

Rapporteur Group on Bilingualism

Paper 1 : 27 May 2010

This paper provides information about Welsh Second Language provision, practitioner training and classroom resources. It goes on to describe levels of attainment and offers an analysis of the current position. It concludes by describing the Welsh-medium Education Strategy and related work that is already in hand to make improvements.

Members are invited to discuss the paper, the issues raised and to comment on the work in hand.

WELSH SECOND LANGUAGE

1. Provision for Welsh Second Language

- 1.1 Welsh was phased in as a compulsory subject for pupils aged 5-14 (Key Stages 1, 2 and 3) in Wales from 1990. From September 1999 onwards, it also became compulsory at age 14-16 (Key Stage 4). With the roll out of the Foundation Phase, Welsh or Welsh Language Development will now be taught to all 3-7 year olds within education. Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) policy is that all pupils should study Welsh 3-16. This means that every pupil who is not studying Welsh as a first language studies Welsh second language. Welsh second language is a 'foundation' subject while Welsh first language, English, Mathematics and Science are 'core' subjects in the curriculum. As with all other subjects in the curriculum, the amount of time given to its study is a matter for local determination by schools.
- 1.2 Assessment is a key aspect of teaching and learning. Practitioners need to assess children's progress so that they can better target their teaching. They need to report on children's progress to parents and the school, and also provide information on children's levels of attainment to their local authority and WAG. The formal assessment arrangements for the Foundation Phase are under development. Within the National Curriculum, schools must assess all 11 year old pupils in the core subjects and Welsh second language at the end of Key Stage 2, and all 14 year olds in all National Curriculum subjects at the end of Key Stage 3. For 14-16 year olds, schools are expected to enter pupils who would benefit from them, for appropriate external qualifications.
- 1.3 With the exception of religious education in schools, there are no compulsory subjects post-16. Welsh and Welsh second language are available as an option at AS Level and A Level. The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification includes a compulsory language module, through which some students choose to continue with their Welsh.

1.4 In terms of offering opportunities for adults to learn Welsh as a second language, the Welsh for Adults programme is one of the largest adult and community learning programmes in Wales, with provisional data for 2008/09 showing 18,220 learners learning the language, compared with 17,570 in 2007/08. WAG steers the Welsh for Adults programme at a strategic level, and co-ordinates it nationally. Six Welsh for Adults centres were established in 2006 to lead on the work of planning, funding and developing provision on the ground, in partnership with third party providers. They are also responsible for ensuring quality and providing training for tutors.

2. Practitioner training

2.1 There is some provision to enhance Welsh second language within basic initial teacher training (ITT). *Cynllun Colegau Cymru* is a Welsh-language programme that is used to teach Welsh as a second language in ITT centres, and is appropriate for trainees who wish to teach in English-medium primary schools. This programme is additional to the standard ITT course and is unaccredited.

2.2 WAG allocates funding to local authorities to fund continuous professional development (CPD) training for practitioners on the delivery of the Foundation Phase. It also has a partnership contract with Trinity University College, Carmarthen (*Geiriau Bach*) and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (*Cam wrth Gam*) to deliver a Welsh-language training course for practitioners working in the Foundation Phase. The *Geiriau Bach* course is held in 17 locations across Wales, and is open to practitioners who are interested in improving their Welsh-language skills. The *Cam wrth Gam* programme trains Welsh-speaking practitioners to Level 3 in Children's Care, Learning and Development.

2.3 Welsh-language CPD training for primary teachers is organised and delivered by the Welsh advisory service of the local authorities. The service is funded through the Better Schools Fund and by the Welsh Language Board. The training is delivered by the *Athrawon Bro*, who are specialist teachers of Welsh and support in particular the teaching of Welsh second language.

2.4 A fact-finding review of the Welsh-language support service to schools provided by the local authorities was commissioned in March 2010. The final report will inform WAG of the type of training delivered locally by the *Athrawon Bro*, and make recommendations on how local authorities could make more cost-effective use of training in the delivery of Welsh-language training in future.

2.5 In January 2010, a Foundation-level sabbatical course was established at Trinity University College in order to improve the Welsh-language skills of primary school teachers, and provide them with the linguistic and methodological skills that they need to teach Welsh as a second

language effectively. The intention is to roll out the course throughout Wales following the pilot phase.

- 2.6 CPD training for secondary teachers of Welsh as a second language is provided by the WJEC through the national inset training programme that is funded through the Better Schools Fund. An annual conference for teachers of Welsh as a second language is included in the programme. The WJEC also provides its own training sessions on KS4 and KS5 qualifications in Welsh second language. The WJEC works in partnership with the Welsh advisory service in the local authorities to provide Welsh second language methodology training locally.
- 2.7 The Welsh for Adults centres produce detailed training plans to ensure the continued professionalization of the tutor workforce. An important element is the delivery of a national qualification designed specifically for Welsh for Adults tutors. WAG also holds an annual national training conference for tutors, which provides an opportunity for tutors from across Wales to share information about the latest developments in the field of Welsh for Adults and receive training on the use of new resources available and on teaching methodologies.

3. Teaching and Learning Resources

- 3.1 Ensuring the availability of a wide range of learning and teaching resources is key to presenting Welsh second language successfully. DCELLS annually convenes a group of teachers to note and prioritise materials to be commissioned, concentrating specifically on satisfying the true needs of practising teachers and lecturers. On average, £360k per year has been invested over the past decade in the development of Welsh second language resources for pupils aged 3-19. Last year, the printed materials generated gross sales of over £100k, with the free access on-line materials on NGfL Cymru also being well used.

4. Levels of attainment

- 4.1 Whilst teaching Welsh second language has enabled some learners to achieve their potential, this is not true in all cases. Concerns arise about levels of achievement in Welsh second language. Commenting on standards in Welsh second language, Estyn's 2008-09 Annual Report states:

In primary schools our inspections have indicated a continued improvement in standards across all subject areas. That includes some improvement in Welsh as a second language although standards in that area remain conspicuously poor relative to other areas.

...standards of work we saw in Welsh as a second language continue to cause concern.

- 4.2 Welsh second language learners are assessed by teachers at the end of Key Stage 3 and this information is collected nationally. In 2009 56% of Year 9 learners had reached Level 5+ in Welsh second language. This is the lowest percentage of all subjects of the curriculum.
- 4.3 At Key Stage 4, full courses and short courses are available for Welsh second language. In 2009, 9,605 learners sat the full GCSE examination, with 70% earning grades A*-C. 11,511 sat the short course GCSE examination, with 45% earning grades A*-C. It is not compulsory for learners to sit an examination at the end of Key Stage 4. The numbers sitting an examination in 2009 represents approximately 65% of the cohort.
- 4.4 Post 16, an AS Level course and A Level course are offered for Welsh second language. In 2009, 609 entrants sat the AS Level examination, with 507 applicants at A Level.
- 4.5 Welsh for Adults provision is accredited by the WJEC or Agored Cymru, ensuring that all learners can achieve credits or full qualifications as recognition for their learning. Qualifications are offered on five levels of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). They are also mapped to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages. It is not compulsory for learners to sit examinations. In 2009, a total of 1991 learners chose to sit the examinations in order to gain full qualifications; 1225 at Entry Level (*Mynediad*); 476 at Level 1 (*Sylfaen*) 221 at Level 2 (*Canolradd*); 58 at Level 3 (*Uwch*); and 11 at Level 4 (*Hyfedredd*).

5 Analysis

- 5.1 Welsh second language provision and outcomes are disappointing in some schools. There are a number of possible reasons for this:
- the subject is not highly valued compared with other priorities (outcomes in Welsh second language are not part of the Core Subject Indicators) and not enough time is allocated in school timetables;
 - teachers lack confidence and linguistic skills;
 - insufficient progression arrangements leading to repetition of the same work and disillusionment amongst pupils, especially between KS2 and KS3; and
 - the current assessment and accreditation systems are not encouraging all pupils to see the worth and relevance of Welsh second language and not every learner aged 15/16 sits an examination or gains a qualification in the subject. Moreover, the GCSE Short Course leads to limited expectations.
- 5.2 Concerning the GCSE Short Course, Estyn noted in its 2007 report:

Only a very small number of pupils who follow the Welsh second language GCSE Short Course make good progress towards becoming fluent Welsh speakers.

Few pupils who follow the short course choose to study Welsh post-16.

Estyn conclude that attainment is low because (of):

- *too many pupils being registered for the Foundation Tier (grades G-C);*
- *a lack of teaching time;*
- *a lack of opportunities to hear and practise the language outside of lessons,*
- *use of non-specialist teachers.*

5.3 There is also a need to further consider the different ways of accrediting Welsh language skills in the post-16 phase, with more focus on using Welsh as a vocational skill.

5.4 A number of different arrangements support the process of teaching Welsh second language in primary and secondary schools, including CPD programmes, language courses for teachers, and preparation of materials. The *Athrawon Bro* services of local authorities have been key in providing a number of these arrangements in the primary sector.

However, often teachers are unable to attend the CPD courses available to them due to budgetary limitations within schools or difficulties in being released from schools. There is also little overall evidence about the efficacy of such training.

5.5 Few primary teachers in the English-medium sector have Welsh second language as their subject specialism and there is a shortage of specialist teachers for teaching Welsh second language at KS3 and KS4. The use of Welsh speakers without training in second language teaching methodology is common. Teachers of other subjects, who are not fluent in Welsh, are also widely used to teach the subject.

5.6 Only limited numbers of post-graduate students choose to study to become Welsh or Welsh second language teachers, and the standard of their Welsh language skills (particularly students who have studied Welsh as a second language themselves) can be variable.

There are important differences in the methodology of teaching Welsh and Welsh second language. However there is concern that the methodological requirements of Welsh second language are not always specifically addressed in the current training available for post-graduate students.

5.7 It is against this background that the Welsh-medium Education Strategy seeks to make step changes and improvements.

6. Welsh-medium Education Strategy

6.1 In April 2010, the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning launched his Welsh-medium Education Strategy, along with the accompanying implementation programme. This outlines a vision for a country where Welsh-medium education and training is an integral part of the education infrastructure. The aim is to ensure that our education system makes it possible for more learners of all ages to achieve a broader range of Welsh language skills, which will enable them to use the language in their personal lives, socially and in the workplace.

6.2 There are 6 Strategic Aims in the Strategy. Aims 3 and 4 are the main aims which will be key to developments in the field of Welsh second language in the coming years:

Strategic Aim 3: To ensure that all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential and encourage sound linguistic progression from one phase of education and training to the next.

Strategic Aim 4: To ensure a planned Welsh-medium education workforce that provides sufficient numbers of practitioners for all phases of education and training, with high-quality Welsh-language skills and competence in teaching methodologies.

6.3 One of the Strategic Objectives under Strategic Aim 3 is *To raise standards in the teaching and learning of Welsh (second language)*, and the implementation programme details the steps which will be taken to realise this objective.

7 Work under development

Foundation Phase

7.1 From the start of the 2011/12 school year, the Foundation Phase will be fully operational across Wales. In schools and settings that do not offer Welsh immersion and Welsh-medium provision, this will involve an emphasis on giving children aged 3-7 the opportunity to hear, see and use Welsh in a range of playing and learning experiences, and to acquire sufficient familiarity with Welsh to encourage further language learning and positive attitudes towards the language. These developments offer a basis for further growth in the 7-11 phase. They also have the potential of enabling some children to transfer to Welsh-medium provision before the age of 7.

The National Curriculum

- 7.2 In 2008, a revised curriculum was introduced. The requirements for Welsh second language at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 have been set out in 'Welsh in the national curriculum in Wales.' The document includes the programmes of study for each key stage, together with attainment targets and level descriptions.
- 7.3 Statutory end of Key Stage 2 assessments in Welsh second language will be collected from summer 2010. Teachers will assess pupil attainment against the level descriptions, and schools will be required to report to parents. Schools may also include this data in their submission to the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 7.4 Teacher assessment at Key Stage 3 has already been subject to external moderation. That process is now being extended to Key Stage 2 for Welsh second language together with the four core subjects. The first external moderation will be held in November 2010 and will roll out to 2013. Clusters of KS2/3 schools will work together to moderate learner profiles in the subject. This work will lead to greater understanding of curriculum levels by teachers, encourage the sharing of good practice, raise expectations and help to bridge between the key stages within clusters.
- 7.5 A new GCSE was accredited in 2009 and courses will be taught for the first time from September 2010. There are two pathways: GCSE Welsh second language and Applied GCSE Welsh second language. A Full Course and Short Course are offered within the two pathways. It is hoped that learners will find these courses more motivating than the current provision.

Post-16 Provision

- 7.6 DCELLS currently works with Sgiliaith and the WJEC to develop *laith ar Waith* units. The purpose of the units is to reward an entrant's competence in providing customer services through the medium of Welsh (with elements of bilingualism). The units are available for first and second language learners, and the intention is to develop and expand the units during the next year, in order to ensure that more learners are rewarded for their Welsh language skills.
- 7.7 Academic research work was commissioned in March 2010 to consider how the way in which the Welsh language is transferred to adults could be improved. The research will review the teaching methodologies currently used to provide Welsh for Adults courses. The final report will offer clear recommendations for the development of the Welsh for Adults curriculum in the future, based on the most recent international research in the field of language acquisition, and full consideration of the specific needs arising in the Welsh for Adults context. It is

anticipated that elements of the work will be relevant in the context of Welsh second language in the national curriculum.

Language Continuum

- 7.8 The current distinction between 'Welsh' and 'Welsh second language' can be an obstacle to meaningful progress in Welsh language skills. However, while a continuum for adult learning would be reasonably straightforward, it is more challenging in the context of pupils and schools. First, a continuum would need to take full account of the complex relationship between linguistic competence and maturity. Secondly, because assessment and examinations results are seen as 'high stakes', it is likely there would be considerable backlash from schools and parents to a single assessment scale in Welsh for all pupils.
- 7.9 These challenges would need to be taken into consideration should a language continuum for the purposes of planning provision and recording attainment be established. The aim would be to facilitate a system of cohesive accreditation across all phases of learning and give learners the necessary impetus to aim for improvement along a progression route. It would also have the advantage of providing employers, and education and training partners, with a readily understood account of the skill levels achieved by the student.
- 7.10 It is intended that further research and modelling work will be undertaken during the coming years to consider the feasibility of introducing a language continuum which would encompass all educational phases.

Quality

- 7.11 From September 2010, Estyn's General Inspection Framework will look at 10 quality indicators under three key questions. There are a range of aspects for each quality indicator. The Welsh language will be one of the indicators in Key Question 1, which schools and providers will be judged against.
- 7.12 The Schools Effectiveness Framework provides the overarching policy for joint working between WAG, local authorities and schools to:
- raise the level of pupils' success;
 - reduce variations between and within schools and
 - reduce the link between success and socio-economic circumstances.
- Welsh-medium and Welsh language provision will be an integral part of the Schools Effectiveness Framework.
- 7.13 In the same way, the Quality and Effectiveness Framework for post-16 education includes consideration of Welsh-medium and bilingual

provision, and provision which contributes to maintaining learners' linguistic skills (first and second language), with specific requirements integrated into the self-assessment guidance given to providers.

8 Further proposals

- 8.1 As part of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy the Welsh Assembly Government is committed to raising standards in the teaching and learning of Welsh second language. This will include identifying best practice, especially at Key Stages 2 and 3, and considering pilot programmes for improving standards.