

# A report on Welsh immersion and intensive language teaching pilot projects in schools

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for Education and Training in Wales



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## 1 Introduction

- 1 A survey of Welsh immersion and intensive language teaching pilot projects is being undertaken as part of Estyn's annual remit for 2004-2005 from the Welsh Assembly Government. This is a report on the survey of the projects, where pupils are immersed in the Welsh language at a late stage of their primary school education.
- 2 Immersion education is defined as the delivery of the curriculum in a second language to learners who share the same first language. There is a long and successful tradition of teaching pupils from English-speaking homes through the medium of Welsh from nursery schools to the end of their school careers in many parts of Wales. Nearly all these pupils are bilingual in both Welsh and English by the end of key stage 2. Introducing immersion during key stage 2 is a different approach and this report evaluates aspects of good practice in teaching and learning in the approaches taken in the pilot projects. It describes other factors that influence standards and sets out recommendations for further improvements.
- 3 The report is based on:
  - a series of visits by HMI to participating primary and secondary schools during 2004 and 2005;
  - discussions with pupils, teachers, headteachers and project leaders; and
  - the monitoring of pupil progress in a series of oral, reading and writing assessments.

## 2 Background

- 4 The National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales, Iaitn Pawb, noted the Welsh Assembly Government's concern that there were relatively few entry points into Welsh-medium education after the age of three or five. To address this issue, the Assembly Government established pilot projects that would provide opportunities for pupils at the upper end of primary schools to study Welsh more intensively for a set period. These pilots aim to enable many more pupils to move into the Welsh-medium sector or to study more subjects through the medium of Welsh in other settings than would otherwise have been the case.
- 5 In September 2001, Jane Davidson AM, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, and a delegation from the Welsh Assembly Government went on a fact-finding mission to Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick in Canada. The aim of the visit was to observe at first-hand the various models of immersion education used in these provinces and to examine the scope for implementing or adapting one or more of these models for Wales to extend the teaching of Welsh as a second language.
- 6 In the report of the visit<sup>1</sup> the delegation considered that the most appropriate point at which to implement a pilot would be with Welsh second language pupils in Year 6 - the final year of primary school - with a view to enabling those pupils to achieve a range of outcomes including:
  - transferring into Welsh-medium secondary school;
  - studying more subjects through the medium of Welsh in a bilingual or predominantly English-medium secondary school setting than would otherwise have been the case; or
  - achieving a sufficiently strong base of linguistic proficiency so as to be able to participate in a much wider range of Welsh language educational and social activities in, and outside, school.
- 7 At the invitation of the Minister, the Welsh Language Board convened a group of experts in spring 2002 to prepare for the development of alternative entry points to Welsh-medium education and intensive language teaching pilot projects to be introduced during the summer term of 2004.
- 8 Following lengthy consultations with schools, local authorities, parents and pupils, three clusters of schools were selected to take part in the 2004 pilot projects. The three volunteer clusters represented very different areas of Wales: two were in north-east Wales, one was in Flintshire, (Model 1) one was in Denbighshire (Model 2); and there was one in south-east Wales from Rhondda Cynon Taf (Model 3). These models are defined in detail in Section 2.1.

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<sup>1</sup> Immersion Education and Intensive Language Teaching –Report of a visit to Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick by Jane Davidson AM Education and Lifelong Learning Minister 16-21 September 2001.

- 9 An additional pilot project was established for pupils in Year 3 in a primary school in Conwy LEA from September 2004, which continued in subsequent school years (Model 4). A primary school in Ceredigion also joined the pilot during the summer of 2005 and introduced Welsh in two classes in Year 5 (Model 5).
- 10 Two additional clusters of schools joined the original pilot schools in 2005, one in Denbighshire (Model 1) and Ynys Môn (Model 1).

## **2.1 Immersion education**

- 11 The design of the Welsh immersion projects has been based on the findings of Swain and Johnson (1997)<sup>2</sup> and Cummins (1979)<sup>3</sup> on immersion education.
- 12 Swain and Johnson (1997) identified both core and contributing variables that characterise the nature of immersion programmes. The following eight core features distinguish it from other types of second language programmes:
  - the second language is the medium of instruction;
  - the immersion curriculum parallels the local first-language curriculum;
  - overt support exists for the first language;
  - the programme aims for additive bilingualism<sup>4</sup>;
  - exposure to the second language is largely confined to the classroom;
  - students enter with similar (and limited) levels of second language proficiency;
  - the teachers are bilingual; and
  - the classroom culture is that of the local first language community.
- 13 They point out that each of these features is seen as existing on a continuum and that each of them must be present to some degree in order for a programme to be considered an immersion programme.
- 14 Cummins (1979) makes a distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. This distinction draws attention to the very different time periods typically required by immigrant children to acquire conversational fluency in their second language as compared to grade-appropriate academic proficiency in that language. Conversational fluency is often acquired to a functional level within about two years of initial exposure to the second language,

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<sup>2</sup> Johnson R.K. and Swain M. (eds.) (1997) *Immersion Education: International perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press

<sup>3</sup> Cummins, J. (1979) Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters. *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, No. 19, 121-129.

<sup>4</sup> additive bilingualism: When learning a second language does not interfere with the learning of a first language. Both languages are developed.

whereas at least five to seven years is usually required to catch up to native speakers in academic aspects of the second language.

- 15 Both the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 pilot immersion projects offered pupils who had previously received their education through the medium of English with Welsh as a second language an opportunity to receive either Welsh immersion or an intensive Welsh teaching course<sup>5</sup> at the end of their primary school careers. Pupils attending Welsh immersion courses could then continue their education through the medium of Welsh in secondary school. Pupils attending intensive Welsh courses followed a Welsh as a second language course in secondary school. The five different models of provision that are currently being piloted are described below.

**Table 1: Immersion and intensive language models**

Model	Location	Number of pupils	Year group	Start date	Duration
Model 1	Flintshire: one Welsh-medium secondary school	18	Year 6	Summer 2004	5 weeks and on-going in Year 7
Model 2	Denbighshire: one secondary school six primary schools	60	Year 6	Summer 2004	5-6 weeks and on-going in Year 7
Model 3	Rhondda Cynon Taf: one English-medium secondary school	40	Year 6	Summer 2004	5 weeks and on-going in Year 7
Model 4	Conwy: one primary school	10	Year 3	September 2004	On-going
Model 1	Flintshire: one Welsh-medium secondary School	23	Year 6	Summer 2005	5 weeks and on-going in Year 7
Model 1	Denbighshire: one Welsh-medium secondary School	18	Year 6	Summer 2005	5 weeks and on-going in Year 7
Model 1	Ynys Môn: one Welsh-medium secondary school	18	Year 6	Summer 2005	5 weeks and on-going in Year 7
Model 2	Denbighshire: one secondary school six primary schools	60	Year 6	Summer 2005	5-6 weeks and on-going in Year 7
Model 3	Rhondda Cynon Taf: One English-medium secondary school	30	Year 6	Summer 2005	5 weeks and on-going in Year 7
Model 3	Wrexham: one English-medium secondary school	42	Year 6	Summer 2005	5 weeks and on-going in Year 7
Model 4	Conwy: one Primary school	14	Year 3	September 2005	On-going
Model 5	Ceredigion: one primary school	41	Year 5	Summer 2005	6 weeks and on-going in Year 6

<sup>5</sup> Welsh immersion means that approximately 90% of the curriculum is taught through the medium of Welsh, while Welsh intensive courses generally teach only a few subjects through the medium of Welsh.

### 3 Main findings

- 16 These main findings refer to Welsh immersion pilots in both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006.

#### 3.1 Pupil achievement

- 17 The vast majority of pupils on all these immersion pilots have made significant gains in their language skills and their knowledge and understanding of Welsh. Most Year 6 pupils were far more confident in speaking Welsh by the end of the summer term courses in 2004 and 2005. Most pupils enjoyed their lessons and were enthusiastic about learning the language. The gains made by most Year 6 pupils in 2004 were from a low starting point. Very few pupils who started the project were at the expected level 4 at the end of key stage 2 in Welsh as a second language. By the end of the summer 2004 pilots most pupils were at this level.
- 18 In the first year of the project, after transfer to secondary school, pupils in Year 7 made varying levels of gain, depending on the teaching model used at the secondary school. In Model 1, pupils continued to make good progress. In Model 2, pupils generally made slower progress, due to a lack of challenge. Pupils in one fast-track class also made good progress in Model 3, but other pupils in the same school only made adequate progress, due to the lack of teacher expectation and challenge. Pupils in Model 4 continued to make adequate progress.
- 19 Pupils on the 2005 summer pilots started from a slightly higher starting point than in the previous year, although they did not achieve the expected level 4 before the start of the pilot. Most pupils made good progress. By the end of the 2005 summer pilots, many pupils were working at level 4. The gains pupils made in Year 7 on the 2005 pilot also varied considerably according to the immersion model used at the secondary school. Most pupils in immersion model schools continued to make good progress. Most pupils following the Welsh second language programme made adequate progress and, in a few classes, they made good and at times outstanding progress.

#### 3.2 Quality of teaching

- 20 There are examples of adequate, good and outstanding teaching in Year 6 classes on many of the 2004 and 2005 summer pilots. The quality of teaching on all the pilots was generally good and it was sometimes outstanding. Most teachers planned their lessons well and offered a good variety of learning experiences to their pupils. Teachers motivated and challenged their pupils well. Where teaching was good or very good, teachers integrated oracy, reading and writing skills well in the lessons. They offered a variety of challenging activities that catered for the whole ability range of pupils. They used Welsh effectively as a means of communication in the lesson. Teachers revised previous work carefully before introducing new work. They introduced new vocabulary well and used whole class, group, pair work and individual learning activities in the lessons. Activities in the lessons had very good pace and timing. Teachers also set and marked interesting and well-focused



homework to reinforce and develop what had been learnt in the lessons. In the weaker classes, mainly in Model 2 primary schools, a few teachers did not offer pupils enough opportunities to practise their vocabulary and did not offer pupils enough variety or challenge to extend their language skills.

- 21 On transfer to secondary school, the quality of teaching in Year 7 classes varied between good with some outstanding features to barely adequate. Where the teaching was outstanding pupils were offered a variety of challenging and enjoyable activities; the pace of teaching was demanding; and teachers had high expectations. In the weaker classes, teachers did not offer pupils enough challenge; the work lacked variety and was inappropriate to the needs or abilities of the pupils. In weaker classes, teachers did not extend pupils' language skills enough.

### **3.3 Planning the pilot projects**

- 22 The project director, assistant project director and the expert adviser offered clear guidance on planning the pilot projects in 2004 and 2005. They organised training courses well and their role in monitoring and evaluating was strengthened during the 2005 pilot to focus on individual pupil progress. However, project managers need to share their findings and disseminate good practice with teachers in pilot schools as soon as they can. This would enable teachers to plan future courses better and reduce duplication of effort between schools.

### **3.4 In-service training of teachers and headteachers**

- 23 In-service training for primary heads and teachers, primary and secondary teachers was provided to a high standard by the project team. This specialist training introduced the concepts and methodology of immersion education. The team also offered teachers a few additional training sessions to prepare resources and additional support materials for the pilots. However, there was too little preparation time to enable teachers to tailor and differentiate materials.

### **3.5 Welsh immersion and intensive Welsh language teaching**

- 24 Each model had different strengths and each offered good value for money. In general, pupils in Model 1 schools made the best progress in learning Welsh. They received the full immersion programme at their Welsh–medium secondary school and had greater contact with the language than pupils in other models. Three Model 1 schools have now successfully implemented the aim of teaching 90% of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh.
- 25 The Model 4 school offered a 50% immersion programme to Year 3 pupils in September 2004. By September 2005 this programme was offering a 90% immersion programme to pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- 26 The Model 5 school also offered a full immersion curriculum during the summer pilot in 2005 to year 5 pupils. The school now offers around 20% of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh to their Year 6 pupils.

- 27 Most Model 2 and 3 schools offered intensive Welsh language teaching for at least a 50% of curriculum time during the summer pilots in 2004 and 2005.
- 28 On transfer to secondary schools in September 2004 and 2005, Model 2 and 3 schools only offered the usual teaching time for Welsh as a second language in Year 7. Due to staffing difficulties, these models were unable to offer any other subjects through the medium of Welsh. This means that Model 2 and 3 schools cannot currently fulfil the vision and aspiration of Iaith Pawb. Models 2 and 3 do not therefore offer the value for money that Models 1, 4 and 5 offer and the best value for money is offered by model 1, where continuity and progression are sustained.

### **3.6 Extra-curricular activities**

- 29 Extra-curricular activities offer additional opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their Welsh language skills outside the classroom. The project team organised a series of three days of extra curricular activities for pupils during July 2004. These activities were organised with the assistance of the Urdd, Mentrau Iaith and the School Libraries Service. However, due to the late organising of these activities and other holiday commitments, most pupils were unable to attend these activities and this valuable resource was lost. The project team did not offer similar extra-curricular activities during 2005 summer holidays.

### **3.7 Linguistic competence of staff**

- 30 Specialist Welsh teachers and teachers from local education authorities' (LEAs) Welsh advisory services assisted staff in teaching on the both pilots in Models 1, 2 and 4 schools. Primary class teachers taught their own pupils in the Model 5 school. Several teachers in one Model 3 school were Welsh learners and although their skills had improved during the pilot, they were unable to extend pupils' oral skills. On transfer to secondary schools all pupils were taught Welsh by qualified specialist secondary Welsh teachers. However not all secondary teachers are qualified to deliver a Welsh-medium curriculum and unless the immersion model continues into the secondary phase, the gains made by late immersion can be lost.

### **3.8 Local education authority support**

- 31 Local education authorities offered good support to the pilot projects in 2004 and 2005. They provided additional staff, transport costs and support from the local Welsh advisory services to the pilot schools. One LEA paid for a Model 3 school to send pupils on a three-day residential course at Glan-Ilyn.

### **3.9 Resources**

- 32 There are few 'late Welsh immersion' resources available. The project team commissioned new locally based Welsh courses for 2004 pilots in North Wales. Teachers and pupils enjoyed using these new course booklets. In South Wales the Welsh advisory team wrote a new course for the Model 3 school. The project team also commissioned additional teaching resources for the 2005 pilot in North Wales.

However, the dearth of suitable reading material continues to make it difficult for teachers to find suitable factual materials for reading.

### **3.10 Pupil attitudes**

- 33 All pupils had very positive attitudes towards both the 2004 and 2005 pilot projects. Pupils enjoyed learning Welsh on both intensive summer courses and developed more confidence in speaking Welsh with others. One secondary school devised a formal questionnaire to monitor pupils' attitudes towards the pilot. This questionnaire gave the school an invaluable insight into what works best from the pupils' perspective.

### **3.11 Pupil attendance**

- 34 Pupil attendance rates were generally very good with pupils keen to participate in all aspects of the 2004 and 2005 pilot projects. Nearly all pupils who attended the summer pilot courses transferred to the secondary pilot schools.

### **3.12 Continuity and progression at secondary schools**

- 35 Not all partners understand the need to plan and secure continuity and progression between the primary and secondary phases. Too few secondary schools have long-term plans in place to capitalise on the prior learning of pupils. The failure to deliver Welsh medium or bilingual teaching across the secondary curriculum hinders subsequent progress for pupils.

## 4 Recommendations

R1 The Welsh Assembly Government should:

- continue to support Welsh immersion and intensive Welsh teaching pilot projects at both primary and secondary levels where there are opportunities for continuity;
- support the models which produce the best results;
- consider ways in which the lessons learnt by the immersion and intensive language teaching pilot could assist other schools to introduce or expand an element of subject teaching through the medium of Welsh; and
- consider the establishment of a facility on the National Grid for Learning Cymru website to enable teachers and pilot schools to share resources.

R2 The Welsh Language Board, local education authorities and secondary schools should:

- consider offering a range of extra-curricular activities as part of all pilots during the summer holidays to ensure that pupils' linguistic skills continue to be developed.

R3 Project leaders should:

- continue to liaise closely with clusters of primary and secondary schools at the start of each project to ensure that all parties are fully involved in planning for progression and achievement;
- monitor developments in all projects closely and disseminate good practice;
- offer additional debriefing sessions at the end of the summer pilots to enable all teachers to share their experiences and resources as well as reflect on the good features and areas for improvement for future pilots;
- raise the awareness of parents and pupils about the potential of transferring between English and Welsh-medium education in targeted areas;
- raise the awareness of all Welsh-medium secondary schools in Wales about the potential of establishing a class for pupils who wish to transfer from English to Welsh-medium education in Year 7; and
- review the practice of using teachers who are not fully fluent in Welsh, on future courses.

R4 Secondary schools should:

- plan for better continuity at English-medium secondary schools by offering more opportunities to study subjects through the medium of Welsh; and
- set individual targets for all pupils in the project and monitor their progress against them regularly.

R5 All primary schools should:

- ensure that pupils achieve level 4 in Welsh as a second language by the end of Year 6.

R6 Teachers should:

- develop their long and short-term planning to challenge and extend pupils appropriately; and
- have more time to plan and prepare high quality resources.

## **5 Planning the pilot projects**

### **5.1 The role of the project team**

- 36 The project team comprised one project director (part-time), two project officers (one part-time) and an expert adviser. They held numerous meetings with directors of education, education officers, primary and secondary headteachers, parents and pupils to explain the aims of the Welsh immersion projects and to invite them to become part of the project in 2004. After detailed discussions with all parties involved, three clusters of schools were selected to take part in the pilot projects from very different areas of Wales in 2004. Two schools were selected from north-east Wales, one from Flintshire, one from Denbighshire and one from Rhondda, Cynon Taf. A primary school in Conwy also joined the pilot in September 2004. In 2005, a further four schools from Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Ynys Môn joined the pilot.
- 37 The project team offered clear guidance on the design and construction of the pilot projects during training sessions. Teachers welcomed this guidance. However, new schools entering the projects for the first time did not always benefit from the experience of other schools in the previous years when planning and designing their own projects.
- 38 The role of the project team was only advisory and the team could not influence policy and staffing decisions at school and authority level. This constrained the development of some projects in some schools and hindered those pupils' progress particularly in secondary schools where too little of the curriculum could be offered through the medium of Welsh.
- 39 Project officers monitored individual pupil progress in each school in detail during the 2005 summer pilot. This offered a sound basis for tracking distance travelled by learners on the pilot. However, the time taken by this detailed monitoring limited the amount of support and guidance the team could offer to new schools and new teachers during the summer pilots.

### **5.2 In-service training**

- 40 The in-service training programme included a discussion about the background to the project, the theory and techniques of immersion teaching as well as guidance on how to plan lessons.
- 41 Primary head teachers, primary and secondary teachers on the pilot projects received high quality in-service training from the project team. Teachers who attended this training programme praised the course content and the guidance offered.
- 42 The project also offered teachers a few additional training sessions. They planned and prepared resources and additional support materials for the pilots. However, time was too short to produce resources that were good enough.

### **5.3 Sharing best practice**

- 43 In 2004 the project team shared some best practice with teachers on the summer pilots. However, on the 2005 summer pilot, there was only a limited opportunity for them to share best practice due to the substantial monitoring exercise taking place in all schools. Because the project leaders were involved in monitoring they were not able to offer the previous level of support to disseminate good practice.
- 44 Some teachers in Model 1 schools in 2005 shared their insights and experiences with other schools in both formal and informal in-service training events. These training events offered new teachers opportunity to learn from the experience of teachers who had taught on previous pilots. They also shared their teaching resources informally.
- 45 Not enough was done at a national level to encourage teachers to share the planning and resources for immersion teaching. The establishment of an immersion education teaching and learning website, possibly as part of the National Grid for Learning website, would have allowed all the pilot schools to share resources and avoided the duplication of effort involved when everyone was producing a range of resources through the medium of Welsh.
- 46 Using information and communications technology is a good means of fostering closer links between pupils, as well as teachers, on the different types of school models around Wales.

### **5.4 Promotion of the pilot projects**

- 47 Project leaders spent a considerable amount of time promoting pilot projects at LEA and school level. This active promotion helped to establish projects in a variety of schools in both North and South Wales.
- 48 Much remains to be done to raise the awareness of schools, parents and pupils about the potential of transferring between English and Welsh-medium education in many targeted areas.
- 49 Project leaders also need to raise the awareness of all Welsh-medium secondary schools in Wales of the potential for establishing a class for pupils to transfer from English-medium primary schools to Welsh-medium education in Year 7.

## 6 Monitoring pupil progress

50 Inspectors made a series of visits to each of the schools in the three immersion pilot projects during the summer and autumn terms of 2004 and 2005. During these visits, they observed lessons, talked to pupils, teachers and headteachers. They also monitored pupil progress in a series of oral, reading and writing assessments.

### 6.1 Model 1 schools

51 Model 1 schools have many strengths. This is the model that offers the full late-immersion model of 90% Welsh immersion curriculum. Schools using this model have developed many of the factors mentioned in Johnson and Swain (1997)<sup>6</sup>. These include the following features:

- the second language is the medium of instruction;
- the immersion curriculum parallels the local first language curriculum;
- overt support exists for the first language;
- the programme aims for additive bilingualism;
- exposure to the second language is largely confined to the classroom; and
- students enter with similar (and limited) levels of second language proficiency.

52 Pupils made good and sometimes outstanding progress in both phases of the project. In Model 1 schools there was a lower teacher: pupil ratio than the average for secondary schools. This enabled these schools to offer pupils a high level of support and more individual attention. There were also good continuity and progression between the primary and secondary phases.

53 In Model 1 schools, secondary teachers often had specific responsibility for the immersion programme and they taught in both primary and secondary phases. This worked well.

### 6.2 Model 2 schools

54 This immersion pilot proved to be challenging, due to the limitations of small rural primary schools. A few of these Model 2 schools could not offer the full Welsh immersion curriculum, due to staffing constraints. The quality and intensity of language experiences given to pupils also varied between schools. This was because of other events, such as school trips, sports days and induction visits for

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<sup>6</sup> Johnson R.K. and Swain M. (eds.) (1997) *Immersion Education: International perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press



Year 6 pupils to their new secondary schools. On transfer to secondary school, not all pupils received a similar range of language experiences.

- 55 Generally pupils did not make good progress in moving between the two phases of the project. There were missed opportunities to develop closer links between the primary and secondary phases of the project. No individual teacher at the Model 2 secondary school had specific responsibility for this project, and consequently there was a lack of ownership in the secondary phase.
- 56 There was considerable concern among the primary teachers participating in the scheme about continuity and progression after transition to the high school.
- 57 Although pupils generally received learning experiences of high quality in Model 2 schools, this model does not fulfil the aspirations and vision of Iaith Pawb for this project because of the lack of support it offers for continuity and progression.

### **6.3 Model 3 schools**

- 58 Pupils generally made good progress in Model 3 schools during the summer phase of the pilot. They were enthusiastic and committed learners. Pupils in one Year 7 fast-track class in 2004 made outstanding progress. However, when Year 6 pupils from the summer course were mixed with other pupils who did not attend the summer course in other Year 7 classes, their progress was generally slower. In 2005, the Model 3 school in South Wales selected pupils to attend the summer course on their Year 6 teacher assessment results. These pupils were placed in a designated class in Year 7 and generally made good progress. Pupils in both Year 6 and 7 classes in the North Wales Model 3 school made good progress.
- 59 The North Wales Model 3 school offers a wide range of activities on the summer course, including a residential experience and producing a Welsh rap music CD-Rom. This course had many strengths, especially in developing and fostering closer links with parents and its feeder primary school. Teachers at this school also formally listen to the opinion of pupils about the course and make changes for the better.
- 60 The South Wales Model 3 school used primary teachers who are Welsh learners and non-specialist during the summer pilot. These teachers made significant progress in teaching Welsh and used incidental Welsh with greater confidence. However, they were unable to extend and challenge pupils' language skills without the assistance of specialist colleagues.
- 61 Both Model 3 secondary schools were unable to offer any Welsh-medium subjects, and this limited the contact hours with the Welsh language and impedes further pupil progress.
- 62 Although pupils generally receive high quality learning experiences in Model 3 schools, this model does not fulfil the aspirations and vision of Iaith Pawb for this project because of the lack of support it offers for continuity and progression.

#### **6.4 Model 4 schools**

- 63 Only one school followed this model. This model has the potential for developing pupils' linguistic skills well over a longer period of time than any of the other current models. Pupils could receive four years of immersion teaching on this model with good continuity and progression between classes.
- 64 The LEA, the school and parents were all supportive of this project. Some parents were also learning Welsh to support their children's learning, in a designated Welsh for Adults class.
- 65 This model has the potential to fulfil the aspirations and vision of Iaith Pawb for this project by delivering continuity and support for progression. Pupils' developing Welsh-language skills are sustained.

#### **6.5 Model 5 schools**

- 66 The Model 5 school pilot had many strengths. This immersion model used primary teachers teaching in their own classrooms. This model offered the full late immersion model during the second half of the summer term to Year 5 pupils in 2005 and 20% of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh to Year 6 pupils.
- 67 The LEA, the school and parents were all supportive of this project. Teachers offered pupils high-quality language experiences across the curriculum through the medium of Welsh.
- 68 Pupils received high-quality learning experiences in this Model 5 school and this model has the potential to fulfil the aspirations and vision of Iaith Pawb for this project by offering continuity and progression in sustaining language skills in Year 6 and beyond.

## **7 Emerging issues**

### **7.1 Welsh Immersion models**

- 69 Only Model 1 schools offered the full late-immersion model where 90% of the curriculum is taught in Welsh. This model, offered in Welsh-medium secondary schools, was able to offer a full variety of activities through the medium of Welsh. This model also had the advantage that more than one teacher taught the Welsh language element and other subject teachers could teach through the medium of Welsh.
- 70 Many of the Model 2 schools were small rural primary schools. These schools found the full late-immersion model (90% of the curriculum in Welsh) particularly challenging. This was partly due to the intrusion of school trips, sports days, English-speaking visitors and induction visits for Year 6 pupils to their new secondary schools. These schools also had mixed-year groups in the same class; one school had three-year groups in the immersion class. Many of the Year 6 teachers in these primary schools were also teaching headteachers. They generally felt that this immersion model needed considerable additional preparation time to succeed.
- 71 Model 3 schools could offer some activities through the medium of Welsh on the summer pilots. However, very few of the secondary staff in other departments were Welsh speakers and this made it difficult to offer any subjects through the medium of Welsh in Year 7.
- 72 Model 4 and 5 schools are still at early stages of development. They offer pupils opportunities to study Welsh for more time at primary level than any other pilot project. There are very positive early indications about pupil progress in both these models.
- 73 At secondary level, only Model 1 schools have successfully implemented the aim of teaching 90% of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh. Model 2 and 3 schools could only offer intensive Welsh teaching during the summer pilot stages. These schools offered the usual curriculum time for Welsh as a second language for Year 7 pupils.

### **7.2 Extra-curricular activities**

- 74 At the end of the summer project, pupils returned to their own primary schools for the last two weeks of the summer term where they may have only limited contact with Welsh. Only pupils in Model 4 and 5 schools continued with the project to the end of the summer term.
- 75 During the summer holidays pupils on the summer pilots had either limited or no contact with Welsh and this impeded progress at the beginning of the secondary stage. There are currently no formal arrangements to address this issue.

- 76 In 2004 the project team arranged a series of three days of extra-curricular activities for pupils attending Model 1, 2 and 3 projects in July 2004. These activities were organised with the assistance of the Urdd, Mentrau Iaith and the School Libraries Service. However, due to other holiday commitments, most pupils were unable to attend these activities. The local library organised a range of activities for pupils from the Model 2 schools, but only four pupils attended this activity.
- 77 Parents and pupils are not fully aware of the importance of the extra-curricular activities. The activities constitute invaluable opportunities for pupils to continue to develop their language skills. The project team should plan the summer extra-curricular activities as an integral part of future immersion projects rather than making them optional.

### **7.3 Linguistic competence of staff**

- 78 One of the pre-requisites for a successful immersion programme is the availability of fluent staff. Most summer pilots were staffed with fluent Welsh teachers. However, a few teachers in one Model 3 school were Welsh learners. These teachers were enthusiastic learners, but were not at a level to be able to extend their pupils' language skills. They worked as team teachers on a rota with a specialist teacher from the secondary school, and with Welsh advisory staff from the LEA. Although these teachers' skills improved during the pilot, they continued to rely on the support of other teachers and were unable to extend pupils' oral skills. On transfer to secondary schools qualified specialist Welsh teachers taught these pupils in Year 7. However not all secondary teachers are qualified to deliver a Welsh-medium curriculum and unless the immersion model continues into the secondary phase, the gains made by late immersion can be lost.

### **7.4 LEA support**

- 79 All pilot schools received good support from their local education authorities. The LEAs financially supported these pilots in a number of different ways, including providing additional staff, transport, and additional Welsh advisory services. These pilots would not have been as successful as they were without the additional financial assistance of the LEAs.
- 80 Model 1 and 3 schools relied on transporting pupils from their primary schools to their secondary school for the immersion programme. In one Model 3 school in South Wales additional supply teachers were given to the primary schools to release the usual class teacher to attend the immersion project at the secondary school. The role of the advisory teachers in this Model 3 school was also crucial in developing the immersion course and teaching sessions during the week.
- 81 In one Model 3 school in North Wales, pupils from one primary school in the cluster had to rely on secondary teachers to ferry them from their primary school to Welsh lessons at the secondary school during the summer pilot. This put too much additional pressure on secondary teachers on top of their usual teaching duties. Transport requirements for pupils on future courses need to be planned at an earlier stage.

## 7.5 Resources

- 82 Very few suitable published materials were available and there is still a shortage. However, four new Welsh language course booklets were successfully piloted during the project. An author was commissioned to write two new Welsh courses based on the localities of Mold, Ruthin and St Asaph, for Model 1 and 2 projects. An experienced Welsh advisory teacher wrote the fourth course for Model 3 project.
- 83 All these courses are well planned and offer a good balance of oral, reading and writing activities. These booklets also offer pupils a good introduction to the Welsh culture of their area. Teachers in Model 1 and 2 projects were positive about the appropriateness of the language and content, and about the fact that the booklets were based on their locality. Pupils on these projects were also positive about these booklets.
- 84 However the dearth of suitable Welsh reading material provided teachers with a challenge in finding materials appropriate to the linguistic needs of pupils on these pilots.

## 7.6 Pupil attitudes

- 85 Pupils displayed positive attitudes on all courses. In lessons, they were committed to their work and made productive use of lesson time. They were generally eager to offer responses in whole-class situations and to engage in individual or group work. Pupils' motivation was evident even in the few lessons when the activities were less interesting.
- 86 When interviewed at the end of the summer course in 2004 and 2005, pupils were positive about the course and its outcomes. They enjoyed the activities and felt that their Welsh had improved as a result of the course. All had positive views towards learning Welsh and were eager to improve further. Teachers reported that these positive views also reflected parents' views.
- 87 Staff in one Model 3 school in North Wales systematically asked pupils for their impressions of the course. The outcomes of this survey were very positive and helped staff to plan future courses.

## 7.7 Pupil attendance

- 88 Pupil attendance rates on the summer 2004 and 2005 pilots were generally very good, with pupils keen to participate in the project. Only one pupil on the 2005 summer pilot was unable to complete the pilot due to a medical condition. However, the intrusion of end of term celebrations, school trips and induction days did impact on attendance on some occasions.
- 89 Most primary pupils who attend the summer courses at the local secondary school moved on to that school in the following September. However, in the Model 3 pilot over a third of pupils transferred to a neighbouring secondary school. These pupils then had to follow the usual Year 7 Welsh second language scheme of work.

Repeating much of the work they had already covered during the summer pilot did not enhance their progress.

## **7.8 Continuity and progression at secondary schools**

- 90 In Model 1 and 3 schools, pupils attended the pilot project at the secondary school. These secondary schools adapted their timetables successfully to ensure that primary pupils settled in well. Pupils were given a taster of life in the secondary school before transferring in the autumn term. As a result, these primary pupils generally settled quickly to the routines of the secondary school. At the start of the autumn term they were far more confident than other pupils arriving at the school for the first time.
- 91 Although the project officers made schools aware of the implications of the pilot project, not all partners understood the full obligations for securing continuity and progression between the primary and secondary phases. There are considerable challenges in securing the kind of long-term strategic planning at both secondary school and LEA levels to deliver the teaching capacity to sustain learning in Welsh across the curriculum.
- 92 As a result of individual school difficulties with staffing and timetables, only Model 1 schools succeed in offering a full immersion programme in Year 7, where pupils can study a range of subjects through the medium of Welsh. Model 2 and 3 secondary schools can only offer a limited opportunity for pupils to practise their linguistic skills outside lessons in Welsh as a distinct curriculum subject.

## 8 Concluding remarks

- 93 Success in learning Welsh on these pilot projects depends on many factors, including students' personality and motivation, teacher expectations, parental support, leadership of the pilot projects and senior management support at school, local authority and national government levels. The features that are common to success in Welsh immersion programmes are as follows:
- fluent teachers who are good models for the target language and make learning fun;
  - pace and variety in the teaching and learning;
  - securing continuity and progress in Welsh-medium learning across the curriculum at secondary level;
  - good targeted support to schools from local education authorities;
  - good liaison between all agencies; and
  - close links between schools and parents.
- 95 These pilot projects are already showing signs of impacting on provision for Welsh as a second language in a broader sense.
- 96 There are distinct advantages in the model of delivering the summer term course for Year 6 pupils in the secondary school with dedicated teachers who have no other responsibilities. Levels of pupil progress during the summer course are higher than in the model organised in individual primary schools. Much is achieved in the secondary school summer-term model in terms of continuity and progression at transition to the secondary school.
- 97 Class teachers on the programme at both primary and secondary schools need more time to prepare appropriate Welsh materials and resources. They also need on-going and carefully planned staff development.
- 98 The active involvement and long term commitment of all stakeholders is required to ensure the continuing success of pupils in these late-immersion and intensive language-teaching programmes.
- 99 There is limited benefit in offering immersion or intensive courses to pupils who transfer to secondary schools that cannot support continuity in the provision in order to build on developing bilingual skills. Unless a bilingual curriculum can be sustained, this kind of immersion programme cannot offer good value for money.