



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

A report on

**Learn Welsh Gwent
Coleg Gwent
Pontypool Campus
Blaendare Road
Pontypool
Torfaen
NP4 5YE**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

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

About Learn Welsh Gwent

The Welsh for Adults sector was reorganised during 2016, and a national centre and a network of providers were established. Learn Welsh Gwent was established during this reorganisation and it is situated within the Bilingualism and Community Learning department of Coleg Gwent in Pontypool.

Learn Welsh Gwent receives a core grant of £1,156,465 during 2019/20 from the National Centre for Learning Welsh to teach Welsh for Adults in the areas of Newport, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen.

Learn Welsh Gwent employs around 60 staff, the majority of whom are full-time tutors, and 19 of whom are core staff, including 5 full-time tutors and 2 fractional tutors. The director is responsible for leading the provider, both operationally and strategically.

Learn Welsh Gwent provides a range of courses, from Entry to Proficiency levels, including mainstream Welsh for Adults, Welsh in the Workplace and Welsh for the Family courses. It also provides a programme of informal learning opportunities for learners to practise and extend their Welsh skills outside the classroom. During 2018/19, around 1,400 adults enrolled on the provider's courses

Summary

Staff at Learn Welsh Gwent are very aware of their contribution towards realising the Welsh Government's vision of creating a million Welsh speakers by 2050. By working towards the aim of 'nurturing the love, interest and respect of our learners and the wider community towards the Welsh language and culture', the provider has succeeded in creating an ethos that promotes the Welsh language in the community through the areas of old Gwent, which permeates all aspects of its work.

Staff at Learn Welsh Gwent have a passionate commitment towards retaining learners and ensuring that they continue with their lessons and become fluent Welsh speakers. They provide individual support of a high standard for the learners in their care. Nearly all tutors know their learners well and work tirelessly to support them to overcome any potential barriers to learning the language.

Most tutors develop highly positive working relationships with learners. They are enthusiastic educators who succeed in engaging learners' interest effectively. They present the language in an interesting way that develops learners' knowledge of the Welsh language skilfully.

Learn Welsh Gwent is an inclusive and supportive community of enthusiastic and ambitious learners, in which nearly all learners feel safe in their learning environment and are very highly motivated to learn Welsh. Most learners show a high level of dedication and are very supportive of each other. They enjoy learning and many concentrate and persevere excellently in the classes. As a result, these learners make strong progress towards achieving their personal aims from the perspective of learning to speak Welsh.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all learners develop their oracy skills to the best of their ability
- R2 Ensure that all tutors use the most effective methods for learning a language
- R3 Ensure that tutors' observation findings are more incisive and that the training programme addresses aspects of teaching that need to be improved

What happens next

Estyn will invite the provider to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the care, support and guidance that it provides for learners, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most learners at Learn Welsh Gwent participate highly enthusiastically in the provision that is provided for them in their Welsh lessons. Many recall previous learning successfully and build confidently on their knowledge and understanding as they develop their language skills further. As a result, these learners make strong progress towards achieving their personal aims. Many learners at intermediate and advanced level use the language spontaneously. They are beginning to master the language's complex syntax, understand and explain grammatical rules and apply them correctly, on the whole, when talking and writing.

In lessons, nearly all learners listen attentively and understand the language of their tutors and visitors successfully. Most enunciate well and use the language confidently with their tutors. Many entry level learners make swift progress in learning and practising elementary patterns, and emulate their tutor's language model skilfully. These learners make sound progress in applying their language in improvised conversations in pairs or groups, for example when discussing their plans for the half-term holiday. Most more experienced learners make very purposeful progress in developing their oracy skills. They make extensive oral contributions by using various verb forms accurately, on the whole. They also understand the main messages of challenging listening pieces and discuss their content confidently. However, a few learners are reluctant to speak during whole-class sessions. These learners have a tendency to speak English unnecessarily at times and, as a result, they do not develop their Welsh language skills to the best of their ability.

Many learners develop their reading skills soundly. They read aloud confidently and accurately in line with their level. Learners who are new to learning the language make appropriate progress in practising simple dialogues and perform them as natural conversations. Most more experienced learners make valuable progress in reading, understanding and responding to a wide range of factual and fictional texts. For example, when reading an extract from the novel 'Milionêrs' by Marilyn Samuel, they show a good grasp of broad vocabulary and the confidence to deal with dialectal forms.

Across the different levels, many learners develop effective writing skills. At entry and foundation levels, they write short sentences correctly, on the whole, and practise patterns that they have learned in previous lessons. Many learners at intermediate and advanced levels write personal and interesting pieces with a strong element of accuracy, for example when describing their first holiday abroad. In the best cases, learners develop sound independent writing skills when writing for different purposes and audiences, for example when writing an application letter to the European Space Agency to represent Wales on a journey to space, or when writing a letter to the council to complain about turning off street lights. A minority of learners make basic spelling and grammatical errors when writing. This work often succeeds in conveying meaning clearly, but tends to reflect the same errors that learners make when they speak.

On the whole, many learners at Learn Welsh Gwent complete their courses successfully across the range of levels. During the last two years, most learners at higher levels have completed their courses. Many learners attend supplementary courses, for example 'Chatterday Saturdays' (Sadyrnau Siarad) and weekend and summer courses. The number of eligible learners who choose to sit Welsh for adults examinations has increased significantly over the last three years. In 2019, around half of eligible learners sat examinations, and most succeeded in gaining a qualification.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Learn Welsh Gwent is an inclusive and friendly community of enthusiastic and ambitious learners, in which nearly all feel safe in their learning environment. Nearly all learners are highly motivated to learn Welsh, either to be of benefit to them in the workplace or to support and communicate with members of their family. Most learners feel that they are given good support by tutors during lessons and in activities outside the classroom. They appreciate that their tutors get to know them well and, as a result, respond well to their personal needs in addition to their learning needs. Most learners know whom to approach for support, where necessary.

Most learners show a high level of commitment and are very supportive of each other in the classroom. These learners enjoy learning and many concentrate and persevere excellently in lessons. Most learners have a constructive working relationship with their tutors and succeed in working effectively with their fellow learners in lessons.

Many learners take advantage of supplementary and informal learning opportunities in order to support their learning. In the best examples, a few learners contribute enthusiastically to the activities of local Welsh language initiatives or enjoy volunteering and helping in informal speaking sessions, such as 'Clybiau Clonc'. The national family weekend in Llangrannog is a popular trip, and over half of the learners who attend are learners from Learn Welsh Gwent.

Many learners appreciate and take advantage of opportunities that are provided for them to take responsibility for organising activities to practise speaking Welsh. Learners themselves are in charge of a wide range of activities, including coffee mornings, a breakfast club, a local history club and a dance club. All of these opportunities enable learners to network with each other in Welsh and extend their knowledge of Welsh heritage and culture. There are notable examples of the effects of these activities, including learners who are leading members of local Welsh clubs and societies. Around half of the provider's current staff are former learners.

Many learners set themselves purposeful targets by using the 'Defnyddio fy Nghymraeg' (Using My Welsh) book. On the whole, these targets are based on using the Welsh language practically in relevant situations outside the classroom. Many learners complete homework regularly and most feel that they make purposeful progress in their lessons.

Many learners feel that the provider listens to them and appreciate the opportunity to have their say and take advantage of opportunities to influence the provision. As a result, for example, lessons have been moved from unsuitable venues and

classrooms have been adapted in order to create environments that are conducive to learning. Another notable example of this was when the provider began to provide free activities for children during Chatterday Saturdays. Learners at proficiency level contribute effectively towards deciding on the content of elements of their course. For example, one class chose to study the history of the poet, Hedd Wyn, in detail.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Most tutors forge extremely positive working relationships with learners. They develop inclusive and supportive learning communities and encourage them to learn how to speak Welsh successfully. Most tutors are enthusiastic and engage learners' interest effectively through discussions on subjects that are of interest to them, for example learners' experiences in additional activities, such as Chatterday Saturdays and 'Clybiau Clonc'. By doing so, they present the language in an interesting way, which develops learners' understanding of the Welsh language skilfully. As a result, many learners make sound progress, enjoy speaking Welsh and are proud to be a part of a close-knit, Welsh community.

Most tutors have sound subject knowledge and a skilful grasp of effective methodology for learning a language. They present attractive learning methods in order to engage and maintain learners' interest. In the best examples, tutors play music by contemporary Welsh artists and encourage learners to watch them perform live. Many tutors prepare a range of activities that challenge learners effectively and ensure high standards, on the whole. They have high expectations of learners and support them effectively in order for them to make progress in the class. In a few lessons, tutors do not use the target language consistently enough and do not prepare learners enough by modelling and providing examples before starting a speaking activity. As a result, learners do not always understand tasks in full and turn to speaking English.

Many tutors share clear learning objectives and question skilfully in order to extend and deepen learners' understanding. They develop learning activities skilfully and vary their methods successfully, for example by repeating vocabulary and patterns, and playing language games. On the whole, these activities develop most learners' oral skills effectively and ensure that they make an attempt without fear of making a mistake. Most tutors use the target language successfully as a means of communication in order to immerse learners in the Welsh language. This contributes successfully towards enriching learners' vocabulary and developing their language patterns. Various reading activities develop learners' skills effectively, for example as they respond to the traditional folk song, 'Ble'r ei di?'. Many tutors develop the written skills of more experienced learners effectively by varying tasks purposefully. A good example of this is that a few learners write a monthly article in the local Welsh newspaper on different topics. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is developing purposefully, and a minority of tutors use it appropriately to promote learning further.

A strength of provision is the lively pace of lessons, as a majority of tutors ensure that activities run smoothly in order to maintain learners' interest. Activities move from one to the next smoothly and build purposefully on each other in order to reinforce learning. Most tutors support learners wisely and provide constructive support for individual learners and groups. Many respond successfully to learners' needs and

this, in turn, contributes beneficially towards developing their confidence to speak Welsh. These tutors provide oral feedback that shows learners how to improve aspects of their language, for example the running of verb forms and negating sentences correctly. A minority of tutors' written feedback does not provide learners with constructive guidelines on how to develop their work further.

The provider encourages all learners to speak Welsh as much as possible outside the classroom. It organises and advertises a very wide range of supplementary learning activities in addition to formal lessons, for example monthly Chatterday Saturdays and weekend courses across the region.

The provider organises a wide range of formal and informal learning activities, which ensure clear progression routes for learners to develop their language skills to the best of their ability. These activities support learners effectively and help them to understand that the process of learning Welsh begins in the classroom and develops further as they practise their skills in the wider community. A notable example of this is the trip that was organised to north Wales in order for learners to practise their Welsh while visiting places such as the Hedd Wyn museum, Llanddwyn Island and a Welsh-medium tour around Caernarfon. Tutors also organise specific thematic days, such as one on the history of the flooding of the Tryweryn valley. This makes a valuable contribution towards expanding learners' knowledge of Welsh history and culture, in addition to the language.

Provision is marketed successfully, as many tutors give prominent attention to the importance of using the Welsh language outside the classroom. Activities are arranged to be accessible to learners and to correspond to their level. Tutors meet the needs of learners and employers alike purposefully and, at the same time, meet local and national priorities effectively.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Learn Welsh Gwent provides valuable guidance for all learners, which has a very positive influence of the progress that they make, their wellbeing and their attitudes to learning. They are given a clear explanation of what they can expect from the provider and the provider's expectations. This information means that learners are aware of how to make the most of their Welsh lessons from the outset. They are given initial vocabulary and ideas about how to start using the Welsh language in the community. A summary of important policies is provided, in addition to information about whom to approach for support, where necessary.

Staff at Learn Welsh Gwent have a passionate commitment towards retaining learners and ensuring that they continue with their lessons. They track learners' attendance regularly and in detail. They contact any learner that misses a few lessons in order to see what they can do to help. This can mean offering a transfer to lessons at different locations or times, or providing personal sessions by video link. The "Dal Ati" video is an effective and encouraging resource that targets learners who are at risk of giving up their courses. Competitive financial terms are offered to learners to re-register for a class the following year, in addition to helping them attend beneficial supplementary events across Wales.

Nearly all tutors at Learn Welsh Gwent provide individual support of a high standard to the learners in their care. Tutors ensure a supportive, positive and stimulating environment in which most learners feel safe and contribute to lessons, without fear of making mistakes. They know their learners well and usually provide feedback that is aimed effectively towards their individual needs.

The provider provides a range of information and opportunities for learners to choose the course that is most relevant to them. They get to know learners' ability quickly and encourage them to change to a more suitable course, where necessary. Nearly all tutors support learners to set useful targets for themselves every term, and evaluate them regularly. They use the 'Defnyddio fy Nghymraeg' scheme effectively to this end. At the end of the year, tutors provide opportunities for learners to set the next steps in their learning, and this prepares learners well in seeking to ensure continuity and progression in their learning.

The provider works closely with Welsh language initiatives and local councils. A notable example of this is the way in which it has developed a close partnership with the Red Cross to respond to a report that identified the low percentage of ethnic families that send their children to Welsh-medium education. Learn Welsh Gwent set up Welsh taster sessions for refugee families in Newport in order to raise awareness of the language. This has led to a full-time course for parents. They have now established a Cylch Ti a Fi (Welsh-medium baby and toddler group) for parents and their young children.

The provider provides regular opportunities for learners to express their views formally and informally. Staff are always ready to listen and online questionnaires are sent to learners following every supplementary course. The provider gathers information through questionnaires about the reasons that learners leave their courses, in order to understand the reasons why and encourage them to resume in the future.

The provider has good arrangements for identifying and responding to learners' additional learning needs. There is an opportunity for all learners to complete a form when they join the class, in order to identify any needs confidentially. The provider has allocated a dedicated member of staff to be in charge of learners' special educational needs, who contacts them to provide every support to facilitate their experience as learners. When support is needed that is beyond the ability of the member of staff, the provider takes advantage of resources at Coleg Gwent to provide support. As a result, tutors receive information about how to provide suitably for these learners in their classes. The provider's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

'Nurturing the love, interest and respect of our learners and the wider community towards the Welsh language and Welsh culture' is one of the main aims of Learn Welsh Gwent. The provider achieves this aim highly successfully and has succeeded in creating an ethos that permeates all aspects of its work. This provides a firm foundation for its mission and complies fully with the plans and aims of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The provider is very aware of its contribution towards the Welsh Government's vision to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

It focuses beneficially on creating new Welsh speakers and assimilating them into Welsh society and, in some cases, these new Welsh speakers create valuable new linguistic networks. To this end, the provider and learners work diligently with partners who promote the Welsh language in the community throughout the areas of old Gwent.

The Head of Bilingualism and Community Learning at Coleg Gwent, and the department itself, work closely with the provider to ensure that the strategic priorities of the college and those of the provider correspond with each other beneficially. For example, the provider plays a valuable role in promoting bilingualism across the college. The department provides strong support and a robust challenge to the provider, and holds senior managers to account appropriately.

Leaders, managers and tutors have clear roles and suitable job descriptions and responsibilities. Staff at all levels understand their roles well and are aware of how they contribute to the provider's work. There are effective lines of communication between managers and tutors in order to manage work and seek staff's views. The provider gives all staff suitable opportunities to contribute to strategic planning. Accountability systems are clear and the provider addresses any issues in relation to underperformance appropriately. As a result, the provider has succeeded in establishing and maintaining high quality provision.

The provider has suitable and thorough systems for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Managers define relevant and measurable actions for improvement within appropriate and realistic timescales, and allocate responsibility for achieving them appropriately. Managers analyse performance data carefully and undertake a suitable range of observations, pastoral visits and mentoring schemes. Information from all of these sources is used efficiently to identify training needs. A beneficial range of sessions is provided, which are tailored to specific tutors' needs in order to address educational aspects that need to be improved.

Overall, the provider has an appropriate understanding of its strengths and areas for development. However, despite the rigour of these procedures, it does not always identify areas for improvement in relation to teaching. As a result, the targeted training programme does not always have a positive enough effect on the teaching practices of a few tutors who are in need of improvement.

On the whole, managers have created an inclusive culture to support their staff's professional learning. Most teaching staff follow a purposeful training programme on teaching and learning and to improve their skills in using technology effectively when teaching. Co-ordinators and tutors share good practice and resources with each other beneficially. The provider has developed useful procedures to cascade information and try to ensure that all tutors benefit from the programme. However, a few tutors do not attend training opportunities regularly enough.

The provider manages and uses funding effectively. Arrangements for monitoring expenditure carefully give the provider financial certainty and enable it to invest and prioritise expenditure in line with the sector's national objectives. For example, the provider gives subsidies to families to attend a Welsh family weekend at Llangrannog and invests in information technology equipment and learning resources. The provider has also made a purposeful strategic decision to invest in its workforce in

order to professionalise provision, for example by employing full-time tutors recently. This has had a positive effect on the quality of provision and the standards achieved by learners.

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 partnership and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a partnership's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

© Crown Copyright 2020: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 13/01/2020