



Developing pupils' Welsh reading skills from 10-14 years of age

September 2024

The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- ▲ primary schools
- ▲ secondary schools
- ▲ special schools
- ▲ pupil referral units
- ▲ all-age schools
- ▲ independent schools
- ▲ further education
- ▲ independent specialist colleges
- ▲ adult community learning partnerships
- ▲ local government education services
- ▲ teacher education and training
- ▲ Welsh for adults
- ▲ work-based learning
- ▲ learning in the justice sector

Estyn also:

- ▲ reports to Senedd Cymru and provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the Welsh Government and others
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website:

www.estyn.gov.wales.

© Crown Copyright 2024: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the document/publication specified.

Contents	Page
<u>Executive summary</u>	1
<u>Recommendations</u>	3
<u>Introduction</u>	4
<u>Background</u>	5
<u>Standards and attitudes to learning</u>	7
<u>Basic and advanced reading skills</u>	7
<u>Reading aloud</u>	10
<u>Provision and leadership</u>	13
<u>Teaching and learning experiences</u>	13
<u>Leadership and improvement planning</u>	14
<u>How to identify reading as a whole-school priority</u>	16
<u>The role of the literacy co-ordinator</u>	18
<u>Transition plans</u>	20
<u>Communicating with parents</u>	20
<u>Immersion units and Welsh language centres</u>	21
<u>A reading culture</u>	22
<u>Learning environment</u>	22
<u>Pupils' views</u>	22
<u>Activities to promote a reading culture</u>	25
<u>Appendix 1</u>	27
<u>Methods and evidence base</u>	34
<u>Glossary</u>	36
<u>References</u>	37

Executive summary

Following the publication of a report on [pupils' English reading skills from 10-14 years of age](#) by Estyn in May 2023, we set out to produce a report on how Welsh and bilingual schools develop pupils' Welsh reading skills across the curriculum. In autumn 2023, we visited twenty Welsh-medium and bilingual primary, secondary and all-age schools, in addition to a few immersion units, to evaluate pupils' Welsh reading skills across the curriculum in Year 6 and Years 7-9 and look at what schools were doing to develop these skills. Schools were selected based on their size, type, geographical location and socio-economic context to provide a cross-section of schools in Wales. In each school visited, meetings were held with senior leaders, literacy co-ordinators, teachers and pupils. We observed sessions where reading skills were being developed or consolidated. We looked at pupils' work and any documents the schools had on developing reading skills and on transition arrangements. A pupil survey was carried out in the Urdd Eisteddfod in June 2023 and a pupil questionnaire was distributed to those schools within the sample and over two thousand pupils responded. We also drew on evidence from primary, secondary and all-age inspections of schools outside the sample during 2023-2024.

Our report on Welsh reading skills highlights a number of strengths and areas that need to be addressed to ensure improvements. In addition to the examples of good practice in schools, we have included suggestions within each chapter to help schools strengthen their practices in developing pupils' reading skills. The first chapter, '[Pupils' standards and attitudes](#)' focuses on the development of pupils' reading skills across the curriculum and pupils' attitudes to reading. The second chapter has two parts. The first part, '[Teaching and learning experiences](#)' considers the offer provided by schools to strengthen pupils' reading skills whilst '[Leadership and planning for improvement](#)' notes how leaders prioritise reading in their schools. The report also looks at provision within immersion units. The third chapter, '[Promoting a reading culture](#)' describes the way in which effective schools create a reading culture successfully and engage pupils' interest in full. [Appendix 1](#) lists the responses to the pupil questionnaire that was distributed to those schools within the sample and over two thousand pupils responded.

It is unsurprising that the negative impact of the pandemic remains clear on the standard of pupils' Welsh reading skills in general, with a minority of pupils having lost the confidence to communicate and read in Welsh. Nearly all pupils from the sample of schools visited and who responded to our survey understand the importance of reading to support their learning and future life chances. However, for a majority of pupils, their enjoyment of reading decreases from the age of 10 to 14.

Many young people from 10 to 14 years of age used basic reading skills, such as annotating, locating and scanning information successfully to find the main messages and key information. Overall, a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils are making good progress in developing their advanced reading skills than in Years 7-9. This is partly because of the challenges of co-ordinating the progressive development of reading skills consistently across the range of subjects and teachers in the secondary phase.

Our findings show that the most beneficial opportunities to develop reading skills could be seen in Welsh lessons or language sessions and within the humanities subjects. However, the advanced reading skills of a majority of pupils in Years 7-9 did not develop as well due to the lack of purposeful opportunities to develop their reading skills across the curriculum.

Many of the strengths and shortcomings we found in the English reading thematic were also evident in Welsh medium and bilingual schools. Whilst leaders in nearly all schools visited recognised the importance of prioritising the development of pupils' reading skills, often this didn't translate into effective provision across the curriculum, particularly in the secondary sector. Coordinating provision to develop pupils' reading skills was in its early stages in a majority of secondary schools. Leaders in a minority of primary schools and a majority of secondary and all-age schools did not use a wide enough range of evidence to identify the exact aspects that need to be improved and plan relevant actions. They were over-reliant on data only, rather than combining it with first-hand evidence of pupils' progress from lessons and books. Only a minority of leaders monitored and evaluated the effect of reading strategies across the school robustly enough. There were very few reading schemes or platforms available through the medium of Welsh compared to English to help schools to monitor pupils' progress in reading.

Our findings show that very few clusters of primary and secondary schools planned together effectively to develop pupils' reading skills from Year 6 to Year 7. This was also the case in many all-age schools, which teach pupils from both the primary and secondary phases. A barrier to this planning is the size of the cluster and the fact that a number of primary schools are within the catchment area of more than one secondary school or, at times, are cross-county.

The immersion units and Welsh language centres we visited worked effectively in developing the Welsh skills of pupils who transfer from English medium- education at a late stage. Teachers used subject terminology and vocabulary correctly and consistently which allowed pupils to develop as fluent speakers. These pupils made swift and successful progress in their Welsh reading skills.

Many primary schools and a few secondary schools promoted reading for pleasure successfully. However, overall, experiences to promote reading outside the classroom were seen to have decreased significantly since the pandemic, particularly in the secondary sector.

Recommendations

Leaders in schools should consider how to:

- Strengthen opportunities for pupils to develop a variety of reading skills, including advanced reading skills, in subjects across the curriculum in addition to Welsh
- Use a variety of self-evaluation activities to effectively monitor and evaluate pupils' reading skills to identify clearly which aspects of reading need to be improved or strengthened
- Plan strategically and structure opportunities appropriately to increase pupils' interest, resilience and confidence when reading in Welsh

Local authorities should consider how to:

- Facilitate transition arrangements between primary and secondary schools and remove any barriers to ensure that schools are able to work together beneficially to develop pupils' reading skills

The Welsh Government should consider how to:

- Create opportunities for Welsh authors to engage with schools and talk to pupils about the type of books they would like to read in Welsh
- Work with partners such as 'Adnodd' to improve and increase the availability of Welsh-medium resources, including non-fiction books

Introduction

This thematic report is written in response to a request for advice from the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language in his remit letter to Estyn for 2023-2024. The report describes the way in which Welsh-medium and bilingual schools develop pupils' Welsh reading skills across the curriculum in Year 6 in primary schools, Years 7, 8 and 9 in secondary schools and from 10-14 years of age in all-age schools. It considers how well pupils' reading skills are developing, provision within schools to develop reading and the 'reading culture' promoted by schools.

We considered what happens during the transition period from the primary sector to the secondary sector and how well schools plan for continuity and progression in pupils' reading skills from Year 6 to Year 7. We also looked at provision in a few immersion units and Welsh language centres across Wales to see how pupils who transfer from English-medium education at a late stage develop their Welsh reading skills. These pupils have very positive attitude to learning which impacts significantly on their progress. In addition, we carried out a pupil survey in the Urdd Eisteddfod in June 2023 and asked pupils in the sample to complete a questionnaire with eleven diverse questions about their reading habits. Over two thousand pupils responded to this questionnaire and their responses are included in [Appendix 1](#).

This report follows on from our report on [developing pupils' English reading skills from 10-14 years of age \(Estyn 2023\)](#), which was published in May 2023. It is intended for Welsh Government, headteachers and staff in schools, local authorities and regional consortia. It may also be of interest to parents and initial teacher education partnerships. The report includes cameos of good practice from primary, secondary and all-age schools and supplementary materials that will be of use to schools to support the promotion and enriching of pupils' reading skills. We hope that the report will contribute to professional discussions about how to improve pupils' Welsh reading skills across Wales.

This report draws on evidence from visits to a selection of Welsh-medium and bilingual primary, secondary and all-age schools across Wales. It also uses information gathered from inspections during 2023-24. It does not evaluate provision for pupils with specific reading difficulties or those who need intensive additional support. We did not have the capacity during this thematic review to investigate these important aspects of provision.

Background

In a statement to the Senedd on 16th November 2021, the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles, outlined Welsh Government's plans to improve children's oracy and reading skills, with the main aim of reducing the attainment gap between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers. The Minister stated that improving reading skills was an important priority for the government and announced a support package worth £5m for reading in schools in Wales, with all learners being given a book to keep. The Minister stated that the government and its partners were exploring further opportunities to support parents to encourage their children to read regularly and engage in stories.

[Curriculum for Wales](#) (Welsh Government, 2022a) has been implemented in all primary and secondary schools since September 2023. A core part of Curriculum for Wales and one of the three mandatory cross-curricular skills is literacy. The [Literacy and Numeracy Framework](#) (LNF) (Welsh Government, 2022b) replaces the previous framework that was introduced in 2008 and made statutory in 2013. Although the new framework is not statutory, it is available as a supporting guidance. The reading element of the new framework outlines the expected standards at each progression step in three broad aspects of reading skills: phonological and phonemic awareness; reading strategies; and understanding, response and analysis. There are guidelines and suggestions on how to develop reading skills within each Area of Learning and Experience.

As an organisation, we have placed a large focus on reading in our various published reports. The Chief Inspector's [annual report](#) (2022-2023) (Estyn, 2024) identified that standards of reading were good in many primary schools. Many primary schools used evidence based- strategies to improve pupils' reading skills. In the most successful cases, these approaches were applied consistently by teachers and supported by effective professional learning for staff. By Year 6, many pupils read with appropriate fluency and a majority summarised and evaluated suitably challenging texts.

In secondary schools, many pupils had sound basic reading skills and they could locate facts and present information successfully. Only a very few had difficulties with basic reading skills. A few pupils used more advanced techniques confidently, such as synthesis. It was identified that a minority of pupils were not able to analyse or evaluate texts confidently in lessons outside Welsh and English. In a majority of schools, pupils were not given sufficiently meaningful opportunities to develop these skills across the curriculum.

In our all-age schools, many pupils, by Year 6, read confidently and fluently from a suitable range of texts, using intonation well. Secondary age pupils, to varying degrees, analysed texts and used inference and deduction, in addition to identifying different points of view. However, pupils' advanced reading skills had not developed as well. This was often linked to a lack of purposeful opportunities to read in lessons other than language lessons.

The latest annual report explains that the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pupils' literacy skills remains and that schools are continuing to respond to this by focusing on pupils' reading skills across the school although with varying degrees of success.

The report [Welsh language acquisition \(Estyn, 2021\)](#) provides an overview of how effectively Welsh-medium and bilingual settings and schools teach and support the acquisition and development of the Welsh language skills of pupils between 3 and 11 years old. The report identifies that many pupils in Key Stage 2 use an increasing range of strategies to develop their comprehension when reading independently; however, they do not always develop a broad enough range of advanced reading skills. In Welsh-medium providers, a majority of pupils do not discuss books and anthologies originally written in Welsh confidently enough.

Overall, in Welsh-medium and English-medium schools, pupils' enjoyment of reading decreases during their time at secondary school.

The report on [Welsh Immersion Education - Strategies and approaches to support 3-11-year-old learners \(Estyn, 2022\)](#) states that many practitioners stimulate the interest of young pupils by reading stories and giving them access to a range of suitable materials. These practitioners provide valuable opportunities for pupils to read increasingly challenging texts as they gain confidence during the early immersion period. Most practitioners who support latecomers plan beneficial activities for them to develop their reading skills.

In November 2023, the Welsh Government published a report that looked at [attainment patterns in reading \(Welsh Government, 2023\)](#), using data at a national level from the personalised assessments conducted from 2018-19 to 2022-23. These are online assessments designed to help to support the development of reading skills. The assessment was introduced during the 2019-20 academic year, but as there was not sufficient data available that year due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, it is not included in the analysis. The annual personal assessments for pupils in Years 2 to 9 provide schools with information about the reading skills of individual pupils and the strengths and areas for improvement in these skills. The personal Welsh reading assessments focus on how well pupils understand text in Welsh and whether they can form an opinion about what they read. Data shows that the average attainment of pupils in Welsh reading in 2022-23 is lower than in 2020-21, with an 11-month difference in attainment. In comparison with the results for reading in English, the attainment for pupils in English Reading in 2022-23 was lower than it was in 2020-21, equivalent to 4 months' lower attainment.

To address how successfully pupils are developing their Welsh reading skills, we decided that this report would follow the same lines as the report on pupils' English reading skills: '[Developing pupils' English reading skills from 10-14 years of age](#)' (Estyn, 2023).

Standards and attitudes to reading

Following discussions with pupils during our thematic visits, nearly all stated that they understand the importance of reading to support their learning and future life chances. They understand that reading is an important part of their education and see it as an integral part of daily work and life. Although not all pupils enjoy reading, they see the value of developing their reading skills. Overall, our visits showed that the negative impact of the pandemic remains clear on the standard of pupils' Welsh reading skills, in general. A minority have lost the confidence to communicate and read in Welsh and, as a result, the vocabulary of these pupils is limited.

Basic and advanced reading skills

This report refers to pupils' 'basic' and 'advanced' reading skills. Definitions of these can be found in the [glossary](#).

The evidence gathered from our visits to schools, together with our inspection findings in 2023-24 shows that many pupils have sound basic reading skills. When given an opportunity to do so, many pupils are able to find or locate information and retrieve it from texts appropriately. They skim successfully to find the main messages and key information and annotate the text purposefully. Through appropriate opportunities, many pupils read for understanding successfully and use basic reading strategies to find relevant information.

When beneficial opportunities arise, a majority of pupils in Year 6 and a minority of pupils in Years 7-9 develop their advanced reading skills successfully. They gather information from a variety of sources competently and begin to combine information. As a result, they can draw sensible conclusions when discussing contemporary topics such as homelessness, obesity and religion. The most able pupils can evaluate information from texts effectively to support their learning across the curriculum. They read extended pieces in detail to discuss and analyse style. These pupils interpret and draw accurate conclusions about the tone and bias of contrasting texts. When they are given an opportunity to do so, a majority of pupils read confidently from different media, such as images or graphs. They are able to find messages that are implicit in these texts correctly, analysing the findings logically and clearly. For example, they analyse picture sources of children in industry in their history lessons.

In language sessions in primary schools and Welsh lessons in the secondary sector, in the main, most pupils benefit from a range of beneficial opportunities to develop their basic and advanced reading skills. Pupils are also given effective opportunities to develop their reading skills within the humanities. However, our findings show that a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils develop their reading skills well compared with pupils in Years 7-9. Overall, a high proportion of primary schools provide regular focused opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading skills. This is less common in secondary schools. Teachers' expectations and the support provided to develop pupils' reading skills are more varied. On the whole, opportunities for pupils to develop their advanced reading skills across the curriculum, outside Welsh

lessons, are limited. Pupils in Year 7-9 tend only to use their retrieval skills in subjects other than Welsh and the humanities through fill-in-the-blank exercises and very basic reading comprehension tasks.

Toolkit for the different types of basic and advanced reading skills that pupils need to develop and master across the curriculum

Basic or Advanced Reading Skills Toolkit

Depending on the nature / challenge of the text



Reading aloud

- Basic and Advanced
- Reading aloud
 - Presenting text aloud by ensuring that the meaning, tone of voice and expression are clear and correct



Locating facts

- Basic
- Searching for relevant information from the text
 - Identifying key points / information in a reading passage



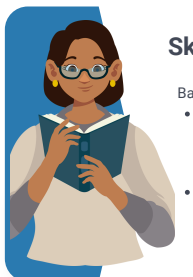
Annotating texts

- Basic
- Highlighting relevant points from the text
 - Highlighting or underlining a specific piece of text



Filling in the blanks

- Basic
- Inserting the key words that are missing in a reading passage



Skimming & scanning

- Basic
- Skimming means reading quickly to gain a general overview of the text. There is no need to read every word, but rather choose key words and sentences
 - Scanning means reading quickly to find specific facts. Text must be looked over quickly, line by line, looking for key words, dates, names or numbers



Reading for understanding

- Basic and Advanced
- The ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning



Researching a range of sources

- Basic and Advanced
- Considering evidence and the reliability of sources, weighing up different points of view



Retrieval strategies

- Basic
- Retrieving and summarising information from the text and putting it in a logical order

Together, we can make a difference. This toolkit identifies the different types of basic and advanced reading skills that pupils need to develop and master across the curriculum.

DEVELOPING PUPILS' WELSH READING SKILLS FROM 10-14 YEARS

Basic or Advanced Reading Skills Toolkit

Depending on the nature / challenge of the text



Inference & deduction

Advanced

- Understanding information or points of view that are not stated clearly and drawing a conclusion
- Creating hypotheses based on information and suggestions within the text and from background information, where relevant



Critical reading

Advanced

- Assessing the power and validity of an opinion or argument



Analytical reading

Advanced

- Considering and analysing the author's use of language



Appreciating & analysing content & style

Advanced

- Analysing authors' writing techniques
- Recognising the skills and craft of the writer when using ideas, techniques and effects



Conscious reading

Advanced

- Considering and discussing the writer's point of view rather than the behaviour or point of view of a character in a text



Evaluating texts

Advanced

- Looking at the quality, effect and reliability of reading passages



Gathering information

Advanced

- Pulling together information from the background of the piece, ideas, connections, conclusions and summaries and collating/combining them to show a complete and original understanding of the text
- When synthesising/collating, pupils' thinking changes and evolves as they read the text



Comparing & contrasting information

Advanced

- Looking for similarities and differences between two (or more) reading passages in terms of ideas, concepts, items, places etc.
- Comparing looks for similar or common features between two or more texts, ideas or concepts
- Contrasting identifies and emphasises the differences between two or more texts, ideas or concepts

Together, we can make a difference. This toolkit identifies the different types of basic and advanced reading skills that pupils need to develop and master across the curriculum.

Reading aloud

When opportunities arise, many Year 6 pupils and a majority of secondary pupils read aloud confidently and fluently. They vary their tone of voice effectively to align with the requirements of the reading passages in question. More able pupils read with conviction and succeed in conveying meaning very skilfully. In a few schools, pupils benefit from using a variety of strategies to increase their confidence when reading aloud, in addition to useful strategies to develop and enrich their vocabulary. As a result, pupils in these schools are more willing to risk pronouncing and saying unfamiliar words and to read aloud independently. However, a minority of pupils across the age range were seen to have difficulties reading aloud and express themselves awkwardly because they do not understand the meaning or intent of the piece. The resilience of these pupils to persevere in reading longer and more complex texts is weak.

Our findings show that pupils in most primary schools read aloud regularly in guided reading groups or joint reading activities. The enthusiasm of these pupils is evident as they read aloud and this has a significant impact on their enjoyment of reading. However, only a few secondary schools provide consistent methods and opportunities to support pupils to read aloud and they therefore miss valuable opportunities to develop this skill. As a result, a minority of secondary-age pupils are less confident compared to Year 6 pupils when reading aloud.

Here are some useful strategies that pupils benefit from, and which improve their reading aloud skills.

DEVELOPING PUPILS' WELSH READING SKILLS FROM 10-14 YEARS

Reading Aloud Skills Strategies



Independent reading

Pupils read on their own



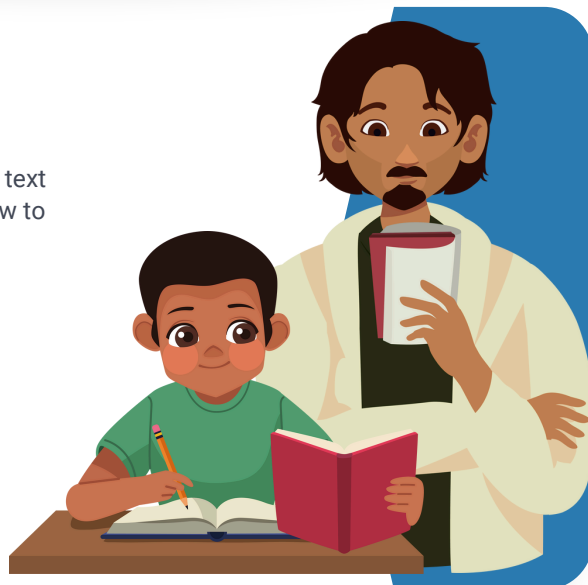
Reading partner / reading in pairs

All pupils work with a partner and take advantage of opportunities in lessons to read and discuss with a partner. One pupil reads aloud while the other pupil listens attentively. Studies show that working with a strong reader helps pupils who find reading difficult.

Joint reading

Teachers and pupils read the same text together. This helps pupils learn how to

- pronounce difficult words
- boost their confidence
- increase their vocabulary
- improve fluency when reading



Together, we can make a difference. Here are some useful strategies that pupils benefit from, and which improve their reading skills.

DEVELOPING PUPILS' WELSH READING SKILLS FROM 10-14 YEARS

Reading Aloud Skills Strategies



Class discussions following reading

Start with a class discussion to check pupils' understanding and knowledge of what they have read. Prompts similar to the below can be used:

- Question them
- Encourage them to identify the things they do not understand so you can clarify or explain
- Ask a series of thought-provoking questions and promote class discussion
- Divide the class into smaller groups to promote extended conversations between pupils.

Guided reading / Reciprocal reading

Groups of three or four pupils read a passage together and then work together to find meaning in a text. Each pupil has a specific role and the task needs to be scaffolded carefully so that the pupils can make predictions, ask questions, explain key points and summarise successfully. It develops reading and critical thinking skills, in addition to speaking and listening skills.



Together, we can make a difference. Here are some useful strategies that pupils benefit from, and which improve their reading skills.

Provision and leadership

Teaching and learning experiences

From our thematic visits, we found that schools understood clearly the importance of improving pupils' skills and developing their confidence to read fluently and intelligently in a positive and encouraging environment. Nearly all primary schools and many secondary schools we visited, promoted the importance of developing pupils' reading skills across the curriculum for staff and pupils. Many schools provided suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their basic reading skills, although only a minority of secondary schools did so across the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs). The most popular tasks were:

- reading for understanding
- gathering and locating information
- researching information
- annotating texts
- identifying the key points

Developing pupils' vocabulary is also an important priority in many schools, and teachers (since the lockdown period) place a great focus on consolidating a range of general words and subject vocabulary. Lists of key or subject-specific words are often displayed around the classroom walls or on worksheets or pupils' booklets. In the best schools, teachers regularly draw attention to, repeat and explain these words when they occur in text and get pupils to practise using them in meaningful contexts. Although pupils in a majority of the schools visited had dictionaries to hand to help them develop their vocabulary, only a few teachers modelled the process of searching and finding a word to enable pupils to use them confidently and independently.

In order to encourage and enrich pupils' reading skills, a few schools have created original materials that develop pupils' reading skills alongside promoting interest and understanding of their local community.

Ysgol Gymraeg Llangennech has developed a unit of work on the Beasley family and their importance to the local area and across Wales as a whole. It uses Angharad Tomos' novel, *'Darn Bach o Bapur'* as a prompt and plans various reading activities that stimulate pupils to enrich their knowledge and understanding of local history alongside their reading skills.

The most beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills, including their advanced reading skills, lie in language sessions and Welsh lessons in particular and, at times, within the humanities Area of Learning and Experience. In these sessions, teachers:

- ask effective questions to confirm understanding

- recall pupils' previous learning and encourage them to think more deeply
- plan coherent tasks
- use a variety of attractive and beneficial resources to support learning
- ask incisive and probing questions that stimulate pupils to broaden their understanding and justify their views
- challenge pupils to search for and find information independently and, as a result, pupils make consistent progress
- encourage pupils to analyse and evaluate opinions
- ask a series of thought-provoking questions and promote class discussion
- divide the class into smaller groups to promote extended conversations between pupils

As a result of the above, the impact of effective teaching on pupils' skills was seen within sessions and in pupil's work. In the most successful lessons, pupils are given robust opportunities to practise and strengthen their skills to:

- read analytically
- weigh up advantages and disadvantages from different points of view
- compare and collate information
- evaluate texts
- infer and make personal deductions

However, overall, opportunities to develop advanced reading skills across the curriculum and, in particular, outside Welsh lessons, are weak. In these cases, planning is not careful enough to ensure that pupils make progress in their reading skills and there is often a lack of challenge in tasks. For example, teachers plan many simple tasks, such as repeated and closed reading comprehension, fill the blanks or annotation and quizzes or wordsearches. These are tasks that keep pupils busy and quiet, rather than tasks that improve their understanding and skills. In addition, although teachers encourage pupils to use the internet when completing independent research on a subject or theme, there is an over-reliance on a specific online search engine to find this information. As a result, pupils are not directed often enough to reading sources from Welsh-medium websites, books or articles.

Leadership and planning for improvement

Developing pupils' reading skills is nearly always a priority in the school improvement plans we looked at. Where leadership is at its best, leaders accurately identify strengths in terms of reading across the school, along with the features that need to be improved and this is clear in school development plans. Through self-evaluation activities, they see the need for, and importance of, prioritising reading. They use a range of basic tests, information gathered by teaching staff and transition information to identify those pupils who need support with their basic reading skills. In the best schools, the professional development programme for staff demonstrates successful co-operation across the age range to enable information to be cascaded effectively and used successfully in the classroom. These leaders evaluate the quality and effect of provision continuously and make suitable changes, where appropriate.

A majority of schools use data from recognised reading tests, including the national reading tests or item level data, to plan useful interventions. Most schools provide appropriate interventions to support individual pupils' reading skills, where necessary. The most effective schools tailor interventions carefully according to their knowledge of the areas within reading that are in need of attention. They then monitor pupils' progress and evaluate provision carefully, refining where necessary for pupils who need support with their reading skills. However, a minority of schools do not tailor reading interventions effectively enough to meet the individual needs of the pupil.

Ysgol Gymraeg Llangennech reflects on and evaluates teaching and the curriculum carefully. Leaders use all the information they gather skilfully to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement in terms of reading. For example, they analyse reading data in great detail and use the findings to plan improvements to provision and tailor interventions to align with pupils' needs. Leaders are ready to change and adapt, where necessary, so that the work helps to raise pupils' reading standards. As a result of this work, the school knows its pupils very well and is able to assist them skilfully and sensibly, where appropriate. '*Sesiynau sgleinio*' ('Polishing sessions') have a positive effect on pupils' confidence when reading and discussing in Welsh.

Most primary schools and around half of the secondary schools in the sample indicated that they had invested in at least one published reading scheme or platform but that the Welsh-medium offer was limited. In addition, these reading schemes or platforms are mainly for primary school pupils. When they use them, a majority of primary schools and a very few secondary schools monitor the process of implementing and evaluate the effect of their chosen reading scheme or platform to keep track of pupils' reading progress.

Our findings from visits and our recent inspection reports show that a minority of primary schools and a majority of secondary and all-age schools do not have a clear enough picture of what needs to be done to strengthen pupils' reading skills. Although quality assurance activities enable leaders to gather valuable first-hand evidence, they do not evaluate pupils' reading standards rigorously or precisely enough during classroom observations or book scrutiny. This is reflected in the development plans, with the aspect of strengthening pupils' reading skills often unclear and weak, particularly in secondary schools. Developing pupils' reading skills often lies within the general strategies to improve pupils' literacy. Actions are not always specific enough to enable leaders or staff to introduce improvements. There is also a tendency for the actions to be based entirely on outcomes and tests rather than a wider range of evidence. They do not give enough consideration to the findings of various self-evaluation activities, particularly when scrutinising work and observing teaching and learning. They also do not evaluate the effect of their work on improving pupils' reading skills in sufficient detail, including the impact of any relevant professional learning programmes.

Toolkit for identifying reading as a whole-school priority

DEVELOPING PUPILS' WELSH READING SKILLS FROM 10-14 YEARS

Reading Skills Self-Evaluation Toolkit



Consider evidence from a range of sources, which include:

- Lesson observations
- Learning walks
- Scrutiny of work
- Pupil's voice
- Professional dialogue with leaders
- Analysis of relevant data (national tests/item level data)

Through the above self-evaluation process, evaluate how well pupils:

- Read aloud
- Locate facts
- Annotate texts
- Fill in the blanks
- Skim and scan
- Read for understanding
- Research a range of sources
- Use information-retrieval strategies
- Infer and deduce
- Draw conclusions
- Read critically
- Read analytically
- Appreciate and analyse content and style
- Read consciously
- Compare and contrast information
- Gather information
- Evaluate texts

Together, we can make a difference. This toolkit can be used to identify reading skills as a whole-school priority.

DEVELOPING PUPILS' WELSH READING SKILLS FROM 10-14 YEARS

Reading Skills Self-Evaluation Toolkit



During this activity, ask the questions:

- What are the strengths in terms of reading skills?
- What reading skills need to be developed?
- What is the quality and challenge of the reading materials that are already available?
- Where are opportunities being missed?
- What is the best practice shared?
- What training is needed and by whom?



Support teachers to define and plan opportunities to develop effective and valuable reading skills in their lessons



Produce your whole-school priority based on your findings and ensure that it is clear, relevant and incisive



Evaluate the impact of the actions for securing improvement

Together, we can make a difference. This toolkit can be used to identify reading skills as a whole-school priority.

The role of the literacy co-ordinator

Our findings show that a majority of literacy co-ordinators work appropriately with other departments and teachers to identify purposeful opportunities to plan and develop reading skills across the school. A minority of co-ordinators work effectively with senior leaders to identify strengths and aspects of reading in need of improvement. These co-ordinators take part in self-evaluation activities and use findings from recognised tests effectively to gain a firm picture of the situation. As a result, they work with the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) and the Welsh lead to plan suitable interventions to ensure that pupils receive relevant and purposeful support. A few provide valuable training for staff to ensure that there are opportunities across the curriculum to develop pupils' reading skills alongside enriching their understanding of subjects. They also evaluate provision regularly and adapt, where necessary.

Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen prioritises developing reading in all aspects of school life. It is a clear individual priority in the school improvement plan and a team of leaders meet regularly to maintain the momentum of the work. The school's internal website shares good practice by showing examples of reading work, provides reading training for staff and keeps a record of all of the books in the school. The enthusiasm among staff and pupils promotes the importance and value of reading, and strategies to enrich pupils' reading skills have been embedded across the curriculum.

The work of co-ordinating reading has begun to develop in a majority of secondary schools since the lockdown periods. Overall, provision to develop pupils' reading skills is not planned cohesively enough across the curriculum to ensure appropriate progress in learning. As a result, pupils are not given meaningful enough opportunities to develop their reading skills across the curriculum. Our findings from the thematic visits and inspection reports show that strategic leadership to develop these skills is not successful enough. For example, in a few cases, co-ordinators are not given enough time to complete their roles effectively or they do not participate fully in the school's self-evaluation activities. As a result, they aren't able to see the full picture of strengths and areas for improvement to address what needs to be improved.

Toolkit to identify the effective aspects of the role of the literacy co-ordinator to develop pupils' reading skills

DEVELOPING PUPILS' WELSH READING SKILLS FROM 10-14 YEARS

Reading Skills Co-ordinator Toolkit



- Play a prominent role in self-evaluation processes to identify strengths within provision for developing reading skills and the areas of improvement.
- Identify the opportunities that already exist to develop reading and apply them in subjects across the curriculum.
- Identify opportunities that are being missed within some subjects or areas and work with those teachers to strengthen their provision.
- Analyse data from various sources to identify the areas within reading that need to be strengthened and the pupils who need additional support.

- Provide appropriate interventions that are tailored carefully to align with pupils' needs.
- Provide specific and appropriate training to meet the needs of each department / area of learning.
- Promote and foster a reading culture that provides valuable experiences for pupils across the school.
- Evaluate provision for reading regularly to ensure that pupils benefit from opportunities to strengthen their reading skills.



Together, we can make a difference. This toolkit can be used to identify the effective aspects of the role of the literacy co-ordinator to develop pupils' reading skills

Transition plans

On the whole, transition plans between primary and secondary schools are organised and structured carefully. They meet as clusters each term and promote the development of well-being effectively.

As part of the transition process from primary to secondary, nearly all primary schools forward Year 6 pupils' results from standardised reading tests to the secondary schools. In many clusters, this information is supported by additional information about pupils' progress in formal meetings between Year 6 teachers and secondary school transition co-ordinators, although the main focus is usually on pupils with additional learning needs. Very few schools plan to develop pupils' reading skills in a structured way from Year 6 to Year 7. One barrier to this is often the size of a cluster and the fact that there are a number of primary schools within the catchment area of more than one secondary school or, at times, are cross-county.

Our findings suggest that a minority of secondary schools make limited use of reading test results from primary schools and conduct a range of additional basic tests on pupils moving from Year 6 to Year 7. Leaders say that they use tests that are the same for all pupils to obtain a wide range of information about the literacy skills of all pupils, including those who come from schools outside the school's catchment area or in other local authority areas.

Communicating with parents

From our thematic visits, the majority of schools communicate with parents about the importance of reading. They share useful and practical materials and reading lists with parents so that they are able to help their children improve their reading skills. The best schools also offer additional support and provide resources to overcome any linguistic barriers and ensure that pupils from non-Welsh-speaking homes are able to receive the same support as pupils from Welsh-speaking homes.

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontybrenin places great importance on working with parents and the local community to increase pupils' confidence in reading through the medium of Welsh. The school welcomes parents to seek and ask for information and strategies to help their children develop as confident Welsh readers. On the school's website, there is a series of resources so that parents can help their children to improve their reading skills. These include up-to-date and stimulating video clips and links for parents to be able to provide their children with help and support to develop their reading skills. The school also organises specific open evenings for parents across the school years and, here, staff present useful workshops on promoting reading. This contributes well to parents' awareness of the school's expectations in terms of each individual's reading development. The school feels that this is a good way of raising the confidence of pupils and parents when reading in Welsh. Parents get to be part of their child's reading journey together with the school and are able to ensure that pupils benefit as much as possible from the experience and enjoyment of reading.

Immersion units and Welsh language centres

Staff in the immersion units and Welsh language centres that were visited develop the Welsh language skills of pupils who transfer from English-medium education at a late stage effectively. Very quickly, these pupils develop as fluent speakers of the language who are able to study the whole curriculum through the medium of Welsh.

The immersion unit at **Ysgol Glan Clwyd** helps pupils who transfer from English-medium education at a very late stage to develop their Welsh language skills. These pupils receive valuable support and encouragement to ensure that they can take full advantage of the school's curriculum and life and develop into fluent Welsh speakers. They develop as confident speakers, fluent readers and produce extended written work which enables them to join the mainstream classes early in their school life.

The enthusiasm, encouragement and resources within the units we visited are strong and the reading strategies that are used are tailored carefully to ensure that pupils have full access to a Welsh-medium curriculum.

The **Gwynedd Immersion Units** (one of which is located on the **site of Ysgol Bro Idris**) use reading effectively as one of the main immersion strategies to learn by rote and model language patterns. The use of reading is essential within the language units and in the immersion structures used. Patterns and vocabulary are visual and reading is used as a basis for gesture work and acts as a central part of immersion. Teachers model everyday language through the use of repeated dialogues which enable pupils to recognise patterns and sentence structures. By reading and learning dialogues by rote, pupils experience success by being able to perform the dialogue, which boosts confidence and pride.

A reading culture

During our visits, many primary schools and a few secondary schools were seen to be working diligently to develop a positive reading culture. They promote an ethos of enjoyment in reading across the school by delivering a variety of activities and valuable experiences for pupils. For example, there are opportunities to enjoy guided reading sessions, in addition to beneficial opportunities and stimulating and entertaining spaces where pupils can develop to become independent readers. Pupils' opinions play an important part in guiding these activities and these schools listen to pupils and adapt activities to promote a reading culture. In addition, leaders within these schools recognise the importance of reading and it is one of their objectives in their development plans.

Learning environment

In most primary schools, the learning environment includes stimulating and entertaining spaces where all groups of pupils can access reading books and comfortable places to enjoy them. There are attractive and purposeful reading areas which promote reading as an enjoyable activity. Around half of the secondary schools have kept and updated their libraries to include a variety of paper and digital reading material. Where school library provision is at its most effective, it is a welcoming place, contains a good and varied depository, is supervised and used by a variety of classes and subjects on a daily basis. It is also home to homework clubs and is a haven for pupils to read and study during break and lunchtimes.

Y Pen Dwfn, which is the library at **Ysgol Syr Henry Richard**, was established at the beginning of 2022. *Y Pen Dwfn* was named by a pupil, as the library stands on the old site of the deep end of the old swimming pool, and the logo was also designed by a pupil. It is a metaphor for the depth and freedom that can be found in enjoying a good book and also a good library. The 'library officers', who are pupils at the school, requested books and contributions from the public and this was a great success. These officers work with specialists from Ceredigion Libraries to organise and categorise the books. These officers continue to develop the area to promote reading for pleasure and a positive reading culture.

During our visits, a number of secondary schools had converted their libraries into classrooms due to lack of space. Others had closed their libraries due to lack of funding to be able to purchase and update their depository of materials and appropriate staffing to take care of the resource.

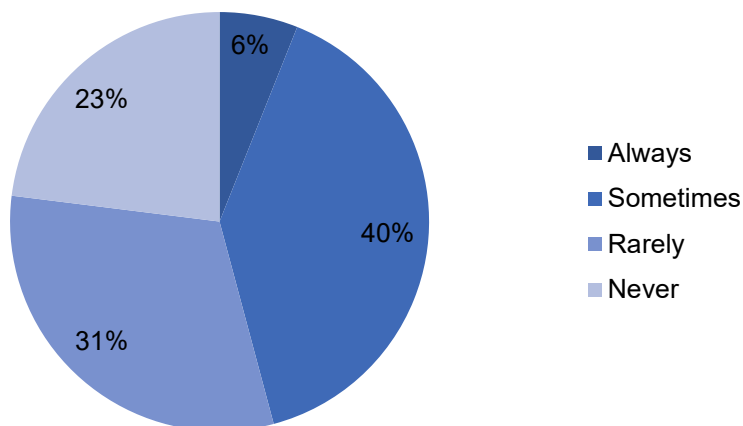
Pupils' views

As part of this thematic report, we asked pupils in the sample to complete a questionnaire about their reading habits. Over two thousand pupils responded to this questionnaire. We also held meetings with groups of pupils in Year 6-9 during our visits. Here is a summary of the findings from the questionnaire.

Overall, Year 6 pupils showed the greatest enthusiasm towards reading and valued the interesting range of reading texts that are available to them in Welsh, in terms of books and digital resources. Enthusiasm towards reading decreased among older pupils, with more than half the pupils questioned losing interest in reading, overall.

Many pupils demonstrated appropriate knowledge of Welsh authors. However, they were more familiar with English authors as they usually read versions of their work that have been translated into Welsh. Among secondary-age pupils, most were of the opinion that there was not a wide enough range of Welsh books available compared to English, particularly non-fiction books. Pupils had mixed feelings about the translations of English books. Around half of pupils felt that translations of some of the main English novels were difficult to read, that the flow and imagination of the story was lost in translation, and that the vocabulary was also alien and unfamiliar. On the other hand, half the pupils disagreed, stating that they enjoy the translations because they are familiar with the story in English and are therefore more willing to read it in Welsh. Overall, most primary and secondary pupils preferred to read English books. The main reasons for this were the unfamiliar vocabulary and dialect and the lack of choice of interesting subjects in Welsh.

Survey analysis: Proportion of pupils who responded to the question 'How often do you read Welsh books independently?'



Here are some of the comments made by the pupils in the questionnaire and in our discussions in the schools we visited.

DEVELOPING PUPILS' WELSH READING SKILLS FROM 10-14 YEARS

Reading Skills Pupil Reactions

Here are some of the comments made by the pupils in the questionnaire and in our discussions in the schools we visited.



"More non-fiction books are needed in Welsh!"



"A website including all Welsh books by age would be so useful."



"There aren't enough books to appeal to Year 8 and 9 in Welsh!"



"Why don't Welsh authors visit us at school?"



"Why don't Welsh authors get the same publicity as English authors?"

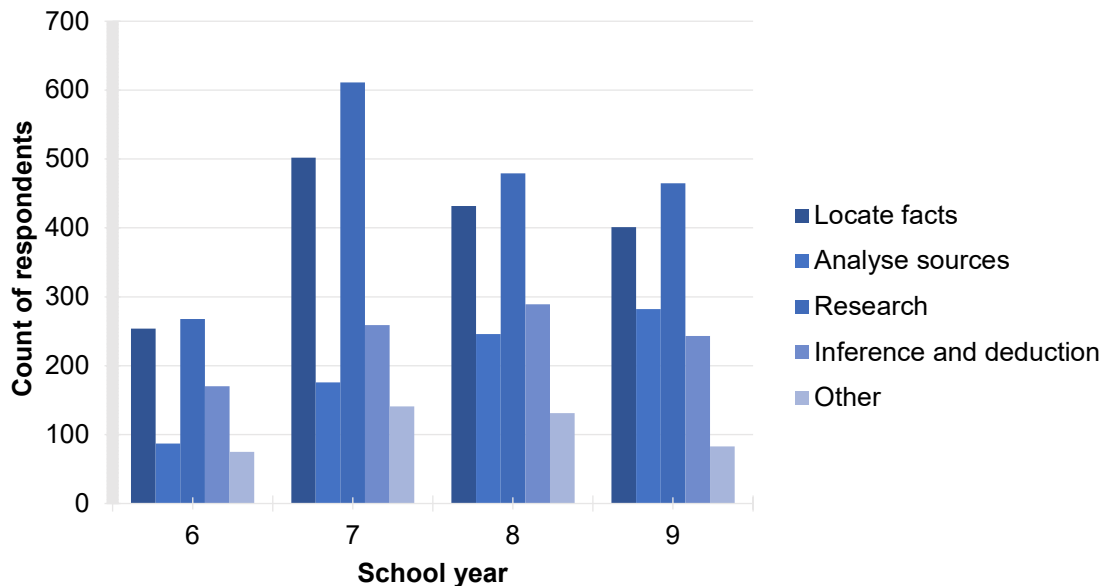


"Why are Welsh books in one small corner of our libraries?"

Most pupils indicated that they develop their reading skills in subjects across the curriculum, mainly in the humanities. Many noted that research tasks and locating facts were completed the most in subjects outside Welsh.

Most pupils indicated that they develop their reading skills in subjects across the curriculum, mainly in the humanities. Many noted that research tasks and locating facts were completed the most in subjects outside Welsh.

Analysis of survey responses: Proportion of pupils who responded to the question 'What kind of tasks do you do with the reading material?'



Findings from our visits note that many schools purchase and use digital reading resources to promote the enjoyment of reading and ensure full and equal access for all pupils to improve their reading skills at school and at home. In discussion with pupils during our visits, nearly all preferred reading for pleasure from a hardback or paperback book rather than reading from a digital device. Most felt that they did not concentrate as well when reading from a digital device and did not become engrossed in the flow of the story as easily.

Activities to promote a reading culture

From our thematic visits, many primary schools recognised to need to create meaningful, varied and imaginative activities and use purposeful strategies to equip pupils to be fluent readers.

A new Welsh and English Reading Record has been created at **Ysgol Syr Henry Richard** to relaunch a campaign to promote reading. The Reading Record, 'Y Silff Lyfrau' ('The Bookshelf'), is more appealing, more accessible and more attractive. The 'Y Silff Lyfrau' is there to collect all of the books the pupils have read throughout the year to give purpose and aim to the reading and develop a sense of ownership.

Evidence from inspection and thematic visits suggests that most primary schools and a majority of secondary schools use some morning sessions or tutor sessions to promote reading activity. A minority of secondary schools structure the staffing carefully to ensure that pupils are given an opportunity to participate beneficially in a

purposeful reading activity. However, a majority of secondary schools do not monitor the value of these reading sessions effectively enough. Although there are boxes of books and reading materials in classrooms, they do not monitor pupils' reading development and there is a lack of consistency from teachers when delivering the activity. It is then difficult to measure the value and effect of such sessions.

Many primary schools and a minority of secondary schools provide numerous experiences for pupils to encourage them to read outside the classroom. For example, they organise visits to the Hay Festival or invite authors to the school to read and discuss novels. However, due to budget constraints, these experiences have decreased, and few workshops are held and few authors visit schools since the pandemic. These activities are likely to be only available to small groups of pupils.

Many primary schools and a minority of the secondary schools visited work well with the local community to promote reading. For example, volunteers come in on a weekly basis to read with pupils and a large number of pupils gain a great deal of satisfaction from a weekly trip to the local library. Schools in Gwynedd make effective use of the support of the Gwynedd Library Service to secure additional funds for the school to purchase resources.

Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy is developing an effective working relationship with the wider school community to promote the benefits of reading. The school has a collaboration project between the local bookshop, Llanrwst library and the Books Council. The school organises regular visits to the shop and the library to provide opportunities for pupils to see the range of Welsh reading books that are available. Pupils are also given an opportunity to use their Books Council vouchers during the visit to the shop and get to meet authors, such as Bethan Gwanas, while they are there. As a result, pupils take pride in the opportunity to read contemporary and current Welsh books and raise their awareness of their local community.

Appendix 1

Findings of the pupil questionnaire

Developing Welsh reading skills – Survey (Questions with closed responses)

Question 1 – What school year are you in?

Among the 2,238 of respondents to this survey, 36% were in Year 7, 26% were in Year 9, 25% were in Year 8 and 13% were in Year 6.

Chosen response	Year group	Percentage of responses	Total responses
1	6	13%	300
2	7	36%	810
3	8	25%	554
4	9	26%	574
answered			2238
did not answer			0

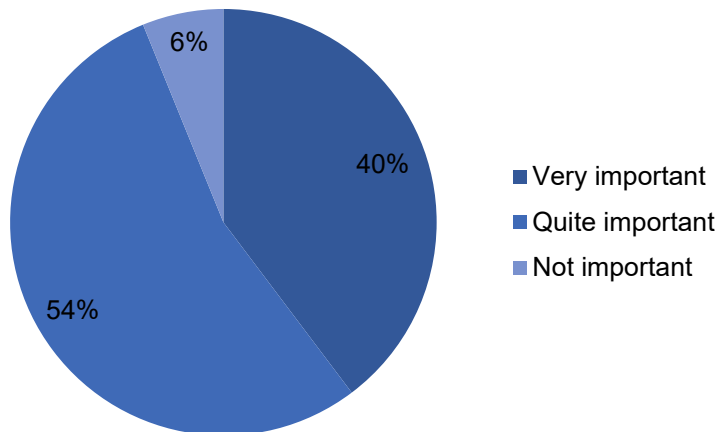
Question 2 – Do you think reading is important?

2,228 learners responded to this question.

More than half the respondents (54%) thought that reading is 'Quite important'. Forty per cent (40%) of respondents thought that reading is 'Very important' and only 6% thought that reading is 'Not important'.

- A majority (60%) of Year 6 learners who responded to this question thought that reading is 'Very important'.
- More than half (57%, 57%, 58%) of respondents in Years 7, 8 and 9 thought that reading is 'Quite important'.

Do you think reading is important?			
Chosen response		Percentage of responses	Total responses
1	Very important	40%	885
2	Quite important	54%	1206
3	Not important	6%	137
answered			2228
did not answer			10



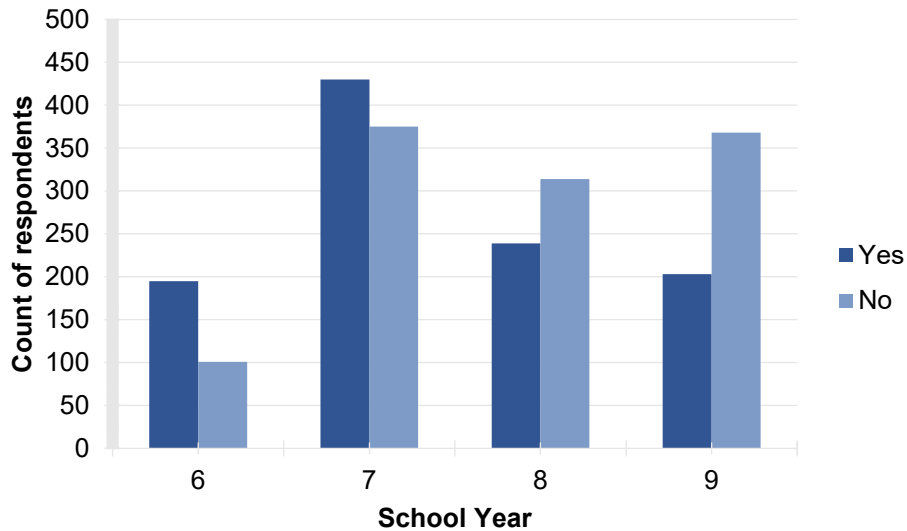
Question 3 – Do you enjoy reading Welsh books?

2,225 learners responded to this question.

More than half the respondent (52%) chose 'No', that they do not enjoy reading Welsh books. Forty-eight per cent (48%) chose 'Yes', meaning that they enjoy reading Welsh books.

A majority of respondents in Year 6 (66%) and around half of Year 7 (53%) responded by saying 'Yes' to this question and more than half of respondents in Year 8 (57%) and a majority of respondents in Year 9 (64%) responded by saying 'No' to this question.

Do you enjoy reading Welsh books?		
Chosen response	Percentage of responses	Total responses
1 Yes	48%	1067
2 No	52%	1158
<i>answered</i>		2225
<i>did not answer</i>		13



Question 4 – What is your favourite Welsh book that you have read at school over the past year?

2,108 learners responded to this question.

The most common response to this question was for respondents to state that they did not have a favourite Welsh book. The most common authors referred to by respondents who did not name a book are listed below, in alphabetical order. At least 5 different learners referred to all of the authors or their publications. The authors of the original texts are listed, although many of these publications will have been translated into Welsh by another author.

Huw Aaron	Elidir Jones	Tom Palmer
Enid Blyton	Tudur Dylan Jones	Sioned Wyn Roberts
Guto Dafydd	T. Llew Jones	Manon Steffan Ros
Roald Dahl	Jeff Kinney	J K Rowling
Huw Davies	Sioned Lleinau	Alex T Smith
Hywel Griffiths	Caryl Lewis	Angharad Tomos
Bethan Gwanas	Sian Lewis	Mary Vaughan
Gwenno Hughes	Anni Llŷn	David Walliams
Meleri Wyn James	Gwyn Morgan	Casia Wiliam

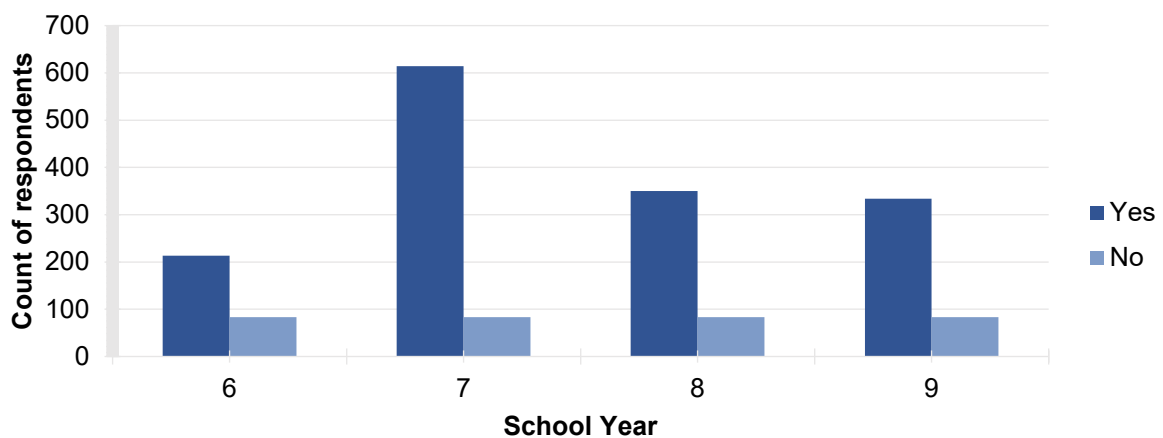
Highly popular titles, mentioned by at least 20 respondents, included ‘Matilda’, ‘Charlie and the Chocolate Factory’, ‘Fi a Joe Allen’, ‘Diary of a Wimpy Kid’, ‘Twm Clwyd’, ‘Horrid Henry’, ‘Crwt yn y Cefn’, ‘Asiant A’, ‘Pen Dafad’, ‘Y Bancsi Bach’, ‘Jac’, ‘Darn Bach o Bapur’, ‘Sw Sara Mai’, ‘Tudur Budur’ and ‘Harry Potter’.

Question 5 – Do you read translations of English books?

2,216 learners responded to this question.

A majority of the respondents chose ‘Yes’, that they read translations of English books, and 32% chose ‘No’.

Do you read translations of English books?		
Chosen response	Percentage of responses	Total responses
1 Yes	68%	1511
2 No	32%	705
If no, why?		694
<i>answered</i>		2216
<i>did not answer</i>		22



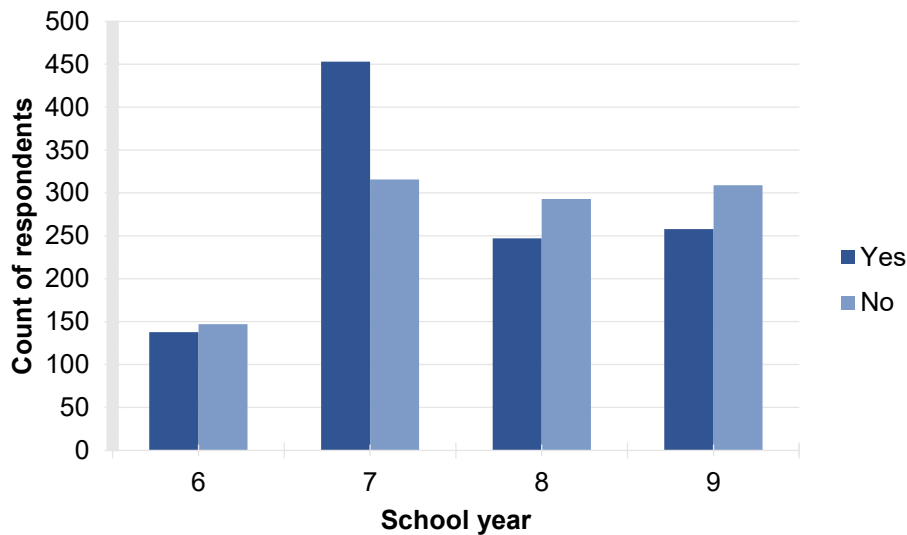
Question 6 – Is the book just as good in Welsh?

2,161 learners responded to this question.

More than half the respondents (51%) chose 'Yes', that the book is just as good in Welsh. Just under half of the respondents (49%) chose 'No'.

Of the 1,511 respondents who said that they read translations of English books in the previous question, 1,485 learners responded to question 6. A majority of these learners (62%) expressed that the book was just as good in Welsh.

Is the book just as good in Welsh?		
Chosen response	Percentage of responses	Total responses
1 Yes	51%	1096
2 No	49%	1065
If no, why?		860
<i>answered</i>		2161
<i>did not answer</i>		77



Question 7 – How often do you read Welsh books independently?

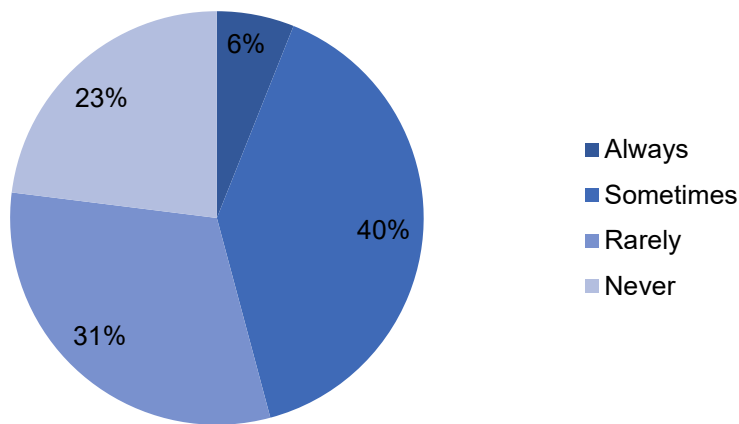
2,232 learners responded to this question.

A minority (40%) of the respondents chose that they read Welsh books independently 'sometimes', 31% answered 'rarely', 23% chose 'never' and only 6% chose that they 'always' read Welsh books independently.

Of the learners who responded in Year 6, many (70%) chose that they read Welsh books independently either 'Always' or 'Sometimes'. In Year 7, just over half (51%) of respondents chose either 'Always' or 'Sometimes'.

Of the learners who responded in Year 8, more than half (59%) chose that they read Welsh books independently either 'Rarely' or 'Never'. In Year 9, a majority (70%) also chose that they read Welsh books independently either 'Rarely' or 'Never'.

How often do you read Welsh books independently?		
Chosen response	Percentage of responses	Total responses
1 Always	6%	135
2 Sometimes	40%	888
3 Rarely	31%	695
4 Never	23%	514
answered		2232
did not answer		6



Question 8 – Are there some things that cause obstacles for you when reading Welsh books?

This is an open-ended question. Two thousand and twelve (2,012) learners responded to this question. The main obstacles when reading Welsh books were:

- the unfamiliar vocabulary and dialect
- the lack of choice of interesting subjects in Welsh

Question 9 – Are you given an opportunity to read on electronic devices, such as an electronic tablet, at school?

2,213 learners responded to this question.

More than half the respondents (55%) chose 'Yes' for this question, meaning that they are given an opportunity to read on electronic devices, such as an electronic tablet, at school. Most of the respondents (94%) in Year 6 chose 'Yes' as their answer, as did more than half (53%) of the respondents in Year 7. However, 'No' was the answer of more than half the respondents in Years 8 and 9 (55% and 52% respectively).

Are you given an opportunity to read on electronic devices, such as an electronic tablet, at school?		
Chosen response	Percentage of responses	Total responses
1 Yes	55%	1223
2 No	45%	990
If you answered 'yes', when and what for?		927
answered		2213
did not answer		25

Question 10 – Which subject do you read Welsh material in (other than Welsh as a subject)?

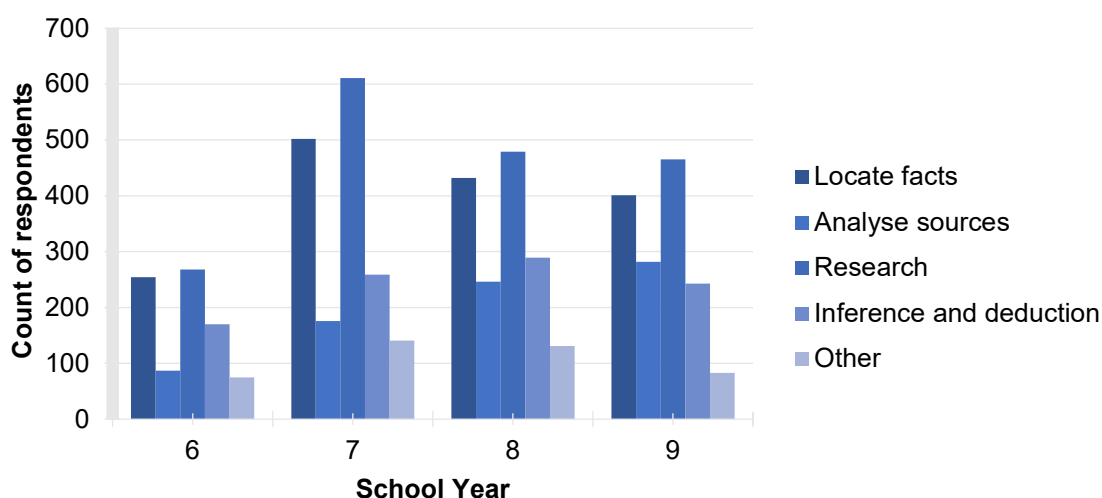
This is an open-ended question. Two thousand and ninety-nine (2,099) learners responded to this question. Several commented that they read Welsh material in all subjects except English and foreign languages. When the subjects were named, the most common were humanities (history and religious education, most specifically), science and drama. Some also noted that they read during registration.

Question 11 – What kind of tasks do you do with the reading material? Tick all that apply.

2,170 learners responded to this question.

When asked what kind of tasks do you do with the reading material, many respondents (84%) chose 'Research' and 73% chose 'Locate facts'. Less than half of respondents (44%) chose 'Inference and deduction' and 37% chose 'Analyse sources'. The answers were similar across the age groups.

What kind of tasks do you do with the reading material? Tick all that apply.		
Chosen response	Percentage of responses	Total responses
1 Locate facts	73%	1589
2 Analyse sources	37%	791
3 Research	84%	1823
4 Inference and deduction	44%	961
5 Other (please note):	20%	430
	answered	2170
	did not answer	68



Methods and evidence base

This report draws on evidence from visits to a sample of seven primary, nine secondary and four all-age schools, in addition to evidence from inspections conducted during 2023-2024. Schools were selected based on their size, geographical location and socioeconomic factors. The report focuses solely on pupils' Welsh reading skills. Estyn published a separate report in May 2023 on how schools develop pupils' English reading skills across the curriculum in English-medium schools.

In total, HMI or peer inspectors visited 20 schools. In order to gather evidence of how clusters of schools planned to develop pupils' reading skills during the transition period, we visited four primary schools along with their catchment secondary schools. We also visited four all-age schools where we gathered evidence on learning and provision for pupils aged 10-14 years. We also visited two immersion units and one Welsh language centre.

In each school visited, inspectors:

- observed sessions in Year 6 classes or a variety of lessons across the curriculum in Years 7-9
- met with small groups of pupils in Years 6, 7, 8 and 9 to discuss their attitudes to reading and how their schools are helping them to develop their reading skills
- interviewed the literacy co-ordinator to discuss the strategies the school is using to develop pupils' reading skills
- interviewed the transition co-ordinator to discuss provision during the transition period
- scrutinised pupils' work
- scrutinised any literacy / reading toolkit and transition plan, if the school had these documents, and school development plans
- met with the headteacher at the beginning of the day to confirm arrangements and at the end of the day to provide feedback on the main findings from the visit

The relatively small sample of schools that we were able to visit for this thematic review meant that we also used evidence from inspections of primary, secondary and all-aged schools outside the sample, which were conducted in 2023-24, when evaluating pupils' learning. We have also considered a range of national and international research on developing pupils' literacy and reading skills which is noted in the background to the report. However, the main findings draws on evidence from the thematic visits, the information gathered from inspections during the academic year 2023-24 and the survey and questionnaire completed by pupils across Wales.

Estyn would like to thank the following schools that supported this thematic review:

School	Description	Authority
Ysgol Corn Hir	Primary	Anglesey
Ysgol Gynradd Tudweiliog	Primary	Gwynedd
Ysgol Bro Gwydir	Primary	Conwy
Ysgol Gymraeg Llangennech	Primary	Carmarthenshire
Ysgol Gynradd Penygroes	Primary	Carmarthenshire
Ysgol Berllan Deg	Primary	Cardiff
Ysgol Garnedd	Primary	Gwynedd
Ysgol Bro Teifi	All-age	Ceredigion
Ysgol Henry Richard	All-age	Ceredigion
Ysgol Bro Idris	All-age	Gwynedd
Ysgol Bro Preseli	All-age	Pembrokeshire
Ysgol Y Strade	Secondary	Carmarthenshire
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Myrddin	Secondary	Carmarthenshire
Ysgol Bro Dinefwr	Secondary	Carmarthenshire
Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen	Secondary	Gwynedd
Ysgol Tryfan	Secondary	Gwynedd
Ysgol Glan y Môr	Secondary	Gwynedd
Ysgol Uwchradd Glan Clwyd	Secondary	Denbighshire
Ysgol Cwm Rhymni	Secondary	Caerphilly
Ysgol Bro Edern	Secondary	Cardiff

Glossary

Basic reading skills	Basic reading skills are the skills that enable pupils to understand texts. Basic reading skills enable pupils to begin to make sense of texts and include decoding words, building fluency and comprehension and acquiring vocabulary. Mastering basic reading skills enables readers to increase their reading speed, comprehension and general vocabulary
Advanced reading skills	Advanced reading skills enable pupils to read a variety of materials, including complex literary and non-literary texts with confidence and understanding. They include strategies that pupils can use to develop a fuller understanding of the text, encourage them to engage with the text and question their thoughts. Advanced reading skills include applying information, finding connections, reading between the lines and handling information to find new ways of discovering answers to problems
Guided reading / Reciprocal reading	Pupils read texts in groups, usually with others of similar ability, either silently or aloud
Independent reading	Pupils read on their own
Reading aloud	Reading aloud for others to hear
Reading culture	An environment where reading is championed, valued, respected and encouraged successfully so that many pupils enjoy reading for pleasure as well as to learn

Numbers – quantities and proportions

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

References

- Department for Education (2012) Research evidence on reading for pleasure. London: DfE. Available online: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c18d540f0b61a825d66e9/reading_for_pleasure.pdf
- Department for Education (2023) *The London: DfE* Available online: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65830c10ed3c34000d3bfcad/The_reading_framework.pdf
- Estyn (2018) *Welsh in key stage 2 and key stage 3 in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools*. Cardiff: Estyn Available online: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-07/Welsh%20in%20key%20stage%202%20and%20key%20stage%203%20in%20Welsh-medium%20or%20bilingual%20schools%20En.pdf>
- Estyn (2021) *Welsh language acquisition: How Welsh-medium and bilingual settings and primary schools develop learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills*. Cardiff: Estyn Available online: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2022-01/Estyn%20Welsh%20language%20acquisition%20E%2810%29.pdf>
- Estyn (2022) *Welsh Immersion Education: Strategies and approaches to support 3 to 11-year-old learners*. Cardiff: Estyn Available online: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/document-page/20964/contents>
- Estyn (2023) *Developing pupils' English reading skills from 10-14 years of age*. Cardiff: Estyn. Available online: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2024-02/Developing%20pupils%E2%80%99%20English%20reading%20skills%20from%2010-14%20years%20of%20age.pdf>
- Estyn (2023) *Support for Welsh in Initial Teacher Education*. Cardiff: Estyn. Available online: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2023-09/Support%20for%20Welsh%20in%20Initial%20Teacher%20Education_0.pdf
- Estyn (2024) *Annual Report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2022-23*. Cardiff: Estyn Available online: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/annual-report/2022-2023#thechiefinspector%E2%80%99sannualreport2022-23>
- Senedd Research (2021) *Reading between the lines: Welsh children's literacy skills*. Cardiff: Welsh Parliament. Available online: [Reading between the lines: Welsh children's literacy skills \(senedd.wales\)](https://www.senedd.wales/reading-between-the-lines-welsh-childrens-literacy-skills)
- Topping, K, & Clark, C. (2023) *What and how kids are reading: 2023 edition* Available online: <https://renaissance.widen.net/view/pdf/priipdurj/UK-What-Kids-Are-Reading-report-2023.pdf?t.download=true&u=zceria>

Welsh Government (2008) *National Literacy and Numeracy Framework*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Available online: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-2008/national-literacy-and-numeracy-framework-curriculum-for-wales-2008-version/>

Welsh Government (2019) *Reading and numeracy assessments*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Available from: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/reading-and-numeracy-assessments/>

Welsh Government (2021) Oral Statement: Children's Reading and Oracy. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Available online: <https://www.gov.wales/oral-statement-childrens-reading-and-oracy>

Welsh Government (2022a) *Curriculum for Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Available online: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales>

Welsh Government (2022b) *Literacy and Numeracy Framework*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Available online: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/cross-curricular-skills-frameworks/literacy-and-numeracy-framework/>

Welsh Government (2023) *Patterns in reading and numeracy attainment: from 2018/19 to 2022/23*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Available online: <https://www.gov.wales/patterns-reading-and-numeracy-attainment-2018-19-2022-23.html>