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Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

An evaluation of the effectiveness of WJEC national INSET programmes

October 2007



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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- ▲ LEAs;
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Introduction

- 1 The purpose of this advice is to provide the Welsh Assembly Government with information on the effectiveness of WJEC's national training programmes for Welsh language and Welsh-medium in-service education and training (INSET).
- 2 This work was undertaken as part of the remit Estyn received from the Welsh Assembly Government in March 2006.
- 3 The evidence base includes:
 - interviews with representatives of nine local education authorities (LAs), members of steering groups and working group members;
 - analysis of documentation provided by LAs;
 - interviews with WJEC officers;
 - analysis of documentation provided by WJEC; and
 - an analysis of the resources created by WJEC.

Background

- 4 In 1989, a national Welsh language in-service training programme was established by WJEC. A national programme of Welsh-medium in-service training was established in April 2000. The purpose of these training programmes is:
 - to assist local authorities, schools and teachers to raise the standards of achievement of pupils who are learning Welsh and Welsh as a second language, and pupils who receive their education through the medium of Welsh by preparing training materials and providing training sessions according to the requirements of local authorities, schools and teachers and those aspects highlighted in Estyn's reports; and
 - to offer a consultation service to educational agencies that influence the way in which Welsh, Welsh as a second language and Welsh-medium education are delivered in the schools of Wales.
- 5 In consultation with representatives of every local authority (LA) in Wales and of the Welsh Assembly Government, the national Welsh language in-service training programme supports aspects of teaching Welsh and Welsh as a second language by:
 - preparing training packages;
 - providing training events; and
 - maintaining a register of assistant trainers who are available to provide training.
- 6 The national Welsh-medium in-service training programme supports teaching through the medium of Welsh on aspects of all national curriculum subjects by maintaining a register of assistant trainers who are available to provide appropriate training.
- 7 In 2006-2007, the Welsh Assembly Government allocated £39.3m to the Better Schools Fund (BSF). This amount was split between the activity areas of curriculum development, governor training, pupil support, additional learning needs, *laith Pawb mewn ysgolion* and information and communications technology (ICT) in schools. As part of activity 5: '*laith Pawb mewn ysgolion*' of the BSF, £200,000 was allocated to WJEC to fund the two national INSET programmes. This funding is administered separately from the remainder of the BSF programme by the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 8 Both the Welsh and the Welsh-medium national programmes receive financial support from the Welsh Assembly Government through its Better Schools Fund (BSF) and from the 22 local authorities in Wales through a service level agreement with WJEC. It receives 60% of its funding for this area of work directly from the BSF. Individual LAs provide the remaining 40%..

- 9 WJEC distributes its £200,000 grant equally between the Welsh language and Welsh-medium national programmes.
- 10 The Welsh Assembly Government is currently reviewing its funding for WJEC's national programmes.

Main findings

- 11 WJEC has a clear organisational structure to ensure appropriate administration of the BSF grant. It employs a national professional development officer who facilitates the work of a good network of advisers and practitioners from each local authority in Wales. These specialists provide the national professional development officer with good, current knowledge and expertise from their educational sectors. They help set the strategic direction for both in-service training programmes.
- 12 However, the arrangements for managing the Welsh-medium in-service training programme are not as well developed as they are for the Welsh language programme. The Welsh-medium steering group is not as effective in influencing training developments at a national level as compared with the steering group for Welsh language training.
- 13 WJEC arranges four appropriate two-day national conferences every year for practitioners from across Wales. The conferences provide good opportunities for teachers and advisers to discuss aspects of their work with colleagues from across Wales. They also provide opportunities for delegates to learn about the work of education specialists from Wales and beyond. LA staff maintain that this training broadens and enriches teachers' experience and provides good and new challenge to the way they work.
- 14 All LAs receive an annual training allocation or quota from WJEC. The flexibility of the quota system enables LAs to plan training provision based on needs identified at a local level. The training allocation or quota for each LA area for Welsh language in-service training is calculated on the number of school-age pupils within the local authority area. This ensures that there is a good and fair match between the level of need and number of training opportunities within LA areas.
- 15 The training allocation of Welsh-medium in-service training is based on the number of pupils who receive Welsh-medium education. This means that more training opportunities are made available for teachers in areas where a high percentage of pupils attend Welsh-medium schools than in areas with a low percentage of pupils attending Welsh-medium schools. This is despite the need for schools across all local authority areas to deliver a similar curriculum. This means that there is not always an even spread of Welsh-medium training across all LAs.
- 16 All LAs and their schools can use their quota to buy in training from a register of specialist assistant trainers maintained by WJEC. In many cases, LAs rely on the information on the register to enable them to identify trainers with the right specialisms to meet their needs. However, there are no agreed criteria for inclusion on the register of assistant trainers.

- 17 In addition to providing good quality flexible training provision, WJEC develops a good range of training materials. Staff interviewed identify that WJEC training materials are used extensively and well by both teachers and LA staff. The national trainer works closely with teachers, advisory teachers and advisers to ensure that training materials are fit for purpose and match closely with needs identified within local authority areas or through national priorities. Many training materials are made available through WJEC and National Grid for Learning Cymru (NGfL Cymru)¹ websites and formats such as CD-ROM and DVD.
- 18 WJEC has limited formal procedures in place to evaluate the quality of the provision delivered on its behalf by assistant trainers. WJEC receives copies of all evaluation forms used by LAs to evaluate courses. However, WJEC does not provide LAs with guidance on the specific information they need to collect to evaluate the provision. WJEC does not formally measure the effect that its training and training materials have on improving the standards that pupils achieve.
- 19 The use that LAs make of their training allocation represents good value for money. Staff across local authority areas work well with each other to share some training events. However, there is too great a variation between LAs in relation to their policies about releasing staff for INSET and allowing them to attend out-of-authority sessions. There is scope therefore to make more efficient use of resources.

¹ The National Grid for Learning Cymru is managed by WJEC on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. It consists of downloadable educational resources which support all key stages of the national curriculum.

Recommendations

- 20 In order to ensure continued improvement in the effectiveness of the WJEC national training programme for Welsh-medium and Welsh language in-service training, the following actions need to be taken.

The Welsh Assembly Government should:

- R1 continue to provide the Better Schools Fund for WJEC national training programme for Welsh-medium and Welsh language provision.

WJEC should:

- R2 work with appropriate partners to make sure that the Welsh-medium in-service training programme responds as effectively to training needs as the Welsh language in-service training programme;
- R3 ensure that teachers from across Wales benefit equally from a good range of Welsh-medium in-service training by reviewing the appropriateness and operation of the formula for allocating training quotas;
- R4 undertake a comprehensive annual self-evaluation of the operation of the programmes through its steering groups;
- R5 work with LAs to support the development of an impact-assessment tool for advisers to report back to WJEC in order to identify the success of the programmes in improving standards;
- R6 put in place agreed criteria for including assistant trainers on the register and develop and formalise a system for monitoring the quality of the training; and
- R7 continue to work closely with LAs to ensure that the materials and training provided are fit for purpose.

Local authorities should:

- R8 continue to support the Welsh and Welsh-medium training programmes by working in partnership with WJEC and by releasing staff to participate in working groups;
- R9 continue to finance the programmes; and
- R10 develop an impact-assessment tool to report back to WJEC on the success of the programmes.

Organisation

- 21 WJEC employs a national professional development officer to administer both the national Welsh in-service training programme and the national Welsh-medium in-service training programme on its behalf. The national professional development officer is supported by an administration officer for approximately 0.5 of a full time post. WJEC also provides the national professional development officer with good specialist support in areas such as design and publication. These services ensure that the materials produced by this programme are consistent with the quality of other WJEC publications.
- 22 The £200,000 BSF grant is split equally between the two in-service training programmes. WJEC subsidises some aspects of the corporate services provided in support of the programmes.
- 23 The national professional development officer is responsible for:
- developing training packs to support in-service training;
 - arranging four two-day national conferences;
 - recruiting and maintaining a register of specialist assistant trainers;
 - coordinating approximately 160 training sessions in LAs each year;
 - delivering approximately 25 training sessions each year; and
 - collating evaluations from WJEC sponsored training events.
- 24 The national professional development officer is well supported by a good representative network of advisers and practitioners from across Wales. These specialists provide the national professional development officer with good, current knowledge and expertise from their educational sectors. They meet regularly in teams of coordinators and as working groups to plan and discuss the work of the national trainer programme and to draft and edit resources for inclusion in the training packs.
- 25 There are two steering groups, one for each in-service training programme. Members of the Welsh steering group consist of senior advisers within LAs, WJEC officers and an Estyn representative. Members of the Welsh-medium steering group who work for LAs are nominated by the Association of Welsh Directors of Education (ADEW). These sit alongside WJEC officers and an Estyn representative. The membership of these groups ensures that LAs are the main driving force behind the national in-service training programmes.
- 26 The Welsh steering group is responsible for setting the strategic direction for the national in-service training programme by identifying areas for development based on local experiences and on national initiatives and priorities. They are effective in

identifying areas for development within their own provision. They evaluate the general training needs of staff in their areas through formal links with schools.

- 27 Members of the group receive regular, concise evaluation reports from the national professional development officer on the success of training events. The Welsh language steering group is also responsible for setting specific tasks for working groups and reviewing the resources produced to ensure that they are of a high quality and represent good value for money.
- 28 There are four working groups, one each for:
- Welsh first language: primary;
 - Welsh first language: secondary;
 - Welsh second language: primary; and
 - Welsh second language: secondary.
- 29 Membership of working groups consists of teachers or advisory teachers nominated by their LAs from across Wales. Working groups normally meet three times a year. Each working group is tasked with producing written materials, or materials on DVD or CD-ROM to support Welsh in-service training. These groups work closely alongside the national professional development officer to develop high quality resources that are used extensively across Wales.
- 30 The Welsh language in-service training steering group meets regularly and provides good leadership for the programme. WJEC's structure for managing the Welsh in-service training programme is clearly defined. LA staff and teachers feel that the programme is effective in supporting Welsh language in-service training.
- 31 However, the arrangements for managing Welsh-medium in-service training are not as fully developed. Although the Welsh-medium steering group has been responsible for setting the strategic direction of the programme in the past, it has not met since April 2005. Because of this, the Welsh-medium in-service training steering group has not been as effective in influencing developments at a national level when compared with the Welsh language in-service training programme. In addition, there are no specific working groups tasked with developing training materials to support Welsh-medium in-service training.
- 32 WJEC has a regular and wide-ranging contact with Cymdeithas Ysgolion Dros Addysg Gymraeg (CYDAG)². It has a general awareness of events programmed by CYDAG. However, WJEC has not met with CYDAG during the past 18 months for the specific purpose of jointly planning training programmes. Because of this, WJEC does not know whether its provision duplicates the work of CYDAG.

² CYDAG is the society of schools for Welsh-medium education. It provides a wide range of training opportunities for teachers who work through the medium of Welsh.

National conferences

- 33 Each year the national professional development officer organises four two-day national conferences for:
- Athrawon Bro Cymru³;
 - additional learning needs;
 - Welsh curriculum leaders; and
 - secondary teachers of Welsh.
- 34 The conferences are usually held during the summer term at a venue in mid Wales and attract teachers, language co-ordinators, advisory teachers and advisers from across Wales. Over 300 delegates attend these conferences each year. They represent all 22 LA areas in Wales. The number of delegates attending each conference remains similar from year to year.
- 35 WJEC does not use its grant from BSF to meet the cost of the four conferences. However, part of the grant is used to facilitate the planning of the conferences. Participants, their schools or LAs pay a predetermined fee to attend the conference. In a few cases, teachers use their General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) training allowance to enable them to attend the conferences. However, in one local authority area, staff cannot attend the conference for both days because of the costs involved. In this case, two members of staff share the conference by each attending for one day.
- 36 LA advisory staff indicate that the conferences represent good value for money. In particular, the conferences provide practitioners with very good opportunities to learn from well known and highly regarded experts from Wales and beyond. In many cases these include non-Welsh-speaking specialists in teaching methodologies who provide delegates with new and innovative ideas that can be applied in not only Welsh-medium settings but also in English medium schools. Often this means that WJEC must pay a premium for these speakers. However, this provides good value when put into the context of the number of delegates benefiting from the training.
- 37 The four conferences provide good national training opportunities. They also provide practitioners with valuable networking opportunities with colleagues from across Wales. In particular, the Athrawon Bro Cymru conference provides many Athrawon Bro with the only formal training that they receive each year.
- 38 Through analysis of evaluation forms overall, nearly 90% of delegates indicate that provision at the conferences is either good or very good. However, there is no formal analysis of the impact of this training on pupils back in schools.

³ Athrawon Bro means 'area teachers' of Welsh who work in schools alongside class teachers and/or in language centres.

Training

Training allocations

- 39 All LAs receive an annual training allocation or quota from WJEC. Each quota equates to a number of training sessions that can be arranged through WJEC. This enables LAs to arrange training events through the national training programmes for their staff.
- 40 The training allocation or quota for each LA area for Welsh in-service training is calculated on the number of school-age pupils within the local authority area. This ensures that there is a good and fair match between the level of need and number of training opportunities within LA areas.
- 41 The quota for Welsh-medium in-service training is based on the number of pupils within local authorities who receive Welsh-medium education. This means that there are significantly more training opportunities available to Welsh-medium teachers in areas where a high percentage of pupils attend Welsh-medium schools than in areas where a relatively small percentage of pupils receive their education through the medium of Welsh. This is despite the need for schools across all local authority areas to deliver a similar curriculum. This means that there is not always an even spread of Welsh-medium training provision across all 22 LAs.
- 42 In almost all cases the allocation of a training quota means that each LA receives a pre-determined number of training sessions from WJEC in any one financial year. However, in one area an independent agency working on behalf of two LAs receives the equivalent monetary value of the training allocation for Welsh-medium in-service training directly from WJEC. This is because the agency uses its own staff to deliver training on its behalf.
- 43 Each LA identifies its own training priorities for Welsh before approaching WJEC with requests to use their training allocation. The national professional development officer is responsible for coordinating the training and for deploying appropriate trainers. In almost all cases, LA staff discuss their specific needs with the national professional development officer in order to identify the most appropriate trainer to be deployed. Overall, LA advisers indicate that there is a good match between needs identified by LAs and the training delivered. Evaluation data from individual sessions collected by LAs identifies high levels of satisfaction with the training.
- 44 Through this arrangement, LA staff organise a wide range of training within their areas. These range from courses to develop the use of language games to improve oracy to audiences with authors to discuss the meaning of their work.
- 45 In many cases, LAs use more than their quota of training sessions within the Welsh in-service programme. However, in a few cases, LAs do not always use their whole training allocation every year. In these cases, the national professional development officer organises a trade-off between LAs. This flexibility enables the national professional development officer to continue to coordinate training in a few geographical areas where a greater training need has been identified.

- 46 However, WJEC does not prioritise additional requests for training. They are dealt with on a 'first come, first served' basis. Currently all requests for training are successful. However, there are no systems in place to prioritise need should there be a high level of demand for additional training sessions in the future.

Assistant trainers

- 47 There are approximately 80 named specialist assistant trainers on each of the registers for Welsh language and Welsh-medium in-service training programmes. The national professional development officer relies on recommendations made by teachers and advisers when creating and maintaining the list of approved trainers. Assistant trainers on the registers are either experienced teachers or trainers. However, there are no agreed criteria to meet in order to be placed on the register of assistant trainers.
- 48 The register for Welsh assistant trainers covers all aspects of teaching Welsh and Welsh as a second language. The register for Welsh-medium assistant trainers covers all national curriculum subjects. The register is reviewed by the national professional development officer every six to twelve months. As a consequence, in a very few cases where LA staff have concerns about the quality of the work of assistant trainers, they have been removed from the register.
- 49 In around half the LAs consulted, assistant trainers who already work for the authorities deliver training for staff as part of WJEC's Welsh-medium in-service training. In these geographical areas the training delivered by WJEC differs little from the training that would normally be available for staff. In one area in particular, the training elements provided through the national Welsh-medium in-service training programme does not enhance the training that is usually available. However, in this case the funding made available through WJEC's programme enables the LA to provide a larger quantity of training than would normally be made available.
- 50 A more extensive and comprehensive use of assistant trainers is identified on the Welsh in-service training register. All Welsh advisers offer training provision. WJEC's provision enhances the breadth of training opportunities. This ensures that there is a national focus to the training that they provide. It also provides teachers with training led by experts and in a few cases this includes poets and authors. This would be more difficult to arrange on an individual LA basis without WJEC's support. These activities are highly valued by teachers and advisers.
- 51 The work of assistant trainers is very flexible. They work closely with the national professional development officer and respond well to the needs identified by individual or clusters of LAs. This means that in LAs where there are few specialist advisers, teachers continue to have a good variety of training opportunities.
- 52 In many training events there is a good and appropriate emphasis on developing and improving the methodological skills of teachers. One LA makes good use of assistant trainers to support teachers who are also studying Bangor University's 'Cwrs Iaith a Methodoleg Cymraeg ail iaith' (CIMCai).

Training materials

- 53 In addition to coordinating an extensive training programme, WJEC also develops a good range of training materials through its working groups. These provide LA staff and heads of departments with a good framework to provide their own in-service training. These materials are developed based on the needs identified within local authority areas or through national priorities.
- 54 A good example is the recent publication 'Llythrennedd Deuol: Elwa ar ddwyieithrwydd i godi safonau yn y Gymraeg' intended to raise standards in Welsh through dual literacy⁴ in key stage 2. This publication provides the user with good examples of the types of activities that could be used to promote the development of dual literacy skills. It provides good exemplar lessons on a wide range of subjects such as history, geography, poetry and art. The guidance makes good use of Estyn's discussion paper on dual literacy and in particular draws attention to the dual literacy features identified in Estyn's paper. It also provides teachers with good ideas on how to plan activities that will provide learners with good opportunities to practise their dual literacy skills.
- 55 The visual appearance of materials has improved over the past few years. WJEC now produces 'good practice' DVDs. The Welsh Assembly Government stipulates that all materials which have been recently produced by WJEC using the BSF grant and are suitable for ICT application should be made available online through NGfL Cymru. As a consequence, all suitable resources are available online. There is easy access to the NGfL website from WJEC's homepage. These online materials provide teachers and trainers with the flexibility to choose and adapt materials to meet the needs of their learners. It also means that all teachers have immediate access to the published materials.
- 56 There is good and effective collaboration between teachers and the national professional development officer to develop high-quality resources. For example, teachers who work in English-medium primary settings and are following the CIMCai course have worked closely with the national trainer through their local LA to initiate and develop a WJEC DVD resource which shares good practice in assessment for learning at key stages one and two. This type of resource can be used flexibly either within a formal training environment or in private on an individual basis.
- 57 In the advisory service of one cluster of local authorities, a group of design and technology teachers from secondary Welsh-medium settings have worked closely with the national programme to share good practice and to create good online resources through NGfL Cymru. In this case, these resources benefit both teachers and pupils.
- 58 The training materials created by WJEC are well prepared and are well presented. They are valued by both teachers and advisers and they help disseminate good practice at a national level. They differentiate clearly between key stages. However, in a few cases, LA officers feel that this labelling of key stages prejudices teachers from being open to good practice observed in different key stages to their own.

⁴ Dual literacy is the ability to move confidently and smoothly between languages for different purposes. In this context dual literacy relates to Welsh and English.

- 59 All LAs and their schools receive copies of all of the training materials produced by the working groups without charge. All LA staff interviewed indicate that they are widely used by advisory teachers and teachers with their local authority areas. They are used well by LA staff to support internal in-service training that is not arranged through the national professional development officer.
- 60 In a very few cases there is duplication between the materials produced by LA staff and the materials published by WJEC. This is mainly because LA staff are able to respond more quickly to specific training needs than the structure of WJEC's working groups allows. Where this is the case, WJEC does not always work efficiently enough to make the best use of existing resources.

Evaluation

- 61 WJEC requires all LAs to seek out the views of staff who attend training events delivered by the national professional development officer or specialist additional trainers. This information is used by the national professional development officer to evaluate the quality of the provision. However there is no common format across LAs to gather the views of staff on the quality of training. WJEC does not provide LAs with guidance on the information they need to collect to evaluate the provision. As a consequence, there are differences in the type and quality of information gathered in each local authority area. For example in many cases, LAs ask their staff to use a five-point scale to evaluate courses, whilst other LAs use a four-point scale. This makes it difficult to identify areas of good or poor performance consistently.
- 62 All LAs are required to send photocopies of course evaluation forms to WJEC as a condition of receiving training. The national professional development officer then prepares an analysis of the findings of the evaluation forms to be discussed at steering group meetings. Most evaluations show that the training received is either good or very good.
- 63 WJEC has limited formal procedures in place to evaluate the work of individual trainers. WJEC officers do not observe assistant trainers to assure the quality and appropriateness of their work. LA education advisers attend many training events and report back to the national trainer if training is weak. Although this system has resulted in one assistant trainer being removed from the register in the past, it is not effective enough to ensure consistent monitoring of performance, to identify areas of good and outstanding practice or to identify areas for concern quickly.
- 64 Course evaluation forms are used well by LAs to identify delegates' immediate perceptions of the training that they receive. In the absence of any formal observation process they are useful in helping the national professional development officer to reach a judgement about whether teachers are satisfied with the training delivered on WJEC's behalf. However, this type of evaluation does not enable WJEC to monitor the impact of its training.
- 65 WJEC does not formally measure the extent to which its resources and training have an impact on raising overall standards of attainments in Welsh, Welsh as a second language or work through the medium of Welsh.
- 66 One agency that provides an advisory service for two local authority areas monitors the impact of a proportion of its courses on standards and the quality of teaching. However, outcomes from this exercise have not yet been discussed with WJEC staff. In a few cases, LA staff are considering options for staff to self-assess their own development as a consequence of attending training, but these systems have not yet been put in place.
- 67 The Service Level Agreement Report published annually by WJEC does not provide enough information about the success of the programme in improving standards.

Value for money

- 68 In a few cases, LAs ask schools to pay a course fee for their staff to attend a BSF/WJEC sponsored course. This is in addition to the cost of supply teachers that schools absorb to release staff to attend these training events. In a few cases, schools use BSF funding to pay the course fee for staff to attend training courses. This means that BSF funding is used twice to fund these training activities.
- 69 The use that LAs make of their training allocation or quota represents good value for money. Wherever possible, LAs work in collaboration with each other to share training events and to ensure that the training allocation stretches as far as possible. For example, one LA in north east Wales works closely with a LA in mid Wales to share training sessions. In another example, an advisory service that works on behalf of a cluster of LAs provides staff from other LAs with information about its training events.
- 70 In a few cases, LAs are creative in the way they use their training allocation. In one cluster of LAs from mid and south-west Wales, staff book more than one training session with WJEC for the same day. The cluster of LAs organises more than one group of teachers to attend the training event. They then rotate the specialist assistant trainers between the different groups. This means that more than one group of teachers can benefit from the work of WJEC's trainers in any one day event. This means that the LAs concerned use only two days of their training allocation rather than the four days it would cost if they were to book trainers for sessions in isolation.
- 71 Overall, the national Welsh language in-service training programme is well organised and well used across all local authorities involved in this survey. It offers good value for money. However, the arrangements for delivering Welsh-medium in-service training are not as well developed. The current structure for managing the Welsh-medium training programme is not always effective enough in influencing developments at a national level.
- 72 WJEC does not work with partners to monitor the outcomes of its training closely enough to ensure it delivers good value for money in its training programmes by identifying what impact its provision has on standards.
- 73 WJEC provides independently audited financial summaries of programme expenditure to the Welsh Assembly Government as required in order to receive grant payments. For 2006-2007, the grant claim was based on expenditure of approximately £198,000. This rate of use is in line with the programme's grant claims for previous years.