

Case study

Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy (YDC) is a bilingual secondary school with 670 learners, 8.2 per cent of whom are eligible for free school meals. Having changed their language medium from English to Welsh in the last five years, the majority of learners are now taught through the medium of Welsh.

In 2012, the school began working with the draft National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF). Since then they have developed the framework within the school, making sure all staff know what their role is in relation to the LNF and developing it within their subjects and across the curriculum. The framework is primarily lead by Elan Davies, the headteacher, supported by a numeracy and a literacy coordinator, and an assistant headteacher who acts as a professional tutor to develop and support staff and learners.

YDC is fed by 15 primary schools across the Conwy valley area serving a large rural area, and works closely with these partner primary schools to ensure that there are effective common approaches to developing the skills within the LNF. Training was initially held for the school's own staff and this was complemented by similar training for partner schools in order to develop consistent approaches.

YDC worked in partnership with the feeder primary schools to develop resources to support the transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. These resources included numeracy guides for parents; literacy and numeracy posters for use in the classroom; training resources for reading, oracy, extended non-literary writing and numeracy; a teaching and learning booklet; and a reflection mat. YDC has also developed

common tasks for numeracy, Welsh and English as part of its transition work and to support consistency in moderating at Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. The main focus has been on the core subjects and common learning and teaching resources.

In addition staff have worked to develop writing and reading strategies for all subjects across the curriculum within the school, not just English and Welsh, which support the skills developed at Key Stage 2.

The school has worked hard to develop this cross-curricular standardised approach to LNF skills. Elan Davies, headteacher, noted that:

'Standardising and sharing the teaching of graphs by the mathematics department has improved the use of graphs in geography and science lessons. In terms of numeracy, teachers now understand the kind of numeracy being used day to day within the context of their curriculum and their subject. While a standardised and more consistent approach to reading and writing in English and Welsh has improved confidence and consistency in writing tasks in subjects such as history and religious education.'

The development of strategies and the confidence that learners have built up has taken time to develop. However, learners and staff now have greater confidence in the learning and teaching approaches of the school.

Elan Davies said:

'We are pleased with the effect the LNF is having on our learners so far. Year 11 are the first group of learners who have had a full three years of teaching

through the LNF, and the consistency of their work, and the confidence that they have gained, is evident in their work.'

YDC recognises that the LNF is developed very much as a continuum and that the new GCSE will include the skills contained within the LNF. They see their role as very much supporting learners to grasp and develop these skills so that they have the right 'tools' to use in their exams.

The next steps for the school are to develop this continuum and work with primary schools, building on their work of embedding skills across all subjects and developing learner response. In order to support staff in the school lead practitioners have been appointed to lead ongoing staff training and to work with other schools to strengthen links.