

Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig

Progress made by schools in implementation of ACCAC
guidance issued in 2003.

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Estyn

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BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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1. Introduction

In 2003, ACCAC produced guidance for schools entitled "Developing the Cwricwlwm Cymreig" . This followed an earlier report produced by Estyn in 2001 on "Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig: The Welsh dimension of the curriculum in Wales: good practice in teaching and learning."

The ACCAC guidance explained the rationale for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, why it was important, and how and where schools could promote it in the school curriculum. The guidance identified opportunities to develop and promote Y Curriculum Cymreig and exemplified good practice through case studies. These case studies described good practice in the teaching of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig in National Curriculum subjects.

This report evaluates the progress made by schools in implementing the ACCAC guidance on Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig from the Early Years to Key Stage 3. The evidence base includes:

- data and judgements from Section 10 inspection reports for the academic year 2003/2004;
- HMI visits, during the Autumn Term 2004, to a sample of English medium primary and secondary schools to:
 - discuss Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig with pupils, teachers, co-ordinators and headteachers; and
 - scrutinise pupils work and teachers' planning documents;
- contributions by teachers to a conference organised by ACCAC on Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig in November 2004.

2. Main Findings

Most schools are making good progress in implementing Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and ACCAC guidance is having a positive influence on provision. Most schools see the ACCAC document "Developing the Cwricwlwm Cymreig" (2003) as a very useful point of reference, when developing Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. However, in a third of schools, headteachers have not taken sufficient account of the guidance.

In general, teachers are developing a greater awareness of the national context of Wales, when planning work for pupils. There has been a considerable improvement in the quality of planning by schools for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, in all the regions of Wales, since the last Estyn survey of 2001. There is now less regional variation between schools in planning for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, compared with the position in 1999-2000. This is, in part, due to the influence of the guidance from ACCAC and the importance that schools accord to the Common Requirements introduced into the National Curriculum in 2000.

Schools in traditionally anglicised regions, such as South Pembrokeshire have made progress in introducing Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. However, while there is some very good practice, not all schools located in other regions close to the border with England, in areas such as Monmouth, Flintshire and east Powys, are as committed to addressing Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.

The focus on Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig was a significant feature of the standards of achievement in three quarters of the classes visited by HMI. Pupils are developing a good knowledge, skill and understanding of the way in which historical events, people and landscapes have influenced artists, poets and authors in various parts of Wales. However, few schools have tried to evaluate systematically the impact of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig on standards in general.

The quality of teaching and learning in Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is good or better in three quarters of classes. In general, teachers:

- plan lessons well, using a variety of approaches, and a good range of resources; and
- set lesson objectives that use the locality, the community and wider studies of Wales as starting points for learning across the curriculum.

In the best cases, teachers:

- use incidental Welsh consistently and effectively, often differentiating the work to reflect the ages and capabilities of the pupils;
- engage pupils in a variety of interesting tasks; and
- convey enthusiasm and conviction about the topics they have chosen to teach.

The teaching of Welsh as a first or second language forms an essential element of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig in all schools. In most cases, LEA Welsh advisory staff and athrawon bro provide effective training and support for teachers in teaching Welsh as a second language. The ACCAC guidance is a further useful resource for LEAs to use in this work. More teachers in primary schools in the most anglicised areas of Wales are developing confidence when teaching Welsh as a second language, in part because of the impact of these initiatives. Nevertheless, the inspection profile of Welsh as a second language remains one of the weakest.

Most teachers in primary schools have attended in-service courses to develop their Welsh language skills. Many schools now have staff who have completed a course in Welsh to equip them to teach the language to a basic level. Most schools also have at least one member of staff who has progressed up to a higher level of competence. However, few teachers have attended in-service courses specifically on the wider aspects of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig other than as part of a Welsh language course.

Most schools have a policy for Cwricwlwm Cymreig that becomes an important priority within the school development plan. Over 60% of schools audited have Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig to identify opportunities for development. This has improved the planning process in those schools and ensured that there is systematic coverage of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig across the curriculum. In the schools where there has been no audit, the quality of curriculum planning suffers because there is little or no awareness of the opportunities for and importance of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.

In the relatively small minority of schools where Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is not a prominent feature, there is a general lack of understanding about what is meant by the Cwricwlwm Cymreig. About a third of the schools in the sample that HMI visited have teachers in post who were new to Wales or were trained in colleges outside

Wales. Few of these teachers have received any in-service training organised within the school, or by the LEA, to inform them of the distinctive characteristics of the National Curriculum in Wales. They have very little understanding of and, in some cases, little empathy with Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. In these cases, opportunities to develop the Cwricwlwm Cymreig are few.

There is an improved focus on Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig within ITT courses in Wales. The growth of degree courses such as Welsh Studies in some institutions has also ensured that many recently appointed teachers are better prepared to teach Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. Many of the more experienced teachers have become aware of a stronger national profile within Wales in politics, media, the arts, sport, language issues, and civic life in general, over the last 25 years. This awareness equips these teachers well to develop learning about contemporary Wales.

ACCAC guidance suggests many ways for a school to promote a Welsh ethos. These include the use of Welsh informally in conversation, during registration, or during lessons. In two thirds of schools, this is a strong feature of school life. In half the schools, pupils and staff make good Welsh language contributions during assemblies. The great majority of schools use pictures and other display material well to portray powerful images of contemporary Wales. However, the display of bilingual notices is a prominent feature in only a third of schools. Few English medium schools use Welsh in correspondence with parents, have bilingual stationery, greet visitors or answer telephone calls bilingually. Bilingualism often has a low priority, in these matters, because of the additional cost involved. Many schools are better at developing the bilingualism of pupils than in developing bilingual administrative procedures.

In a third of the schools visited by HMI, a governor has specific responsibility for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. In other schools, responsibility for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is part of a governor's general responsibility for the whole curriculum, or for Welsh. Where governors have specific responsibility for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, they often meet with the school co-ordinator to discuss the work, as part of their monitoring brief to ensure that the curriculum reflects the needs of pupils.

Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is a strong feature in schools where the headteacher provides good leadership and vision about this entitlement. About half the headteachers we interviewed had read the ACCAC guidance on Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig thoroughly. They find the most useful aspects of the guidance to be the case studies and advice on how to promote Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. A further small percentage had scanned the document, and about a third of headteachers had not read the guidance.

Most schools have a co-ordinator for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig who, in many cases, is also the co-ordinator for Welsh. Sometimes, in these instances, other teachers regard Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig mainly as the responsibility of the Welsh teacher. When this is the case, teachers do not always set their subjects in a clear and meaningful Welsh context. A few schools teach subjects such as geography, history or PE through the medium of Welsh to pupils for whom it is a second language, in order to extend their vocabulary and understanding of the language.

The ACCAC guidance identifies good opportunities that schools can use to foster Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig through strong links and partnerships with the local community. The guidance gives good examples of how schools, particularly those serving strongly multi-cultural communities, can plan the curriculum to reflect different traditions and cultures. Many schools see Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig as the obvious starting point to develop pupils' appreciation, understanding of, and empathy with, other cultures. However many parents move to Wales without a clear understanding of the curricular differences that their children will encounter in their new school.

ACCAC guidance suggests that schools have a role to play in supporting parents who wish to learn Welsh. In the small minority of cases where evening classes for parents are provided for parents on the school site, these are mainly in basic literacy or English as a second language. No school visited by HMI provided Welsh language classes for parents.

The use of resources, including the locality and the community, is very good in most schools. The ACCAC publication has been useful in further developing awareness of resources for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. In the best cases, teachers and pupils use the Internet well to access stimulating learning materials. However, only a third of teachers interviewed during visits could name a useful website that has materials about Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.

Where schools have audited Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, they have not always identified or developed action plans to address shortages of resources. Few schools have a strategy for developing resources for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.

3. Recommendations

The Assembly Government should consider:

- requiring that induction arrangements include a focus on Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig for teachers who are new to working in Wales.

ACCAC should consider:

- developing more materials on Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig to support schools.

LEAs should consider:

- supporting schools to share innovative resource material to support the teaching of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, for example, through establishing networks of schools and through websites; and
- continuing to provide professional development opportunities for teachers on Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and for those who wish to learn Welsh to a higher level.

Schools should:

- conduct regular and systematic audits of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig in all subjects in order to monitor provision;

- develop opportunities for pupils to progress in their awareness of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, especially in developing bilingualism, with all subjects;
- ensure that each governing body has a designated governor with responsibility for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig;
- ensure that parents who are new to Wales, are made aware of the distinctive features of the curriculum in Wales;
- increase bilingual signage and the use of bilingual correspondence and the greeting of visitors bilingually;
- provide professional development opportunities for all staff on Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, particularly those who were trained outside Wales and may be unfamiliar with the curriculum requirements in Wales;
- provide opportunities for all staff in primary schools to learn and teach Welsh;
- develop learning resources that support Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and work with partner schools and local education authorities to develop resource networks for sharing innovative materials; and
- consider providing classes in Welsh and Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig for parents.