.

The leadership team works together highly effectively and implements clear and sensible duties which ensure that its expertise is used fully for the benefit of learners. They provide tutors with excellent support, maintaining and fostering their development to ensure varied and rich learning experiences for learners. A notable example of this is the Quality, Curriculum and Training Committee, which provides tutors with a forum to discuss what support they would like to receive and have input into the action plans to improve and develop provision. All members of staff have a comprehensive job description of a high standard and are clear about their duties and those of their colleagues.

The staffing structure prioritises full-time posts, which provides an effective career path for tutors. This has enabled the provider to work ambitiously, for example by providing tutors to teach Welsh to members and officials at Welsh Government.

The provision is a key part of the School of Welsh at Cardiff University and there are clear lines of support and accountability between the Director and the Head of the School. The university is aware of the provider's contribution to the long-term Welsh language strategy within the university and supports wider co-operation between the service and academic departments. For example, they have further developed on the success of the work that has taken place with the School of Medicine, where a programme of taster courses was produced for more than 100 students who were about to spend time on wards.

The provider's ambition on behalf of its staff and learners leads to regular and ongoing self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for improvement to continue to raise standards. As a result, the self-evaluation arrangements are comprehensive and based on a wide range of evidence, including observation data, the views of learners and the workforce. For example, the provider has used data astutely to improve learner trends, such as completion, attendance and the like. This has a positive effect on the attainment of those learners and on provision in general.

The observation procedure is a core part of the self-evaluation process and the appointment of two senior tutors with specific responsibility for standards of learning and the observation procedure reflects the dedication of leaders to ensure that they evaluate progress rigorously and regularly. Leaders work together successfully as a team to use the national quality framework proactively to ensure appropriate progress. They provide a wide range of professional learning opportunities for full-time and associate tutors based on the provider's priorities, for example by developing tutors' skills to use digital apps effectively and by supporting them to ensure successful progression for learners in their learning. The effect of this training is analysed and evaluated continuously and is an effective part of the evaluation and performance monitoring programme for all members of staff.

All professional learning sessions are recorded and shared on demand to encourage participation. Overall, this has a positive influence on the consistency of teaching methods across the provision. Each associate tutor is also paired with a full-time tutor who can offer flexible support within a culture based on support and challenge. As a result, tutors are extremely appreciative of the regular support and professional learning opportunities that are provided for them purposefully.

The provision's budget is managed effectively by the Director and Head of the School, taking advantage of project funds to promote and improve the service. Cardiff University top-slices 15% of the fundings, which contributes to practical support from the university's services, such as human resources.

Evidence base of the report

Before the inspection, inspectors:

- analysed the outcomes from the learner questionnaire and considered the views of tutors and staff through their questionnaire responses

During the inspection, inspectors:

- met the head of the provider, a representative of the managing body/governing body, senior and middle managers (where appropriate) and tutors to evaluate the impact of the provider's work
- engaged with learners to discuss their work and hear their views about various aspects of their provider
- met with groups of learners, such as representatives of learner voice groups
- visited a broad sample of classes and conducted learning walks to observe learners in lessons and informal learning activities
- looked closely at the provider's self-evaluation processes
- considered the provider's improvement plans and looked at evidence to show how well the provider had moved forward with planned improvements
- scrutinised a range of the provider's documents, including information on learner progress, records of meetings of staff and the managing/governing body, information on learners' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of learners, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- reviewed the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the provider and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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