



Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Summary of findings from our **national thematic reports** 2014

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- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ independent specialist colleges;
- ▲ adult community learning;
- ▲ local authority education services for children and young people;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ Welsh for adults;
- ▲ work-based learning; and
- ▲ learning in the justice sector.

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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Foreword

I hope that you find this compendium, and the full set of reports on which it is based, informative and relevant to your own work if you are part of the education system in Wales. The compendium collates evidence on standards and provision and sets out specific recommendations for how to improve. I hope that staff in schools and other providers want to know what Estyn expects to find on inspections: this collation sums up our findings and expectations in relation to the aspects covered.

Estyn's thematic reports in 2014 cover a range of important aspects of education and training in Wales. They report on standards and provision across all education sectors from evaluating learner involvement in adult community learning and work-based learning to reviewing primary and secondary school pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship. We have reported on a range of other aspects too, both in schools and in post-16 education and training, ranging from barriers to apprenticeship in work-based learning provision to action on bullying in primary and secondary schools

Estyn works closely with Welsh Government officials to formulate the programme of thematic reports that is requested in the annual remit letter to HMCI from the Minister for Education and Skills. This programme takes into account the key priorities of the Welsh Government and this year included interim reports about standards of literacy and numeracy as well as a report on reducing the impact of deprivation on educational improvement.

Estyn's thematic reports in 2014 address matters that are of central concern to policy-makers. Our reports are also intended to contribute to the wider thinking and to current debates in policy areas such as the review of the curriculum and of arrangements for assessment. The forthcoming programme of thematic reports for 2015 promises to be equally informative and influential with reviews underway in relation to topics as diverse as the role of the 10% advisory teacher in non-maintained settings, creative arts in primary schools, regional support for school improvement, and what schools and local authorities are doing to improve attendance.

We hope that our thematic reports are being used widely by providers to help to improve their practice in order to enhance outcomes for learners in Wales. This compendium of all the thematic reports published so far this year brings together detailed analyses and recommendations from each report for easy reference. The full reports, including case studies, are available on our website:

<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/thematic-reports>



Ann Keane

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales

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Learner support services for pupils aged 14-16 – May 2014

Main findings

Outcomes

- 1 Pupil outcomes have generally improved since the introduction of Learning Pathways 14-19, which has led to wider subject choices and more learning support at key stage 4.
- 2 It is pupils who face the greatest barriers to learning that have benefited most from the Learning Pathways 14-19 policy developments. They are more engaged and their attendance rates have improved as a result. The numbers remaining in education and training after the age of 16 have increased and attendance rates have improved over the last three years, particularly in schools where there are higher levels of pupils eligible for free school meals. The number of key stage 4 pupils who are excluded from secondary schools has fallen considerably since 2009.
- 3 Even so, around half of pupils still do not attain a good GCSE (grade A*-C) or equivalent in English / Welsh first language or in mathematics. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved at a slower rate at the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics than at the level 2 threshold. The proportion of young people not engaged in education, employment and training at 19 has not reduced recently.

Provision

- 4 In most schools, the learning coaching provided by designated learning coaches for targeted pupils or by support staff for pupils with special educational needs, is generally effective and helps pupils to improve their attendance, behaviour and performance. Learning coaching for other pupils is more variable in its impact.
- 5 The provision of personal support is the strongest aspect of learner support. Many of the survey schools have effective systems to deliver personal support and staff work well with other agencies to help pupils overcome barriers presented by home circumstances or by physical and mental health problems. Many schools have tracking systems to monitor the progress of pupils. A majority use these tracking systems well to identify those in need of additional support. The minority of schools that do not have effective tracking systems do not target learner support services and interventions well enough.
- 6 The provision of careers advice and guidance is the weakest feature of learner support. Careers advice and guidance do not start early enough or take enough account of individual pupils' needs and potential when helping them plan their future learning pathways. Only a minority of schools offer all pupils the opportunity to discuss their career aspirations and plans when they are choosing their key stage 4 courses in Year 9 or planning their next steps in Year 11.

- 7 In a majority of schools, the information on courses, career opportunities and progression routes provided to pupils is not up-to-date. As a result of this and of a bias towards retaining pupils in sixth forms where they exist, pupils are not always given accurate or impartial information when choosing their options. Most careers advice and guidance for pupils and parents are provided at options events, which provide generic information, but do not involve specific conversations about individuals.
- 8 Schools have not considered carefully enough how they should replace the services previously carried out by Careers Wales, including making use of Careers Online and other sources of information about further and higher education, training, apprenticeships and careers.

Leadership and management

- 9 Only a minority of schools take a strategic approach to co-ordinating learner support services. These schools target learning coaching and personal support well for the learners that most need them and can demonstrate impact in outcomes. They ensure that staff are well trained, and make use of external partners and collaborative arrangements to provide successful learning coaching and personal support.
- 10 In a majority of schools, the different elements of learner support are not well co-ordinated and they do not work together effectively. In particular, careers advice and guidance are not co-ordinated well enough. The advice on subject choices and options for future study at Year 7 and Year 11 are approached as separate events and only in a few schools is there an overall plan.
- 11 Most schools have an appropriate range of staff providing learner support services. A minority of schools do not have contingency plans to manage further reduction in the extent of external support or to enable them to retain the additional staff that provide learner support services.
- 12 The majority of schools evaluate headline performance data and make more limited use of data on the progress made by vulnerable individuals and groups of learners. However, the majority of schools do not use data to evaluate the impact of learning support strategies well enough to know how to improve that provision.

Recommendations

Schools should:

- R1 focus learner support services on improving pupils' attainment of high grades in GCSE English or Welsh first language and in mathematics;
- R2 take a more strategic approach to learner support services and co-ordinate the delivery of learning coaching, personal support, and careers advice and guidance;

- R3 improve the scope and quality of careers advice and guidance;
- R4 make sure that all pupils have regular discussions with the most appropriate support staff about their progress, aspirations and learning pathway, especially at key points in Year 9 and Year 11;
- R5 provide all staff involved in giving advice and guidance with regular and up to date training and information;
- R6 evaluate the impact of learner support services on outcomes; and
- R7 plan for possible reductions in funding for external support so as to sustain current levels of learner support.

Local authorities should:

- R8 lead and co-ordinate partnerships to support schools with external support services.

The Welsh Government should:

- R9 update its guidance to schools on careers advice and guidance to reflect the recent changes to the role of Careers Wales.

English in key stages 2 and 3

– June 2014

Main findings

- 1 In most lessons in key stage 2 and in a majority of lessons in key stage 3, observed during inspection and for this survey, pupils achieve good standards in English. There are excellent standards in a few primary and secondary schools where pupils read and respond very well to a wide range of texts with complex meanings. These pupils use higher-order reading skills such as inference and deduction confidently, and they display flair, originality and accuracy in their written work.
- 2 In a minority of primary schools in key stage 2, where standards are judged as adequate, too many pupils do not read fluently for their age and with understanding. There are weaknesses in pupils' writing, including younger pupils' lack of independent writing and limited extended writing particularly by older pupils.
- 3 In a significant minority of secondary schools, standards in English lessons are adequate because many pupils make progress that is too variable. Although oracy is often good, these pupils do not read or write well enough. They lack confidence and do not have a secure understanding of what they have read. In these schools, pupils lack an understanding of the writing process, including editing work to improve the content. Their written work is often short, featuring a narrow range of styles and purposes, and has too many punctuation and spelling errors.
- 4 Inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and grammar continue to mar the quality of writing in a majority of primary and secondary schools. There is not enough emphasis on pupils learning and using a wide range of spelling strategies. It is important for schools to agree how to teach spelling, punctuation and grammar and provide consistency in their approaches, such as teaching spelling rules and strategies.
- 5 Since 2008, the proportion of pupils in key stages 2 and 3 attaining the expected level or above in teacher assessments has increased. Progress has accelerated since 2011 in both key stages. The rate of improvement has been faster in key stage 3 than in key stage 2. The data on standards of writing shows more improvement since 2008, but standards in writing remain lower than in oracy and reading in both key stages. Despite the overall improving trend, the rate of progress is still too slow for pupils in Wales to catch-up with pupils in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. There is a full analysis of performance data on pages 8 to 11.
- 6 Most pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) do not attain as well as their non-FSM peers in English. The gap in performance widens as pupils progress from primary to secondary school. There have only been modest improvements in the performance data for more able pupils in both key stages over the past five years. Boys do not attain as well as girls, particularly in key stage 3.
- 7 The quality of teaching and assessment of English is good or better in a majority of primary and secondary schools. This is broadly similar to our findings in 2008. In

- the best practice seen in only a minority of lessons, there is explicit teaching of language skills that helps pupils make fast progress.
- 8 The teaching of writing is underdeveloped in a minority of secondary schools. In this minority of schools, pupils cannot transfer reading and writing skills to their work in other subjects.
- 9 The tracking of pupils' progress in English in primary and secondary schools has improved over the past five years. However, a majority of schools do not implement 'assessment for learning' strategies consistently or effectively enough. There is still too much poor marking of pupils' work in both key stages. Across Wales, the reliability and validity of statutory teacher assessments are affected by weaknesses in arrangements for the standardisation and moderation of teachers' judgements.
- 10 English has a high priority in the curriculum of almost all schools in key stages 2 and 3. Generally, schools allocate enough time for teaching English, including developing reading skills. Curriculum planning for English is generally good in a majority of primary and secondary schools. However, in a significant minority of primary and secondary schools, plans do not give enough attention to the skills of reading for comprehension and writing non-literary material. There is not a good balance of non-literary and literary narrative texts. In a majority of primary and secondary schools, work is not challenging enough for more able pupils.
- 11 Support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and English as an additional language (EAL) continues to be a strong feature of the work of most primary and secondary schools. As a result, many of these pupils make good progress in English.
- 12 Effective transitional arrangements are lacking in a minority of primary schools and secondary schools and they are poor in a few. This affects pupils' progress in English from key stage 2 to key stage 3.
- 13 Many primary and secondary schools have good leadership. In a few schools where there is excellent leadership, senior managers focus on establishing and maintaining high standards in the teaching of English, so that pupils gain the literacy skills they need for all subjects. In secondary schools, the best senior leaders put as high a priority on standards in key stage 3 as in key stage 4.
- 14 Overall, a majority of primary schools and a minority of secondary schools have quality improvement systems that draw on a wide range of performance and other data to judge the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. However, there are weaknesses in the improvement plans of a minority of schools. Whole-school and subject plans lack enough detail of what action staff will take to improve pupils' English skills, particularly in writing. Plans lack quantitative success criteria, to judge the effect of actions on standards of English.

Recommendations

Primary and secondary schools should:

R1 continue to focus on raising standards of pupils' independent and extended

writing, giving close attention to content, expression and accuracy;

R2 continue to raise pupils' ability to read for information and use higher-order reading skills;

R3 tackle the underperformance of pupils entitled to FSM in English, including for more able pupils, by targeting and matching support to their individual learning needs;

R4 provide challenging work in English to stretch all pupils, particularly the more able;

R5 agree how to teach spelling, punctuation and grammar and provide consistency in approaches, such as teaching spelling rules and strategies;

R6 improve 'assessment for learning' practices and the marking of pupils' work;

R7 achieve a better balance of literary and non-literary material and cover all seven writing genres ;

R8 work with other schools to share effective standardisation and moderation practices; and

R9 share more information to aid pupils' transition to secondary school.

In addition, secondary schools should:

R9 improve the teaching of writing as a process by encouraging pupils to plan, review, edit and improve their own work; and

R10 make more use of oracy prior to reading and writing, in order to help pupils to develop and extend their understanding and improve the quality of their work.

The Welsh Government should:

R11 improve the reliability and validity of teacher assessment by reviewing assessment criteria and introducing external moderation at key stage 2 and key stage 3.

ESDGC – Progress in education for sustainable development and global citizenship – June 2014

Main findings

Pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship

- 1 In the majority of the schools visited for this survey, pupils' understanding of the key concepts of sustainable development and global citizenship develops appropriately as pupils progress through school and is generally secure for each of the seven themes for ESDGC. There is now no significant difference between pupils' understanding of sustainable development and their understanding of global citizenship. This is an improvement since 2006 when understanding of global citizenship was not as well developed.

Sustainable development

- 2 Pupils are often very interested in the natural environment and their understanding of it is generally good. Almost all pupils understand that they depend on the environment for energy, food and other resources. Many pupils understand the need to conserve energy, but often in terms of saving money rather than resources.
- 3 In the best schools, pupils' understanding of consumption and waste develops well. They understand where the things they consume come from and where waste goes, although only a minority understand the interdependence of producers and consumers. Few understand the difference between 'standard of living' and 'quality of life.'
- 4 Few Foundation Phase or key stage 2 pupils understand the difference between climate and weather, but almost all pupils in the secondary schools visited understand the concept of climate change and global warming and many can explain the implications for the way we live.

Global citizenship

- 5 Pupils in all key stages generally have an appropriate understanding of the concepts of wealth and poverty and some of their implications. Almost all pupils have an understanding of the effects of inequality on people's lives and understand the types of support charities can provide for people in need. Almost all pupils in the secondary schools visited have a good understanding of the inequalities that exist between people in different countries, and between people within countries.
- 6 Pupils in schools with a high proportion of ethnic minority pupils generally have a better understanding of the effect of discrimination and prejudice on individuals than pupils in other schools. Few pupils at key stages 3 and 4 have a good

understanding of identity and culture, including complex concepts such as the link between culture, faith and individual value systems and beliefs.

- 7 Almost all pupils in the schools visited can give examples of ways in which they make choices and decisions that affect school life. They influence the work of the school through groups such as the school council, eco-committee or healthy living group. They realise that actions have consequences and generally know how to minimise personal conflicts.
- 8 Almost all pupils in the schools visited understand the principles of how to care for their own health and that of others. They have a secure understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Almost all key stage 2 pupils understand about the negative effects of pollution, tobacco and alcohol on their health and most pupils at key stages 3 and 4 understand that there are ways in which health and quality of life can be improved in countries around the world.

Vision, policy, planning and promoting ESDGC

- 9 In most of the schools visited, leaders have a clear vision for promoting ESDGC. The schools with the most effective policies for developing ESDGC have a clear definition and understanding of ESDGC and what it means for their staff and pupils in the context of their school and beyond. This clarity in understanding ESDGC has improved since 2006.
- 10 The majority of the schools visited have effective plans for developing and delivering ESDGC. Almost all schools teach aspects of ESDGC effectively through a variety of subjects. In a minority of the schools, planning is not systematic and relies too much on discrete and uncoordinated projects for coverage. This results in pupils having a limited understanding of the impact of their actions in respect of ESDGC. Where planning in secondary schools is most effective, teachers who specialise in specific subjects plan the coverage of ESDGC together. This strengthens the provision and ensures that teachers who have a stronger understanding of the more complex aspects of ESDGC teach them. This results in pupils having a deeper understanding of these aspects.
- 11 Schools with the most effective planning include opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy, literacy and thinking skills within cross-curricular thematic projects that focus on ESDGC. However, in many of the schools visited, teachers do not incorporate good enough opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in ESDGC work. This has not improved since 2006.
- 12 All the schools visited provide a wide range of extra-curricular and other activities to promote ESDGC and extend pupils' knowledge and experience. All the schools visited follow at least one accredited scheme in areas related to ESDGC. However, few schools collect evidence to assess the impact that following these schemes has had on pupils' understanding of ESDGC concepts.

Leadership, management and support for ESDGC

- 13 Where schools have identified members of staff with clear responsibility for leading and developing ESDGC, the provision is generally effective and pupils' understanding of key concepts is at least good. Where responsibilities are not clear enough, this is not the case.
- 14 The confidence of teachers in delivering ESDGC is high in many of the schools visited. Where training has not been a priority, members of staff lack confidence in teaching the more complex concepts related to ESDGC. Most schools visited would benefit from further training in specific aspects of ESDGC. A directory of good practice contacts would be helpful.
- 15 Most of the schools visited include aspects of ESDGC within their self-evaluation procedures. Leaders generally evaluate the planning and delivery, but very few schools evaluate the impact of provision on pupils' understanding of ESDGC.
- 16 Many of the schools visited have a member of the governing body with particular responsibility for ESDGC. Very few governors have received training other than from the school or feel confident enough to challenge the schools in relation to ESDGC.

Recommendations

Schools should:

- R1 improve pupils' understanding of the more complex ESDGC concepts identified in this report, including those relating to identity and culture;
- R2 plan for the progressive development of pupils' understanding of the seven ESDGC themes across the curriculum, and assess and track pupils' development;
- R3 plan for ESDGC to make a positive contribution to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy;
- R4 provide a variety of extra-curricular opportunities to support ESDGC;
- R5 identify members of staff to have responsibility for co-ordinating and developing ESDGC across the school;
- R6 provide appropriate training for teachers and other staff to help them to deliver ESDGC more effectively, including its more complex concepts; and
- R7 ensure that governors receive training to enable them to support and challenge the school in delivering ESDGC.

Local authorities / regional consortia should:

- R8 establish a directory of providers with good practice in ESDGC, which can be shared with schools; and
- R9 provide training for governors to enable them to support and challenge schools

appropriately in respect of ESDGC.

Action on bullying – June 2014

Main findings

Pupils' experiences of bullying

- 1 Too many pupils suffer from bullying at some point during their time in school. The effects of being bullied can be short or long-term, psychological or social, and often result in underachievement or attendance problems. Certain groups of pupils are at a higher-than-average risk of being bullied, including:
 - pupils with special needs or a disability;
 - lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils; and
 - pupils from a minority ethnic or religious background.
- 2 Pupils' experiences of bullying and the ways in which schools deal with it vary widely. In many secondary schools, how well staff deal with bullying may also vary within a school. In these secondary schools, staff lack a clear understanding of what constitutes a 'reportable incident' of bullying, because the school does not have an agreed definition of bullying that is clearly understood by the school community as a whole. Even in schools that have robust strategies to address bullying, there is often not a common understanding of the importance of the protected characteristics or their legal implications.

Ethos and values

- 3 Pupils report lower instances of bullying, both generally and on the grounds of the protected characteristics, in schools where there is a strong ethos that promotes equality and diversity. However, too few schools establish a positive basis for dealing with bullying by helping pupils to understand their rights and using the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The schools where leaders do use the convention to establish an ethos in which children understand that they have and can exercise a right to be safe often achieve success in countering the effects and incidence of bullying. Case studies of such schools are quoted in chapter 2 of this report.
- 4 There is a close link between how pupils treat one another and how well leaders communicate expectations about pupil behaviour. The best schools take a proactive approach to preventing bullying and to mitigating its effects when it occurs. For example, they make sure that there is effective supervision between lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes, when bullying is more likely to occur, and provide safe places for vulnerable groups during these times. They provide counselling services and use external agencies to support pupils who experience bullying.

Consulting pupils

- 5 Very few schools consult with groups of pupils to gain a true picture of the extent and nature of bullying at the school. The best schools use a range of methods to collect the views of pupils, parents or carers, and staff about bullying.

Verbal bullying

- 6 In a minority of primary schools, staff do not have a clear picture of the extent of verbal bullying that takes place or the sort of language that is used routinely as a form of insult. In a minority of secondary schools, staff do not treat remarks that can cause offence seriously enough but treat it as normal 'banter'.

Keeping records

- 7 Most schools in the survey keep records of behavioural incidents and a minority keep a specific record of bullying incidents. Very few primary schools categorise incidents according to the protected characteristics. As a result, they do not have a clear picture of patterns of behaviour over time that they can use to inform anti-bullying planning.

Supporting pupils

- 8 Most pupils know whom to tell if they witness or experience bullying. The best schools display details of where help is available, and provide details of local and national helplines. These schools provide opportunities for pupils to support each other, for example through buddy systems. Overall, most primary school pupils are confident that the school will deal with their issues effectively. However, as pupils get older, they become less confident that the school will be able to resolve bullying issues.
- 9 Most schools hold an 'anti-bullying week' annually that normally includes issues related to the protected characteristics. These weeks usually focus on developing pupils' personal, social and emotional skills, including greater resilience in dealing with bullying. However, developing resilience is less well planned for in the school curriculum generally. In many schools, the curriculum celebrates individual differences, but often shies away from the aspects that staff feel less confident in discussing, such as homophobia and gender reassignment. A minority of schools are anxious about highlighting diversity issues and see this as potentially contentious. This attitude means that a minority of schools only tackle issues as they arise, rather than building them into the curriculum proactively.

Cyberbullying

- 10 In most secondary schools, pupils and staff are concerned about the rise in cyberbullying, particularly in relation to the protected characteristics. Cyberbullying has created new forms of bullying that are unfamiliar to some staff. In the best practice, staff keep up-to-date with the technologies that pupils use and understand their potential for misuse inside and outside school.

Policies, plans and procedures

- 11 Many school strategic equality plans do not pay enough attention to the full range of protected characteristics. The Equality Act 2010 has resulted in some confusion, particularly in primary schools, between a disability equality plan and a strategic equality plan, and actions relating to the protected characteristics may appear in

neither. Of the schools in the survey, only a few identify 'reducing bullying on the grounds of protected characteristics' as one of their equality objectives. Even these schools do not refer to specifics, such as how they plan to tackle bullying on the grounds of race or address issues of homophobic bullying.

- 12 Many schools have separate behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In the best examples, these policies are well understood and set out the school's expectations about how members of the school community should treat each other. A few schools have combined these policies into a single document. These schools see bullying within a continuum of behaviour and tend to deal with it more successfully.
- 13 In drawing up strategic equality plans, schools are required to consult widely with the community and with groups representing protected characteristics. Many schools consult pupils, parents and staff, but few ask the views of groups linked to the protected characteristics.
- 14 In many schools, governing bodies review progress towards meeting the strategic equality plan annually. However, the quality of this monitoring and the information provided to governors varies too much and is generally unsatisfactory.
- 15 Local authorities provided schools with support when drawing up strategic equality plans. Not all local authorities and regional consortia provide schools with ongoing support and advice through monitoring the appropriateness of schools' strategic objectives or the progress towards meeting them well enough. Many do not provide governors with effective training that enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities to monitor strategic equality plans and objectives.
- 16 In a few clusters, schools collaborate to identify possible issues in relation to the protected characteristics when preparing strategic equality plans. These clusters share useful information and expertise in combatting discrimination and bullying. However, there are very few cases where feeder and receiving schools work towards joint strategic equality objectives.

Staff development and attitudes

- 17 Many schools train staff on bullying, although the training tends to be general and does not relate specifically to the protected characteristics. Where staff receive specific training, they find this useful. Schools report an absence of high-quality face to face training, especially related to transgender issues. Many schools are unaware of the Welsh Government's useful guidance 'Respecting Others'.

Recommendations

Schools should:

R1 raise awareness of bullying on the grounds of protected characteristics with pupils, parents, staff, and governors and take a more proactive approach to preventing and mitigating its effects (see Appendix 3 for a checklist);

R2 consult pupils, parents, and others, to identify the extent and nature of bullying in

the school and to agree the contents of strategic equality plans;

R3 plan age-appropriate opportunities in the curriculum to discuss issues related to the protected characteristics and to build pupils' resilience to bullying;

R4 ensure staff have a clear understanding of the extent and nature of bullying that may take place in school, including cyberbullying,

R5 make sure that staff know how to deal with and record incidents of bullying;

R6 record and monitor incidents of bullying in relation to the protected characteristics and use this information to review strategic equality objectives; and

R7 make sure all policies and procedures meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Local authorities and regional consortia should:

R8 provide training and support for school staff to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications;

R9 provide training and support for school governors to enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities to monitor strategic equality plans and objectives; and

R10 monitor the quality and effectiveness of schools' strategic equality plans more closely.

The Welsh Government should:

R11 publicise the 'Respecting Others' guidance.

ICT at key stage 3 – July 2014

Main findings

Standards

- 1 Standards in ICT as a subject are good or better in around half of the schools visited for this survey. In key stage 3 teacher assessments, ICT has been the best performing non-core subject for the last five years. However, this level of performance is not reflected in the findings of inspectors when they visited the survey schools. Neither is it reflected in GCSE and A level results.
- 2 Pupils' skills in using ICT for researching and presenting information are good in most schools. Where standards are adequate or worse pupils do not develop the full range of ICT skills that they should to a high enough standard, especially in creating databases and modelling. They also rely too much on the teacher for help.

Teaching

- 3 The quality of teaching ICT as a subject is good or better in half the lessons observed. Where teaching is strong, teachers use their subject knowledge well to develop pupils' knowledge and application of ICT in all aspects of the subject. They enthuse and motivate pupils effectively and keep them focused and on-task. As a result pupils become confident, independent learners.
- 4 In a half of lessons observed where teaching is no better than adequate, teachers do not consider pupils' prior knowledge well enough and do not challenge pupils sufficiently. In these lessons, pupils rely too much on teachers for support and teachers do not make sure that pupils make progress by building on prior knowledge and skills.

Planning, provision and assessment

- 5 The quality of planning, provision and assessment for ICT as a subject is good or better in half the schools visited. Where planning is good, schemes of work ensure full coverage of the statutory requirements for the subject at the appropriate level, and this is fully implemented. In other schools these statutory requirements are not covered suitably. Very few secondary schools liaise effectively with their feeder primary schools to ensure continuity and progression in ICT from key stage 2 to key stage 3.
- 6 Where assessment is good, schools use the information well to plan next steps in learning and teachers also involve pupils successfully in self- assessing their work. This has a good impact on standards. Although nearly all schools standardise assessments within the school, only a very few have the arrangements to moderate assessment externally.

- 7 The reliability and validity of teacher assessment in ICT at the end of key stage 3 are doubtful. This is often due to assessments being overgenerous, compounded by a lack of external verification.

Leadership and management

- 8 Around half of middle leaders succeed in raising standards in ICT as a subject by setting high expectations for teaching. They ensure that teachers co-operate to produce effective schemes of work and stimulating resources. They monitor colleagues' work rigorously to ensure all staff adhere to the scheme of work. They implement effective assessment and tracking procedures.
- 9 Nearly a third of schools do not have a suitable ICT improvement plan that sets out clearly how the school will improve standards, provision and prioritise ICT strategies throughout the school.
- 10 In around half of schools, leaders enrich the ICT curriculum with experiences in computer programming and coding, which go beyond the requirements of the present national curriculum.
- 11 The National Curriculum for ICT is not fully relevant to the technological needs of today's society or engaging enough for pupils.
- 12 ICT curriculum time varies significantly from school to school. A minority of schools do not offer the equivalent of a lesson a week in key stage 3 and often this is not enough time for pupils to cover all aspects of the ICT curriculum effectively.
- 13 ICT departments are generally poor in liaising with other departments and do not provide pupils with relevant contexts across the curriculum to apply the skills they developed in discrete ICT lessons.
- 14 Staff in around half of the schools surveyed say that the poor quality of the internet connection hinders their ICT work. The level of filtering and blocking of internet sites by local authorities also hinders access unnecessarily in the majority of schools.
- 15 Most schools are unsure about the level of ICT support arrangements that can be provided by the new regional consortia. Currently, middle leaders and teachers do not have enough access to appropriate professional development, external reviews and regular networking opportunities.

ICT across the curriculum

- 16 Standards of ICT skills across the curriculum are unsatisfactory in over a half of schools visited and no better than adequate in the remainder. Pupils are not offered enough opportunities to apply the skills learned in discrete ICT lessons in other subjects. Consequently they develop a mindset of choosing not to apply these skills by choice either.
- 17 The quality of planning and provision for the use of ICT across the curriculum in key stage 3 is unsatisfactory in many schools and no better than adequate in the others.

Teachers do not offer pupils enough well-planned opportunities to practise their skills in meaningful contexts across the curriculum.

- 18 The majority of schools use ICT well as a tool to help raise standards in literacy. Pupils develop effective skim-reading skills as they scan for relevant information and many extract, interpret and present information appropriately. However, pupils often copy information from websites without summarising it in their own words or reorganising it to cover the topic in question. In the worst examples, pupils concentrate more on the layout, design and transition of their presentation slides than the quality and accuracy of the content.
- 19 ICT has less impact on helping to raise standards in numeracy than in literacy. Few teachers use ICT regularly to support the development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum. Where pupils use ICT well, they produce a variety of graphs, create tables and use databases and spreadsheets effectively in real-life problem solving.
- 20 Only a few schools evaluate the impact of ICT on raising standards in literacy or numeracy or as mitigating the effects of disadvantage. Generally schools depend too much on anecdotal evidence rather than measureable outcomes to evaluate impact.

Recommendations

In order to improve standards in ICT in secondary schools at key stage 3:

schools should:

- R1 improve the delivery and monitoring of ICT across the curriculum to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' ICT skills;
- R2 ensure that each element of the ICT programme of study is taught well across the key stage;
- R3 improve the quality of teaching so that pupils develop their ability to work independently and make progress in developing their ICT skills during ICT lessons and in other subjects across the curriculum;
- R4 provide relevant and sufficient professional development opportunities for all teachers;
- R5 improve the accuracy of teacher assessment;
- R6 liaise effectively with their feeder primary schools to ensure continuity in planning the delivery of ICT across key stage 2 and key stage 3 so that pupils do not unnecessarily revisit skills and become disengaged in lessons; and
- R7 improve the liaison between the ICT department and other subject departments so that pupils have more contexts in which to apply and develop their skills.

Local authorities and regional consortia should:

R8 ensure that ICT curriculum support is available to all secondary schools;

R9 monitor the standards and provision of ICT as a subject and the effectiveness of its use across the curriculum; and

R10 support schools to improve the accuracy and reliability of teacher assessment.

The Welsh Government should:

R11 implement a relevant statutory framework for ICT from Foundation Phase to post-16 and review the National Curriculum subject orders to reflect current developments in technology; and

R12 assist local authorities and regional consortia to address the technical issues that constrain access to ICT resources in secondary schools.

Attendance in secondary schools – September 2014

Main findings

- 1 In the past five years, attendance in secondary schools has gradually improved. Authorised and unauthorised absences have both reduced. The proportion of pupils with no absences has also increased. Nearly three-fifths of the remaining absence is due to illness. Despite the improvement, absenteeism is a concern in nearly a third of secondary schools inspected in the first three years of the current inspection cycle and disproportionately disadvantages vulnerable groups of pupils.
- 2 There has been a year-on-year reduction in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Even so, persistent absentees now account for just over a quarter of all absences in secondary schools.
- 3 Absence from school has a clear impact on educational performance. About two-fifths of pupils who are absent for between 10-20% of sessions gain the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics, compared with about three-fifths for pupils who are absent for between 4-6% of sessions. Despite the impact that an absence rate of 10-20% has, the threshold for referral to Education Welfare Services is generally an absence rate of over 20%.
- 4 Pupils who are eligible for free school meals are more likely to be absent, to be persistent absentees, and to underperform. The overall absence rate of pupils eligible for free school meals is nearly twice the rate for pupils not eligible. Pupils eligible for free school meals have an unauthorised absence rate that is four times higher than for pupils not eligible. Just under a fifth of pupils eligible for free school meals are persistently absent. This is much higher than the 5% of pupils not eligible who are persistently absent.
- 5 The absence rate for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is higher than for pupils with no SEN. Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) have a higher absence rate than any other groups of pupils with SEN. This group of pupils had the highest rate of unauthorised absence too. It is three-and-a-half times higher than for pupils without SEN.
- 6 Schools have strengthened the messages they give regarding the link between high attendance and good academic achievement. Most pupils are aware of this link. With few exceptions, pupils know their current level of attendance and their target level. Despite the fact that pupils have a good understanding of reasons for non-attendance, only a few schools involve pupils in developing strategies to improve attendance, for example through school councils.
- 7 Most of the schools visited for this survey have identified strategic approaches to improving attendance and a few have a written attendance strategy. The strategies vary in content and quality. Most consist of procedures for dealing with absence and identify the general activities undertaken by the school to support attendance. These

strategies are not usually based on a detailed analysis of the available data and neither do they set clear targets for improvement. Less than half of schools have carried out a good enough analysis of why pupils do not attend school and they do not set appropriate targets for improving the attendance of specific groups of pupils. Around half of schools do not use data to evaluate the impact of initiatives to improve attendance.

- 8 With few exceptions, pupils know who to go to in school if they have a worry. Pupils appreciate the support they receive, for example from peer mentoring. Restorative practice, pupil support centres and nurture groups are used to good effect and have enabled more pupils to attend school more often. However, a few schools are not aware enough of the needs of a few pupils, such as those with caring responsibilities. In addition, staff lack up-to-date knowledge of some bullying-related issues or how to deal with them. This is also a finding of Estyn's 'Action on Bullying' report .
- 9 The schools that are the most successful at improving attendance recognise that good teaching leads to greater pupil engagement. They identify and address shortcomings in teaching and offer a wide range of curriculum choices. They provide good support, guidance and mentoring for pupils. These schools have effective partnership arrangements with external agencies and services. However, around half of schools are not aware of relevant support services and initiatives, such as Families First, or how to access them. In a few schools, procedures for accessing services are too complicated, interventions take too long to get started, and schools are uncertain as to their impact.
- 10 Many schools have procedures for assigning the correct attendance codes. However, there remains variability in the use of the attendance codes. For example, 12% of unauthorised absences are categorised as "other unauthorised absence", where no attendance code or description can be used. In particular, in a few schools, there is uncertainty in applying the correct code for pupils that are educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS). As a result, it is possible for pupils to be recorded as present, even when they have actually failed to attend the EOTAS provision. This is a serious safeguarding concern, as these schools are unable to account for the whereabouts of their pupils.
- 11 There is also considerable variation in how the attendance of pupils educated off site and not dually registered (B code) and pupils that are dually registered and present at another school or pupil referral unit (D code) are recorded across Wales. In one consortium, the recorded use of the B code is 10 times higher than that of the local authority with the lowest recorded use. In another consortium, the use of the D code is 22 times higher than that of the lowest recording local authority. This highlights the fact that there are significant variations, across Wales and within consortia, regarding approaches taken and provision made for pupils that are educated away from school.
- 12 The extent to which senior managers and elected members from local authorities in Wales understand and discuss attendance at a corporate level varies between authorities. There are good examples where attendance is included in strategic plans that identify targets for attendance.

- 13 There are also good examples where local authorities and schools work well with other agencies. However, the extent and impact of multi-agency working in schools across Wales are too variable. The degree to which multi-agency approaches are effective is determined by the knowledge that schools have of these services, the willingness of schools to engage with them and the ability of school leaders to ensure that their schools are included in initiatives.
- 14 A minority of schools do not understand what attendance data means to them. They need support to analyse data, identify main messages and determine appropriate actions. Not all schools know about the arrangements within their local authorities to access comparative data. In a few authorities, the data analysis provided for schools is of variable quality. Many schools are unaware of their local authority's approach to improving attendance and nearly all are unaware of the consortia attendance grant .
- 15 Secondary schools that employ staff to improve the attendance of specific groups of pupils generally deploy them effectively. They build relationships with families and local communities and work with primary feeder schools to improve the attendance of pupils. However, there are too few training opportunities for staff who work with families and pupils with complex needs, and for those who work with families from different cultural backgrounds.
- 16 The role of education welfare services is not always clear in relation to regional consortia arrangements and there is sometimes a lack of co-ordination between school improvement services in consortia and the residual attendance and inclusion services in local authorities. School improvement services do not make full use of the knowledge of schools and families held by education welfare officers.
- 17 The development of the all Wales Attendance Analysis Framework and the inclusion of attendance data in school banding have both played an important role in raising attendance rates.

Recommendations

Schools should:

- R1 make better use of attendance data to inform their approach to improving the attendance of pupils, particularly those from vulnerable groups, such as persistent absentees, pupils eligible for free school meals, and those with SEN;
- R2 improve teaching and the curriculum offer to maximise pupil engagement and explore approaches such as restorative practice, pupil support centres, peer mentoring and nurture groups;
- R3 strengthen links with external agencies or services that assist in engaging and supporting families;
- R4 engage more with pupils in developing the attendance policy or strategy, for example through school councils;

R5 ensure that staff receive up-to-date training on issues such as bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;

R6 comply with the pupil registration regulations in accurately recording the attendance of pupils educated otherwise than at school and when removing pupils from the roll of the school; and

R7 ensure that initiatives to improve attendance are thoroughly evaluated.

Local authorities should:

R8 provide schools with training on understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes;

R9 analyse attendance patterns to inform a corporate strategy to improve the attendance of pupils, particularly those from vulnerable groups;

R10 investigate and challenge the variation in the use of attendance codes;

R11 improve the knowledge that schools have of relevant national priorities, initiatives and grants;

R12 identify and share exemplar practice within and beyond consortia boundaries; and

R13 ensure that school improvement services are aware of and use knowledge held by education welfare services.

The Welsh Government should:

R14 provide clarity about the responsibility for attendance within local authorities and regional consortia; and

R15 as part of the attendance analysis framework, continue to provide and publish comprehensive analyses of attendance data for local authorities and regional consortia.

Effective classroom observation in primary and secondary schools – October 2014

Main findings

- 1 In most schools, classroom observation takes place for a wide range of reasons. In particular, classroom observation provides school leaders with first-hand evidence about the quality of teaching and learning in their school and is an important management tool. Where classroom observation is effective in improving teaching and learning, it is combined with other activities, such as book scrutiny and listening to learners, to provide a rounded picture of teaching and learning rather than a snap shot of a particular lesson.
- 2 Where classroom observation is effective, leaders have established a positive culture of improvement, self-evaluation and professional learning. In these schools, staff view classroom observation as a professional entitlement and as an integral part of effective team working. Staff are keen to share practice and to support each other's professional learning. This happens when leaders:
 - communicate a clear strategic vision for the achievement of high standards and for the quality of teaching and learning they wish to attain;
 - are explicit about the purposes of classroom observation in school policies;
 - provide staff with professional development opportunities that derive from classroom observation and link with whole-school priorities and the development needs of individuals;
 - are sensitive to staff concerns and issues of professional autonomy;
 - distribute leadership roles so that responsibilities are shared and understood throughout the school;
 - update their own professional learning regularly; and
 - recruit staff who share the school's ethos and goals and have a balance of skills and experience.
- 3 In practical terms, classroom observation is most effective when:
 - all staff have a clear understanding of the purposes of any observation and know when the observation will take place;
 - the teacher and observer have time before the observation to discuss the focus of the observation and to share relevant information about the class;

- observations of teaching focus clearly on the extent to which it helps pupils to learn and make good progress, and on the standards achieved by the pupils;
- observations of teaching and learning draw on a wide range of evidence which includes more than one classroom visit, planning, assessment records, scrutiny of pupils' work, and listening to learners;
- observers use forms suited to the purpose to record the findings of the observation;
- the observed member of staff has an opportunity to receive feedback and engage in professional dialogue as soon as possible;
- observations usually last between thirty to sixty minutes;
- observers ensure that there is a written record of the observation;
- all observations requiring judgements are moderated to ensure consistency;
- observers are trained to use judgement descriptors accurately and consistently to ensure equality and fairness;
- an annual self-evaluation cycle includes timetabled performance management observations and observations to monitor the school's progress against targets in the school improvement plan; and
- the school takes account of formal classroom observations when reviewing improvement targets.

Recommendations

School leaders should:

- R1 establish a shared culture of improvement, self-evaluation and professional learning so that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities;
- R2 establish self-evaluation practices that take account of a wide range of evidence, including classroom observation that focuses primarily on pupils' standards of achievement and on the quality of teaching and learning;
- R3 develop clear, explicit classroom observation policies and practices that all staff understand and apply;
- R4 engage in professional dialogue with teachers and support staff soon after classroom observation;
- R5 arrange professional development opportunities for staff, based on evidence that includes classroom observation, that are matched to school and individual priorities;

- R6 for classroom observations that require judgements, develop grade descriptors and moderation procedures to ensure consistency; and
- R7 train as peer inspectors in order to be able to align and share their practice with that of others as inspectors.

Local authorities and consortia should:

- R8 help schools with strong improvement, self-evaluation and professional learning cultures and effective classroom observation to share their practice with other schools.

The Welsh Government should:

- R8 provide opportunities for schools with strong improvement, self-evaluation and professional learning cultures and effective classroom observation to share their practice on the Learning Wales website.

Numeracy in key stages 2 and 3: an interim report – November 2014

Main findings

- 1 In just under half of primary and secondary schools inspected in 2013-2014, pupils develop good or better numeracy skills. In the remaining schools, pupils' numerical skills are at best average. This is because only around half of schools have developed suitable provision for numeracy, although this is an increase on the baseline survey.
- 2 The schools in the survey have made progress in developing their numeracy provision since the baseline survey. This is beginning to have an impact on pupil standards in both primary and secondary schools. In the main, pupils in these schools show a secure grasp of basic mathematical skills. This is an improvement from the baseline survey as measured against the first recommendation (R1). In particular, the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework has helped the schools to plan more effectively, and teachers are beginning to plan better quality activities to support and extend pupils' numeracy skills (R3 and R4). Standards and the quality of teaching are higher and leadership across the schools has also improved, albeit marginally. On the whole, there is a greater focus on improving numeracy. Teachers have received better quality training, which has developed their numerical skills and led to improved planning and consistent numerical methodology across these schools (R2 and R7).
- 3 Despite making progress since the baseline survey, there is still a lot for these schools to do before many of the strategies have a consistent impact on standards. In particular, schools have made limited progress with:
 - assessing and tracking of pupils' numeracy skills (R5);
 - improving the continuity and progression of experience by pupils between primary schools and between primary and secondary schools (R7); and
 - monitoring and evaluating the quality of numeracy standards and provision in schools (R8).
- 4 In the majority of schools in the survey, pupils demonstrate secure numeracy skills and can generally transfer them across the curriculum and use them to analyse data and solve problems. The majority of pupils in the survey have an appropriate understanding of times-tables, the four rules of number, place value and fractions. However, there are still too many pupils who lack confidence with division and percentages. These deficiencies impede pupils' ability to interpret results and solve problems.
- 5 Pupils' numerical reasoning skills are still not strong enough. Too many pupils are unfamiliar with problem-solving procedures such as identifying, collecting, organising, calculating, interpreting and evaluating. Many pupils misunderstand

- cause and effect and do not check their answers for reasonableness or accuracy, or to identify silly mistakes.
- 6 In many of the schools visited, teachers' planning for the development of pupils' numeracy skills is generally better than reported in the baseline survey and in comparison with that of schools inspected through the regular inspection cycle. However, in around half of schools, planning is still superficial, and only a few schools do enough to challenge more able pupils. In most primary and secondary schools, planning and provision for numeracy are weaker than for literacy.
 - 7 In nearly all the schools, planning and developing numerical reasoning are proving to be more difficult than planning for using mathematical skills across the curriculum. Most schools are just beginning to identify and use tasks that are suitable for developing pupils' reasoning skills of planning, communicating and reviewing. This is the case in both mathematics lessons and in subjects across the curriculum.
 - 8 The quality of teaching to develop numeracy is good in just over half of the lessons observed. This is an improvement on the baseline study. In the lessons where teaching is less successful, this is often because teachers lack the mathematical subject knowledge to address pupils' misconceptions. In primary and secondary schools where teachers lack the relevant knowledge, pupils make limited progress and in a few cases they become more confused.
 - 9 In general, the quality of marking pupils' numeracy work across the curriculum is not good enough. As noted in the baseline survey, teachers do not routinely identify numerical errors in pupils' work in subjects other than in mathematics. When compared with the baseline study, the tracking of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum remains at an early stage of development. Nearly all schools are taking a 'wait and see' approach in anticipation that a national tracking system may be developed.
 - 10 Leadership for numeracy is good in only a minority of schools. This is a slight improvement compared with the baseline study. In the schools where leadership for numeracy is strongest, strategies to develop numeracy feature strongly in school development plans and leaders in these schools allocate worthwhile time, training and resources to support the development of numeracy. However, even in the schools where leadership is good, improving pupils' numerical reasoning remains an important area to develop.
 - 11 The majority of schools have agreed approaches for performing simple calculations. This is an improvement on the baseline survey. However, staff are inconsistent in how they implement of these agreed approaches in around half of schools. As a result, too many pupils in these schools lack confidence in basic number work, such as multiplication and division.
 - 12 Similar to the findings of the baseline survey, the monitoring of pupils numeracy skills through lesson observation and work scrutiny remains underdeveloped. Nearly all schools fail to use of these techniques systematically to evaluate provision. Most schools are too reliant on test data, such as the National Numeracy Tests data, skills qualifications or results in mathematics to provide proxy measures for the quality of their provision.

- 13 Since the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework and National Support Programme, the amount of training time schools allocate for developing numeracy has increased significantly. In a few primary schools surveyed and in most secondary schools, senior leaders report that improving the numerical skills of staff remains a priority to enable numeracy provision to be effective across the school.
- 14 Since the baseline survey, there has been little progress on collaboration between primary and secondary partner schools across key stages 2 and 3. This remains an important area for improvement.

Recommendations

These recommendations supersede the recommendations from the baseline survey.

Schools should:

- R1 ensure that pupils master important number skills, such as division, work with metric measures, percentages, ratio and proportion, in mathematics lessons;
- R2 develop pupils' numerical reasoning skills in mathematics lessons and in other subjects;
- R3 extend the opportunities for pupils of all abilities to use their numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum;
- R4 support staff to widen their knowledge and understanding of strategies to use numeracy across the curriculum;
- R5 improve the assessment and tracking of pupils' numeracy skills;
- R6 strengthen procedures for evaluating numeracy provision; and
- R7 work more closely with cluster schools to develop greater consistency in teaching and assessing pupils' numeracy skills.

Local authorities and regional consortia should:

- R8 support schools to help staff to improve their knowledge, skills and confidence in developing pupils' numeracy skills through their subjects; and
- R9 share best practice between schools.

The Welsh Government should:

- R10 consider developing a national system for tracking pupils' numeracy skills.

Linguistic progression and standards of Welsh in bilingual schools – November 2014

Main findings

Studying Welsh first language

- 1 Across Wales, a number of pupils who studied Welsh as a first language at primary school do not study Welsh as a first language after transferring to secondary school. As a result, these pupils do not develop their Welsh skills to the best of their ability, and a few pupils who have studied Welsh as a first language are entered inappropriately for the Welsh second language GCSE examination. The proportion of pupils studying Welsh as a first language falls from 19.8% in key stage 2 (2008), to 16.3% in key stage 3 (2011), and then to 15.3% in key stage 4 (2013).
- 2 Gwynedd, Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire authorities have the highest proportions of pupils in key stage 4 studying Welsh as a first language. These authorities also have the biggest decrease in the number studying Welsh first language between key stages 2 and 4 over the last six years. The decrease is approximately one in every five pupils, or more.

Following other courses through the medium of Welsh

- 3 Only in one in three bilingual schools do most pupils who study Welsh as a first language follow two or more additional GCSE courses through the medium of Welsh. Only in a very few bilingual schools do most pupils follow five or more additional GCSE courses through the medium of Welsh.
- 4 The survey visited schools in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Anglesey and Gwynedd. Ceredigion and Anglesey local authorities have the lowest proportions of Welsh first language pupils (approximately 20%) who follow five additional GCSE courses through the medium of Welsh. Approximately half of Welsh first language pupils follow five additional GCSE courses through the medium of Welsh in Gwynedd and Carmarthenshire.

Standards of Welsh

- 5 In the bilingual schools that have the highest proportions of pupils who follow two or more additional GCSE courses through the medium of Welsh, most pupils use Welsh fluently in a range of contexts. In general, pupils who follow the most additional GCSE courses through the medium of Welsh have the best ability to discuss and write in Welsh.
- 6 On the whole, pupils in bilingual schools with low proportions of pupils who follow courses through the medium of Welsh do not have good enough speaking and writing skills in Welsh. A minority of pupils in these schools have a firm grasp of Welsh, but many use too many English words when speaking and writing. The

majority of pupils are not confident in using Welsh orally or in writing because of the lack of opportunities to use the language in a range of contexts across the curriculum.

Bilingual teaching

- 7 In most of the bilingual lessons observed, pupils make good progress in both their understanding and subject skills. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of the pupils' use of Welsh. In the majority of lessons, teachers deliver mainly through the medium of Welsh, and paraphrase core or complex ideas in English to ensure that everyone understands. In a minority of bilingual lessons, teachers repeat everything in Welsh and English. This slows the tempo of lessons unnecessarily.
- 8 Pupils in the bilingual lessons observed often develop their subject knowledge well by using Welsh and English-medium resources. Teachers ensure that pupils develop a good awareness of subject-specific terms in both languages. This has a positive effect on pupils' linguistic proficiency and on their confidence when discussing and writing in Welsh and English. It is only in a few lessons that teachers plan translanguaging activities carefully enough.
- 9 In a minority of the bilingual lessons observed, mainly in the schools in which lower percentages of pupils follow their courses through the medium of Welsh, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve while studying subjects through the medium of Welsh are not high enough. These teachers do not support the use of Welsh effectively enough, and pupils have the misconception that studying subjects through the medium of Welsh can hinder their academic success. In fact, pupils who follow their GCSE courses through the medium of Welsh achieve as well as, if not better than, those who follow most of their GCSE courses through the medium of English.
- 10 The majority of schools visited focus on improving pupils' literacy across the subjects they study, and the schools' marking policy gives appropriate attention to linguistic issues. However, a minority of teachers do not follow these policies when correcting pupils' work.

Leadership

- 11 Leaders in the few bilingual schools that ensure that a high proportion of pupils study additional subjects through the medium of Welsh have high expectations of pupils' ability to achieve well in those subjects. They set ambitious targets to ensure linguistic progression and plan strategically to achieve them. These schools have a close relationship with parents, and present the advantages of continuing to study subjects through the medium of Welsh to them clearly. They plan carefully to provide an attractive and rich offer of general and vocational courses in Welsh and ensure extensive opportunities for pupils to develop their language skills across the curriculum. They also ensure that English-medium resources are available to pupils who speak little Welsh.
- 12 Developing Welsh skills is not a whole-school priority in a minority of the bilingual schools visited. They do not offer a wide enough range of courses through the

medium of Welsh in key stage 4. Some teachers persuade pupils inappropriately to study subjects through the medium of English. A minority of bilingual schools do not plan effectively enough to promote social use of Welsh.

Staffing and resources

- 13 The bilingual schools visited are facing a challenge in recruiting staff who are confident and capable of teaching their subjects through the medium of Welsh. However, the training and support that are available at school or on sabbatical courses develop staff's Welsh linguistic skills effectively, on the whole.
- 14 Many schools conduct in-service training sessions to refine their bilingual teaching strategies. Only a few bilingual schools have developed links with other schools in order to share good practice or facilitate the process of producing Welsh resources.
- 15 There are shortcomings in Welsh-medium resources. For example, the phraseology of Welsh-medium examination papers tends to be more complicated than in the corresponding English-medium papers, and this sometimes makes it difficult for pupils to understand the questions. At times, the meaning of questions in Welsh is not the same as in the English version. In addition, the use of subject-specific Welsh terms by examination boards is not always consistent from one year to the next. Not all teaching resources that exist on 'Hwb'¹ are available in Welsh.

Authorities

- 16 Only Gwynedd has high enough expectations of schools to increase the proportion of pupils who continue to study subjects through the medium of Welsh in key stage 4, and support schools to achieve ambitious targets. Addressing this lack of progression is not a priority for the majority of local authorities.

Recommendations

Bilingual schools should:

- R1 set targets to increase the proportion of pupils in key stage 4 who continue to study Welsh as a first language and follow their courses through the medium of Welsh;
- R2 expand the offer of qualifications available through the medium of Welsh;
- R3 explain the advantages of following courses through the medium of Welsh to pupils and parents, and ensure that parents are included more in their children's education;
- R4 co-operate with other schools to produce Welsh learning resources, and to discuss and share bilingual teaching strategies;
- R5 ensure that developing pupils' Welsh skills is a whole-school priority and plan

¹ All-Wales Learning Platform that aims to support and promote teachers to operate in a digital environment and share their practice and digital resources.

purposefully to promote the social use of Welsh;

R6 encourage teachers across subjects to promote pupils' use of Welsh in lessons and beyond; and

R7 ensure that teachers across subjects pay attention to the accuracy and quality of pupils' expression in Welsh.

Local authorities should:

R8 track, on a school by school basis, the proportion of pupils in key stage 4 who follow courses through the medium of Welsh and set targets to increase this in line with the objectives of the Welsh-medium education strategy; and

R9 assist schools in discussing, developing and sharing the most effective bilingual teaching strategies.

The Welsh Government should:

R10 ensure that high quality Welsh educational resources are available in all subjects on 'Hwb';

R11 raise awareness of the advantages of bilingualism and of continuing to study subjects through the medium of Welsh; and

R12 ensure that examination boards publish guidance documents and marking schemes for teachers in Welsh, and prepare questions in a clear phraseology in their Welsh-medium examination papers.

The effectiveness of learner-involvement strategies in adult community learning and work-based learning – November 2014

Main findings

- 1 The Welsh Government's learner-involvement strategy guidance for post-16 learners has helped ACL and WBL providers to improve how learners shape their curriculum.
- 2 Providers in both sectors make good use of involvement strategies and activities to make sure that learners can influence the curriculum, resources and facilities. However, not all ACL providers use the outcomes of learner-involvement activities to improve the quality of teaching and assessment well enough.
- 3 Providers in both sectors have moved considerably beyond using learner surveys as the main ways of collecting and analysing views and opinions. Many providers use learner forums, class or course representatives and enrichment activities to extend learners' skills and help learners to evaluate the curriculum. Importantly, providers in both sectors enable learners to take leadership roles, which help them to develop skills for citizenship and contribute to the wider community.
- 4 In both sectors, providers make use of the outcomes of learner-involvement activities to inform self-assessment and quality development planning. All providers have formal ways of reporting the results to learners, providing their views and opinions. However, it is unclear how many ACL providers provide information to learners about what has happened or what they have changed as a result of taking part in these surveys or questionnaires.
- 5 Learners achieve a range of outcomes as a result of taking part in learner involvement activities. These outcomes are mainly concerned with the development of personal and social skills. Many adult learners improve their personal effectiveness as a result of taking part in learner improvement activities. They use their learning well to improve their work and lives. Inspectors found that work-based learners developed a range of skills and knowledge that helped them in their daily working lives. In ACL, older learners take responsibility well for organising their own learning activities. However, few providers have formal systems to record and recognise the skills and knowledge gained by learners.
- 6 The impact of learner-involvement work on attainment and qualifications is less clear. Few providers have been able to measure the impact of learner-involvement on success rates accurately. Inspectors found that a range of other factors (such as readiness to engage, confidence, ability to articulate ideas) contribute to improving attainment and qualifications alongside learner-involvement. In addition, ACL

partnerships and providers do not make enough use of the outcomes of learner involvement activities to improve the quality of teaching.

- 7 In only a few cases do ACL partnerships and providers place priority on helping learners to organise their own learning. Learners gain a range of benefits from this. However, generally ACL partnerships and providers do not do enough to help learners set up their own classes or activities. Most local authority and further education ACL providers do not have an infrastructure in place to help learners to organise their own learning. As a result, not all learners have the opportunity to develop their citizenship or leadership skills.
- 8 The Welsh Government carried out a national Learner Voice Wales survey in January and February 2013. The evidence from this work and from inspection demonstrates that providers are beginning to make use of the results of the Learner Voice survey in their self-assessment processes and quality improvement planning. Inspectors found that providers make use of the survey alongside the range of other learner involvement activities reported above. Nevertheless, not all ACL partnerships use the outcomes of their Learner Voice Wales survey well enough to improve the quality of their provision. Not all work-based learners know about the results of the Learner Voice Wales survey at provider level.
- 9 Over the three years of this survey work inspectors found that providers in all post-16 settings (further education, Welsh for Adults, ACL and WBL) make good use of the Welsh Government's learner-involvement strategy to make sure that learners can contribute to shaping provision and the curriculum. Providers in all settings work well with learners to make sure that their views and opinions have a positive impact on:
 - learner outcomes – particularly personal and social skills;
 - the curriculum;
 - resources, facilities and venues;
 - support for learners;
 - quality improvement; and
 - overall leadership and management of provision.
- 10 However, whilst most sectors use learner views and opinions to improve the quality of teaching and assessment, this was less prevalent in ACL.
- 11 Providers in the post-16 sector use two main types of involvement to engage learners in shaping their curriculum:
 - reflective involvement; and
 - active involvement.
- 12 Inspectors also found four approaches to learner-involvement that engage learners in different ways:
 - leadership;
 - partnership;
 - consultation; and

- informing.
- 13 These approaches to engaging learners are not separate pieces of work. Providers may use a mixture of these activities and help learners to move between the different approaches.
- 14 The different approaches have a different emphasis. The informing and consultation approaches are mainly concerned with improving the quality of the provision. The partnership and leadership approaches are more concerned with learners developing the skills and motivation to take action and organise their own learning.

Recommendations

Adult community learning providers should:

- R1 put formal infrastructures in place to help learners to organise their own classes and activities in their communities;
- R2 increase the use of learner-involvement strategies and activities to improve the quality of teaching and assessment;
- R3 offer programmes to learners that help them to develop their citizenship and leadership skills;
- R4 put formal systems in place to record and recognise the range of personal and social outcomes achieved by learners;
- R5 make robust use of the Learner Voice Wales survey at partnership level in quality improvement planning; and
- R6 make sure that all learners know about what has happened as a result of providing their views and opinions or what they have changed as a result of taking part in surveys or questionnaires

Work-based learning providers should:

- R5 monitor more closely the impact of taking part in learner-involvement activities for individual learners;
- R6 improve access to learner-involvement activities for learners in geographically dispersed locations; and
- R7 make sure that all learners know the outcomes of the Learner Voice Wales survey at provider level.

The Welsh Government should:

- R8 review its learner-involvement strategy to place more emphasis on the development of citizenship skills and build the capacity of learners to take leadership roles and organise their own learning.

Barriers to apprenticeship – November 2014

Main findings

- 1 Analysis of data on the take-up of apprenticeships by learners from black and minority ethnic communities suggests that there may be under-representation by these groups.
- 2 Providers are generally aware of the barriers that prevent learners from minority groups and those with disabilities from engaging in apprenticeship programmes. They regularly analyse the number and proportion of these learners to identify where they need to improve representation from BME and disabled groups.
- 3 Many providers put measures in place to support learners from these groups and to improve recruitment, for example by working closely with local schools that have a high BME pupil population.
- 4 Evidence from providers, employers and community groups suggests that the barriers that prevent learners for BME communities and those with disabilities from engaging in apprenticeship programmes include:
 - lack of awareness of apprenticeships by parents, employers and learners themselves;
 - few apprenticeship role models from the BME communities or from disabled groups;
 - difficulties in finding suitable work placements, especially where employers believe there will be a need to provide additional support for learners;
 - real or perceived discrimination;
 - language difficulties for students for whom English is an additional language and cultural differences;
 - available support for learners not being accessed or fully utilised;
 - parental anxiety that the young people may not be able to cope; and
 - insufficient co-ordination between schools, employers, WBL providers and local community organisations to promote apprenticeships.
- 5 Consistently, more females have undertaken apprenticeships than males during the past three years. However, there remains strong gender stereotyping in the types of apprenticeships chosen by young people.
- 6 Providers do work to address gender stereotyping issues. However, although a few providers measure the outcomes of this work, there is little evidence to demonstrate its impact in changing patterns in the take-up of apprenticeships.
- 7 The majority of providers have good arrangements to ensure continuing compliance with the Equality Act 2010, but are unable to demonstrate that this translates into any

measurable improvement in reducing barriers or stereotyping.

Recommendations

In order to improve the take-up of apprenticeships, the Welsh Government should continue to:

- R1 use 'National Apprenticeship Week' to target the promotion of apprenticeships to parents and learners from BME communities and disabled learners, and to combat gender stereotyping;
- R2 commission, in partnership with WBL providers, schools, BME community groups, groups representing the disabled, Careers Wales and the National Training federation for Wales (NTfW), an all-Wales marketing campaign to raise awareness of and promote apprenticeships to marginalised groups and to combat gender stereo-typing. The target audience should include parents, teachers, learners and employers;
- R3 make sure that employers are aware of the support available to them when taking on apprentices with specific support or learning needs including those that require support for English language development;
- R4 review the current allocation of apprenticeship places to meet local demand, including encouraging public sector organisations to take on apprentices, with a focus on recruiting from BME communities and learners with a disability; and
- R5 work with WBL providers to further develop their equality and diversity policies and approaches, including sharing best practice.

Work-based learning providers should:

- R6 work more closely with schools, employers, community leaders and organisations representing BME and disabled learners to improve awareness of apprenticeships;
- R7 work more effectively with local education providers and other agencies to make sure that valuable experience and resources are shared to support apprentices from BME communities;
- R8 work with community leaders to identify community co-ordinators who will co-ordinate action to raise awareness of apprenticeships in the BME communities;
- R9 make use of role models to promote apprenticeships in the community; and
- R10 work with the Welsh Government and awarding bodies to develop more awareness of the support available for delivering some elements of a qualification for learners with disabilities.