A Survey of Welsh as a Second Language in Key Stages 2 and 3 and Transition

Estyn

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1. Introduction

In its Welsh language policy review, **Our Language: Its Future,** the Welsh Assembly Government notes that to raise standards of bilingualism:

- 'schools should consider ways of improving standards in Welsh as a second language'; and

- 'English-medium primary and secondary schools should develop policies for making greater use of Welsh as a medium of learning in specific subjects'.

This survey of practice in Welsh as a second language has been undertaken as part of Estyn's annual remit for 2003-2004 from the Welsh Assembly Government. This report of the survey findings evaluates aspects of good practice in teaching and learning Welsh as a second language in key stages 2 and 3. Particular emphasis is placed on the transition period between the two key stages. The report also describes other factors that influence standards.

The report is based on:

- evidence from Section 10 school inspections conducted in 2002-2003;

- one-day visits by HMI to 38 primary and secondary schools during the autumn term of 2003 and the spring term of 2004; and

- discussions with LEA Welsh advisers and athrawon bro (Welsh area/advisory teachers).

The report also considers trends in standards and quality over the last three years, using Estyn inspection data.

In order to help raise standards in Welsh as a second language in primary and secondary schools, the report gives particular attention to identifying:

- descriptions of good practice;

- the main features of good standards;

- common shortcomings where standards and quality are unsatisfactory or only satisfactory; and

- the key issues which need attention in order to raise standards.

This report is not intended to cover every aspect of teaching and learning, nor do we expect that every case study or example of good practice quoted in this report will be relevant to all schools. However, some of these examples may help schools to improve methods of teaching, learning, and standards in Welsh as a second language.

2. Main findings

Transition from primary to secondary education

Joint planning
Although there are some examples of useful initiatives in planning for pupil transition between key stages, there are too few curriculum links of good quality, to secure progression in learning. Too often, secondary schools begin teaching Welsh second language at too low a starting point without giving enough consideration to pupils' previous achievements.

Sharing expertise
One of the best initiatives in improving arrangements for transition is the sharing of expertise between primary and secondary schools where Welsh secondary teachers work with the feeder primary schools. As a result, expectations have risen and pupils now undertake some work in Year 6, which had not previously been possible until Year 7.

Teaching and learning through the medium of Welsh
Many primary and secondary schools see advantages in using the second language as a medium for providing experiences in the wider curriculum. Pupils are given greater opportunities to use their language skills in contexts other than the language lesson. Pupils' learning and motivation is also enhanced.

Transferring and using data
Systems exist to provide data about pupil achievement promptly. Nevertheless, many primary schools do not transfer data, and others transfer insufficient data to give a clear picture of pupils' achievements. Some data reaches secondary schools too late to be of use.

Extra-curricular activities
An increasing number of LEAs and Welsh departments in secondary schools have developed a range of activities such as taster day provision, book quizzes, writing stories and e-mail links for Year 6 pupils to promote the use of Welsh outside the usual classroom activities.

Welsh as a second language and the use of Information and Communications Technology
Using information and communications technology raises the pupils' self-confidence and motivation in Welsh as a second language. Pupils are able to research independently, communicate with pupils in other areas of Wales and develop reading skills through using Welsh resources on the world wide web.

Managing improvement

Effective monitoring and evaluation
Welsh co-ordinators and heads of the Welsh departments have an important role to play in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and standards of work in

Welsh as a second language. The best kind of monitoring uses classroom observations to evaluate what is going well and to identify the reasons for this success. Monitoring also focuses on how to promote effective progression from key stages 2 to 3.

Classroom observation

The most effective improvements in teaching and learning Welsh as a second language have occurred when primary and secondary teachers have observed teaching methods and pupils' work in each others' classes. Teachers have gained a better understanding of each others' practice as a result of sharing observations.

Standards of achievement

Standards in Welsh as a second language are poorer than standards in any other National Curriculum subject. However, standards of achievement have risen over the last three years in key stages 2 and 3. There has been an increase in the number of classes in which pupils achieve satisfactory and good standards and a decrease in the proportion of unsatisfactory work. Nevertheless, only a very small proportion of standards of achievement is very good – the lowest percentage of any subject in both key stages. Standards of achievement are unsatisfactory or poor in 3% of primary classes and 5% of secondary classes.

Although standards of achievement have improved, they remain lower than in any other National Curriculum subject.

Standards of achievement in primary schools

Although the amount of unsatisfactory work has decreased, there has been no significant increase in good standards. Very good standards are rare.
In general, standards in Years 5 and 6 are not as good as standards in Years 3 and 4. The proportion of classes with good and very good standards of achievement in Years 5 and 6 in 2002-2003 is lower than previous years. Overall, neither the expectations of teachers nor the work of pupils at the end of key stage 2 are challenging enough to build on the progress in the standards achieved in Years 3 and 4.

Standards of achievement in secondary schools

The proportion of work that is satisfactory or good has increased over the last three years. Only a little is very good and there has been no improvement in the proportion of very good work in the last three years.

Overall, expectations in key stage 3 are not sufficiently high to challenge pupils to build on the progress made in the primary schools. Too often, the schemes of work do not take account of the need to plan progression and continuity.

3. Recommendations

In order to raise standards from satisfactory to good and very good, there is a need to:

- ask for longer oral responses from pupils and to test their ability to apply what they have learned to natural situations of communication, including making spontaneous and extended contributions;

- expand the range of reading and improve pupils' ability to discuss aspects of fiction and make use of factual sources;

- improve pupils' ability to write correctly in their own words for an increasing range of purposes and in a variety of forms;

- plan carefully to ensure that pupils make consistent progress across the key stages in a range of reading and writing skills;

- secure progression in the learning between key stages 2 and 3; and

- develop strategies in schools for self-evaluating quality and the standards achieved.

Teachers should:

- improve continuity and progression in teaching methods between key stages 2 and 3;

- observe classes in the phase which comes before or after their own, to improve continuity and progression between key stages 2 and 3; and

- monitor standards regularly by observing and sampling pupils' work, and tracking pupils' progress against their previous achievement.

Primary schools should:

- ensure that enough information about pupils' achievement is transferred at the end of key stage 2 and that it is used for planning schemes of work in key stage 3.

Secondary schools should:

- re-visit and refine their Welsh as second language schemes of work to ensure better continuity and progression between the primary and secondary sectors. They need to raise pupils' expectations and offer them work that is as challenging as the good practice case studies included in this report.

4.   Good practice in Welsh as a second language

4.1   Effective transition arrangements between primary and secondary education

The term transition covers all provision made by schools, or by relevant LEAs, to aid and support pupils in their movement between primary and secondary education. Most primary schools, secondary schools and LEAs have schemes and programmes to improve transition. Increasingly, primary and secondary schools are working together to improve continuity in teaching and learning between key stage 2 and 3. The most effective schemes note the different factors associated with effective transition, for example, formulating policies and joint planning, and show how they intend to make improvements as outlined in **Moving On…Effective Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3,** Estyn 2003.

Recently LEAs have given priority to improving transition in Welsh as a second language. They have provided training, resources and advisory support to schools to help them to improve the links between the primary and secondary phases. In the best situations, primary and secondary schools have developed joint schemes to improve transition and they include them in their school development plans.

4.1.1 Effective transition policies

Effective transition arrangements include all teachers who are either directly or indirectly responsible for pupils' progress from key stage 2 to key stage 3. Some primary and secondary schools have jointly agreed policies, with clear aims and objectives. Teachers in these schools understand their own responsibilities for implementing these policies.

The best transition policies have well-developed arrangements between primary and secondary schools for:

- creating joint schemes of work for transition so that pupils build on what has been learned previously;

- improving continuity in teaching and learning methods;

- transferring and using data on pupils' achievements effectively;

- observing classroom practice in both sectors; and

- sharing expertise.

The following case study describes how good transition arrangements in Ceredigion support progression between key stage 2 and key stage 3 for pupils taking Welsh as a second language.

Case study 1: Transition arrangements to develop progression between key stages 2 and 3.

A secondary school and all the primary schools in a town in Ceredigion have come together to establish a Transition Steering Committee for the area. The membership of the committee includes all the headteachers of the area. Subject panels have been established for every curriculum subject, including Welsh as a second language.

The Welsh as a second language panel has looked at language forms presented to pupils to make sure that teachers make use of consistent sentence patterns and vocabulary across both key stages. In addition, the LEA has prepared Welsh as a second language tests for Year 6 pupils that were used in May 2003 to assess pupil progress.

As a result of these developments:

- the relationship between the secondary school and the primary schools has strengthened because primary and secondary teachers work more closely together;

- a portfolio has been produced giving examples of pupils' levels of achievement in oral and written work;

- the secondary school has received much more information about the achievement of Year 7 pupils; and

- the secondary school is able to build on the work done in key stage 2 more effectively in Year 7.

4.1.2 Joint planning

Recently a few secondary schools have developed joint schemes of work with the primary schools in their catchment areas. The term 'transition unit' is used to describe a unit of work that primary and secondary teachers have planned jointly. Usually, the transition unit is started at the end of Year 6 and completed at the start of Year 7. The best units succeed in maintaining continuity in pupils' learning from the primary to secondary school.

LEAs are helping all the primary and secondary schools within their authority to develop transition units jointly over the transition period. Schools can adapt these models to their own particular circumstances.

The case study below describes how Swansea and Neath Port Talbot LEAs have worked together to develop a 'transition unit' in the form of a short programme of work in booklet form that spans key stages 2 and 3.

Case study 2: Developing transition units to span work from key stage 2 to 3

Canolfan San Helen, serving Swansea and Neath Port Talbot LEAs, has prepared a booklet entitled '**O Gynradd i Gyfun**' **(From Primary to Comprehensive)** in order to develop Welsh second-language curricular links between all primary and secondary schools in the two counties. The booklet is introduced to Year 6 pupils in the primary schools during the summer term and is transferred with the pupils to the secondary school in the autumn term.

The work in the first half of **'O Gynradd i Gyfun',** is undertaken by Year 6 pupils in the summer term and includes a variety of revision exercises. Pupils start by discussing themselves, their friends and their interests in order to develop their oral, reading and writing skills. It offers a good variety of activities, which include asking and answering questions, writing dialogues, completing simple questionnaires and self-assessment. Work in the second half of the booklet is covered at the beginning of Year 7. A unit on the house and the garden has a variety of exercises that develop the pupils' oral, viewing, reading and writing skills. When they have finished the booklet, pupils complete a written assessment in the form of a letter and another self-assessment form.

Teachers and pupils in both primary and secondary schools have welcomed this initiative. As a result of using the booklet, primary school teachers are more confident in presenting materials and all the primary pupils in both counties use the same language patterns and syntax. Secondary teachers have also seen better progress in pupils' achievement by the beginning of Year 7 and can build on this progress more effectively.

The process of planning transition booklets has assisted primary and secondary teachers in learning more about each other's schemes of work and teaching methods.

In some cases, this has led to better teaching in Year 7 because secondary teachers see the work of Year 6 pupils earlier than usual. They can analyse pupils' strengths and weaknesses better and use the findings to plan teaching and learning in Year 7. Pupils are encouraged to do their best work, because they know that they will be assessed on the basis of this at the next key stage and the work is to continue into key stage 3. Having evidence of pupils' previous work makes it easier for teachers to plan and evaluate progress in Year 7. The best schemes improve continuity and progression in accordance with pupils' learning needs. These schemes have challenging objectives and engage pupils' interest so that pupils look forward to continuing with the work in their secondary school.

In nine authorities throughout Wales, the practice of primary and secondary schools sharing course booklets is developing well. In authorities in north-east Wales, LEAs are offering copies of the course book **'Ymlaen â ni' (On we go)** to primary pupils and teacher guidelines to secondary departments. These LEAs are also transferring copies of Year 5 and 6 schemes of work to the secondary Welsh departments. These initiatives help to ensure continuity and progression in the pupils' learning. However only a minority of secondary schools are currently sharing their Welsh schemes of work with their feeder primaries.

Athrawon bro[1] also make an important contribution in assisting primary and secondary schools to come together for transition in Welsh as a second language. The case study below demonstrates how athrawon bro can strengthen transition arrangements.

Case study 3: The role of athrawon bro in strengthening transition arrangements

A secondary school and its six feeder schools in Cardiff have been trying to improve the curriculum links in order to achieve better progression in the pupils' experiences and their grasp of language.

Teachers from both sectors have co-operated with the athrawon bro service. This has led to a transition pack for Years 6 and 7, which provides guidance on linguistic aims and objectives, topics for discussion and examples of activities. The scheme is currently in operation in Year 6.

Athrawon bro[1] visit the primary schools regularly to present exemplar lessons in Year 6 based on the new scheme and to set targets for class teachers to achieve between visits. From time to time, the secondary teachers will also visit the primary schools and teach Year 6 classes jointly with the class teacher. It is intended that primary teachers should do the same in secondary schools next year.

At present, the transition scheme in Year 6 is helping to:

- give better direction to the work during the transition period;

- establish appropriate expectations for Years 6 and 7 based on better understanding of what pupils cover in the curricula;

- create a better relationship between the primary and secondary sectors;

- familiarise secondary teachers with teaching methods and classroom organisation in the primary sector; and

- bring more variety to the teaching methods in the classroom by sharing good practice.

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1 **Athrawon bro** means 'area teachers' of Welsh who work in schools alongside class teachers and/or in language centres. **Survey of the Work of Athrawon Bro in Wales**. Estyn 2003.

4.1.3 Sharing expertise

One of the best initiatives in improving arrangements for transition is the sharing of expertise between primary and secondary schools where Welsh as a second language secondary teachers work with the feeder primary schools. Treorchy Comprehensive School has appointed a Welsh teacher to work in co-operation with class teachers in English-medium feeder primary schools. As a result, expectations have risen and pupils now undertake some work in Year 6, which had not previously been possible until Year 7.

Case Study 4: Sharing expertise between secondary and primary schools

Treorchy Comprehensive School, in Rhondda Cynon Taf, has developed a three-year plan to raise standards in Welsh as a second language.
A specialist teacher, employed by the English-medium secondary school, teaches Welsh lessons in Years 5 and 6 in the feeder primary schools. As a result of the progress they make, the pupils who are more confident in their use of the Welsh language transfer to a class in the secondary school, where they can follow a number of subjects bilingually, for example, geography, PSE and drama.

This innovative scheme has raised the primary pupils' confidence and achievement. The intention is for many of them to sit the GCSE examinations in Welsh as a second language in Year 10 rather than in Year 11 previously. This will allow pupils to develop further by going on to sit the Welsh Literature GCSE exam in Year 11.

4.1.4 Teaching and learning through the medium of Welsh

Many primary and secondary schools see advantages in using the second language as a medium for experiences in the wider curriculum. By using the language in this way, they give their pupils greater opportunities to use their language skills in contexts other than the language lesson. Pupils' learning is enhanced significantly by giving them the opportunity to use the language in different context and situations. The experience motivates their learning and encourages them not merely to practise the language, but to use it purposefully.

This strategy often works best in subjects that have a strong practical element, for example, physical education, art and drama, especially in the primary school. Work in such subjects not only nurtures a range of useful subject skills, but also creates a variety of opportunities to extend the pupils' language, in its different forms, in connection with new experiences. There are also examples of schools teaching some humanities subjects. The case study that follows exemplifies how a Ceredigion school has developed second language skills through undertaking a humanities project.

Case study 5: Developing Welsh skills through a humanities project

A Year 6 class in a Ceredigion primary school has been studying their local area as part of their geography and history programmes of study.

In order to enable pupils to develop second language skills as part of this project, school staff have asked the athrawes fro[2] to plan a detailed scheme of work involving materials and strategies that will promote the pupils' oral, reading and writing skills.

As a result of following the scheme as planned, pupils have been able to hold an extended discussion during role-play in a tourism information shop. They have searched through atlases for places with geographical terms in the name of the town or village, such as 'aber', 'llan', 'tref' and 'caer'. They have written independently and extendedly about the town's attractions.

As a result of this scheme, pupils improve their oral, reading and writing skills effectively. Pupils are also sufficiently confident to discuss their work with visitors using the new vocabulary that they have acquired.

Recently, some primary and secondary schools have developed joint initiatives which enable pupils studying Welsh as a second language in the primary school to transfer to a programme which continues to teach subjects in Welsh in the secondary school. The good links between the two sectors are fundamental to the success of any such transition scheme. All schemes start with discussions between the primary and secondary schools about pupils' linguistic performance. In some cases, athrawon bro are also involved.

Some schools in Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire have arranged for every Year 6 pupil in the school's catchment area to sit Welsh tests at the end of the summer term that are designed either by the secondary school's Welsh department or centrally by the LEA to identify levels of pupils' achievement in Welsh as a second language. These tests are administered by the local athrawon bro and are marked by the head of the Welsh department in the secondary school or centrally by the LEA. The results of the pupils' Welsh tests and SATs are generally discussed with the athrawon bro and with members of the secondary school's senior management team, before they invite pupils to join the transfer group in the secondary school. As a result, the school contacts parents to invite suitable pupils to be part of the transfer group. The implications of transition are discussed in detail with the pupils and their parents before coming to a final decision. The vast majority of pupils accept the invitation to join the project.

Pupils follow an intensive course in Welsh in key stage 3 with the aim of sitting Welsh Second Language GCSE either at the end of Year 9 or 10. Then, pupils will transfer to follow a Welsh programme of study in key stage 4.

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2 **athrawes fro** - means ' female area teacher' of Welsh who works in schools alongside class teachers

As well as following an intensive Welsh language programme in key stage 3, the pupils follow aspects of subjects, or entire subjects, through the medium of Welsh, for example, geography, technology and information technology courses.

Some English-medium secondary schools employ an assistant to support Welsh learning in an attempt to raise pupils' standards of achievement and better equip them to undertake some Welsh-medium work. This facilitates group work and increases pupils' contact time with the language. The case study below describes the advantages of using an assistant.

Case study 6: Using a learning support assistant to develop language skills

A secondary school in Carmarthenshire employs a learning support assistant, especially for the school's bilingual scheme, to improve pupils' language skills.

This assistant's role is to support teachers who teach an intensive Welsh programme for second language pupils in key stage 3. She also supports teachers who teach other subjects through the medium of Welsh. The assistant works with small groups of pupils in order to improve their oral skills.

The assistant also plays an important role in working with pupils who arrive at the school unable to speak any Welsh. The assistant helps the class teacher by taking small groups of pupils to work intensively on linguistic aspects of the lesson so that they can catch up with the rest.

Pupils have benefited greatly from such support and from having an additional opportunity to practise their language skills more intensively.

When primary and secondary schools give their pupils opportunities to have additional experiences in Welsh, standards of achievement are higher and pupils are more likely to become bilingual. These experiences can contribute to raising and extending the attainment of pupils in the language and enriching their ability and their subject knowledge at the same time. Collaborative planning is the key to good outcomes for pupils.

4.1.5 Transferring and using data

Many primary schools currently transfer useful data and information about pupils' levels of achievement in Welsh as a second language.

Systems exist to provide data promptly. Nevertheless, many primary schools do not transfer data, and others transfer insufficient data to give a clear picture of pupils' achievements. Unfortunately, some data continues to reach secondary schools too late to be of any use.

Recently, the Pembrokeshire athrawon bro team has been working with schools to identify pupils' achievement in Welsh as a second language, in order to bridge the gap between the primary and secondary sectors. The athrawon bro determine attainment levels for individual pupils at the end of the key stage in collaboration with the class teacher and transfer this information directly to the secondary school's Welsh department.

The following case study describes how this happens.

Case study 7: Transferring data between primary and secondary schools

In Pembrokeshire, the athrawon bro team, in collaboration with the primary and secondary teachers, delivers a transition course for all Year 6 pupils.

In co-operation with the class teachers, athrawon bro determine pupils' performance levels in Welsh at the end of Year 6 and give the outcomes of these assessments to all of the heads of department in the secondary schools who also receive the primary schools' schemes of work. This helps to ensure continuity and progression in teaching and learning between Years 6 and 7.

The great advantage of this system is that the athrawon bro develop an overview of pupils' performance at both area and county level. They discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and, as a result, they refine their schemes of work in order to raise standards.

In the best secondary schools, Welsh departments use information about pupils' achievements in Welsh as a second language to:

● set targets for the department, classes and individual pupils;

● review progress towards targets;

● identify underachievement of individuals, groups or of pupils in specific subjects; and

● steer any reviews of learning, teaching and planning.

Some secondary schools make good use of data. They keep full records of pupils' work and end-of-unit assessments each term. Analysing these assessments helps teachers to adapt their teaching methods, where necessary, as is exemplified in the case study that follows.

Case study 8: Using data to track progression

In one secondary school in Powys, the head of the Welsh department visits all primary schools in the catchment area every term to speak to all the teachers and to collect summative assessment forms on the performance of each pupil in Year 6.

The information is transferred to a spreadsheet to help the allocation of pupils into classes in Year 7, according to their ability in Welsh. The information is updated regularly and is also used to track pupils' achievement from primary to the end of key stage 3.

As a result, the secondary school does not have to cover the same ground twice. It is also in a better position to extend the most able pupils and to maintain pupils' motivation.

4.1.6   Extra-curricular activities to promote links between primary and secondary schools

Taster days

Most secondary schools now offer taster days to Year 6 pupils in their catchment during the summer term preceding entry. Pupils are offered a range of experiences to enable them to get to know the secondary school and their new teachers. Recently, an increasing number of Welsh departments have become part of the taster day provision. Second language pupils are offered a lesson during the day. This enables them to become familiar with class organisation, and learn about greetings and the incidental language used in the secondary school.

Case study 9: Taster days

Every other year in one secondary school in Merthyr Tydfil, the Welsh department arranges a variety of linguistic activities and experiences for the Year 6 pupils of the catchment area. A number of Welsh activities are arranged such as "Who wants to be a millionaire?" quizzes, parachute games and a treasure hunt around the school. The local Urdd Officer contributes to the day's fun by leading some of the language games and activities.

The pupils enjoy the activities and use the day to get to know the Welsh teachers before transferring to the secondary school.

The Welsh department also offers a day of fun and games to Year 7 pupils who did not have the opportunity to attend a taster day while they were in the primary school.

These 'fun and games' days appeal a great deal to pupils and they help to motivate them through enjoyment.

The county quiz

In Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire, the athrawon bro service arranges a variety of extra-curricular activities to promote the Welsh language in schools. One of the great successes has been the second language quiz for Year 6 pupils. This successful quiz has been organised for five years during the last weeks of the summer term in June and July.

The first round is organised in the primary schools with the secondary teachers acting as judges. This allows teachers to see the pupils actively using the language.

The content of the quiz reflects the language learned during key stage 2. Pupils give short presentations about a book or a story they have studied and enjoyed. The winners receive certificates and a trophy for the school.

Summary of the good features in transition arrangements

Examples of good practice in transition arrangements include primary and secondary teachers observing each other's lessons to identify effective practice, for example, lesson structures, the use of incidental language, role play etc. Where key stage 2 and 3 teachers collaborate to create an action plan for transition. In most authorities teachers from both sectors are exchanging and discussing the content of their schemes of work and developing schemes of work jointly to improve progression from Year 6 to Year 7. In the best examples teachers plan units of work to be started in Year 6 and completed in Year 7.

When teachers from both sectors agree on the evidence of achievement that needs to be transferred to secondary teachers, they can then identify individual pupils' progress in key stage 3. Primary and secondary teachers can also assess pupils' work in Years 6 and 7 jointly to agree on strengths and shortcomings in individual pupils' knowledge and skills, in order to plan the next stage. They can also use the information to monitor pupils' progress. Teachers in both sectors monitor standards regularly by observing and sampling pupils' work and by tracking pupils' progress against previous attainment. When teachers share in-service training, they can develop common teaching methods and share materials and resources across the key stages. This sharing benefits pupils because teachers have higher expectations for their performance in Welsh as a second language as a result.

4.1.7 Welsh as a second language and the use of information and communications technology

The National Curriculum includes the general requirement that pupils should be given the opportunity, when appropriate, to develop and use their information technology skills. The term information and communications technology is used to mean the range of equipment and techniques (telecommunication, networking, hardware and software) which can be used to support teaching and learning. Teachers of Welsh as a second language are generally confident in their use of technology such as cassette tapes and videos. Developing Welsh through the use of new technology extends the use of technology that teachers already make to help learners to understand and imitate oral and written Welsh.

Developing pupils' learning skills

Information and communications technology offers many advantages for pupils learning Welsh. It raises the pupils' self-confidence and motivation. It can motivate pupils to carry out research independently and offers the opportunity for pupils to play an active part in the learning process. Information and communications technology also assists pupils in communicating with pupils in other areas of Wales in the form of e-mail or video conferencing. Pupils develop reading skills through using Welsh resources on the web. Using information and communications technology develops problem-solving skills and enables pupils to be effective and confident learners as well as extending their Information Technology skills.

Information and communications technology can motivate pupils to improve their presentations by using formatting and graphics facilities. Pupils are offered opportunities to correct mistakes by using word-processing software for re-drafting. Because pupils can decide on which software to use and how to lay out and re-draft their work, they become more careful and accurate and take more pride in their work.

The following case study shows how important it is to integrate the use of computers into the scheme of work.

Case study 10: Integrating the use of information and communications technology in the Welsh scheme of work

In one secondary school in Powys, the Welsh department has planned in detail to integrate information and communications technology into Welsh as a second language lessons. An information and communications technology development plan has been prepared for the Welsh department for a period of two years. The plan complements scheme of work for Welsh as a second language. The needs of teachers, in-service training, resources and responsibilities within the department are considered within the plan. Around the same time, the department's policy and scheme of work were reviewed in order to ensure that information and communications technology is a strong element within them. The department is to monitor and evaluate the development plan by asking the following questions:

- Has using information and communications technology contributed to improving learning, teaching and raising standards?

- What opportunities does the department provide for using information and communications technology in lessons?

- How have pupils' information and communications technology skills developed?

- How does information and communications technology improve learning and teaching?

Integrating information and communications technology into the department's work has raised levels of pupil motivation and they produce a variety of written work to a high standard in the form of posters, pamphlets and information leaflets.

The support of athrawon bro

Many of the athrawon bro services across Wales support primary teachers in developing information and communications technology materials for Welsh as a second language. Several working groups have been established. These include athrawon bro, co-ordinators of information and communications technology and Welsh second language and advisory teachers. The groups produce various materials for oral, reading and writing tasks. A variety of computer programmes has been developed in order to produce useful learning resources and exciting language games.

In Swansea and Neath Port Talbot LEAs, athrawon bro co-operate with primary teachers to help pupils to use computers to achieve progression in Welsh. The way they do this is exemplified in the case study of the pupils' work that follows.

Case study 11: Using e-mail to promote progression

All Year 6 pupils in the secondary school's catchment area were invited to create a number of stories in the form of an e-mail. Pupils in one school wrote the opening sentence and sent that sentence on to the next school. Then the next school produced a sentence and sent both sentences to the next school. When these stories were completed, they were sent to the secondary school in the form of an e-mail, where pupils are being used as a starting point for Welsh in Year 7.

This is a way of improving the quality and effectiveness of progression between the key stages. It motivates the pupils and promotes reading and writing skills. Because they have all contributed they follow the progress of the stories with interest and enjoy the follow-up in Year 7.

In Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen LEAs, the athrawon bro service has produced a CD-ROM of all their schemes of work and individual lesson plans from Year 1 to Year 6, which is distributed to every primary school in the area. The schemes of work and individual lesson plans, and the associated resources, are particularly useful to teachers whose own grasp of Welsh is limited.

Pembrokeshire LEA has produced a file and a CD-ROM for a 'Transition Pack', which includes useful activities in a good variety of genres to revise Welsh vocabulary, verb forms and syntax. The same LEA has produced teaching packs and CD-ROMs on themes such as **Y Dref** (**The Town**) and **Teimladau (Feelings**) in order to assist teachers with little Welsh to present Welsh to their pupils.

The interactive whiteboard

The interactive whiteboard can be a good way of revising or presenting Welsh as a second language activities. A number of LEAs and individual teachers have prepared learning materials for the interactive whiteboard.

The interactive whiteboard is at its most effective when pupils study a text in detail and then underline the verbs, names or adjectives. The teacher then checks the text and discusses the errors with them.

Pupils are able to complete matching exercises, by integrating or reorganising sentences. Pupils can predict the ending of sentences according to clues within it. They are able to re-arrange a simple story on the screen. Another useful strategy used to teach grammar is to colour verb endings or any other grammatical aspect of the text by using highlighter pens or coloured pencils. The interactive whiteboard can also be used to turn a sentence from the present tense to the past tense.

Using the interactive whiteboard offers teachers a number of advantages, especially since it motivates pupils to play an active part in the lesson. It allows the writing process to be seen and shared by everyone as well as offering an opportunity to see a text being built step by step. It also helps pupils to understand how sentences are built. Using the interactive whiteboard assists pupils in the drafting process by offering ideas on how to improve the text, which is a great advantage to kinaesthetic learners. The interactive whiteboard is a way of changing text on the screen quickly to promote discussion and ensures that pupils can play an active part in the lesson.

In many primary schools teachers are using new technologies as an integral part of the teaching and learning in Welsh lessons. The case study below shows how a teacher makes good use of the interactive whiteboard to help pupils make progress.

Case study 12: Using the interactive whiteboard to promote progression

The aim of a Year 4 lesson in one school in Newport was to get the pupils to read, understand and write a dialogue in relation to objects found in the classroom.

The teacher in the previous lesson had presented the relevant language patterns and vocabulary to the pupils. In this lesson, the teacher spends some time reviewing these, through 'a drilling technique' using flash cards. Then, she revises a set dialogue in order to present a model to the pupils. Pupils are given the opportunity to read the dialogue together, take different parts and replace elements of the dialogue. The teacher then splits the class into groups, based on ability, to undertake different tasks, including some on the interactive white board. The tasks include:

- matching words and pictures;

- putting a dialogue in order;

- filling the blanks in a dialogue;

- listening to a dialogue on tape; and

- following the script in print, matching speech bubbles with pictures in a book.

The challenging tasks for pupils include recording a dialogue and writing their own dialogue, using the interactive white board. The teacher visits different groups to motivate and help them. At the end of the lesson, the groups share their work with the rest of the class, and compare their dialogues with the original dialogue.

The teacher, who has herself learned Welsh in the LEA's 'Welsh for teachers' courses, makes regular use of Welsh throughout the lesson. This has a positive effect on the pupils' use and understanding of Welsh.

In addition, using information technology in the group activities, helps to:

- engage the pupils' attention;

- motivate the pupils, especially the boys;

- improve the pupils' spelling and punctuation skills; and

- refine the pupils' key skills, in information and communications technology.

The following case study illustrates an activity, which is only made possible by the use of the interactive whiteboard.

Case study 13: Using the interactive whiteboard to promote oral and writing skills

In one primary school in Newport LEA, Year 6 pupils prepare weather forecasts to develop vocabulary and writing skills.

Firstly, the teacher revises the appropriate vocabulary for the weather with the pupils, and then presents a map of Wales with the terms north, south, west and east by using the interactive whiteboard. Then, the teacher shows a video clip of the previous evening's weather forecast. Three simple scripts of the forecast are prepared, appropriately differentiated for the needs of the pupils in the class.

Then, the pupils are asked to work in pairs to create their own scripts. After preparing the scripts, a number of pairs are asked to perform the script by using the interactive whiteboard.

Integrating the interactive whiteboard into the Welsh lesson raises the pupils' motivation and enthusiasm to use information and communications technology to communicate in Welsh with an audience.

Many useful computer programmes for use in teaching Welsh as a second language have been produced for the interactive whiteboard. The case study below outlines how a primary school makes good use of an interactive CD ROM.

Case study 14: Using the interactive whiteboard to revise and learn vocabulary

Pembrokeshire LEA has developed a series of CD ROMs, which can be used on interactive white boards in the county's primary schools. The teachers and pupils use activities on the CD ROMs to revise and reinforce vocabulary introduced previously.

In **Y Dref** (**The Town**), video clips are shown of pupils wandering around coastal towns talking to camera. The speech on the film is repeated in the form of a series of phrases on screen and the pupils' task is to arrange the words to make a real conversation. Pupils receive assistance as they select the words and put them in order, as each word has a sound as an additional clue to promote the reading and comprehension. If the pupils succeed in putting the words in the correct order, the programme creates the full conversation.

These CD ROMs are interactive and promote role-play in an unusual manner, as pupils communicate on the video clips directly with the class, asking and answering questions. This method also develops the pupils' viewing, listening and understanding skills and shows how a conversation is built step by step. Pupils delight in practising Welsh by using this technology and are keen to take part in all aspects of the lesson.

A few of schools use interactive whiteboards and data projectors. As a result, pupils interact well with each other and with their teacher during lessons, and they also learn to use information and communications technology skills independently in order to improve their work.

5. Managing improvement

5.1 Effective monitoring and evaluation

Primary school co-ordinators and heads of the secondary school Welsh department have an important role to play in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and standards of work in Welsh as a second language. The best kind of monitoring uses classroom observations to evaluate what is going well and identifies the reasons for this. It also focuses on how to promote effective progression from key stages 2 and 3.

As a first step, robust self-evaluation looks at standards by asking:

● are the pupils making the expected progress across the key stage?

● are there variations in the performance of different groups of pupils? e.g. boys and girls

● what was the pupils' previous attainment at the beginning of the key stage? and

● what information is available about the results of non-statutory tests, examinations and teachers' assessments?

In some parts of Wales, athrawon bro play an important role, not only in monitoring the standards of Welsh in the primary sector but in ensuring consistency in the monitoring of standards within individual schools and in different schools.

Below is an example of good practice in this respect.

Case study 15: Consistency in monitoring standards of Welsh

In Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen LEAs, the athrawes fro and the Welsh as a second language co-ordinator arrange a specific date for monitoring standards of Welsh in schools. A meeting is arranged with staff in advance to explain how the subject will be monitored during their visit.

The athrawes fro and the Welsh as a second language co-ordinator draw up a timetable to visit each class in the school for a teaching session. This varies from 10 to 30 minutes according the age of the pupils. The athrawes fro and the Welsh as a second language co-ordinator usually join the class to observe the lesson. If there is an opportunity, they feedback initial findings to the teacher immediately after the lesson.

At the end of the day, the athrawes fro and the co-ordinator write a brief report on the findings of the visit, noting strengths and areas in need of further attention. They also feed back the findings to the headteacher and then to the whole school in a staff meeting. This report will form the basis of an action plan to be implemented over the next year.

5.1.1 Effective monitoring and improvement strategies

Effective Welsh primary co-ordinators and heads of department offer a good overview of the education provided. They observe activities in Welsh as a second language across the whole school. They look at how Welsh as a second language policies are being implemented in terms of consistency and the outcomes on standards. Welsh primary co-ordinators and heads of department participate in joint teaching as well as observing lessons. They are able to identify needs in terms of resources or in-service training and decide whether or not the resources available in the classroom are appropriate in terms of the work planned, including the use of time. They are allocated time to write a brief report which includes recommendations for improvement. This is then sent to the staff and the headteacher and discussed in a staff meeting. They prepare formal presentations of their findings to be presented to the governors.

Looking at pupils' work is an important activity for a subject leader or head of department when monitoring. Some of the most successful methods of evaluation include looking at the work of pupils of different abilities across years and key stages in order to identify standards and the extent of continuity and progression.

5.1.2 Classroom observation

The most effective improvements in teaching and learning Welsh as a second language have occurred when primary and secondary teachers have observed teaching methods and pupils' work in each others' classes and as a result have gained a better understanding.

In the past year, a number of secondary Welsh teachers have observed lessons in primary schools. As a direct result of this observation, they have become more aware of pupils' standards of achievement, and they know more about the way in which the subjects and skills are taught in key stage 2. In general, primary teachers currently have too few opportunities to observe their former pupils in key stage 3 classes, in order for them to become more aware of how they can better prepare Year 6 pupils for key stage 3.

6. Estyn Section 10 inspection findings on standards and quality during the last three years

Standards of achievement: 2000-2003

Whilst there are pockets of very good practice as outlined above, overall the standards of achievement in Welsh second language are poorer than any other subject.

Estyn inspection reports over the last three years indicate that overall Welsh as a second language has poorer standards of achievement than any other National Curriculum subject. The percentage of very good standards of achievement is also the lowest percentage of any subject at key stages 2 and 3. The table below indicates Estyn's findings on standards of achievement in Welsh as a second language.

Table 1: The standards achieved by pupils in key stages 2 and 3 between 2000 and 2003 according to the percentage of classes

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4/5
KS2				
2002-2003	2	41	55	3
2001-2002	3	38	51	9
2000-2001	2	42	46	11
KS3				
2002-2003	3	57	36	5
2001-2002	4	41	45	9
2000-2001	3	34	51	12

Grade 1:   Very good
Grade 2:   Good
Grade 3:   Satisfactory
Grade 4/5: Unsatisfactory or poor

(Where figures have been rounded up, there may be a difference between the sum of the composite items and the total shown)

Key stage 2

There has been consistent increase in the proportion of satisfactory and good standards achieved over the last three years. It has increased from 90% in 2001 to 98% in 2003. Very good standards of achievement are scarce. Nevertheless, the proportion of unsatisfactory or poor standards of achievement has fallen from 11% in 2000-2001 to 3% in 2002-2003.

Overall, standards of achievement in Years 5 and 6 are not as good as they are in Years 3 and 4.

Key stage 3

The proportion of satisfactory or better standards of achievement has risen from 88% in 2001 to 95% in 2003. There has been a significant rise of 16% in good standards in 2002-2003, but the proportion of standards of achievement that are very good is low at 3%. This has not increased over the last three years. Welsh as a second language has the lowest percentage of classes with very good standards of achievement in any subject in key stage 3.

Looking at standards of achievement by school year in key stage 3, it is clear that there has been some increase in good standards of achievement in Year 7 in 2002-2003 but there has been very little increase in very good standards of achievement in any key stage 3 year.

Teaching

Where teaching is good or very good (in about 52% of classes in key stage 2 and 62% of classes in key stage 3) Estyn's inspection evidence in 2002-2003 shows that certain features are common to both key stages. These are:

- lesson plans based on clear linguistic aims and objectives;

- sufficient time given to practising patterns and new vocabulary thoroughly;

- regular emphasis placed on extending pupils' responses;

- a variety of stimulating activities offered;

- pupils given opportunities to take part in oral interactions in role play, pair work and group work;

- pupils given opportunities to use and apply the language learned in new situations;

- pupils given regular opportunities to improve their reading and writing skills; and

- Welsh used as the language of instruction and general communication in the class outside the periods allocated to teach Welsh as a subject.

Teachers also regularly assess and record their pupils' progress in the three areas of language skills and use assessments to plan subsequent work. In the best examples, good use is made of pupil assessments to improve transition between key stages 2 and 3.

Where the teaching is unsatisfactory or only satisfactory - in 48% of classes in KS2 and 38% of classes in KS3 - the same shortcomings are common to both key stages. They are:

- low expectations;

- failure to offer challenge at an appropriate level to pupils of different abilities; and

- missed opportunities for pupils to master new patterns and vocabulary and to apply them for different purposes.

In key stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6, a large number of teachers are Welsh learners themselves, and this often limits the challenge they can provide. As a result, their expectations of pupils are much lower, despite the best efforts of these teachers.

Low expectations are a common obstacle to pupil progress at the beginning of key stage 3. Too often when planning their schemes of work, teachers do not take pupils' achievements at the end of key stage 2 into account, and there is a tendency in many schools to begin at too low a starting point with all pupils in Year 7, even when many have a satisfactory or good grasp of basic Welsh.

Teachers' competence in the delivery of the National Curriculum

The OHMCI Good Practice - Welsh Second Language in Key Stage 2 1998 noted:

> *'A substantial proportion of the teachers who teach Welsh have only a limited knowledge of the language. Many have either attended or are attending courses to learn the language or to improve their grasp of it, and they have received training on the methods of teaching the language.'*

This situation still remains the case in many authorities in anglicised parts of Wales where a significant proportion of teachers who teach in key stages 1 and 2 have limited knowledge of Welsh. These teachers have also received training in language teaching methodology organised by the Local Education Authorities (LEAs). However, the length and intensity of these courses vary between LEAs and this, in turn, impacts on the expertise of teachers. Teachers' lack of expertise is most apparent at the end of key stage 2. Schools often lack specialist Welsh teachers in Years 5 and 6 to enable pupils to achieve their full potential within the subject.

Welsh as a second language in the secondary schools is taught mostly by subject specialist teachers. Nevertheless, too many non-specialists teach Welsh as a second language in many schools across Wales.

7. The good features and shortcomings in standards of achievement in Welsh as a second language

This section notes the good features and shortcomings seen in Estyn Section 10 Welsh as a second language reports between 2001 and 2003.

Key Stage 2

In about 43% of classes standards of achievement are good or very good.

Where **oral** standards are good or very good pupils listen attentively to an increasing range of complex phrases. They speak confidently with good enunciation and intonation. Pupils increase the range of their vocabulary and sentence patterns and can apply them effectively in different contexts throughout the key stage. They are also able to start a conversation and, increasingly, maintain a conversation. Pupils can also undertake role-play effectively.

Where standards of **reading** are good or very good pupils can read simple texts independently and correctly, using correct intonation to convey meaning. They can read their own work correctly and read unfamiliar texts confidently. Pupils follow and understand the main flow of paragraphs. Pupils also make good and regular use of dictionaries.

Where standards of **writing** are good or very good pupils are able to write in paragraphs, by adding to and adapting the models provided for them, using familiar vocabulary and patterns. They can write extended pieces of good work, by using and applying effectively vocabulary and patterns they have learned in Years 5 and 6. Pupils make good use of their skills to record their work in other subjects, such as history or geography. They can write in an increasing range of styles, including dialogues, paragraphs offering factual information and short descriptive pieces. Pupils are able to use computers to re-draft and correct their work.

In about 57% of classes the standards of achievement and quality of provision are unsatisfactory or only satisfactory.

Where **oral** standards are unsatisfactory pupils have an uncertain grasp of syntax and basic vocabulary, thereby impeding their ability to express themselves. Pupils respond in limited ways. They cannot make extended observations in conversations or discussions. Pupils also have weak enunciation and intonation.

Where **reading** standards are unsatisfactory pupils read slowly and without expression. They cannot read with clarity and meaning. Pupils also have difficulty reading whole texts without help.

Where **writing** standards are unsatisfactory pupils undertake too much copying work and limited language exercises. Pupils cannot write extended pieces.

Key stage 3

In about 60% of classes standards of achievement are good or very good.

Where **oral** standards are good or very good, pupils listen well and extend their understanding of vocabulary and syntax. They have good enunciation and intonation and speak at a natural pace. Pupils can make spontaneous statements and answer and ask questions. They can also participate effectively in a range of activities including pair work and group work.

Where **reading** standards are good or very good, pupils read intelligently using appropriate enunciation and intonation. They respond well to challenging reading tasks, and increasingly extendedly to a range of reading material. Pupils enjoy reading a range of reading materials independently and for pleasure.

Where **writing** standards are good or very good, pupils can write simple paragraphs, answer questions and complete structured exercises fairly correctly. They show progress in their ability to write extended pieces, by varying their use of patterns and vocabulary, maintaining a reasonable level of accuracy in a range of subjects. Pupils can also write in various styles such as dialogues, paragraphs and occasional poems with increasing confidence.

In about 40% of classes the standards of achievement and quality of provision are unsatisfactory or only satisfactory.

Where **oral** standards are unsatisfactory, pupils have difficulty in listening attentively, their enunciation is uncertain, and their use of basic patterns and responses are peremptory and erroneous. They rely heavily on the teachers' support and on notes and handouts when responding orally.

Where **reading** standards are unsatisfactory, pupils mispronounce when reading, and read slowly and without expression. They read only a narrow range of materials. Pupils rarely read for pleasure.

Where **writing** standards are unsatisfactory, pupils write erroneously in terms of syntax and spelling. They write short, repetitive pieces by copying language items.

8. Concluding remarks

Although some strides have been made in the teaching and learning of Welsh as a second language in key stages 2 and 3, much work remains to be done to improve the learning outcomes for pupils learning Welsh as a second language. Addressing the recommendations in this report would play an important part in ensuring that the transition for pupils from key stages 2 to key stage 3 encourages pupils to use the language in a variety of interesting and challenging situations.