

Supplementary guidance: Welsh

Autumn 2021

This document is also available in Welsh.

The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- ▲ primary schools
- ▲ secondary schools
- ▲ all-age schools
- ▲ special schools
- ▲ pupil referral units
- ▲ independent schools
- ▲ further education
- ▲ independent specialist colleges
- ▲ adult community learning
- ▲ local authority education services for children and young people
- ▲ teacher education and training
- ▲ Welsh for adults
- ▲ work-based learning
- ▲ learning in the justice sector

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence

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What is the purpose?

To provide guidance to inspectors when evaluating the effectiveness of providers in supporting learners to develop their Welsh language skills.

For whom is it intended?

All inspectors of maintained non-maintained, primary, secondary and all age schools, and independent schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

From when should the guidance be used?

September 2021

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Supplementary guidance

Our inspection guidance explains What we inspect and How we inspect. However, we also produce supplementary guidance to help inspectors to consider specific aspects of education and training further.

The supplementary guidance documents set out some key principles, considerations and resources for inspectors. They relate to all sectors that Estyn inspects, unless they state that they are for a specific sector. They expand on certain aspects of education/training (e.g. the inspection of literacy) or on ways of conducting inspections (e.g. the use of learning walks) or specific inspection arrangements (e.g. guidance on inspecting church schools).

The supplementary guidance documents do not aim to be comprehensive. Inspectors are not required to work through them exhaustively when covering any specific aspect on an inspection. However, inspectors may find them useful when responding to specific emerging questions that arise during inspections or when they wish to reflect or investigate further.

The supplementary guidance documents may also help providers to gain an understanding of Estyn's inspection arrangements. They may also be helpful to providers in evaluating specific aspects of their own provision.

Our inspection work is based on the following principles:

- Inspectors will approach inspection with a positive mindset to ensure it is the best possible professional learning experience for the staff in each provider
- Inspectors will take a learner-focused approach to inspection
- Inspectors will always focus strongly on the quality of teaching and learning
- Inspectors will seek out well-considered innovative practice
- Inspectors will tailor the inspection activities according to the circumstances in each provider as far as possible
- Inspectors will be agile and responsive to emerging findings and will use the increased range of inspection tools and approaches available
- Inspectors will consider everything in the inspection framework, but will only report on the key strengths and weaknesses within each provider

Introduction

This supplementary guidance is aimed at supporting inspectors to:

- evaluate the extent to which leaders and managers plan strategically purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in formal and informal situations and implement these plans effectively
- evaluate the extent and quality of the school's provision for the development of Welsh language communication skills in formal teaching activities and in informal situations
- evaluate how well the school teaches pupils about the advantages of learning Welsh and being bilingual
- where appropriate, inspectors should consider how well the proportion of teaching in Welsh matches the school's official language categorisation
- evaluate pupils' ability to speak and respond to spoken Welsh compared with pupils in schools in similar contexts and their starting points
- evaluate the progress pupils make in developing their communication skills in Welsh for their learning across the curriculum and in more informal contexts.

When inspecting literacy skills (Welsh) in Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools and PRUs, you should also refer to the supplementary guidance: [Supplementary guidance for the inspection of Welsh and English literacy in schools and PRUs](#) which can also be found on Estyn's website.

The revised Inspection Framework (September, 2021) sets a requirement for inspectors to evaluate and comment on the Welsh language in:

5.1 (Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, including the governing body),

3.1 (The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum), and in

1.1 (Standards and progress in learning and skills [listening and reading, speaking and writing]).

The report has been presented in this way as 5.1 incorporates the strategic vision of leaders for Welsh in their settings in addition to the self-evaluation processes, priorities and professional learning in order to support the teaching (3.1) and learning (1.1). In addition, inspectors are free to report on aspects related to Welsh that are linked to inspection area 2 (Wellbeing and attitudes to learning) and inspection area 4 (Care, support and guidance).

Background

Increasing the number of Welsh speakers and the number of people who actively use the Welsh language in their daily lives are priorities for the Welsh Government. As well as achieving a million Welsh speakers by 2050, corresponding to nearly a third of the population, it aims to increase the proportion of the population that speak Welsh daily from 10% (in 2013–2015) to 20% by 2050.

The Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 action plan aims to increase the proportion of school pupils receiving Welsh-medium education to 40% by 2050, with an interim target of 30% by 2031. One of the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is to ensure 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language' (National Assembly for Wales, 2015, p.4). Following the principles of Qualified for Life (Welsh Government, 2015), Successful Futures acknowledges the importance of the Welsh language in the development of Wales 'as a bilingual nation with the strength and assurance to nurture both languages' (Donaldson, 2015, p.26). Furthermore, it states that schools should have a renewed focus 'on learning Welsh primarily as a means of communication, particularly oral communication and understanding' (Donaldson, 2015, p.115).

The Welsh in education: action plan 2017-21 identifies the aim to develop Welsh-medium provision and improve the teaching and learning of Welsh for all learner, and place these 'at the heart' of educational reform (Welsh Government, 2017b). The Education Minister states, 'Our National Mission is to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence' (Welsh Government, 2017a, p.3).

Welsh continues to be a mandatory element of the curriculum for all learners until they are 16 years old, and A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life (October 2015) identifies that it is a priority to 'ensure that all learners can develop their Welsh language skills and use the language confidently in different contexts'.

The advantages for learners of increasing their competence in the Welsh language and in being bilingual are well-established. They include:

- commercial value in the employment market and extending language skills for the workplace
- expanding their horizons and enriching their experiences of life in Wales and beyond
- the cognitive advantages of bilingualism¹
- appreciation of diversity

When evaluating Welsh language outcomes and provision, it is essential that we always consider the school's linguistic context and what it does in order to ensure continuity and progression in its pupils' linguistic skills from their individual starting points.

In broad terms, schools can be classified according to their linguistic make-up² as follows:

- schools that teach mainly through the medium of Welsh
- English-medium schools

¹ Research in Canada has revealed that bilingualism enhances attention and cognitive control in children and older adults and, in 2007, highlighted the impact of bilingualism on delaying the onset of the symptoms of dementia.

² The Welsh Assembly Government publication 'Defining Schools According to Welsh-medium Provision' (Information document No: 023/2007, October 2007) sets out descriptions and categories of schools according to the amount of Welsh used in teaching and learning and in the day-to-day life of the school.

- streamed schools, which offer both Welsh-medium and English-medium provision to varying degrees

Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act introduced in 2013, requires each local authority to prepare and present a [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan](#) (WESP) to improve provision and standards with regards to Welsh medium education in schools. Each WESP must set out how the local authority will support the continued provision of Welsh-medium education. The next cycle of WESPs are to be presented by January 2022 and will be operational from September 2022.

All maintained schools, including special schools and pupil referral units, have a legal obligation to teach Welsh to all pupils of statutory school age other than a very few pupils whose statement of special educational needs (SEN) or individual development plan (IDP) for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) disapples them from learning Welsh.

There is no statutory requirement for independent schools to teach Welsh as a subject. When the school makes a positive decision not to provide for the teaching of Welsh or develop the Welsh dimension of the curriculum, the report should simply state: 'The school does not teach Welsh' or 'The school does not seek to develop the Cwricwlwm Cymreig'. In independent schools that teach Welsh or deliver Welsh-medium provision, inspectors should use the questions listed in the next section, as applicable. Inspectors should examine the school's policy on the Welsh language and evaluate how well the school is implementing that policy. They should also judge the extent to which the school contributes to the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic, environmental, historical and linguistic characteristics of Wales.

The Curriculum for Wales guidance (Welsh Government, 2020a) for Languages, Literacy and Communication sets out how the area of learning and experience supports the four purposes of the curriculum. As its main aim, it identifies supporting learning across the whole curriculum and enabling learners to gain knowledge and skills in Welsh, English and international languages, as well as in literature (Welsh Government, 2020a, p.126). The importance of supporting 'learners to use Welsh confidently and appreciate its usefulness to communication in a bilingual Wales' (Welsh Government, 2020a, p.30) is also highlighted. As a result, developing learners who take pride in the Welsh language and use it with increasing confidence is at the heart of the national vision.

During the period of familiarisation and the adoption of the Curriculum for Wales in September 2022, we will adopt a pragmatic approach to the providers' work to plan, design and realise their curriculum in an appropriate and timely manner. Inspectors will give due regard to any published guidance on common or shared expectations. Due consideration will be given to the planning and delivery of developing pupils' listening and reading, and speaking and writing skills. Inspectors should consider the positive or negative effects of any arrangements in place to enable learners to develop their language and literacy skills by having access to enriched learning experiences overall in both formal and informal activities.

Inspectors should give careful consideration to the effect of any important areas for improvement relating to the questions overleaf on the judgement for the relevant quality indicator. When considering whether an area for development is important,

inspectors should take into account the proportion of learners involved or affected by the shortcoming.

Evaluating the Welsh language

5.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, including the governing body (in improving pupils' Welsh language skills)

General guidance

Inspectors should consider the extent to which leaders have established a clear and strategic vision for developing bilingual and plurilingual pupils in an enriched Welsh learning environment. Inspectors should evaluate the rationale for the curriculum, in terms of their developmental language acquisition for pupils and advantages for them in preparation for lifelong learning and playing a full part in a bilingual society. Inspectors should evaluate how successful leaders and managers are in achieving national priorities, in particular in improving pupils' Welsh language skills in line with achieving a million Welsh speakers by 2050: [Cymraeg 2050 A million Welsh speakers](#). Inspectors should evaluate to what extent leaders and managers plan purposefully to provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in formal and informal situations.

Questions

- How effective is the school's vision? How well do leaders disseminate the vision with all partners? What is the impact on pupils' Welsh language acquisition and progress made in the skills?
- To what extent do school leaders plan purposefully to develop its pupils' Welsh language skills across areas of the curriculum?
- Do practitioners at all levels have an accurate picture of what needs to be done to improve outcomes and provision in Welsh?
- Do improvement plans identify clear proposals to address specific areas that are in need of development?
- Does the school work well in partnership with other providers to extend the availability of Welsh-medium provision that is offered to pupils?
- Is there joint working between primary schools and non-maintained settings and between secondary schools and partner primary schools, to ensure consistency, continuity and progression in pupils' learning experiences and skills in Welsh during the transition period?
- To what extent does the school take advantage of the opportunities that are offered by other providers, such as the Urdd and Mentrau Iaith (Welsh Language Initiatives)³?

³ Mentrau Iaith (Welsh Language Initiatives) support efforts to sustain the language at a community level. Mentrau Iaith work in partnership with local and national organisations and stakeholders on various projects to promote the use of the Welsh language.

- Where applicable, does the school have enough staff who are able to teach effectively through the medium of Welsh in order to ensure sustained continuity and progression in Welsh-medium provision?
- Do leaders provide effective professional learning opportunities for practitioners to deepen their understanding of language immersion methodology?
- Are all teachers who teach Welsh qualified to do so?
- Where applicable, is there good quality support/professional development for non-specialist Welsh teachers and other staff at the school, such as internal support by language specialists or participation in the Sabbatical Scheme⁴?
- Does the school take every reasonable action in relation to the cost-effectiveness of delivering Welsh-medium provision?

3.1 Teaching and learning experiences: The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the schools' curriculum (developing pupils' Welsh language skills)

General guidance

Inspectors should evaluate to what extent curriculum arrangements ensure that pupils develop the necessary Welsh language listening and reading, speaking and writing skills from individual starting points to support their work across areas of the curriculum. Inspectors should consider how effective practitioners develop pupils' language acquisition by using immersion methodology consistently across the school.

Inspectors should consider how well the school has paid attention to the national literacy framework when planning learning experiences for pupils in order to ensure progression in skills. Consideration should be given to the school's efforts to develop pupils' Welsh skills in their efforts to plan activities in line with implementing a Curriculum for Wales. The breadth of pupils' experiences across the curriculum should provide increasing and purposeful opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their Welsh language skills. Inspectors should look at the evidence in pupils' books and displays in the learning environment. They should consider the extent to which planning helps to provide purposeful and developmental opportunities for pupils to actively use the Welsh language in a natural and coherent way across the curriculum.

Inspectors should evaluate to what extent the school's formal and informal provision develops Welsh language skills and evaluate the quality of provision, for example in formal Welsh lessons, as a medium of learning in other areas of the curriculum and in a more holistic approach in line with Curriculum for Wales. In addition, inspectors should comment on the school's extra-curricular activities provided by staff, such as Sïarter Iaith/Cymraeg Campus initiatives and activities supported by outside providers such as the Urdd or Menter Iaith. Inspectors should comment on the arrangements and the appropriateness of the time that is allocated to ensure that

⁴ The 'sabbatical scheme' is a programme funded by the Welsh Government to increase the number of qualified teachers and lecturers who teach through the medium of Welsh. The first course was held in spring 2006.

pupils achieve sustained progress and appropriate standards in Welsh. Pupils should be aware of the advantages of learning Welsh and being bilingual and plurilingual. It is a statutory requirement for all pupils to learn Welsh up to school-leaving age.

Questions

Inspectors should consider the following questions when inspecting and reporting on aspect 3.1: The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the schools' curriculum (developing pupils' Welsh language skills):

General/Strategic

- Does the school meet the statutory requirement to teach Welsh to all pupils up to school-leaving age, other than pupils whose statements of SEN/IDP disapply them?
- Does the Welsh language play a prominent part in the everyday life of the school?
- Does the school nurture curiosity about the Welsh language and enjoyment of it, in order to enable pupils to be aware of the advantages of using the Welsh language?
- Can the language be heard and seen around the school? For example, do pupils and staff speak Welsh to each other and is the language used on signage and in displays around the school? How cohesive and consistent is this?
- Does the school have an ethos that promotes the Welsh language (heritage and culture) and positive attitudes towards them? Do practitioners plan activities to develop pupils' Welsh skills by utilizing the local and national context of Wales?
- Is there continuity between and across key stages in terms of pupils' experiences in Welsh and, where applicable, the extent of Welsh-medium provision? For example, from non-maintained providers to foundation phase, and from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3?
- Is there good support for pupils who are latecomers to the school, or pupils who have limited or no previous competence in the Welsh language?
- Where applicable, are pupils able to access the full range of Welsh-medium vocational options?
- Where applicable, is there continuity in developing pupils' Welsh language skills in provision in pupil referral units?
- Where applicable, for pupils who attend Welsh language immersion centres as they have little or no Welsh, is there continuity in the provision in developing their Welsh language skills in Welsh-medium and Welsh streams in bilingual schools?

Pedagogy

- Do the school's learning and teaching practices (pedagogy) ensure that pupils' Welsh language skills develop/improve soundly and quickly? Is this consistent across the school?
- How confident are practitioners in their Welsh language immersion methodology? Is their a cohesive and consistent approach across the school?
- How well supported are learners by effective Welsh language teaching and learning resources?

- Do the school's learning activities reinforce pupils' language skills and ensure interdependence between and across listening, reading, speaking and writing skills?
- Are pupils given increasing opportunities to develop their use of the Welsh language in situations outside Welsh lessons?

Planning

- Do curriculum organisation and the time allocation enable pupils to make and sustain developmental progress in Welsh?
- Does the school plan purposefully to develop its pupils' language skills? Does the planning display that practitioners build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding of their Welsh skills? Do teachers consider pupils' individual starting points and their access to the language continuum effectively enough?
- Where applicable, are pupils given enriched and relevant opportunities and support to develop dual literacy skills, such as translinguaging? How purposeful are these opportunities in developing pupils' Welsh skills?

Teaching

- Do practitioners intervene and support pupils to develop their Welsh acquisition effectively both in formal and informal activities?
- Does the school have a consistent approach to developing pupils' listening and speaking skills?
- How correct and advanced are practitioners language skills? Are they effective language role models? Do they use the appropriate level of Welsh with pupils and support them to make progress?
- Do practitioners make effective use of the Welsh language as a medium of communication, both in lessons and in other situations?
- Is there sufficient practitioner intervention to improve the quality and accuracy of pupils' oral competence in Welsh? How effective do practitioners and leaders monitor and evaluate the sustained impact of interventions on pupils' skills?
- Do teachers have high enough expectations of pupils' confidence and competence when conversing in Welsh?
- Does the school prepare pupils to use the Welsh language in further studies, in the workplace and in their communities?

Assessment

- How available are Welsh or bilingual teaching, learning and assessment materials, including for pupils who are identified as having ALN? What is the standard of these materials and how effective are practitioners in using the outcomes of different assessments to plan subsequent activities to ensure progress?
- How effective are the tracking processes and systems in developing pupils' skills? Does the information feed into planning subsequent activities well enough?
- Where applicable, are all pupils who are assessed in Welsh first language at the end of Key Stage 2 also assessed in Welsh first language at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4?

- Where applicable, do pupils have access to Welsh-speaking specialist teachers and educational psychologists, in addition to provision for profound specific needs, such as speech and hearing therapists?

1.1 Learning: Standards and progress in Welsh

General guidance

Inspectors should report clearly on pupils' standards and progress from their individual starting points in listening and reading, speaking and writing skills in Welsh in all key stages.

Inspectors should judge standards in Welsh language skills on the basis of first-hand evidence, for example when observing pupils' progress in lessons, learning walks, scrutinising pupils' work and discussions with pupils in both formal and informal activities. Observing pupils carefully in lessons and speaking with pupils will provide evidence of their listening and speaking skills and their ability to think. Depending on pupils' level of age and proficiency, listening to them read different texts appropriate to their level of competency and discussing the content will provide information about their understanding and use of familiar and unfamiliar words and syntactic patterns in Welsh. Scrutinising work in books and displays in the learning environment will provide evidence of how well pupils are able to write clearly and understand what they read.

Inspectors should consider pupils' standards in Welsh in comparison with similar schools and pupils' previous attainment from different individual starting points. Where applicable, inspectors should consider pupils' progress from the foundation phase to Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. They should consider pupils' progress and attainment in Welsh, Welsh literature or Welsh as a second language in comparison with their previous progress and attainment in similar schools.

Inspectors should consider the progress that pupils make in terms of developing their Welsh language skills across the curriculum and around the school. Consideration should be given to the school's provision for developing Welsh learning and skills in their efforts to implementing the Curriculum for Wales. They should consider pupils' attitudes towards learning Welsh and how well they know about the advantages of learning Welsh and becoming bilingual.

In Key Stage 4, where applicable, inspectors should consider the proportion of pupils who gain a recognised Key Stage 4 qualification in Welsh second language. In Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, they should consider the proportion of pupils who complete their coursework and their final assessment in Welsh in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form in all of the courses that they follow across the curriculum.

Questions

Inspectors should consider the following questions when inspecting and reporting on 1.1 Standards and progress in learning and skills [listening and reading, speaking and writing (in Welsh)]:

- Are pupils making good progress in Welsh lessons/through the medium of Welsh across the curriculum?

- Do pupils develop their grasp of Welsh language skills in an integrated manner?
For example:
 - How well do they develop listening and speaking skills in order to communicate?
 - How well do they develop reading skills in order to understand and respond to different written forms?
 - How well do they develop writing skills in order to write effectively, correctly and at length, both with and without a genre/language frame for support?
 - How well do pupils progress along the language continuum from their individual starting points?
- Where applicable, are pupils confident and competent in using the Welsh language in a range of situations outside their Welsh lessons? Do they speak Welsh spontaneously in less formal activities?
- Where applicable, are pupils able to use the appropriate and relevant words, syntactic patterns and linguistic register when discussing or communicating with different audiences?
- When appropriate, do pupils have a good understanding of subject terminology in Welsh in subjects across different areas of the curriculum?
- Do pupils who join the school with little or no previous competence in the Welsh language achieve well from their individual starting points?
- Do pupils continue to develop their Welsh language skills from non-maintained settings to the foundation phase and Key Stage 2 in primary schools, and then in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in secondary schools, in a way that ensures progression in developing their listening, reading, speaking and writing skills?
- Does attainment in Welsh according to teachers' assessments at the end of the foundation phase, Key Stages 2 and 3, and in external examinations in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form (Welsh, Welsh Literature or Welsh second language), compare favourably with that in similar schools?
- Where applicable, do all pupils gain a recognised qualification in Welsh at the end of Key Stage 4, apart from those pupils who are disapplied by their statements of SEN/IDP?
- Where applicable, how many pupils who learn Welsh as a second language (in English-medium or in English streams in bilingual schools) gain a recognised qualification in Welsh, including GCSE Welsh second language (full course) at the end of Key Stage 4?
- In Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, how many pupils complete their coursework and their final assessments in Welsh (in all courses that they follow across the curriculum) in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form?
- Do pupils display positive attitudes and enjoyment in learning Welsh?
- Are pupils aware of the advantages of learning Welsh and becoming increasingly bilingual?
- What proportion of pupils take part in extra-curricular or community events or activities where they are able to use their Welsh language skills? How does this influence and support progress made in developing their Welsh skills?