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# One language for all

## Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4

Report and recommendations

September 2013

# One language for all

**Audience** Welsh and Welsh second language practitioners; learners in Key Stages 3 and 4; parents/carers; local authorities; education consortia; initial teacher training centres; awarding organisations; the Welsh Language Commissioner; university schools of Welsh; and other stakeholders and partners involved in the field.

**Overview** In July 2012, the Minister for Education and Skills established a group to review Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4. The main objective of the group was to consider what changes should be made to the teaching and assessment of the subject to enable more learners to use the language in the workplace, community and with their families. This document summarises the Review Group's findings and recommendations.

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**Additional copies** This document is available on the Welsh Government website at [www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills](http://www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills)

**Related documents** *Welsh-medium Education Strategy* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010); *A living language: a language for living – Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17* (Welsh Government, 2012).

This document is also available in Welsh.

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## Foreword

It is undeniably the eleventh hour for Welsh second language. Although there are many wonderful teachers working in the field, and some individual examples of exemplary teaching, Estyn reports show that the overall standard has fallen annually; in fact, pupil attainment levels are lower than in any other subject. Had this been said of Mathematics, or English, a revolution would undoubtedly have ensued. But low attainment in Welsh second language has been accepted as the norm. If we are serious about developing Welsh speakers, and about seeing the Welsh language thrive, a change of direction is urgently required before it is too late.

Aside from developing future Welsh speakers, we also have an obligation to the young people in our schools who are trying to learn the language. According to the evidence, this is a very tedious experience for large numbers of them – they do not regard the subject as being relevant or of any value to them. They are not confident enough to use Welsh outside the classroom – the opportunities to do so are actually very limited – and there is no incentive therefore to learn the language.

Welsh second language is a statutory subject in the National Curriculum. It became a compulsory subject for all pupils at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 in 1990, and compulsory at Key Stage 4 nine years later. However, it is not a core subject and does not therefore have the same status as subjects such as Welsh first language and English. At Key Stage 4, schools register pupils for the full course or short course GCSE examination (or an equivalent NVQ qualification); register pupils for an entry level qualification; or chose not to register pupils for any Welsh language examination. The statistics reveal all: in 2012, 27.4% of pupils were entered for the full course second language GCSE, 35.3% for the short course second language GCSE, and 15.4% for the first language GCSE; but 21.9% of pupils in Wales did not sit any Welsh language examination.

We are totally convinced that fundamental changes have to be made to increase the number of Welsh speakers and develop a bilingual workforce for the future, but most importantly to give every child in Wales a real opportunity to become fluent in Welsh and to reap all the benefits of fluency.

The Group has reviewed the provision and received evidence verbally and in writing from institutions, teachers, parents and, more importantly, from pupils themselves. There was also an opportunity to question and talk to experts in the field. Evidence was received regarding good practice, along with examples of notable success in several schools and of teachers' commitment to the subject. The picture is certainly not bleak in every respect. Wales has some extremely effective second language teachers, who are thoroughly conscientious and always go the extra mile – they are champions of Welsh within their schools who lead on all matters relating to the Welsh language. However, evidence was also received on how to improve the provision. Some specific themes emerged which we have used as a basis for our recommendations: the status of the subject; the nature of the curriculum and progression; assessment; teaching and learning; resources; the workforce, and informal learning. We addressed the controversial idea of a language continuum, and this led us to suggest that the Literacy Framework for

Welsh be developed as a basis for one continuum of learning Welsh in all schools – this would result in the term ‘second language’ itself being removed. The importance of developing the use of Welsh as a medium in English-medium secondary schools was also discussed. However, the most important recommendation of all is the necessity for the subject to be accorded the same status as core subjects in schools; with equal status in the National Curriculum and the same prominence in performance measures, we can bring about the change that is essential if we are serious about creating Welsh speakers.

It is important, of course, that Welsh second language is not discussed in isolation and that it is seen in a wider context that includes learning the language in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, and the Welsh for Adults sector. Key Stages 3 and 4 do not take place in isolation either – they are founded on Key Stage 2 and the Foundation Phase and we must ensure that these foundations are solid. The success of the subject at Key Stage 4 in turn affects the number of pupils studying A level Welsh and Welsh as a degree subject, and those numbers are crucial if we want to develop teachers who have the appropriate linguistic and academic skills.

The future of Welsh and Welsh culture is wholly dependent on transmitting the language to our young people. And not only that: they have to want to *use* the language every day if it is to be a viable language, a language that is spoken confidently at the end of the twenty first century. If this review’s recommendations are implemented, the years ahead will undoubtedly be challenging. But they will also be very exciting as we meet that challenge and realise the vision of putting Welsh at the core of the educational and personal development of every pupil in Wales.

Professor Sioned Davies  
Chair, Welsh Second Language Review Group  
September 2013

# Section 1: Introduction and context

## Introduction

- 1.1 Welsh, including Welsh second language, is a statutory subject in the Curriculum for Wales. Following the Education Reform Act of 1988, Welsh became compulsory for every pupil at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 in 1990 and from September 1999, Welsh became compulsory at Key Stage 4. The introduction of the Foundation Phase for 3 to 7 year olds in Wales from 2008 has also meant that children in English-medium settings and schools are coming into contact with the Welsh language at an earlier age due to the Welsh Language Development Area of Learning, an additional requirement for these specific settings and schools. Whilst these changes have led to more learners learning Welsh in English-medium schools, the number of learners reaching a level where the language can be used beyond the classroom is low.
- 1.2 Estyn reports for several years have indicated that there is less good practice in the learning of Welsh as a second language compared with other subjects. The main reason given for this at Key Stage 2 is that teachers are not confident enough and lack the knowledge to teach Welsh to an appropriate level. At secondary level, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to improve their ability to use Welsh other than in Welsh lessons.
- 1.3 The Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy, which was published in 2010, sets out the Government's vision of having an education and training system that ensures an increase in the number of pupils learning Welsh in schools in Wales, so that they are able to use Welsh with their families and in the community and workplace. The Strategy contains specific objectives to address low standards in Welsh second language.
- 1.4 On 30 April 2012 the then Minister for Education and Skills agreed an action plan to address poor standards and attainment in Welsh second language education. Within the action plan there was a specific objective to review Welsh second language assessment and qualifications. This review was to include:
  - identifying opportunities for raising the status of Welsh second language as a subject and removing barriers at a local, regional and national level;
  - reviewing Welsh second language qualifications at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5;
  - considering the implications of discontinuing the GCSE Welsh second language short courses; and
  - giving further consideration to the feasibility of introducing a Welsh language continuum.
- 1.5 On 17 July 2012, the then Minister for Education and Skills announced that he would establish the Group to review Welsh second language at

Key Stages 3 and 4 and Terms of Reference were published for the work (Appendix 1). The Review Group's membership was also published (Appendix 2) and work began in October 2012.

- 1.6 The Group has since gathered evidence from a range of institutions and individuals including teachers, pupils and experts in Welsh second language education. The Group has also invited evidence from organisations with an interest in the field. Further information about the Group's course of action can be found in Section 2 of this report.
- 1.7 The Group's work has intensified following the results of the 2011 Census. Between 2001 and 2011, there was a decrease in the number and proportion of people aged 3 and over able to speak Welsh in Wales. The decrease was due to demographic changes in the population, migration and to changes in people's skills between the two Censuses. Despite an increase in the size of the population, the number of Welsh speakers fell from 582,000 in 2001 to 562,000 in 2011. Differences between 2001 and 2011 varied by age group – with considerable increases for younger children (aged 3-4), a slight increase for adults aged 20-44, and decreases for other age groups. These results present Welsh second language education with a challenge to ensure that more children learning Welsh as a second language develop their skills sufficiently so that they are confident enough to use, and indicate their ability to use, the language after leaving school.
- 1.8 Another factor to consider following the Census is that many of those counted as Welsh speakers, especially in the 3-16 age range, have been entered by their parents and have learned Welsh as a second language. Therefore, it is likely that their involvement with the language, and their level of fluency, is limited compared with children receiving a Welsh-medium education. Without improvement in the efficiency of Welsh second language education, many of these speakers will not continue to make use, and indicate their use, of the language in future.

## Policy context

- 1.9 It is important to set out the Welsh second language context from the perspective of the Government's Language Strategy, *A Living Language: A Language for Living*, which was launched in 2012. The strategy sets out the vision of increasing the number of people who both speak and use the language, and of increasing people's confidence and fluency in the language.
- 1.10 The Welsh-medium Education Strategy, which had already been published in 2010, contributes to making *A Living Language: A Language for Living* a reality with a number of the objectives in both Strategies interlocking, specifically:  
Strategic aim 3: To ensure that all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential and encourage sound linguistic progression from one phase of education and training to the next;

Strategic aim 4: To ensure a planned Welsh-medium education workforce that provides sufficient numbers of practitioners for all phases of education and training, with high-quality Welsh language skills and competence in teaching methodologies;

Strategic aim 5: To improve the central support mechanisms for Welsh-medium education and training.

- 1.11 Literacy and numeracy are embedded in all subjects across the curriculum, and to support all teachers to become teachers of literacy and numeracy, a National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) has been introduced. The LNF will be a statutory requirement of the curriculum for pupils from Reception to Year 9, from September 2013 onwards. Teachers will be required to undertake annual assessments of pupils' progress in meeting the expectations set out in the LNF, and report these to parents.
- 1.12 Alongside the LNF, reading and numeracy tests have been introduced for pupils in Year 2 to Year 9. These tests will provide further evidence about pupils' level of attainment, in addition to the assessments undertaken by teachers.
- 1.13 Taken together these two developments represent a significant change to the assessment arrangements in schools in Wales. The Minister for Education and Skills has therefore established a Review Group to consider assessment arrangements and the national curriculum in Wales and make recommendations on any changes needed to ensure that the LNF and the tests form part of a coherent approach. The review will respond to concerns about the reliability of teacher assessment highlighted by Estyn, consider whether standards/levels of attainment contained within our curriculum are sufficiently stretching and explore the impact of changing assessment on the wider curriculum.
- 1.14 The review of assessment and the curriculum in Wales will consider in particular the use and usefulness of the current approach to level descriptions and attainment targets, the most appropriate modes of assessment, how assessment data is used, and the timing of the assessments that are undertaken and which subjects it is necessary to assess. The aim is to streamline and simplify the assessment arrangements.
- 1.15 The first phase of the review of assessment arrangements and the curriculum in Wales will be completed by September 2013. This will include evidence gathering, consultation with key stakeholders and experts, and analysis, all of which will culminate in a report. The Welsh Second Language Review Group has received regular updates on this wider review to ensure that the recommendations of the two groups do not conflict.
- 1.16 An independent report by Robert Hill, *The future delivery of education services in Wales*<sup>1</sup>, published June 2013, stated that 'pupils are making

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<sup>1</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/education/future-delivery-of-education-services-in-wales/?lang=en>



excellent progress in acquiring Welsh second language skills in fewer than one in ten primary schools. The effect of this poor achievement on the secondary sector cannot be over emphasised'. The Hill report makes specific recommendations for this Group to consider aimed at improving attainment in Welsh second language and those recommendations are referred to in the body of this report.

## **Background**

- 1.17 As indicated above, Welsh is a statutory subject in the Curriculum for Wales, and is compulsory for all pupils up to the age of 16. Learners take either Welsh first language or Welsh second language. Welsh second language is a foundation subject while Welsh first language, English, Mathematics and Science are core subjects in the curriculum (and contribute to the Core Subject Indicators). As with every other subject in the curriculum, the amount of time allocated to studying the subject is a matter to be determined locally by schools.
- 1.18 Although the study of Welsh or Welsh second language as a subject is compulsory, making a decision on a particular qualification is a matter for schools and is done at a local level. However, the Welsh subject Order states that there should be appropriate assessment and accreditation available to all learners.
- 1.19 At Key Stage 4, GCSE Welsh second language full course or short course can be taken and there is a choice of two syllabi for each: Welsh second language and applied Welsh second language. However, one in three learners do not gain any qualification in Welsh second language and many learners take the GCSE short course where attainment is low.
- 1.20 Section 3 of this report will provide further details on the current position and will explore the factors influencing standards in the subject.

## Section 2: The Group's vision and course of action

### The Review Group's vision

2.1 A number of evaluations and reports weighing up the successes and indeed failures of the second language sector have been produced over the years, but this is the first time an external, independent Group has been established to consider and provide recommendations on how to improve standards in Welsh second language education.

2.2 At the review's inception it was important to have clear terms of reference and also to agree an evidence-taking process that would add information, judgement and perspective. The terms of reference were determined by the Minister for Education and Skills, and specifically, the Group was asked to consider:

- how to provide a positive learning experience for Welsh second language learners in English-medium schools;
- how to raise the status of Welsh second language as a subject and remove barriers at a local, regional and national level;
- whether qualifications (currently available and/or other possible forms of accreditation) are a lever or a barrier with regard to developing transferable Welsh language skills;
- how best to develop learners' Welsh language skills so that they are able to transfer their skills and use the language in the workplace, community and family; and
- how to address workforce planning issues to ensure that all secondary schools have the resources and capacity to provide quality Welsh second language provision.

2.3 At the Review Group's inaugural meeting, a discussion was held on the vision of every Group member for Welsh second language. It was agreed that the long-term aim is to raise standards and to enable more learners to use Welsh at work and in the community in future. To achieve this aim, it was agreed that the following issues would need to be prioritised:

- ensure that pupils see a point to learning the language and that pupils' confidence to use the language is an important factor;
- increase the opportunities for pupils to use the language in the community, and make increased use of technology to promote the language;
- consider whether compelling pupils to learn the language is a barrier to some and whether the subject is too academic, highbrow and dry;
- look at the language continuum and consider how to improve successful transition from one key stage to another in order to ensure progression and to avoid too much repetition of linguistic patterns;
- ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities to succeed, as the provision in terms of time is inconsistent at present;

- revise the syllabus to give teachers flexibility. It was agreed that pupils' attainment, confidence and enjoyment would increase given an opportunity to explore more relevant topics;
- ensure a high quality workforce and the importance of training; and
- raise the status of the subject and ensure strong leadership within schools and local authorities.

2.4 The terms of reference and the Group's vision for Welsh second language have formed the basis for all discussions. They have also been of assistance in considering the evidence and in reaching conclusions that will lead to recommendations later in the report.

## **Course of action and response to the review**

2.5 The review began in October 2012. At the inaugural meeting a discussion was held on the Review Group members' vision for the field, as noted above, and also on courses of action. Members were given an opportunity to declare interests which might interfere with the Review Group's work, and this register was constantly updated as the work progressed. It was also agreed that the Review Group would need to adhere to Nolan principles; confidentiality and transparency were specifically discussed. It was also agreed that the Review Group would operate through the medium of Welsh and would meet at locations across Wales as necessary.

2.6 At the initial meeting it was agreed that evidence would need to be taken verbally or in writing from the following groups:

- pupils;
- teachers;
- parents;
- WJEC;
- Estyn;
- teacher training centres;
- Welsh for Adults centres;
- Mentrau Iaith;
- the Urdd; and
- individuals or organisations with an interest in the field.

2.7 It was also agreed that the Group would adopt various courses of action, and during the review period the following was done:

- focus groups were held with 82 pupils and with 31 parents;
- 27 individuals came to represent 17 organisations to present evidence to the Review Group (see Appendix 3); 33 written responses were received from a range of individuals and organisations (see Appendix 4);
- 38 responses were received to an online questionnaire for Welsh and Welsh second language Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students and teachers who completed the course in 2010-2012 (see Appendix 5);

- the review was informed through a call for evidence on the Welsh Government website; and
- an article on the review featured in a Dysg newsletter.

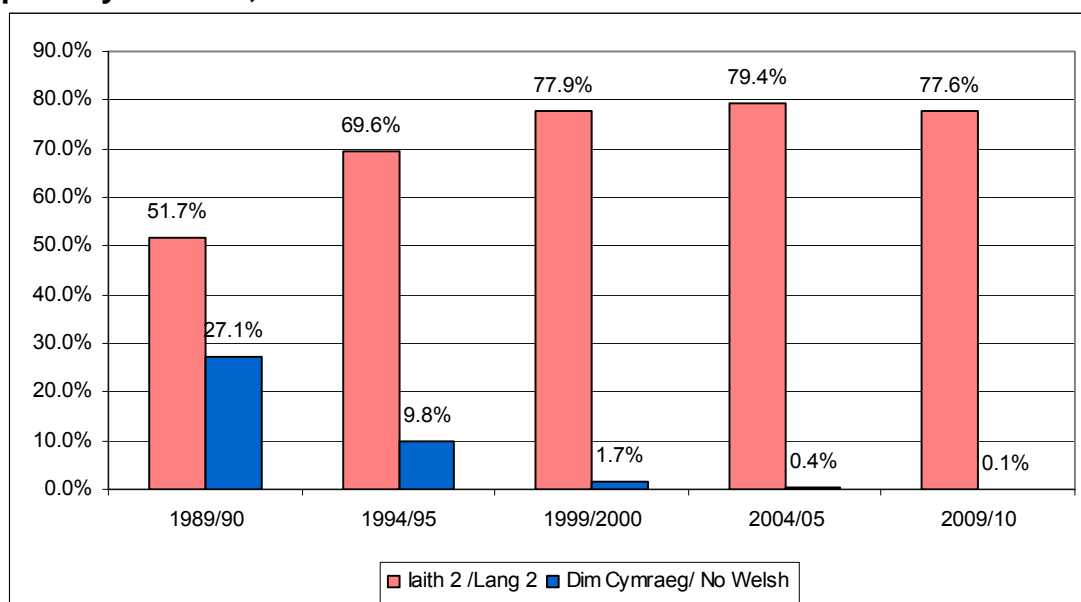
2.8 The Review Group also received and discussed a number of research reports completed in recent years, a full list of which can be found in Appendix 6.

## Section 3: The current position

### The pupils

- 3.1 Approximately 80% of pupils in Wales are taught Welsh second language. Following the introduction of the National Curriculum for Wales in 1990, there was a 20% increase in the number of pupils being taught Welsh second language. The percentage increased further in 1999/2000 and has remained relatively consistent since then. Table 1 shows the percentage of pupils being taught Welsh second language in primary schools over a 20-year period.

**Table 1: Percentage of pupils learning Welsh second language in primary schools, 1989/90 – 2009/10**

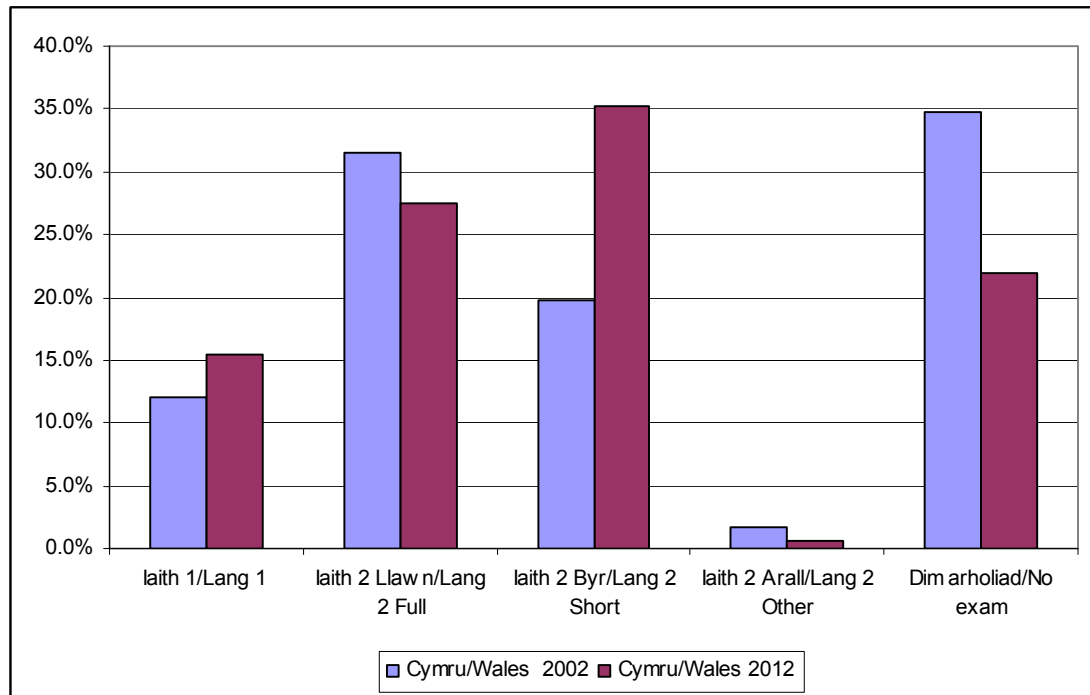


Source: PLASC<sup>2</sup>

- 3.2 Table 2 shows the percentage of pupils studying Welsh and Welsh second language GCSE exams over a decade. In 2012, approximately 60% of pupils studied Welsh second language at Key Stage 4 and gained either a full course or short course GCSE, compared to 50% in 2002. Although the percentage of pupils who do not sit an exam has reduced over the ten year period, there has been a sharp increase in the percentage of pupils who study the short course Welsh second language GCSE, with the percentage studying the full course GCSE reducing by approximately 5%. The GCSE full and short course will be discussed further in this section of the report.

<sup>2</sup> Pupil Level Annual School Census

**Table 2: Percentage of pupils studying Welsh and Welsh second language GCSE Exams, 2002 - 2012**



Source: Welsh Exam Database

## Curriculum and assessment

- 3.3 Welsh second language is a foundation subject within the National Curriculum for Wales. Welsh Language Development is a required Area of Learning in the Foundation Phase and Welsh second language is a requirement at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. Welsh second language is also taught at Key Stage 5 where, like all other subjects, it is optional. This section of the report will give an overview of current provision and attainment in Welsh second language from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 5.

### The Foundation Phase

- 3.4 The Foundation Phase is the statutory curriculum for all 3 to 7 years old children in Wales in both maintained and non-maintained settings. Welsh Language Development is one of the seven Areas of Learning in the Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning. This Area of Learning is only delivered in schools and settings where English is the main medium of communication.
- 3.5 The Foundation Phase's Welsh Language Development Area of Learning seeks to develop learners' familiarity with Welsh sufficiently to encourage further language learning and positive attitudes towards Welsh. Young children in the Foundation Phase in English-medium settings and schools learn Welsh through play and active learning, as well as story and structured activities.

- 3.6 In the Minister's annual remit letter to Estyn for 2011-2012, Estyn was requested to:
- report on the implementation of the Welsh Language Development Area of Learning in the Foundation Phase in schools and non-maintained settings; and
  - highlight examples of best practice.

The report<sup>3</sup>, published in January 2013, found that:

*"In the majority of English-medium schools inspected during 2010-2012, most children make suitable progress in speaking and listening to Welsh in the Foundation Phase, particularly during whole-group sessions. Children have a positive attitude towards learning Welsh. Their speaking and listening skills are developing well but reading and writing are generally underdeveloped in the Foundation Phase".*

However, the report also noted that:

*"in a minority of schools staff do not devote enough time to teaching Welsh... Practitioners do not practise and repeat new Welsh words regularly or offer children enough opportunities to practise their Welsh... Generally, when practitioners' own Welsh is fluent, children's progress in learning Welsh is better. These practitioners use Welsh consistently across all areas of learning. Where there are no confident Welsh-speaking practitioners in a school or setting, the use of Welsh by staff is usually more limited. This means that children hear less Welsh and have less opportunity to practise it."*

- 3.7 The Welsh Government is currently supporting the continuing need for a good quality workforce that is able to deliver the Foundation Phase in both Welsh and English through a number of training programmes. The Sabbaticals Scheme provides 5-week and 12-week courses to practitioners in maintained English-medium settings to develop their Welsh-language skills; a new contract has recently been awarded to deliver basic Welsh-language courses to early years practitioners in non-maintained settings; and Cam wrth Gam continues to train candidates to achieve Level 3 in Children's Care Learning and Development through work based placements in early years settings/schools.
- 3.8 Schools are not currently required to record individual children's progress in Welsh Language Development and there is no formal assessment data available at school, local authority or national level. This means that there is no way to track children's progress in Welsh from the beginning of their education to the end of the Foundation Phase and onwards to Key Stage 2. One of Estyn's recommendations for the Welsh Government is to:

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/264782.7/welsh-language-development-in-the-foundation-phase-january-2013/?navmap=30.163>

*“review whether the Foundation Phase Outcomes Indicator should capture children’s progress in Welsh Language Development.”*

This is currently being considered as part of existing evaluation and review arrangements. Decisions about changes to end of Foundation Phase assessment will be made in the light of the outcomes of this evaluation and the curriculum and assessment review, in addition to the findings of the Estyn report.

## **Key Stage 2**

- 3.9 The ‘Welsh in the national curriculum for Wales’<sup>4</sup> document contains the programmes of study for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, together with attainment targets and level descriptions. In order to fulfil statutory requirements, end of key stage teacher assessment are undertaken for Welsh second language, and reported to parents.
- 3.10 It is optional for schools to provide details of teacher assessments in Welsh second language to the Welsh Government. In 2012, data for 25,082 pupils from an eligible cohort of 25,519 (98.3%) was provided, compared to 25,592 pupils from an eligible cohort of 26,155 (97.8%) in 2011.
- 3.11 Table 3 shows the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4 or above) in Welsh second language at the end of Key Stage 2 from 2010, when the assessments were introduced, to 2012. Although the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above has increased over the past two years, the percentage still remains relatively low compared to 85.2% of pupils gaining Level 4 or above in English and 84% of pupils gaining Level 4 or above in Welsh in 2012.

**Table 3: Key Stage 2 non-core teacher assessments: Percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above 2010 – 2012**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>All pupils</b>	35.4%	51.4%	61.6%
<b>Boys</b>	30.4%	45.2%	55.1%
<b>Girls</b>	40.8%	58.1%	68.6%

*Source: National Data Collection*

- 3.12 The Welsh Government commissioned Key Stage 2/3 external moderation in 2010, which concluded in 2012. Clusters of schools presented Welsh second language profiles for moderation, and in the final report, the chief moderator noted:

*“It is clear that the moderation process is still in development across clusters as the evidence from the cluster programme of work provided shows some variation... In an extensive number of cases there was inconsistency in the*

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<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/arevisedcurriculumforwales/nationalcurriculum/welshnc/?lang=en>



*understanding of the standard across key stages where it was obvious that the best-fit judgement was not a cluster agreement.”*

The report provides examples of best practice for cluster moderation and suggestions for improving teaching and learning, for example:

*“There were examples of oral work where the learners had memorised work provided in writing, word for word. It was therefore very difficult to consider this type of task as evidence for Oracy as it is the memory rather than oracy skills which are being assessed in such cases. Memorising written work is not appropriate evidence of Oracy.”*

- 3.13 The year-on-year increase in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above, could be as a result of improved moderation of teacher assessments. However, as the chief moderator concluded, *“clusters are reminded that cluster moderation is a statutory requirement”* and *“clusters should continue to work together in future in order to strengthen cluster contact across key stages, in line with the statutory order. This will ensure an agreed understanding of the level characteristics and of the best-fit, leading to a more effective transition. It will also ensure good practice in terms of learning and teaching methodology and task setting.”*
- 3.14 Including Welsh second language with the core subjects for Key Stage 2/3 cluster moderation has been a positive step in improving the subject’s status. Insisting that the requirements are the same for Welsh second language and the core subjects during future moderation will help to raise expectations and, in the long term, should raise attainment in Welsh second language.

### Key Stage 3

- 3.15 The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5+ in Welsh second language at the end of Key Stage 3 has increased steadily over the last 6 years, as outlined in Table 4.

**Table 4: Percentage of pupils achieving Level 5+ in Welsh second language at the end of Key Stage 3, 2007 - 2012**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>All Pupils</b>	50.6	54.1	56	59.4	64.6	68.2
<b>Boys</b>	40.9	44.3	46.4	50.1	55.2	58.9
<b>Girls</b>	61	64.3	66.1	69.3	74.9	78.4

*Source: National Data Collection*

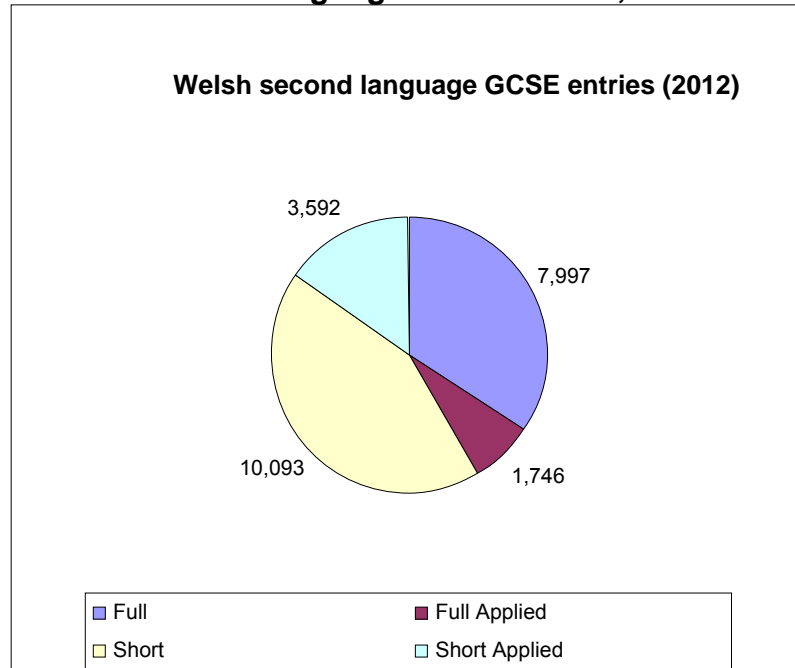
However, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 5 or above) in 2012 was lower in Welsh second language than any other subject at 68.2%. The percentage achieving the expected level in modern foreign languages (MFL) in 2012 was 74.5%. There is no obvious reason why learners should achieve higher levels in MFL than Welsh second language as language skills and level descriptions in the subject Orders are comparable. In addition, in most cases learners begin learning Welsh second language earlier in their school career than MFL.

- 3.16 In 2012 girls performed better than boys in all non-core subjects. However, the gap was greatest in Welsh second language (19.5 percentage points). There has been no improvement in this gap between girls and boys' performance in the past six years.

#### **Key Stage 4**

- 3.17 At Key Stage 4, pupils can study either a short or full course Welsh second language GCSE, and there is a choice of a general or an applied course. The short course and full course require pupils to reach the same standards in Welsh; the short course has less breadth with fewer contexts in which the language must be used.
- 3.18 There continues to be more candidates entered for GCSE Welsh second language short course than full course, as illustrated in Diagram 1. A minority of schools enter all learners for GCSE Welsh second language full course. In some schools Welsh second language full course is offered as an option subject and those pupils not opting for full course Welsh second language are obliged to follow the short course. In other schools all learners follow the short course. This compulsory aspect may account for poor attainment. The evidence received during this review outlined some of the reasons for the increase in entries for the short course, and include:
- offering the short course rather than full course may be seen as one way to gain time on the timetable as schools are looking to offer a wider range of options (e.g. vocational / Welsh Baccalaureate); and
  - the limited number of specialist Welsh second language teachers makes offering full course GCSE to more pupils in more schools a challenge.
- 3.19 As outlined in paragraph 3.15, Welsh second language is the worst performing subject at Key Stage 3, with only 68.2% of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 5 or above). Poor attainment levels continue at Key Stage 4. Table 5 shows that there is a notable difference in the percentage of candidates achieving A\*-C in the full course compared with the short course; 24 percentage points in 2012. Girls continue to outperform boys in 2012 with 19.5 percentage point difference between boys and girls achieving A\*-C in the full course and 20.3 percentage points in the short course.

**Diagram 1: Welsh second language GCSE entries, 2012**



Source: Welsh Government

**Table 5: Percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C GCSE Welsh second language, 2007 - 2012**

A*-C	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Full Course</b>						
Male	60.8	60.8	59.9	62.4	61.3	62.8
Female	78.1	77.5	78.8	80.6	79.8	82.3
All Candidates	70.4	70.2	70.3	72.7	71.6	73.6
<b>Short Course</b>						
Male	36.3	34.4	35.1	38	36.9	39.4
Female	57.8	54.5	53.9	57.7	56.9	59.7
All Candidates	47.3	44.5	44.6	47.7	46.8	49.6

Source: Joint Council for Qualifications

3.20 Low attainment compared with other subjects and the gap between boys and girls' attainment are issues that have been apparent in Welsh second language for a long time and have, regrettably, been accepted as the norm. In 2007, Estyn carried out an evaluation of the Welsh second language GCSE short course<sup>5</sup>. The report concluded that "Only a very few pupils who follow the GCSE Welsh second language short course make good progress towards becoming fluent Welsh speakers." Less contact time for the short course (as little as an hour per fortnight in some schools) can often mean lower achievement for individuals as languages need to be practised regularly in order for learners to gain fluency.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/172563.3/an-evaluation-of-the-gcse-welsh-second-language-short-course-october-2007/?navmap=30,163>,

3.21 In recent years, vocational language units have been made available through some awarding organisations. The units are free-standing and have been accredited on to the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW). The units are based on the individual skills of Speaking, Reading, Understanding Spoken Welsh and Writing. As these units are relatively new, the take-up of the units is quite low, and it is too early to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of the units.

### A level

3.22 Welsh second language is offered as an A level or AS level in many schools across Wales. According to the WJEC specification, the course aims to develop candidates' communication skills, in both written and spoken Welsh. It is intended to develop their ability to use language imaginatively. Broad reading is encouraged as well as thorough learning of specific literary works. The ability to respond to literature and contemporary multimedia cultural materials is promoted in order to gain an appreciation of Wales's cultural heritage.

3.23 The successful implementation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy needs a sufficient supply of university graduates in Welsh, coming from a pool of learners who have studied A level Welsh. There is a specific target to increase the total A level Welsh (second language) entries as a percentage of full and short course GCSE Welsh (second language) entries, two years earlier.

3.24 However, the percentage of learners moving on to study Welsh at A level has decreased over the past 4 years. One possible reason for this is that the choice of subjects available in post-16 provision has increased considerably in recent years.

**Table 6: Total A level Welsh (second language) entries as a percentage of full and short course GCSE Welsh (second language) entries, two years earlier**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Indicator</b>	3.0%	2.4%	2.5%	2.4%
<b>Number</b>	595	496	558	556

*Source: WJEC data*

3.25 During 2012, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol undertook research with pupils, university students and practitioners to understand the reasons why there is a decline in the number of pupils choosing Welsh second language at A level. The research concluded that there was insufficient information provided to pupils in schools promoting Welsh second language as a subject that can be studied at degree level. Pupils therefore did not progress to studying the subject at A level. It was also suggested that the requirement to study literature before language skills had been sufficiently developed deterred pupils from continuing to study the subject. The lack of opportunities to use the language outside the classroom, which would help them in their studies, was also a factor.

## Issues and challenges

3.26 Estyn has commented regularly on the poor standards in the teaching and learning of Welsh second language. In the 2011-12 Annual Report<sup>6</sup> Estyn concluded that *“In most schools, provision for Welsh second language is good in the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2, provision is less well developed.”* In secondary schools *“Standards in Welsh second language are good in a few schools and improving in a majority of them. They are particularly strong in those schools where standards are excellent overall. However, Welsh second language is an important area for improvement in around a fifth of schools.”*

3.27 There are a number of issues to address to improve standards in Welsh second language. These issues have been raised in a number of various reports over the past few years, and include the following:

- pupils do not continue to develop their Welsh skills well enough on transition to Key Stages 2 and 3;
- the time allocated to teaching the subject is not sufficient, and in some schools, the allocation is as little as one hour a fortnight;
- many teachers in primary schools lack confidence and ability to teach Welsh second language;
- too many pupils who follow the short course are entered for the foundation tier though they are capable of gaining A\*-B grades which can not be achieved in the foundation tier;
- in most schools, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to hear and practise using the language beyond formal Welsh lessons;
- in too many secondary schools, the subject is taught by non-specialist teachers who lack a thorough understanding of second language teaching methodology; and
- pupils are not confident to use the language.

3.28 The challenge now is to address these issues and ensure that Welsh second language is transformed into a high-performing subject, which enables pupils to use the language.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/annual-report/annual-report-2011-2012/>

## **Section 4: The proposed changes**

### **The need to improve standards and attainment**

- 4.1 As previously noted in Section 1 of this report, Welsh / Welsh second language is a statutory subject in the Curriculum for Wales. Welsh became compulsory for every pupil at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 in 1990 and compulsory at Key Stage 4 from September 1999. The Foundation Phase, which has replaced Key Stage 1 in Wales, includes Welsh Language Development as an Area of Learning for English-medium settings and schools.
- 4.2 As outlined in Section 2 of this report, the Review Group's vision for Welsh second language is to raise standards to enable more learners to use the language in future employment and in the community and to ensure that pupils understand the social and historical context of the language. This vision supports one of the wider policy aims of the Welsh Government, which is to see the Welsh language thrive. To achieve this aim, there is a need to ensure a steady flow of Welsh speakers coming through the education system and using the language in their everyday lives. At present, evidence strongly suggests that pupils who have followed the Welsh second language curriculum are not able to use their language skills outside the classroom for a number of reasons. This section of the report discusses these reasons in more detail and proposes changes to the current system of teaching and learning Welsh second language, with the aim of enabling pupils to use their Welsh language skills. How success will be measured is a matter which will need careful consideration when planning the implementation of any changes.
- 4.3 The Review Group recognises that in order to improve standards and attainment we can not consider Key Stages 3 and 4 in isolation. Research shows that children who acquire another language in their early years are more likely to become proficient in the language. Therefore, although this Group's main focus is Key Stages 3 and 4, we must consider this in the context of earlier learning in the Foundation Phase and at Key Stage 2 and also the transition between each stage of learning. In parallel to the Review Group's work, a steering group has been discussing the key factors for the successful delivery of Welsh second language at Key Stage 2 and has made recommendations to the Review Group, which support and reinforce this Group's recommendations.

### **Status**

- 4.4 The evidence and comments received from stakeholders consistently linked the status and value of Welsh second language as a curriculum subject and how Welsh second language is perceived by local authorities, schools, pupils and parents with pupils' success in language acquisition. The potential for future success in developing learners who have the skills to use

the Welsh language outside the classroom was considered to be dependent upon raising the status of the subject.

- 4.5 It is worth noting that the teachers who contributed to the review agreed that the attitude of parents towards the subject has changed over recent years, with the majority now supportive of their children learning Welsh, and with the subject becoming an accepted part of the education system in Wales. There are some parental concerns regarding the teaching of the full course versus the short course and the expected fluency of their children. These will be covered in more detail later in this section of the report.
- 4.6 The vast majority of evidence received supported the teaching of Welsh second language as a statutory subject within the curriculum in Wales. One exception to this was an online petition on the National Assembly for Wales website which wanted an end to the compulsory study of Welsh at Key Stage 4. Other evidence suggested that some parents considered having Welsh as a mandatory subject was counter-productive and that pupils who see the subject as compulsory do not engage in the same way as they would if they did it through choice. This was a minority view, and the vast majority of evidence supported the continuation of the current requirement for the subject to be mandatory.
- 4.7 The Review Group did consider making Welsh second language optional at Key Stage 4, while maintaining the statutory requirement up to and including Key Stage 3. However, the Group agreed that it is crucial for pupils to continue to learn and practise the language to achieve the aim of enabling more learners to use the language. Evidence received from both parents and pupils in focus groups suggested that the majority considered that the ability to speak Welsh was advantageous both for future employment and in gaining an appreciation of Welsh identity.

*“It opens doors. No door is shut to you if you can speak Welsh”  
“If you can speak Welsh, there are more job opportunities.”*

This view was reiterated in the vast majority of evidence received. The Group also agreed that removing the requirement would be a step back in terms of the progress made in some schools, and that the focus should be on ensuring that the curriculum is fit for purpose and that all schools can raise standards in the subject.

**Recommendation 1**

Welsh Government to ensure that Welsh second language continues to be a statutory subject within the National Curriculum and continues to be a compulsory subject for all pupils in Wales until the end of Key Stage 4.

- 4.8 As previously discussed in Section 3 of the report, Welsh second language is not a core subject in the National Curriculum for Wales. Although teachers are required to make statutory teacher assessments for each eligible learner at Key Stages 2 and 3, attainment in Welsh second language does not

contribute to the core subject indicator<sup>7</sup>. The vast majority of evidence received as part of this review suggests that, as a consequence, the subject is not given sufficient status. The Review Group concluded that the status of the subject would only be improved if attainment in Welsh second language, both in formal qualifications such as GCSE and end of key stage assessments, is included in school performance measures, ensuring that the subject has the same prominence as Welsh (first language) and English.

- 4.9 Schools and local authorities would have to consider the impact of this change and put strategies in place to raise standards. The framework to plan, implement and monitor these strategies is already in place through the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) as a result of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The purpose of the WESP is to outline how local authorities will improve the planning for Welsh-medium education and the teaching of Welsh and subjects through the medium of Welsh. Each local authority is required to submit a WESP to the Welsh Government for approval and monitoring. The WESP, which will become statutory from April 2014, sets out local authority plans to develop and improve Welsh-medium and Welsh-language education, and includes specific targets which take into account the local linguistic context which will naturally influence teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 2**

Welsh Government to give equal status to Welsh second language within the National Curriculum, ensuring that the subject has the same prominence as the core subjects in performance measures.

- 4.10 Estyn has reported that leadership with regards to the Welsh language within schools is weak in some English-medium settings. Hand in hand with performance data, Estyn has a key role to play in judging how an individual school is performing and how the school is perceived by pupils and parents.
- 4.11 There are examples of schools whose performance was judged by Estyn as being excellent while standards and attainment in Welsh second language were poor according to the data. In such instances, the Review Group believes that Estyn should, as a minimum, include recommendations for improving standards of Welsh second language to ensure that head teachers, senior management and governors take steps to address the issues, such as:
- allocating sufficient time within the curriculum for Welsh second language;
  - the introduction of specific support schemes such as intensive language courses; and
  - the use of teaching/language assistants.

<sup>7</sup> At Key Stages 2 and 3 it is defined as achieving the expected level in both Maths and Science and either English or Welsh (first language). At Key Stage 4 it is defined as achieving a level 2 qualification at grade A\*-C in both Maths and Science and either English or Welsh (first language).



The Group believes that Estyn should not award 'Excellent' to a school when standards and attainment in Welsh second language are very poor.

- 4.12 Evidence from pupils also suggests that schools make a concerted effort to use Welsh around the school during inspections, which again would distort the picture giving Estyn opportunity to praise the school for activity which was not reflected in attainment data.

**Recommendation 3**

Estyn to show more clearly how standards in Welsh second language contribute to the general judgement for the whole school, and to include recommendations for improvement where applicable.

- 4.13 It became apparent in the evidence that some pupils do not understand the benefits of learning the language and do not have an understanding of the wider context of the language, both historically, culturally and politically. Evidence received from heads of Welsh departments suggested that it is essential for pupils to have an awareness of the critical role of the Welsh language in the development of Welsh national identity, and of the historical underpinning of contemporary Welsh society to ensure that they understand why they are learning the language. The evidence states that:

*“Children made better and earlier progress when they had an understanding of the linguistic context rather than learning in a vacuum.”*

- 4.14 The consultation document on the review of the *Cwrciwlwm Cymreig*<sup>8</sup> stated that the implementation of what is known as the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* should not be limited to history in future, but should continue to have a much wider application across children and young people's learning. The Group agreed with this view and believes that a cross-curricular approach to the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* should help pupils develop a better understanding of the context of the language.
- 4.15 Further evidence from parents and pupils suggests that youngsters would be more inclined to learn Welsh if they understood the relevance of the language to their every day lives.

*“Pupils need to understand why they are learning the language so that they become connected to the subject.”*

This is also supported by the recent Beaufort Research<sup>9</sup> report on the behaviour, attitudes and aspirations of Welsh speakers in terms of their use of Welsh in a range of everyday settings:

*“At the heart of what drove positive behaviours and perceptions was a sense of identity with the Welsh language at a number of different levels:*

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<sup>8</sup> Part of the national curriculum for Wales which reflects the culture, environment, economy and history of Wales, and the influences which have shaped the country of today.

<sup>9</sup> <http://cymru.gov.uk/topics/welshlanguage/research/exploring-welsh-lang-in-daily-lives/?skip=1&lang=en>

*personal, family, community, national identity and heritage. This link between language and identity not only spread out from the personal through to national but also spanned the past, present and future.”*

#### **Recommendation 4**

Welsh Government to make the social and historical context of Wales and the Welsh language an integral part of the curriculum across all subjects so that pupils gain an understanding of the context of the language and understand the contribution of the language to Wales and to being Welsh.

- 4.16 It was also suggested in the evidence that there was a general lack of promotion of the Welsh language and the value of the language as a skill in future employment. School leaders, teachers, pupils and parents need to understand that the ability to speak Welsh could lead to improved employability. On completion of the labour market intelligence research, which is currently being undertaken to determine the Welsh language needs of employers, the Welsh Government in collaboration with the Welsh Language Commissioner and Careers Wales should take steps to promote Welsh as a skill for the workplace.
- 4.17 Pupils, as they are learning the language and considering future employment, need to be aware that there are opportunities to use the language and the benefits of having Welsh language skills at all levels of competence. Some posts might only require oral skills while others might require competence in the four skills; speaking, listening, reading and writing. It needs to be emphasised, by all involved in career advice, that the skill level is relevant to the post and situation.

#### **Recommendation 5**

Welsh Government, in collaboration with the Welsh Language Commissioner, Careers Wales and school career advisors should promote Welsh as a skill for the workplace.

## **Curriculum and progression**

- 4.18 When considering Welsh second language in the curriculum and approaches which could evoke change in standards and attainment, it is essential not to look at secondary education in isolation but rather to consider progression in language acquisition from the Foundation Phase right through to Key Stage 4 and beyond and also transition at each stage.
- 4.19 The Welsh in the national curriculum for Wales<sup>10</sup> document includes the programmes of study for Welsh and Welsh second language. With regard to Welsh second language, the document states that pupils during

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<sup>10</sup>

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/arevisedcurriculumforwales/nationalcurriculum/welshnc/?lang=en>

Key Stage 4 should be given opportunities to build on their previous learning, and, as a part of their oracy skills, should be given opportunities to use language accurately, clearly and confidently:

- using words and patterns suitable for the situation;
- identifying the differences between the spoken language in different areas and of written language;
- considering the ways in which formal and informal language varies according to its context and purpose; and
- developing accuracy by:
  - a. using verb forms (tense and person)
  - b. forming negative sentences
  - c. using prepositions
  - d. using mutations
  - e. differentiating between similar words
  - f. using noun gender.

4.20 In a series of focus groups held with parents the majority noted that they expect that their children should be able to hold basic conversations in Welsh by the time they leave school. Although the current curriculum should enable pupils to communicate in a variety of situations, there is concern that pupils do not develop these skills sufficiently.

4.21 The recent introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework<sup>11</sup> has been generally welcomed by schools and parents as it sets out clearly the expectations for learners in terms of developing oracy, reading and writing skills in English and Welsh (first language). The Group discussed the merits of expanding the Welsh element of the framework to include Welsh second language. The evidence also pointed towards this approach as it would provide a well-defined basis for the curriculum and set clear expectations for pupils, parents and teachers. This approach could see the Welsh second language curriculum evolve into a language acquisition model where learners improve their Welsh through hearing and speaking the language, improve their vocabulary, spelling and grammar through wider reading and refine writing skills in a similar way to their English literacy development. A dual literacy or triple literacy approach (including a modern foreign language in the model) could have a positive effect on both pupils' literacy and on their Welsh second language skills.

4.22 One of the key themes in the evidence received is that further consideration should be given to developing a language continuum for the purposes of curriculum planning and delivery and recording attainment. It would facilitate a system of progression across all phases of learning and would also have the advantage of providing learners, parents and employers with a clear definition of the skill levels achieved by pupils. Developing such a continuum would mean that all pupils in Wales would follow the same programme of study and could be assessed against one framework.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/nlnf/?lang=en>

- 4.23 The possibility of measuring pupils' ability in Welsh along a linguistic continuum has been a matter of discussion for a number of years. It has been subject to various research and feasibility studies. However, no conclusion has been reached on its introduction mainly due its potential complexity. There are a number of factors which would need to be considered in developing a continuum, not least that it would be difficult for pupils in English-medium schools to achieve the same linguistic level as pupils in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools in the present system as they have much less contact with the language.
- 4.24 The Review Group has considered this matter carefully and believes that there is an opportunity to revise the curriculum and to build on the National Literacy Framework to create one continuum of learning for Welsh which would include expectations for pupils learning Welsh in Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools. Research would be needed in order to map Welsh second language acquisition milestones in comparison to the expected levels of Welsh literacy for each year group. Careful planning would then be required to establish expected levels of competence for pupils currently learning Welsh second language in English-medium schools and clear information would need to be provided to parents.
- 4.25 Additional initial language acquisition targets would be required for pupils whose first experience of Welsh is at an English-medium school at the start of compulsory education at age 5, and for those who come from outside Wales at a later stage in their education. The expectations may also need to be adapted in order to acknowledge the complexities of second language acquisition. It can be challenging to assess attainment in a second language as initially learners learn words, phrases and sentences by heart and this work will have few grammatical mistakes. As pupils progress they begin to structure their own responses and it can appear that they have taken a backward step as there may be mistakes in language patterns where previously there were none. Research will be needed to ensure that expectations are realistic and attainable for Welsh learners in English-medium schools. When developing the new framework, the Welsh Government should also consider international research and best practice in the teaching of Welsh second language, Welsh for Adults, modern foreign languages and other minority languages such as Basque.
- 4.26 When changes are made to the curriculum, there must also be a clear focus on progression post-16 including providing routes for language progression and opportunities for pupils to use and study the language further.

**Recommendation 6**

Welsh Government to revise the Welsh programme of study, over a three to five year period, and use the National Literacy Framework for Welsh as a basis for a revised curriculum to include:

- one continuum of learning for Welsh with clear expectations for pupils learning Welsh in English-medium, bilingual and Welsh-medium settings; and
- guidance, support materials and training.

As a consequence the Welsh second language element of the Welsh programme of study would be removed along with the term Welsh second language.

- 4.27 Progression from one key stage to the next can be a challenge in many subjects, especially at the transition from primary to secondary. Evidence from heads of Welsh departments in secondary schools stated that the level of proficiency amongst pupils transferring from primary schools varied significantly with a tendency for teachers in year 7 to start again with the basics when learning the language rather than building on skills already developed at primary school. Although steps have been taken to improve transition from primary to secondary, with examples of some secondary schools working closely with their feeder primary schools, there is further work to be done to share good practice and ensure that all schools have effective transition arrangements in place for Welsh second language.
- 4.28 This is further evidenced by both parents and pupils who suggested that children lose interest after transferring from primary school and that the Welsh second language curriculum fails to ensure the progress and momentum required to sustain pupils' enthusiasm and eagerness to learn.
- 4.29 The national Key Stage 2/3 cluster moderation (pilot 2010-11; national moderation 2011-2012) succeeded in raising the status of Welsh second language as a subject and facilitated the transition between key stages. As a result, in the best clusters there is improved communication between schools, better understanding of National Curriculum level descriptions and more consistent awarding of National Curriculum attainment target levels for Welsh second language.
- 4.30 The Group received evidence which emphasised the need for the Key Stage 2/3 cluster moderation to continue to ensure that secondary schools have a better understanding of pupils' attainment levels which would then enable pupils to continue to build on their skills on transfer to secondary school. The moderation meetings are a vehicle to share good practice and resources and, where appropriate, facilitate the setting of pupils according to ability for Welsh second language in secondary schools.

#### **Recommendation 7**

Local authorities and regional consortia to facilitate Key Stage 2/3 Welsh second language cluster moderation to ensure that secondary teachers are fully informed of pupils' previous learning so that pupils have the opportunity to build on their skills and knowledge on transfer to secondary school.

- 4.31 Hand in hand with the issues of progression from primary to secondary schools; this key period also provides opportunities for learners to transfer from one learning medium to another and as a result transfer from following the Welsh first language to the Welsh second language programme of study. Improving rates of linguistic progression between phases of Education is a key aim of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy to ensure that learners continue to develop their language skills. When learners transfer from one learning medium to another, the school performance data

for Welsh second language becomes distorted, with more positive outcomes for pupils in English-medium schools who followed the Welsh first language programme of study at primary school. The majority of these individuals are not given sufficient opportunities to build on and develop their Welsh language skills.

- 4.32 Introducing one framework which provides a continuum of learning Welsh for all pupils, with clearly defined outcomes (as noted in recommendation 6) could facilitate progression from one key stage to the next. The framework could also help teachers in English-medium schools to assess and set targets for individuals who have previously been taught through the medium of Welsh to ensure that they build on their language skills and continue to make progress. Consideration would need to be given to supporting primary schools where teachers may have limited Welsh language skills themselves and also to supporting non-specialist Welsh second language teachers at Key Stages 3 and 4. The Welsh Government would need to provide clear guidance on this and ensure the availability of appropriate support and training through the local authority and regional consortia and also through links between Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools where appropriate.

**Recommendation 8**

Welsh Government to develop clear guidance on progression from one key stage to the next to ensure that learners continue to develop their skills if they transfer from a Welsh-medium to an English-medium school.

- 4.33 As noted in Section 3, improving progression into A level is a key aim of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. As part of their WESPs local authorities, when planning provision, need to ensure that A level provision is delivered in sufficient locations across Wales. In addition to geographic and financial implications common to all subjects, there are additional issues when considering the provision for Welsh second language. Pupils who plan to study Welsh second language in Year 12 at their secondary school (where they are familiar with the teaching staff and other pupils) may choose not to continue with the subject if they have to attend a different school or college, due to the confidence needed to use a second language in a new environment. Conversely, in some cases, the change of setting may be the impetus needed for the learner to become a fluent Welsh speaker. Remote learning must also be used carefully in the context of language learning as hearing and speaking the language regularly is essential.

**Recommendation 9**

Local authorities, as part of their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, to ensure that appropriate A level Welsh second language provision is available in sufficient locations across Wales.

## Assessment

- 4.34 Pupils are assessed in Welsh second language at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3. At Key Stage 4 it is the norm that pupils are entered for either the full or short course GCSE, although, as with other subjects, this is not mandatory. Data in section 3 of the report shows that attainment at Key Stages 2 and 3 is improving. However, at Key Stage 4 the number of pupils being entered for the GCSE full courses, where attainment is higher, is declining.
- 4.35 As repeatedly noted in the evidence, completion of the current Welsh second language GCSE does not ensure that pupils are sufficiently prepared and able to use the language outside of school. In the focus groups held with pupils, it was made clear that they wanted to be able to hold everyday conversations:

*By the end of GCSE we could talk about recycling! We could just talk about the given topics.*

- 4.36 The applied GCSE qualification<sup>12</sup> has emphasis on developing skills *to make use of the language for effective and appropriate communication in everyday lives and/or in occupational situations*. This qualification should solve some of the issues regarding the relevance of GCSE Welsh second language to pupils with its emphasis on more every day use of language. However, take-up of this qualification remains low, and having the option of two qualifications could dilute the resources available to teach the subject. While new GCSE (or equivalent) qualifications are being development, good practice in the teaching and learning of the applied GCSE should be shared and the Welsh Government should work with WJEC, regional consortia and local authorities to promote the applied course to Welsh teachers, pupils and parents, particularly in schools where attainment in Welsh second language is low.
- 4.37 The GCSE short course has been the subject of great criticism over the years. Section 3 of this report refers to the Estyn evaluation in 2007. One of the recommendations of this report was that the Welsh Government should consider phasing out the short GCSE course when the staffing capacity and quality of teaching are good enough to sustain delivery of the full GCSE course to increased numbers of pupils. However, the short course is still delivered across Wales, and the Group was concerned that the number of pupils entered for the short course has increased. The opinion of parents and pupils in the focus groups regarding whether or not the full course GCSE should be the standard qualification, with the removal of the short course, was divided although the response from teachers was overwhelmingly towards abolishing the current short course.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?subject=210&level=15>

- 4.38 However, as the Group has recommended developing a continuum of learning Welsh, the level descriptions and qualifications will need to be reviewed and revised. One set of level descriptions would need to be developed for Welsh with defined expectations for learners in Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools. These level descriptions would be used as for teacher assessments at Key Stages 2 and 3. At Key Stage 4, the Group agrees that two full GCSEs (or equivalent) should be available to distinguish between pupils who learn in English-medium schools from pupils who learn in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools. Consideration should be given to developing a dual award whereby pupils in English-medium schools would receive an additional grade to show what comparative grade they would have achieved in the Welsh (first language) examination. This would not only assist employers to understand the difference in Welsh-language skill levels, but could also support the Welsh Government aim to ensure that learners who have received Welsh-medium education in primary schools continue to progress on transfer to secondary school. However, dual accreditation would need very careful consideration and implementation to ensure that it is not counter-productive.
- 4.39 Alongside the Literacy Framework, reading tests for English and Welsh (first language) have been made statutory in Wales. The Review Group believes that all schools should apply a national Welsh language reading test to all eligible 8-14 year old pupils. This would mean that English-medium, bilingual and Welsh-medium settings would have to administer reading tests in Welsh and English. Given the implications for staff training and curriculum planning, a sufficient lead-in time would be essential prior to implementation. This would also support the objective of improving the status of the subject.

**Recommendation 10**

Welsh Government, within a three to five year timetable, to:

- develop new level descriptions with the revised programme of study for Welsh and produce guidance for schools which includes defined expectations for learners in Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools;
- develop a new full GCSE (or equivalent) qualification based on the revised curriculum; and
- remove the short course GCSE.

In addition, consideration should be given to the introduction of a Welsh reading test for 8-14-year-old pupils in English-medium settings.

Prior to the new arrangements becoming operational, training would be necessary to equip teachers and to inform them of the new requirements. New national teaching resources would also be required to coincide with the developments.

- 4.40 One constant criticism of the assessment process in the evidence is that learners are able to learn passages which they can replicate in an assessment situation. This was also reiterated in evidence received by teachers; that due to time constraints they taught to an assessment or



exam, which means that the pupils are not confident to use Welsh in other contexts.

- 4.41 The evidence suggested that the contextual nature of the Welsh second language GCSE<sup>13</sup> can be a hindrance as it stipulates a number of contexts that pupils are required to study, and as a result, some learners become disengaged. Although it is acknowledged that a language needs to be taught within different contexts, especially to develop vocabulary, the Group agreed with the evidence that indicated that more emphasis should be given to developing language patterns and their use across various everyday contexts. This is reiterated by teachers, head teachers and local authority Welsh in Education Officers who suggest strongly that the teaching of language patterns and how these patterns can be transferred to everyday situations should be the priority and that there should be a concerted effort to move away from teaching traditional contexts which may not facilitate the use of Welsh outside the classroom.
- 4.42 Evidence received on the teaching of modern foreign languages in Wales also repeated some of the comments regarding the teaching of themes or contexts. In order to better develop language it is preferable to concentrate on words and patterns which can be replicated in everyday situations.

#### **Recommendation 11**

When developing the new GCSE (or equivalent) qualification, awarding organisations should ensure that:

- the syllabus is not too reliant on contexts or themes;
- the new assessment procedures have more appropriate controlled assessments; and
- that opportunities to recite or re-write prepared responses in oral and written assessments are avoided / minimised so that learners are encouraged to prepare in a way that will be beneficial when using the Welsh language beyond the classroom on completion of the qualification.

- 4.43 As there is no statutory requirement for post-16 provision, A level provision is predominately based on the awarding organisations' specifications. Following the introduction of a language continuum and revised qualifications, the A level specification would need to be revisited to ensure progression from GCSE. The Group agrees that the A level qualification should have an emphasis on developing oral skills, whilst also providing opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills.

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<sup>13</sup> **Welsh Second Language GCSE contexts:** holidays, leisure time, sports, alcohol, drugs and smoking, fashion/shopping, the environment, Welsh celebrities, keeping fit and healthy, cinema/film, family and friends, pop music, the home, charity/part-time work, the weekend, an area, the media, Welsh culture, technology, Wales' celebrations, myself, school experiences, special events  
**Welsh Second Language Applied GCSE contexts:** the world around us; the world of work; the future; the use of the Welsh language

4.44 One of the recommendations made in the National Assembly for Wales Enterprise and Learning Committee’s report<sup>14</sup> on the teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language in 2010 was that:

“the Welsh Government explore ways to implement an accredited Welsh language course in post-16 education, with more focus on using Welsh as a vocational skill.”

4.45 The Hill report also recommended that this Review Group consider the *role that Welsh language skills should play in the Welsh Baccalaureate, including whether or not functional skills in Welsh should form part of the core requirement.*

4.46 The Group believes that compulsory language modules should be developed for all post-16 learners, to be included in the Welsh Baccalaureate, which build on Welsh second language skills and knowledge acquired at Key Stages 3 and 4. The modules would enable learners to continue to develop their language skills in preparation for further and higher education and the workplace.

**Recommendation 12**

Post-16 qualifications to be revised to include:

- an A level qualification with an emphasis on developing oral language skills suitable for the workplace; and
- compulsory language modules to be included as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification.

## Teaching and learning

4.47 Teachers in Wales can use various methods and teaching styles to deliver the curriculum, in response to pupil needs, or based on their prior training. Welsh Government and teacher training providers do not prescribe one specific pedagogy for the teaching of Welsh second language. The underpinning philosophy has varied across the years from a structured grammar based approach to a more communicative approach. By now teachers settle on methods which draw from each of these strands. In most primary schools, the majority of teachers follow the school or the local authority’s scheme of work, and are dependent on training and advice from local authority advisors on how to deliver the scheme of work. In secondary schools, the majority of Welsh second language teachers are specialists and have, therefore, received some training in Welsh second language methodologies.

4.48 As noted above (4.41), the Group believes that it is preferable for pupils to learn a variety of patterns and vocabulary which can be used in various

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-third-assembly/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-report/el\\_3\\_-10-r08.htm](http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-third-assembly/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-report/el_3_-10-r08.htm)

situations and practised regularly rather restricting learning to a prescribed list of contexts. In the focus groups, pupils noted that they dislike the repetitive nature of the teaching and that they tend to study topics that are not relevant to everyday life.

*We do the same topics every year.... It's repetitive.*

- 4.49 The Group agrees that research is needed to establish which are the most appropriate and effective methodologies for successful second language acquisition. The Welsh Government would need to consider commissioning specific Welsh second language research in addition to drawing on international research and best practice in second language acquisition and considering research and best practice in Wales. Based on this, the Welsh Government would need to develop and disseminate guidance for practitioners and work with the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers and local authority and regional consortia advisors to deliver training to practitioners.

**Recommendation 13**

Welsh Government, in partnership with regional consortia, local authorities and ITT centres to provide guidance and training for teachers on the most effective language teaching methods based on research and best practice.

- 4.50 The evidence strongly suggests that one key factor affecting the teaching and learning of Welsh second language in the secondary sector is the time allocated to the subject on the school timetable, that is, pupils' level of exposure to the language. As with all other subjects in the curriculum, the amount of time given to its study is a matter for local determination by schools. However, research and the evidence indicate that in some secondary schools, Welsh second language is taught for as little as an hour a fortnight. This could be due to budgetary constraints or lack of senior management support for the subject. This combined with few opportunities to hear the language outside the classroom results in a situation which is not conducive to language acquisition.

**Recommendation 14**

Welsh Government to produce clear guidelines for schools on the time pupils need to learn and practise the language in order to make good progress in Welsh second language, to include examples of best practice. Welsh Government to ensure that local authorities audit, record and report on the time allocated for Welsh second language through the WESPs.

- 4.51 In their evidence, teachers suggested that there is a need for learners to have exposure to the language every day to make a significant difference to their achievement. This could either be through more regular time allocated to the subject or through its use in other school activities such as during registration, recreational or sporting activities.
- 4.52 The Group also received evidence that supported the use of Welsh across the curriculum. This could be in the form of using incidental language or/and

teaching elements of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh. This approach would require full support and commitment from all departments and clear leadership and training to ensure that standards in all subjects are maintained.

- 4.53 Successful methods of language teaching in Wales and other countries include more learning through the medium of the target language and more teaching time, especially in the primary sector. In the Welsh-medium primary sector in Wales, immersion methods are used, and pupils have a high-level exposure to the language through an increasingly Welsh-only experience. In particular, this entails the curriculum being taught wholly through the medium of Welsh (except for English lessons). This method has proved successful and there are valuable lessons to be learnt and considered.
- 4.54 Although the remit of the Group does not specifically include the teaching and learning of Welsh second language in the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2, the influence and success of teaching Welsh second language in the primary sector has a direct affect on achievement in Key Stages 3 and 4. Further development of Welsh across the curriculum, by sharing current good practice and building on the experiences of two clusters currently working to extend the use of Welsh as a medium of instruction at Key Stage 2 in English-medium schools<sup>15</sup>, provides an opportunity to increase standards over time in all key stages.

**Recommendation 15**

Welsh Government should:

- develop best practice guidance on using incidental Welsh in school activities and using Welsh across the curriculum based on the pilot project to extend the use of Welsh as a medium of instruction in English-medium primary schools; and
- set targets to increase the use of Welsh-medium learning across the curriculum, based on best practice, in English-medium schools.

- 4.55 The Review Group received evidence from the late immersion centres in north and mid Wales. The main aim of the centres is to provide an intensive Welsh-language course for learners that will enable them to integrate into a Welsh or bilingual school. The Group was impressed by the progress that pupils can make following a short period at one of the centres, and believes that there are lessons to be learnt from the centres. The Group also learnt about the late immersion projects that are operational in a number of secondary Welsh-medium schools in Wales. The aim is to provide a late entry point into Welsh-medium education, whereby pupils in year 6 receive an intensive period of Welsh-language learning, and on transfer to secondary school continue to receive additional language tuition and support to follow their subjects through the medium of Welsh. There are a number of opportunities for providing intensive periods of Welsh language learning in primary and secondary schools, and these should be considered and trialled, based on identified best practice.

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<sup>15</sup> This is a Programme for Government commitment.

**Recommendation 16**

Welsh Government to build on best practice and work with local authorities, regional consortia and schools to trial intensive periods of Welsh language learning in primary and secondary schools.

- 4.56 Another constraint in the teaching and learning of Welsh is class sizes. Teaching to large class numbers is the norm with class sizes of 30+ not uncommon in secondary schools. The Review Group received evidence from the Welsh for Adults sector which is fortunate to have smaller class sizes of approximately 8-12 learners providing a more favourable environment for language acquisition.
- 4.57 Class sizes are particularly an issue when oral tasks and assessments are undertaken. Completing individual assessments of all pupils in a class takes a significant proportion of time away from actual teaching activity. There is also no practical satisfactory way of encouraging meaningful and sustained dialogue during lessons in a class of 30+ pupils. In order to develop oral skills, alternative and innovative ways to practise and encourage the use of oral skills are required. There are examples of best practice whereby teaching/language assistants are used to facilitate oral tasks; however, this happens in a minority of schools.
- 4.58 Another factor which can contribute to providing the best environment for language acquisition is ensuring that pupils are in classes with pupils of a similar ability. Some secondary schools set pupils according to ability in year 7. However, in some schools this is not done until year 10, or not at all. This can result in fewer opportunities for more able and talented pupils to develop their Welsh-language skills, and pupils who require more support can be left lacking in confidence. Conversely, setting pupils too early can result in low expectations for pupils in lower sets. Some pupils, having been placed in a low set, will lose confidence and motivation and will be reluctant to learn. It is worth noting that best practice for English as an additional language pupils is not to place them in a low set despite initial difficulty they may have accessing the curriculum. Pupils arriving in a school in Wales with no Welsh may likewise benefit from the enthusiasm and motivation experienced in a higher set for Welsh second language. There is a lack of consistency and guidance on the best practice that should be adopted regarding grouping pupils for Welsh second language; further research is required to determine the best classroom arrangements for successful language acquisition.

**Recommendation 17**

Based on best practice and individual circumstances, schools to:

- plan to ensure that the best teaching environment for successful language acquisition is provided to take account of both class sizes and pupil ability; and
- to consider using teaching/language assistants who have appropriate Welsh-language skills to support oral tasks.

## Resources

- 4.59 The Enterprise and Learning Committee recommended that Welsh Government should:

“explore opportunities for further investment into and promotion of more varied Welsh language teaching materials for learners at primary and secondary levels, particularly provision for internet based and Information Technology based learning material”.

The shortage of quality Welsh second language teaching and learning resources was also a constant theme in the evidence received by the Review Group from teachers, head teachers and stakeholders.

*“It is hard to find engaging and appropriate resources to support Welsh language teaching. Many of the resources currently available in schools are outdated, do not provide sufficient challenge, and were designed to support older schemes of work.”*

- 4.60 There is also strong evidence that there is considerable duplication in the production of teaching resources and a general reluctance to share these materials at a national level. Although the introduction of Hwb<sup>16</sup> is welcomed, there is a requirement to improve its Welsh second language content and make the content more accessible to users.

*“Teachers of Welsh Second Language are constantly producing their own resources to reflect curriculum and specification changes. This constant need to produce resources is a drain on secondary Welsh teachers’ energy and their focus on the delivery of high quality lessons.”*

- 4.61 The Group believes that there is a need for a more co-ordinated approach to developing teaching resources to reduce duplication. There is no clear reason why teachers are constantly developing their own resources rather than sharing and planning the development of resources at a regional or national level. In a period of reducing budgets and more pressures on teachers, there should be a concerted effort to remove duplication and ensure that the funding is targeted towards developing more national online resources which can be tailored to meet local needs.

### **Recommendation 18**

Welsh Government in partnership with regional consortia to establish a national group of practitioners and regional consortia advisors with an expertise in Welsh second language to develop resources for dissemination and sharing via Hwb, with the aim of reducing duplication.

- 4.62 A comparison was often made to the teaching of modern foreign languages where it was considered that there were better and more resources available. Although the Welsh Government commissions national teaching

<sup>16</sup> <https://hwb.wales.gov.uk/Home/Pages/Home.aspx>

and learning materials for Welsh second language to plug the gap on the open market, the Group agrees that more interactive resources, audio / DVD content are required to engage and stimulate the learners.

**Recommendation 19**

Welsh Government should continue to commission appropriate high quality national teaching resources which will be available for teachers through Hwb.

**The workforce**

- 4.63 The quality of teaching is absolutely critical to ensure a positive learning experience. Without this positive experience, the chance of achieving successful attainment levels diminishes. Ensuring a high quality Welsh second language workforce is therefore crucial.
- 4.64 As previously noted, the majority of teachers teaching Welsh second language in primary schools are not language specialists. The Welsh Government's Sabbatical Scheme offers Welsh-language and methodology training for teachers and teaching assistants who need to improve their confidence and language skills to teach and support the teaching of Welsh second language in English-medium settings as part of the National Curriculum. There are also higher-level courses to improve the confidence and language skills of practitioners in Welsh-medium and bilingual settings. All evidence which mentioned the Sabbatical Scheme was complimentary with regards to its objectives and delivery but there remained some concerns. The willingness of schools to release teachers to attend the course was one concern, especially as the course is intensive and up to three months in duration. The location of the intensive courses also caused some issues which might dissuade some teachers from attending and there is a general consensus that the methodology content of the courses needs to be strengthened.
- 4.65 In line with recommendations made previously by the Enterprise and Learning Committee, the Welsh Government should consider how local authorities, schools and Welsh departments identify Welsh second language teachers who will benefit from further training; how teachers are encouraged to enrol; and how best to provide support and advice to schools and teachers on managing resources to accommodate teachers' absence for training purposes.
- 4.66 In addition, the Welsh Government's Welsh in Education Grant provides funding to regional consortia to undertake a range of activities aimed at achieving the outcomes of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. A significant proportion of the activities funded by the grant are currently targeted at supporting the delivery of Welsh second language in the primary sector. The activities, which are mainly offered by Athrawon Bro/Welsh in Education Officers, are aimed at improving the Welsh language and

methodology skills of teachers and support staff in English-medium primary schools.

- 4.67 The majority of teachers in secondary schools are specialist language teachers. However, not all secondary schools have a workforce which includes teachers who are fully qualified and competent to teach the subject either due to budgetary constraints or the inability to recruit specialist teachers. There are cases where teachers are teaching the subject only because they can speak Welsh, often with limited or no knowledge of language acquisition, pedagogy or the necessary linguistic skills. Recommendation 13 already highlights the need to develop guidance and training for teachers on language teaching methods based on research and best practice. This Group strongly believes that this needs to be addressed urgently and targeted at non-specialist teachers in the first instance.
- 4.68 Achieving this objective will require a range of strategies as the additional Welsh second language teachers of the future will not only be newly qualified teachers but existing experienced teachers. The Hill report recommends the use of immersion groups and secondments to Welsh-medium schools to boost the language skills of teachers teaching Welsh as a second language. This could be useful to help teachers, who have learned Welsh and have good language skills but who are lacking in confidence, make the transition to fluency. However, language acquisition methodology in Welsh-medium and English-medium settings are different and so methodology training would need separate consideration. Intensive courses, similar to the proven delivery model of the Sabbatical Scheme could be an option to up-skill these experienced teachers amongst others. In addition the development of these teachers and existing Welsh second language teachers by identifying and promoting best practice at both regional and national level will ensure that all teachers are kept informed of proven successful teaching methods and resources that have a meaningful and positive effect on outcomes.

**Recommendation 20**

Welsh Government, in partnership with regional consortia to develop a national, regional and local training strategy to provide continuous professional development training to practitioners, to include:

- training for secondary teachers who have not specialised in teaching Welsh second language;
- language and methodology training through the Sabbatical Scheme;
- opportunities for teachers to observe high quality lessons; and
- dissemination of best practice including through Lead Practitioner Schools.

It should be ensured that teachers are released by schools to attend training with the support of the head teacher and senior management.

- 4.69 In addition to ensuring the quality of teaching, the number of specialist language teachers needs to be increased. The Welsh Government is currently conducting an audit of the language skills of practitioners in all sectors. The aim is to use the data to inform workforce planning and other



policy developments, such as initial teacher training and continuous professional development. The successful implementation of the recommendations of this review will be dependent on a high quality workforce. Therefore, on the basis of the audit results, the Welsh Government should take steps to ensure that every primary and secondary school has sufficient numbers of teachers qualified to teach Welsh and that it is a requirement for schools to ensure that all teachers of Welsh second language have received appropriate methodology training and are therefore competent to teach the subject.

**Recommendation 21**

Welsh Government to take steps to ensure that every primary and secondary school has sufficient numbers of teachers qualified and able to teach Welsh.

- 4.70 The long term success of Welsh second language will be dependent on the recruitment and training, in sufficient numbers, of enthusiastic and competent Welsh second language teachers. Improving initial teacher training and promoting teaching Welsh as a career is therefore crucial. There are incentives available to study a Welsh as a PGCE subject, and these incentives have been crucial to attract students. However, the Group received data on the declining number of pupils studying Welsh at A level and progressing to study Welsh at degree level. The Group strongly believes, therefore, that efforts to promote teaching Welsh as a career should be coupled with efforts to increase the number of pupils studying Welsh at A level and degree level.

**Recommendation 22**

Welsh Government in partnership with stakeholders to promote Welsh as a subject at A level and degree level and the teaching of Welsh second language as a potential career. In addition, Welsh Government to continue to offer incentives to ensure that more students consider studying Welsh as a PGCE subject.

- 4.71 The Review Group agreed that it was important to hear the views of newly qualified secondary teachers, as they represent the future. The majority of the sample of recently qualified teachers surveyed suggested that they would have liked to receive more training on Welsh second language methodology during their courses. In other evidence received, one Welsh second language teacher noted:

*“Providing more training on the process behind acquiring a language would be highly beneficial to most teachers.*

Another commented on the use of experienced teachers to support new and inexperienced Welsh second language teachers;

*“There are some excellent second language practitioners and their skills should be fully utilised to provide an example to others, for example organising observed lessons and being involved in the development of resources.”*

- 4.72 A review of initial teacher training is currently being undertaken. This is an opportunity to influence the content of the secondary PGCE and the support provided to students when on placement at a school, including ensuring more focus on the teaching methodology.
- 4.73 With regards to primary teachers, the evidence suggested that the language content of the primary PGCE and BA Education courses should also be reviewed to strengthen the Welsh language and methodology content. It was also suggested that all primary and secondary teachers should receive training in language awareness and the use of incidental Welsh as part of initial training or early professional development to ensure that they understand the history and context of the language.

**Recommendation 23**

Initial Teacher Training centres to review all PGCE and BA Education courses to:

- strengthen the second language methodology training element of the secondary Welsh course based on research and best practice;
- strengthen the Welsh tuition and Welsh second language teaching methodology training received as a part of the primary course based on research and best practice; and
- include Welsh language awareness and an introduction to incidental Welsh in all courses.

## Informal learning

- 4.74 One of the biggest challenges is to promote the use of the Welsh language by children and young people outside the classroom, in social activities and in the community to ensure that they practise and use their skills. The Enterprise and Learning Committee quoted written evidence which stated:

*“that proficiency is at its lowest amongst those pupils with very little contact with the language outside the classroom.”*

This is a significant challenge for all involved in the teaching and learning of Welsh second language in schools, along with other partners promoting the use of the Welsh language in informal situations. Parents agreed that opportunities to use Welsh outside the classroom were essential to achieve fluency.

- 4.75 The evidence suggested that teachers of Welsh on the whole are given responsibility for the promotion of Welsh within the whole school, the success of which is dependent on the goodwill of the staff in Welsh departments. Informal activities outside of the classroom and outside school hours also tends falls to the departments. The Review Group agrees that responsibility for developing Welsh across the school should be shared. There are examples of good practice where schools have established cross-departmental groups. This good practice needs to be disseminated. In addition, the responsibility for informal activities outside school hours, such

as weekend visits to Llangrannog, should be shared, especially with heads of year.

- 4.76 In evidence, parents often referred frequently to the lack of opportunities to hear and use Welsh outside the classroom and school. Linked with this, one group of parents suggested the possibility of twinning with a school in a different part of Wales to provide this opportunity. This suggestion was repeated by a student in one focus group. However, becoming active in the Welsh community in their own area of Wales could be more beneficial to learners. Although it may be a challenge in some areas, visits to shows and taking part in Urdd/Menter Iaith activities should be possible in most part of Wales.
- 4.77 Organisations such as the Urdd and Menter Iaith both contributed to the review and provided evidence of activities available for Welsh second language pupils. Both organisations have an important role to play in providing opportunities to use the Welsh language outside the classroom, both within schools and within the community, especially in areas of Wales where the language is not as prevalent in the community. There are issues of capacity and funding for these organisations. However, there is potential for improvements in the contribution and the impact that these organisations and others can have. The Welsh Government in partnership with the Urdd is currently involved in two innovative Welsh second language projects. Urdd development officers are supporting pupils in 15 English-medium schools across Wales in establishing and maintaining activities or projects which offer an opportunity to practise and use Welsh informally outside Welsh lessons. The Welsh Government is also funding residential courses, run by the Urdd and based at its residential centre at Glan-llyn, aimed at improving the confidence and standard of Welsh of learners who plan to study Welsh second language post-16.
- 4.78 Organisations funded by the Welsh Government, which can contribute to informal Welsh language learning activities, should plan strategically how these services are delivered and how the benefits can be maximised. Areas of best practice should be highlighted and replicated throughout Wales. This is not only relevant to the secondary sector but could have significant benefits to the primary sector, especially in English-medium settings where the opportunities to hear Welsh outside the classroom are minimal. Schools should also take a more proactive and systematic role in planning and sourcing these opportunities.
- 4.79 Coupled with informal activities, there is a need for pupils to have more contact with the Welsh language through other means, such as social media platforms and service providers. This ties in with the aim of the Welsh Language Strategy and the work of the Welsh Language Commissioner, and was a theme in the recent *Iaith Fyw: dweud eich dweud* consultation. The Group agrees that more needs to be done in this respect.

### **Recommendation 24**

Informal opportunities to use and practise language skills are essential to reinforce school-based learning and the responsibility needs to be shared by a number of stakeholders, and as a minimum should include:

- opportunities for pupils to use Welsh and to hear the language being used outside the classroom, within the school setting. This should be a whole-school initiative and not the sole responsibility of the Welsh departments and teachers;
- more opportunities for pupils in English-medium settings to use and hear Welsh outside of school. Welsh Government, by funding organisations such as the Mentrau Iaith and the Urdd, should facilitate this; and
- more opportunities to access Welsh-language services, especially digital services so that pupils are encouraged to use of the language.

## **Conclusions**

- 4.80 The Group was asked at the onset of this process to give advice to the Minister and officials on improving Welsh second language provision at Key Stages 3 and 4; the aim is to influence change that will result in more learners being able to use the language outside the classroom in their communities and in future employment. The changes required to facilitate this improvement have to be supported throughout the whole Welsh education system; success is dependent on individual teachers being supported by their departments, schools and local authorities; and Welsh Government, at a national level, has a key role in implementing changes to the curriculum and assessment arrangements and in providing training to facilitate the changes.
- 4.81 In this report, the Group presents a set of recommendations to be considered, some of which are linked and would need to be implemented in tandem. Some recommendations can be implemented within a short timescale; others require planning and should be introduced over time. The key factor that cannot be overemphasized is the requirement for the subject to receive the same status as the core subjects within schools, have equal status within the national curriculum and the same prominence in performance measures. Once this is achieved, many of the improvements required will either be a necessity or will be a natural progression resulting from the enhanced status.
- 4.82 The cost implications of the recommendations have not been considered in this report, but the consensus view is that the key recommendations should be implemented from within existing budgets at a national, regional and local authority level.
- 4.83 Welsh Government's vision is to see the Welsh language thrive in Wales; the opportunity to be part of this vision has to be available to all. Ensuring that the teaching of the Welsh language is successful in our schools gives our children and young people this opportunity.

4.84 Two key dates and announcements stand out in Welsh second language education; 1990, when it became a statutory subject at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and 1999 when Welsh second language became statutory up to Key Stage 4. A third key milestone is required to elevate the teaching of Welsh throughout Wales. Ensuring equal status and making improvements to the curriculum, assessment and the teaching and learning of the subject should lead to ensuring that more pupils are able to use the language in their everyday lives in the future. This report and its recommendations provide a blueprint to achieve this vision.

# **Appendix 1: Welsh Second Language at Key Stages 3 and 4 Review Group terms of reference**

## **1. Objective**

To consider what changes should be made to the teaching and assessment of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4 to enable more learners to use the language in future employment and in the community.

## **2. Remit**

The Group will be required to consider the following:

- how to provide a positive learning experience for Welsh second language learners in English-medium schools;
- how to raise the status of Welsh second language as a subject and remove barriers at a local, regional and national level;
- whether qualifications (currently available and/or other possible forms of accreditation) are a lever or a barrier with regard to developing transferable Welsh language skills;
- how best to develop learners' Welsh language skills so that they are able to transfer their skills and use the language in the work place, community and family; and
- how to address workforce planning issues to ensure that all secondary schools have the resources and capacity to provide quality Welsh second language provision.

Discussion papers will be prepared by relevant officers and will be circulated to members around one week in advance of meetings.

The Group will be required to receive expert evidence from a number of stakeholders, and will include the following:

- Estyn
- Academic experts in language acquisition / bilingualism
- WJEC

The Chair may invite other stakeholders to attend meetings as deemed appropriate.

## **3. Timetable**

The review will commence in September 2012 and will conclude in September 2013 following submission of a report and recommendations to the Minister for Education and Skills.

## **Appendix 2: Members of the Welsh Second Language at Key Stages 3 and 4 Review Group**

### **Professor Sioned Davies – Chair**

Head of School of Welsh, Cardiff University.

### **Aled Evans**

Director of Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

### **Aled Loader**

Head of Welsh Department, St Joseph's RC High School, Newport.

### **Elaine Senior**

Independent Adviser, Welsh for Adults.

### **Elen Roberts**

Welsh in Education Support Team Leader, Education Achievement Service for South East Wales.

### **Eleri Jones**

Headteacher, Ysgol Brynhyfryd, Ruthin.

### **Shoned Wyn Jones**

Head of Welsh and Modern Languages Faculty, Ysgol John Bright, Llandudno.

### **Susan Gwyer Roberts**

Headteacher, Caldicot School, Monmouthshire. Represented by Ann Davies, Head of Welsh Department, Caldicot School in two meetings.

### Appendix 3: Organisations who presented evidence

	<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
1	Estyn	Meilyr Rowlands	Strategic Director	23 October 2012
2.	Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol	Dr Rhiannon Heledd Williams	Welsh Development Officer	4 December 2012
3.	Welsh Government	David Heath	Assessment & Curriculum Review Project Manager	4 December 2012
4.	Welsh Government	Dr Dylan Vaughan Jones	Head of General Qualifications Development	4 December 2012
5.	WJEC	Gareth Pierce Siân Llewelyn Jones	Chief Executive Subject Officer	4 December 2012
6.	Caldicot School	Ann Davies	Head of Welsh Department	18 February 2013
7.	Gwynedd Secondary Language Centre	Carys Lake	Head	18 February 2013
8	Ceredigion Language Centre	Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan  Meinir Ebbsworth Gwenyth Owens Anwen Jones	Assistant Director, Education & Community Services Department, Ceredigion County Council School Improvement Officer Athrawon Bro Service Manager Athrawes Fro	18 February 2013
9	St Teilo's Church in Wales High School	Martin Gwynedd	Head of Welsh Department	15 March 2013
10	CILT Cymru	Ceri James Ellie Jones	Director Project Manager – 'Routes into Languages Cymru'	15 March 2013
11	Cardiff High School	Lona Evans	Head of Welsh Department	15 March 2013
12	School of Education, Cardiff Metropolitan University	Marian Sweet	Leader of Secondary PGCE Welsh	15 March 2013
13	Welsh Government	Christopher Owen Martin Austin Alex Clewett	Head of HWB Team Digital Leader Digital Leader	29 April 2013



	<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
14	North Wales Welsh for Adults Centre	Ifor Gruffydd Elwyn Hughes	Director Deputy Director	29 April 2013
15	School of Education, Bangor University	Dr Gwyn Lewis	Director of Teaching and Learning	29 April 2013
16	Welsh Second Language KS2 Steering Group	Enfys Thomas	Chair	29 April 2013
17	Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg	Ffred Ffransis Colin Nosworthy Ioan Talfryn	Education Group Chair Communications and Assembly Liaison Officer Popeth Cymraeg Chief Executive	6 September 2013

## Appendix 4: Written responses received

	<b>NAME AND/OR ORGANISATION</b>
1	Cymdeithas Ysgolion dros Addysg Gymraeg (CYDAG)
2	Nigel D. Binding, Head of Welsh Department, Penyrheol Comprehensive School, Gorseinon
3	Merlyn Cooper
4	John Davies, Head of Lifelong Learning, Wrexham County Borough Council
5	Llinos Davies
6	Bethan Edwards
7	Education Achievement Service for South East Wales
8	Education Group, Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg
9	Lona Evans, Head of Welsh Department, Cardiff High School
10	General Teaching Council for Wales
11	Christine Gwilliam, Head of Languages Faculty, Cantonian High School, Cardiff
12	Martin Gwynedd, Head of Welsh Department, St Teilo's Church in Wales High School, Cardiff
13	Meryl Hendry
14	Alun Pari Huws
15	Meri Huws, Welsh Language Commissioner
16	iNet Wales, North Wales Student Steering Group
17	iNet Wales, South Wales Student Steering Group
18	Efa Gruffudd Jones, Chief Executive, Urdd Gobaith Cymru
19	Emyr Prys Jones
20	Gareth Jones, Secretary, ASCL Cymru
21	Jo Knell, Independent Consultant
22	Members of Denbighshire Welsh in Education Young People's Consultation Forum
23	Mentrau Iaith Cymru
24	Steven Monk, Head of Welsh Department, Welshpool High School
25	National Union of Teachers Wales (UCAC)
26	Dafydd Roberts, head of department and teacher in field of Welsh second language
27	Ioan Talfryn, Popeth Cymraeg Ltd Chief Executive
28	Les Taylor, teacher, parent and learner of Welsh
29	Rachel Thomas, Key Stage 2 teacher
30	Iago ap Steffan
31	Jan Townsend
32	Welsh Advisory Team in Denbighshire
33	Welsh Department, Fitzalan High School, Cardiff

## Appendix 5: Welsh Second Language Review Group questionnaire

In July 2012, the Welsh Government's Minister for Education and Skills announced his intention to establish a Group to review Welsh Second Language at Key Stages 3 and 4. The Group's aim is to consider what changes should be made to the teaching and assessment of Welsh Second Language to enable more learners to use Welsh in the workplace and community in future. The Group will report and provide recommendations to the Minister by September 2013.

As part of the review the Group has a number of considerations, including how a positive learning experience can be provided for Welsh Second Language learners, how to raise the status of the subject, the suitability of the qualifications, how best to develop learners' Welsh language skills and how to plan the workforce to ensure sufficient resources and capacity in schools. This questionnaire is designed to gather information about the teacher training courses, and targets students who are about to complete the Welsh and Welsh Second Language PGCE course as well as qualified teachers who completed the training course in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The results will be used solely for the purpose of this review and all responses will be treated confidentially. Respondents will not be identified in the report or recommendations.

For further details, please e-mail us: [addysg.gymraeg@cymru.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:addysg.gymraeg@cymru.gsi.gov.uk)

1. Are you:

- a student who is currently undertaking a Welsh/Welsh Second Language PGCE course?
- a teacher who completed the training course in 2010, 2011 or 2012?

### **Students**

2. Have you secured a post yet?

- Yes
- No

3. When looking for a teaching post, were you/are you looking specifically for a post to teach:

- Welsh as a first language
- Welsh Second Language
- No preference

4. You are about to complete the course. Are you confident that you are adequately trained and equipped for a career as a teacher of Welsh **first language**?

- Yes
- Partly

- No
- Not sure
- Not applicable

5. Are you confident that you are adequately trained and equipped for a career as a teacher of Welsh **Second Language**?

- Yes
- Partly
- No
- Not sure
- Not applicable

6. In your opinion, is there a need to develop or improve elements of the PGCE course to better equip you to teach Welsh Second Language?

- Yes. If yes, please give details.
- No
- Not sure

7. Is there any additional training you would like to have received on the PGCE course?

- Yes. If yes, please give details.
- No
- Not sure

8. Were there enough Welsh and Welsh Second Language resources to assist you whilst undertaking the PGCE course?

- Yes
- No. If no, please indicate what type of resources would have been useful.
- Not sure

9. To what extent did you receive training on how to raise the status of Welsh amongst pupils?

- A lot of training
- Some training
- No training

10. To what extent did you receive training on how to convey language awareness to pupils?

- A lot of training
- Some training
- No training

11. To what extent did you receive training on how to encourage use of Welsh outside the classroom?

- A lot of training
- Some training
- No training

12. Do you have any further comments about the training you received on the PGCE course?

## **Teachers**

13. In which county/local authority do you work?

14. How easy was it to secure a post?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Difficult
- Very difficult

Please add any comments here.

15. Do you teach Welsh Second Language?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

16. When looking for a teaching post, were you looking specifically for a post to teach:

- Welsh as a first language
- Welsh Second Language
- No preference

17. In which year did you complete the PGCE course?

- 2010
- 2011
- 2012

18. What was your opinion of the content of the PGCE course in relation to teaching Welsh Second Language?

19. In retrospect, after a few years of teaching, is there a need to develop or improve elements of the PGCE course to better equip teachers to teach Welsh Second Language?

- Yes. If yes, please give details.
- No

20. Is there any additional training you would like to have received as part of the PGCE course?

- Yes. If yes, please give details.
- No

21. Are there enough Welsh Second Language resources to support your teaching of the subject?

- Yes
- No. If no, please indicate what type of resources would be useful.
- Not applicable

22. In light of your early experience as a teacher of Welsh/Welsh Second Language, to what extent does the Welsh Department take responsibility for raising the status of Welsh within the school?

- Wholly responsible
- Has some responsibility/shares responsibility with other departments
- No responsibility
- Not sure

23. To what extent does the Welsh Department take responsibility for conveying language awareness to pupils?

- Wholly responsible
- Has some responsibility/shares responsibility with other departments
- No responsibility
- Not sure

24. To what extent does the Welsh Department take responsibility for encouraging pupils to use Welsh outside the classroom?

- Wholly responsible
- Has some responsibility/shares responsibility with other departments
- No responsibility
- Not sure

25. Do you have any further comments that you wish to share about the training provided to Welsh Second Language teachers?

### **Everyone**

26. Do you believe that prospective Welsh teachers and prospective Welsh Second Language teachers should be trained separately?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Please add any comments here.

27. Do you have any general comments that you wish to submit to the Review Group about the teaching of Welsh as a Second Language? (e.g. your views on the content of courses, on assessment, on the intensity of the teaching, on pupils' response etc).

### **End**

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

## Appendix 6: Research reports and other reference documents

Beaufort research (July 2013): *Exploring Welsh speakers' language use in their daily lives*

<http://www.beaufortresearch.co.uk/index.php/site/exploringwelshspeakers/>

Enterprise and Learning Committee (September 2010) *The teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language*, National Assembly for Wales:

[http://www.assemblywales.org/the\\_teaching\\_and\\_acquisition\\_of\\_welsh\\_as\\_a\\_second\\_language\\_-\\_e-2.pdf](http://www.assemblywales.org/the_teaching_and_acquisition_of_welsh_as_a_second_language_-_e-2.pdf)

Estyn (October 2007) *An Evaluation of the GCSE Welsh second language short course*, Estyn: Cardiff.

Gruffudd, H., Meek, E., Stevens, C. (August 2004), *The Movement of Pupils between Welsh and Second-Language Welsh (final report: abridge version)*, Llais y Lli.

Lewis, W.G. (2010), *Welsh Second Language in the National Curriculum - the case of teaching Welsh in English-medium schools*, used as evidence by the National Assembly's Enterprise and Learning Committee for their report 'The teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language'.

Lewis, W.G. (2011), 'Addysg Ddwyieithog yn yr unfed ganrif ar hugain: adolygu'r cyd-destun rhyngwladol', in *Gwerddon, Rhif 7* (ed. Williams, I.) (pp. 66-88):

[http://www.gwerddon.org/en/media/main/gwerddon/rhifynnau/Gwerddon\\_07-\(terfynol\).pdf](http://www.gwerddon.org/en/media/main/gwerddon/rhifynnau/Gwerddon_07-(terfynol).pdf)

Lewis, W.G. & Maelor, G. (Secondary Welsh PGCE Tutors), *Llawlyfr Cymraeg 2012-13, Tystysgrif Addysg i Raddedigion*, North and Mid Wales Centre of Teacher Education.

Petition P-04-488 - *The right to decide: an end to the compulsory study of Welsh to GCSE*:

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=6795&Opt=0>

Robert Hill Consulting (2013), *Future delivery of education services in Wales*, Welsh Government.

Welsh Government (2011), *Supporting triple literacy: Language learning in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3*

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/supportlit/?jsessionid=CC6F433B6C4AE450B2CA5236126F94E2?lang=en>

Welsh Government (2012), *Welsh Second Language Action Plan*, <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshactionplan/?skip=1&lang=en>.

Welsh Assembly Government; Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment; and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (October 2007) *GCSE subject criteria in Welsh Second Language (final version)*, Welsh Assembly Government.



## **Appendix 7: Acknowledgements**

On behalf of the Review Group, I would like to thank all those who assisted us in the completion of this work. Evidence was received, both verbally and in writing, from a wide range of individuals, who were all keen to offer information and comments. We are particularly grateful to the teachers and pupils who shared their experiences with us – they are, after all, the ones with the best understanding of what actually takes place in the classroom.

Our thanks are also due to Awen Penri, Richard Evans and Siwan Davies from Welsh Government for their help, advice and organisational support. We as a Group have benefitted immensely from their experience and have appreciated their professionalism.

Lastly, I would like to thank the other members of the Group for facilitating my job as Chair. It has been a real pleasure to work with them to develop clear recommendations for the future, so that every pupil has the best possible opportunity to learn Welsh and, more importantly, to use it with confidence and enjoy the experience.

Professor Sioned Davies  
Chair