



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION, DOCUMENT

Support for Welsh in Initial Teacher Education

What we plan to do in response to Estyn's report on providing support to develop student teachers' Welsh language skills.

First published: 6 October 2023

Last updated: 6 October 2023

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/support-welsh-initial-teacher-education-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Contents

[Report details](#)

[Summary of main findings](#)

[Recommendations](#)

[Publication details](#)

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/support-welsh-initial-teacher-education-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Report details

The advice was commissioned by the Education Directorate to understand how initial teacher education (ITE) partnerships are providing support to develop student teachers' Welsh language skills, including teaching through the medium of Welsh.

Summary of main findings

Estyn found that ITE partnerships provide specific sessions to improve students' Welsh language skills while at university. However, the effectiveness of these sessions varies considerably for the following reasons:

- In a few cases, they are not regular enough or do not respond specifically enough to students' needs to prepare them to use their Welsh language skills when teaching in schools.
- The sessions provided by the universities to develop students' Welsh language skills are often unrelated to subject or phase specific learning, especially in secondary programmes.
- Only a few partnerships provide opportunities for students to make clear links between what they have learnt about the methodology of Welsh language teaching in taught sessions and classroom practice when on school experience. As a result, although many students make suitable progress in their personal Welsh skills in Welsh skills sessions, they do not always apply their learning when on school experience.

Estyn also found that in many partnerships, there isn't a shared vision or a clear and consistent understanding of the partnership's expectations for Welsh amongst partner schools. Partnerships often do not plan strategically enough the provision for the development of the Welsh language across the programmes.

This means that provision is fragmented, or the Welsh language aspect is seen as a separate unit.

Also, in general, partnerships do not evaluate the provision for Welsh language development across programmes effectively enough. They do not consider the progress students make in using their Welsh language skills when teaching. In addition, they do not consider the impact of students' teaching on pupils' skills and experiences. As a result, they do not identify strengths and areas for development sharply enough to enable them to make improvements.

In a few partnerships, the role of the language mentor has a positive influence on students' experiences and helps them develop their language skills while on school experience. Often, where the provision for the development of students' skills and pedagogy is particularly effective, developing students' Welsh language skills is included within the partnership's vision and improvement plan.

In addition, partnerships benefit if lead and wider partnership schools have a clear vision and improvement plan for the development of the Welsh language. In these instances, school leaders act strategically to ensure that their school community understands the importance of the Welsh language. They provide high quality professional learning to help staff use Welsh and develop their language acquisition pedagogy. This has a positive influence on the experiences of students placed in these schools and on pupils' progress.

The professional learning offered by school improvement partners in local authorities and regional consortia to support education practitioners to develop their Welsh language skills and teach through the medium of Welsh varies across Wales. This means that teachers, particularly in the secondary sector, are not always confident in supporting pupils to acquire and develop their Welsh language skills within the curriculum subjects. In addition, this has an impact on their confidence when mentoring ITE students. There are few links and opportunities for progression between the support given to students to develop their Welsh skills in ITE programmes and the professional learning offer for

newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

There are few opportunities for schools and partnerships to collaborate and share effective practice about their provision to support the Welsh language skills of students and their wider staff. In a few examples, schools collaborate with their university partners to support efforts to recruit students into ITE programmes. Partnerships are developing their recruitment practices to meet the challenge of attracting students to train as teachers and complete programmes through the medium of Welsh.

Recommendations

Recommendations for initial teacher education partnerships

Recommendation 1

Initial teacher education partnerships should: plan purposeful opportunities to develop students' Welsh language skills and pedagogy in all aspects of ITE programmes to ensure consistent support throughout the programme, including when on school experience.

Recommendation 2

Initial teacher education partnerships should: ensure that provision to support the Welsh language focuses on the development of students' personal skills and teaching to develop pupils' Welsh skills; this should include language acquisition pedagogy in Welsh-medium, English-medium and bilingual schools.

Recommendation 3

Initial teacher education partnerships should: monitor and evaluate the impact of provision for Welsh language development taking into account how students use their Welsh language skills and language acquisition pedagogy to support pupils' progress in schools.

Recommendation 4

Initial teacher education partnerships should: create opportunities for collaboration between ITE partnerships to develop and expand support for teaching through the medium of Welsh.

Welsh Government response to recommendations 1 to 4

The revised accreditation criteria for ITE programmes commencing from 1 September 2024 sets out strengthened requirements for ITE partnerships to support student teachers to develop their Welsh language skills and support for those training to teaching through the medium of Welsh. These requirements align with recommendations 1 and 2. Welsh Government would expect the Teacher Education Accreditation Board to ensure that these criteria are met when revised programmes are submitted in spring 2024.

All partnerships should have robust processes in place to monitor the Welsh language skills of all students. Estyn and EWC, as part of the monitoring and inspection processes, should ensure that Partnerships are compliant with this and that Welsh language pedagogy is developed and applied in an appropriate manner.

A workshop is planned for 12 October for all stakeholders to explore the

opportunities for collaborative working across Partnerships to ensure that the requirements set out in the Criteria are met.

Recommendation for leaders in partnership schools

Recommendation 5

Leaders in partnership schools should: Prioritise and develop a strategy for the development of the Welsh language in response to the expectations set out by partnerships and Welsh Government policies.

Welsh Government response to recommendation 5

Welsh Government agrees that this is important and the revised accreditation criteria sets out the requirement:

- All Partnerships should develop a clear strategy for the approach they will take to the development of provision for the promotion and use of the Welsh language including the implementation and evaluation of the strategy.

Partnership schools should integrate this strategy with their own school vision for how they will develop the language skills of all learners to enable them to be confident speakers in line with Curriculum for Wales.

Recommendations for Welsh Government

Recommendation 6

The Welsh Government should: Ensure clarity of expectation in the professional standards for teaching and leadership to focus on how teachers and leaders develop practice that impacts positively on pupils' Welsh skills.

Welsh Government response to recommendation 6

The professional standards describe the skills, knowledge and behaviours that characterise excellent practice and support professional growth. They are intended to:

- set clear expectations about effective practice during a practitioner's career including, where applicable, entry to the profession
- enable practitioners to reflect on their practice, individually and collectively, against nationally agreed standards of effective practice and affirm and celebrate their successes
- support practitioners to identify areas for further professional development
- form a backdrop to the performance management process

The standards haven't been designed to be prescriptive. However, to support practitioners to understand progress in their Welsh language skills, we have published the **Welsh language competency framework**. When individual practitioners are engaging in professional learning, they should be clear about how they can use the skills in the classroom to support learners.

Recommendation 7

The Welsh Government should: Ensure that ITE partnerships collaborate with school improvement partners to develop a more consistent, coherent and specialised provision for the development of the education workforce's Welsh language skills and pedagogy as part of the professional learning continuum.

Welsh Government response to recommendation 7

As part of the Welsh in education workforce plan, we have set out actions for regional consortia, local authorities and the National Centre for Learning Welsh to work collaboratively with other key stakeholders, including ITE partnerships to:

- Implement a national programme of free Welsh language courses for all ITE students and practitioners in accordance with the 'Language competency framework for education practitioners' and with defined linguistic outcomes.

This work is on-going and the National Centre for Learning Welsh has appointed a director to lead on mapping current provision and identifying priorities for development, including provision for ITE students.

Additionally, in line with the Welsh in education workforce plan, the regional consortia and local authorities are developing national programmes of professional learning to support the teaching of Welsh and through the medium of Welsh working with universities as applicable.

Publication details

The report will be published on or after 14 September 2023 and may be

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/support-welsh-initial-teacher-education-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

accessed on the Estyn website.

This document may not be fully accessible.

For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/support-welsh-initial-teacher-education-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).