

2012-2013

Learning Welsh as a second language

All pupils in maintained schools study Welsh up to the age of 16. As around three-quarters of schools are English-medium, more pupils take a GCSE in Welsh as a second language than in Welsh as a first language. Only 15% sit Welsh first language at 16, whereas 62% sit GCSE Welsh second language. Nearly a quarter of the Year 11 cohort do not sit any GCSE examinations in Welsh.

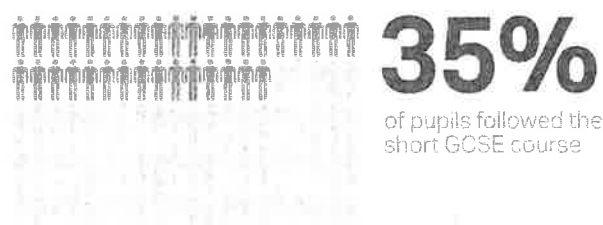
In post-16, six 'Welsh for adults' centres provide opportunities nationally for adults to learn Welsh in their communities or workplaces. These centres offer a wide range of courses from entry level courses for non-Welsh speakers to proficiency level for advanced Welsh learners. Learners can attend courses of varying intensity and duration, from short taster and residential courses to intensive courses of more than three hours a week over a longer period. In addition the centres offer customised courses for specific workplaces and have also developed a good range of distance and e-learning courses.

During the past five years the number of adult Welsh learners has remained at a fairly constant level, with around 18,000 learners enrolled. There has been a downward trend in enrolments at entry and foundation levels but the number of learners attending proficiency courses has increased. The numbers of learners attending specialist courses, such as Welsh in the workplace, revision courses and short courses have also increased.

Figure 1.9: 2013
Full Welsh second language GCSE course



Figure 1.10: 2013
Short Welsh second language GCSE course



2012 - 2013

How good are outcomes in Welsh as a second language?

There are no published assessment results for Welsh language development in English-medium settings and schools up to the age of seven.

At key stage 2, it is optional for schools to provide details of teacher assessments in Welsh second language to the Welsh Government. In 2013, 95% of pupils from the eligible cohort were assessed in Welsh second language. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4 or above) in Welsh second language was 68%.

In 2013, approximately 83% of pupils at the end of key stage 3 completed Welsh second language assessments, and 73% of them reached or exceeded the expected level. The other 17% of pupils completed Welsh first language assessments.

GCSE Welsh second-language courses do not produce bilingual pupils or young people who are sufficiently confident to use the language in their everyday lives. Welsh is a statutory subject for every pupil until the end of key stage 4. GCSE second language qualifications are, for many pupils, the culmination of 11 years of learning Welsh as a second language. This is a considerable investment by the Welsh Government.

In 2013, 27% of pupils followed full Welsh second-language GCSE courses (slightly higher than in 2012). Of these, 76% achieved A*-C grades. Results from the short course are weaker than those for the full course. Thirty-five per cent followed the short GCSE course and 48% achieved A*-C grades.

Therefore, in general, a fairly low number of pupils follow the Welsh second-language full GCSE courses in key stage 4. In a few English-medium schools like Bryngwyn School, many pupils sit and pass the full GCSE course. In Bryngwyn School, 93% follow the full GCSE course with 82% of them achieving A* to C grades. It is no surprise that, in those schools where teaching is good or excellent, pupils reach high standards in Welsh second language.

In 2007, Estyn published a remit report entitled 'An evaluation of the GCSE Welsh second language short course'. The report identifies several challenges associated with the GCSE short course and these shortcomings are still relevant. They mainly reflect the lack of time allocated to teaching GCSE courses in Welsh second language and the poor quality of much of that teaching, both of which affect the motivation of pupils. The dearth of well-qualified teachers of Welsh as a second language still limits pupils' progress across key stages.

2012-2013

Findings from school inspections in the current inspection cycle

In Welsh second language, in the majority of schools, pupils make a relatively good start in terms of learning to speak Welsh and listening to Welsh. In the Foundation Phase, the majority of pupils make good progress during whole-group sessions, and they have a positive attitude towards speaking Welsh.

Standards in key stage 2 are improving slowly but, in a significant minority of schools, pupils do not develop their Welsh language skills well enough. Frequently in these schools, teachers do not allocate enough time to improving pupils' Welsh second language skills and many teachers are not confident when using the Welsh language themselves, especially with older pupils in key stage 2. Too often, teachers do not plan jointly to ensure language progression from year to year but often repeat sentence patterns and vocabulary from scratch. Too much use is made of writing frames that require pupils to fill the gaps rather than offering opportunities to structure simple sentences independently. Examples of pupils making good use of the Welsh language across the curriculum are scarce.

Standards in Welsh second language in secondary schools are good in only a few schools. Standards are particularly good in those schools in which standards are excellent in general. However, Welsh second language is an important area that needs to be improved in approximately one in every five schools, where standards are so low that we make a recommendation that improvements need to be made. Even in schools where standards are good, it is rare to find pupils who are confident enough to use the language on a day-to-day basis.

There are not enough opportunities for pupils to improve their ability to use the Welsh language outside Welsh lessons. Very few English-medium secondary schools include actions in their school-improvement plans to increase fluency in Welsh. Very few work with organisations such as the *Urdd* or *Mentrau Iaith* to offer more opportunities for pupils to practise speaking Welsh informally after school hours. However, some individual schools do succeed well where they have teachers who are better qualified and who find imaginative ways to improve pupils' skills in and beyond their timetabled lessons.

What can be done to improve the situation?

Too often, what we see in many Welsh second language lessons reflects traditional and unexciting teaching techniques.

The most successful schools place an emphasis on fostering confidence in speaking (and writing) the language, as opposed to the more passive skills of listening and reading. They do this by linking class work with enjoyable extra-curricular activities and by emphasising the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* across the whole school, so that pupils appreciate and understand the history, geography and culture of Wales. These activities include outdoor activities, or residential periods away from school, for example at *Urdd* camps.

The best schools create links with peers in Welsh-medium schools, both locally and further afield, and they use modern technology, such as e-mail and Twitter. A great deal can be learned from the methodology demonstrated by some Welsh for adults providers, for example by inviting Welsh speakers from the local community to school to speak to the learners.

A few schools raise awareness amongst pupils and parents of the advantages of bilingualism in the job market. The careers service has an important role to play by using labour-market information about the jobs available to Welsh speakers.

2012-2013

Staffing

Attracting well-qualified Welsh specialists to teach Welsh second language is a challenge for many English-medium secondary schools. Overall there is limited staffing and leadership capacity. In some schools, teachers who are not subject-specialists are expected to teach Welsh extensively. Too many of these teachers lack competence and confidence.

There are 1,003 teachers registered to teach Welsh as a first or second language working in secondary schools in Wales¹. Of these teachers, only 67% have been trained to teach Welsh and 23% have not been trained to teach the subject. This means that there are at least 226 teachers teaching Welsh in secondary schools who have not been trained to teach the subject, while there is no information on the relevant qualifications of the rest.

A minority of schools organise a programme to help staff to learn Welsh. This helps staff to use the Welsh language with pupils in informal situations around the school but fails to address the need for fluent teachers.

It is clear from the way that immersion teaching methods work with young children from non-Welsh speaking homes when they join Welsh-medium schools at the age of three or four that early immersion is the most effective way of teaching not only a second language but also a third and fourth language. Young children are highly receptive to language learning. It becomes more difficult later on, although immersion is used at all levels, including for adults. Recent research suggests that there are general cognitive benefits associated with fluency in more than one language and that they go beyond simple language proficiency. However, we do not currently have the capacity in the teaching and learning-support workforce in Wales to enable schools and settings to offer immersion teaching to all children for whom Welsh is a second or third language. Neither do we have a curriculum for Welsh as a second language that requires teachers to use immersion methods.

Figure 1.11: Percentages of registered secondary school teachers of Welsh by initial training



¹ General Teaching Council for Wales Annual Statistics Digest, March 2013

2013-2014

Numeracy

In a majority of schools, the increased focus on developing pupils' numeracy is beginning to have a positive impact, although this is from a low baseline.

In the **Foundation Phase**, many pupils find it difficult to interpret problems expressed in words and to decide which operation they need to use to solve the problem. Where standards are good, pupils talk confidently about the mathematics they use and explain the reasons for their approach.

In **key stage 2**, in schools where numeracy is strong, most pupils use their skills to solve mathematical problems in a variety of contexts. They solve real-life problems that require applying a range of numeracy skills. For example, they plan the purchase of new furniture for their classroom and calculate the cost. In a minority of schools where there are shortcomings in numeracy, pupils do not use the skills they gain in mathematics lessons at the same level in other subjects.



ICT

Most pupils use ICT well to present information, and pupils at key stage 2 develop their skills in ICT to research information in different subjects. In the very few schools where ICT is excellent, most pupils use a range of ICT equipment confidently in the Foundation Phase. They build on this to master more complex skills. For example, they produce simple computer games using simulations and spreadsheets. In a minority of schools, pupils do not use a wide enough range of ICT skills such as data handling, modelling or writing simple coded programs.

Welsh

Standards in Welsh as a second language have not improved. In the **Foundation Phase**, most pupils continue to enjoy learning Welsh and respond to commands with understanding. Many ask and answer simple questions with confidence. This year, in a few schools, there has been an increase in daily, short practice sessions to keep pupils' skills in Welsh sharp. This often improves pupils' confidence when speaking on a range of topics and has enabled them to sustain a conversation for longer periods, particularly in **key stage 2**. In most schools, pupils do not use their Welsh oracy and writing skills beyond Welsh lessons. They lack confidence and are reluctant to participate in short exchanges about everyday subjects. Most pupils have reading skills that are less well developed than their speaking and writing skills and many find it difficult to discuss what they have read. Very few pupils have a Welsh reading book.

2013-2014

Provision: Secondary schools

Provision is good or better in just over two-thirds of schools. This is better than was the case last year and reflects the progress made by schools in improving their provision for skills and in ensuring greater in-school consistency in the quality of teaching.

Nearly all schools offer a suitable range of courses at key stage 4. Many schools have effective strategies to support pupils with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills. They are making appropriate progress in implementing the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF). Most use the LNF as a framework within which to structure and monitor their provision. However, in only around half of schools are the co-ordination and monitoring of literacy across all curriculum subjects good. The quality of support received by schools from National Support Programme partners has been variable. In schools where support has been less effective, partners lack experience of the age-range of the school they are supporting, or do not have the same breadth of expertise across both literacy and numeracy.

A minority of schools have shortcomings in the way in which they are planning for progression in both literacy and numeracy and a lack of knowledge about how and where to include higher-order numeracy tasks appropriately across subjects other than mathematics.

The promotion of the Welsh dimension is a strong feature in most Welsh-medium and bilingual schools and in the majority of English-medium schools. For example, pupils can take up a range of extra-curricular sporting and cultural activities that enable them to develop their use of the Welsh language in more social and informal settings. This year, inspectors found that pupils are able to study Welsh at an appropriate level in a majority of schools. However as reported last year, in a minority of schools, including a very few bilingual schools, pupils are not suitably challenged and do not take qualifications appropriate to their ability in Welsh.

By working in partnership with charities and environmental organisations and using guest speakers, a majority of schools offer a good range of activities that support sustainable development and global citizenship activities. In previous years, we reported that global citizenship was less well developed than sustainable development, but the two aspects now receive similar attention.

Teaching

This year, there has been a small improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now good or better in half of schools, but there are fewer schools where teaching is excellent.

In the very few schools where teaching is excellent, there is a high level of consistency in the quality of teaching across all subjects. Activities are challenging, and engage pupils' imagination fully. Teachers' questioning is skilful and probing and explores pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils make better than expected progress.

In around half of schools where teaching is consistently good, teachers have high expectations, present well-planned tasks and provide effective questioning. However in half of schools, teaching is inconsistent and there is too much variation in pupils' experiences. In these schools, there are weaknesses in lesson planning, questioning, pace or expectations.

Assessment is consistently good in a majority of the schools inspected this year. Good features include clear feedback to pupils about what needs to improve and guidance on how to respond. Teachers and leaders monitor the progress of pupils carefully. This information is used well to identify where additional support or greater challenge is needed. However, the quality of assessment is variable in a minority of schools. In these schools, there is inconsistency in the quality of written feedback and pupils do not routinely act on teachers' comments to correct and improve their work.

Figure 2.7: Percentage judgements awarded for Key
Question 2: How good is provision?



2014-2015

Provision: Secondary schools

Provision is good or better in around half of secondary schools inspected this year. This is a lower proportion than last year due mainly to shortcomings in provision for developing pupils' skills and inconsistency in the quality of teaching or assessment.

Learning experiences

A few schools offer pupils exceptional learning experiences. Innovative curriculum arrangements have a significant impact on the quality and breadth of provision, on the development of pupils' skills, and on their attitudes to learning and outcomes. These innovations include discrete lessons focusing on elements of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and opportunities for pupils to take part in extended activities that capture their interest.

Around a half of schools have suitable plans to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. These schools also provide useful support for pupils experiencing difficulties with these skills. However, in almost half of schools, planning and co-ordination for progression in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are weak. Often, planned activities offer pupils very low challenge, for example tasks in which they copy text, perform simple calculations or cut and paste rather than analysing and summarising information.

In the majority of schools, the development of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is patchy and poorly co-ordinated. Only a very few schools have embraced the use of new technologies, such as tablet computers, across the curriculum.

In the majority of English-medium schools, although many pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh, there are not enough planned opportunities to develop their confidence in speaking the language.

A few bilingual schools do not make sure that pupils who previously learnt through the medium of Welsh in key stage 2 and key stage 3 continue to make enough

progress in Welsh in key stage 4. In addition, they do not promote the social use of the language well enough. In the majority of English-medium schools, although many pupils have positive attitudes towards speaking Welsh, there is not enough planning to develop their confidence in speaking the language.

Many schools offer a wide range of courses to meet the interests of most pupils as well as a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Most schools have suitable provision for the development of pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship.

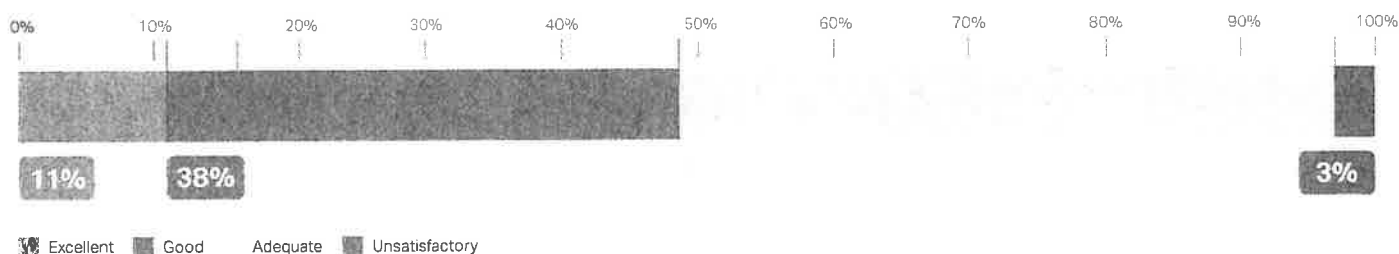
Teaching

Teaching is good or better in about half of schools. In these schools, teachers have clear learning objectives for their lessons and plan to ensure a suitable pace and a variety of activities. They use assessment information to ensure that activities meet the needs of pupils across the ability range. They monitor pupils' progress carefully and provide them with useful feedback so that they understand what they need to do to improve their work.

In the very few schools where teaching is outstanding, teachers create an atmosphere in which pupils feel confident to take risks and learn from their mistakes. Lessons are planned meticulously to provide high levels of challenge. Teachers capture pupils' interest with imaginative and relevant activities. They ask probing and challenging questions that encourage pupils to become curious, independent learners.

In about a half of schools, the quality of teaching is inconsistent and activities are not challenging enough. In about half of lessons, teachers do not adapt work to stretch more able pupils or support those of lower ability. Lessons often proceed at too slow a pace. Teachers' questioning is superficial and focuses too much on the recall of facts. A few teachers offer pupils too much direction and explanation, rather than encouraging them to think for themselves.

Figure 2.11: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



2015-2016

Section 2:
Sector summaries:

Outcomes: Primary schools

In the majority of schools, there are still important shortcomings in standards of ICT. Most pupils routinely use tablets and computers to find and present information and they demonstrate sound awareness of e-safety. Yet many pupils do not have a strong enough grasp of the full range of ICT skills appropriate for their age, such as creating spreadsheets or managing and interpreting data. In the very few schools where ICT standards are strong, key stage 2 pupils use formulae in spreadsheets, for example when comparing the exchange rates of different currencies.

Standards of Welsh in English-medium schools are still too variable. Around a third of English-medium schools have recommendations relating to pupils not using their Welsh oracy skills well enough outside of formal lessons. Although many pupils in English-medium schools are enthusiastic about learning Welsh and know useful phrases, they do not often use them correctly or with confidence.

Taking every opportunity to increase literacy

Twenty-seven languages are spoken at **Kitchener Primary School**, with English spoken as an additional language by 86% of pupils. The school employs a broad range of strategies and teaching methods to ensure that all pupils have the best opportunities to develop their literacy skills. As a result, standards in literacy across the school have risen each year for the past three years.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

