



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on
Learn Welsh Glamorgan

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by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
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This report is also available in Welsh

About Learn Welsh Glamorgan

Learn Welsh Glamorgan (LWG) was established in 2016 as a result of sectoral restructuring and the establishment of the National Centre for Learning Welsh (NCLW). LWG is one of 10 of the Centre's providers and is responsible for providing Welsh language courses for adults in the Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tudful areas and online. LWG is located within the Faculty of Life Sciences and Education and the Director of LWG is accountable to an acting line manager who represents the Dean of the faculty. All of the provider's staff are employed by the university.

LWG has approximately 1,560 individual learners over a three-year period, with numbers rising to 1,831 by July 2024. In terms of total learners, LWG has approximately 2,600 learners over a three-year period, with numbers rising to 3,126 learners by July 2024. By October 2024, numbers have risen to 2,121 individual learners. The provision receives £996,067 annually through a core grant from the NCLW. In addition to mainstream provision, LWG is responsible for providing supplementary projects, for example 'Codi Hyder' within Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board, 'Welsh at Home' which works with families and schools, and provides 'Work Welsh' courses for various organisations such as the Royal Mint and Careers Wales.

A comprehensive programme of online and face-to-face courses is provided which vary in duration and intensity. A programme of supplementary courses and learner support events is also provided to facilitate the journey from learner to active speaker.

Seventeen core members of staff are employed, which include 5 full-time tutors, 1 0.5 tutor, 1 fractional tutor, and there are 37 associate tutors. The Director of LWG is responsible for leading provision both strategically and operationally.

Summary

Learn Welsh Glamorgan (LWG) has increased the number of learners who attend courses significantly since its last inspection in 2018. This growth is due partly to the number of courses that are now online. Many LWG learners learn online and around half of learners live outside the provider's geographical area.

An increase in the costs of hiring external venues has risen significantly over recent years and this has led to a reduction in opportunities to learn in community venues. However, the provider works purposefully to maintain provision to meet the needs of learners, employers and the local community. A notable example of this is the way in which leaders, since the end of the pandemic, have responded positively to the wishes of learners by beginning to bring intensive courses back to the university site and run them as face-to-face courses.

The provider has succeeded in creating a close-knit and caring community, whether face-to-face or online, with the educational well-being of the learners at the heart of its work. Nearly all learners enjoy learning very much and demonstrate strong motivation to learn the Welsh language.

Most tutors have high expectations of their learners. They challenge learners to make the best possible progress and develop their language skills, particularly their oracy, stretching them and encouraging them to create language independently.

The provider facilitates very valuable opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language purposefully in different contexts through an effective range of activities and by promoting learners' participation in events outside formal lessons. As a result, many learners use the Welsh language extremely beneficially outside their lessons and make strong progress towards becoming active speakers.

Leaders monitor performance and assure quality effectively which, in turn, has a very positive effect on teaching and learning. They also work diligently with the senior managers of the University of South Wales towards developing and expanding the provider's contribution towards the university's linguistic planning and training both internally and externally.

Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the provider continue to improve:

- R1 Ensure consistency in the good practice of supporting learners to improve their pronunciation
- R2 Continue to develop the provider's strategic role to contribute fully to language planning and training within the University of South Wales

What happens next

Progress against any recommendations will be evaluated during the subsequent full inspection of the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

Estyn will invite the provider to prepare a case study on its work in relation to providing opportunities for learners to refine their language skills and learn more about culture, history and current affairs through literature and poetry.

Main findings

Teaching and learning

The number of learners who attend Learn Welsh Glamorgan courses has increased significantly since its last inspection. Nearly all tutors are passionate about their work and convey their love for the language to learners which, in turn, has a positive influence on their attitudes and linguistic progress. Nearly all learners demonstrate a strong motivation to learn Welsh and appreciate the benefits of bilingualism.

Tutors foster productive working relationships with their learners and create a stimulating environment where learners are willing to use their language without fear of making mistakes. As a result, many learners across the levels in face-to-face and online classes make strong progress on their language journey towards becoming active speakers. They recall previous learning successfully and build on this to create increasingly fluent language in line with their level.

Most tutors have high expectations of their learners. They challenge learners to make the best possible progress and develop their oracy by encouraging them to use extended language and vary their syntax and vocabulary continuously. Through planning carefully, they set firm objectives for the lessons and explain tasks clearly, by modelling and repeating beneficially before asking learners to complete the tasks themselves. They ensure a brisk and lively pace to lessons which motivates learners to concentrate and, by using various questioning techniques skilfully, they stretch and encourage them to create language independently. Nearly all learners listen attentively and respond appropriately in line with their level, and many speak Welsh spontaneously with each other and the tutor.

During online lessons, most tutors use chat rooms purposefully to provide opportunities for learners to practise and develop their oracy and reading skills in pairs and small groups. They use a wide and stimulating range of resources and technology to keep the learners' interest alive.

Most tutors use the target language beneficially. However, a very few tutors do not use the target language effectively enough and use English unnecessarily. They tend to ask learners to translate too much from Welsh to English. A majority of tutors give appropriate attention to correct pronunciation, but this does not happen consistently enough with a minority of tutors. The pronunciation of a few learners, particularly learners on online courses, is weak.

Many entry and foundation level learners are beginning to develop their understanding of the structures of the language soundly. They are able to question each other meaningfully and personalise answers appropriately and express opinions purposefully. Many learners across the levels use varied syntax and verb tenses increasingly appropriately when discussing in line with their level. By higher level courses, they succeed in developing linguistic understanding and agility, for example when they turn sentences from the impersonal to the passive.

Most entry level learners develop their reading skills and begin to write simple sentences correctly, on the whole. Many read texts and write sentences that have been personalised or converted to the third person successfully. A few have difficulty distinguishing between the past and the imperfect tenses. By foundation level, many learners begin to try to write increasingly at length. A minority of learners at this level use the definite article incorrectly and use the wrong mutation within patterns from time to time.

Most intermediate level learners succeed in writing at length. In the best cases, written work is ambitious and a few learners try to introduce idioms that enrich their work. A few learners continue to have difficulty using '*bod*', '*mae*' and '*yw*' correctly.

Most gloywi level learners express themselves orally very confidently and fluently. They question each other effectively and pronounce the sound of the language very naturally when using varied and comprehensive vocabulary. They vary syntax easily and combine their oracy, reading and writing skills when reading and discussing articles, literature and poetry, and interpret poems skilfully by discussing poetic techniques such as alliteration. In the best cases, these learners read and respond in writing to poems such as '*Ymadawiad Arthur*' by T. Gwynn Jones in a mature and probing manner.

Spotlight: Producing cultured active speakers

In response to demand from learners, the provider has established '*O'r gair i'r gerdd*' sessions, which provide excellent opportunities for learners to nurture their poetry skills and discuss Welsh poetry through the medium of Welsh. All members of the class develop their knowledge and understanding of the language to the best of their ability during these sessions. Leaders value the opportunity to work creatively through the medium of Welsh. As a result, they develop to become cultured active Welsh speakers.

Many tutors assess learners' attainment continuously and provide useful oral feedback which helps learners to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They pay consistent and beneficial attention to grammar, for example by learning how to use irregular verb stems when creating sentences in different tenses. Many tutors provide useful written feedback. They assess thoroughly and provide clear and comprehensive feedback that motivates learners to develop their skills further. In the best cases, a few tutors encourage learners to compete in literary or poetry competitions in local eisteddfodau.

Many tutors encourage learners beneficially to take advantage of opportunities to use the language. As a result, around half of learners attend supplementary courses such as '*Sadyrnau Siarad*' and additional provision such as reading clubs.

Many learners feel that learning the Welsh language has helped them to participate in activities through the medium of Welsh. Opportunities to raise money and to steward in the National Eisteddfod in Rhondda Cynon Taf have been a valuable experience for learners. The *Côr y Dysgwyr* choir, which was established for the Eisteddfod, is going from strength to strength. Here, learners enjoy singing and socialising through the medium of Welsh in venues across the area. The provider works closely with a number of partners, such as the local 'mentrau iaith' Welsh language initiatives. For example, current and former learners of Learn Welsh Glamorgan lead the '*Cam Ymlaen*' walking club and a history club with Menter Bro Ogwr.

On the whole, many learners across the levels use the Welsh language purposefully and proactively outside formal lessons with members of their families, at work, in leisure groups or on social media. These learners gain confidence beneficially and develop increasing fluency in a wide range of situations.

Well-being, care, support and guidance

Learn Welsh Glamorgan is a close-knit and caring community where the tutors' knowledge of their learners is a strong feature. Nearly all tutors ensure a positive and stimulating environment and, as a result, nearly all learners show enthusiasm and enjoy their learning. Learners feel safe and know whom to approach if they need support or advice.

There is a wide range of courses and the provider offers valuable and impartial advice on choosing the course that is most appropriate for learners, including which subsequent courses to follow. There is appropriate flexibility to move between courses if the course is not suitable or if circumstances change.

There is strong support for learners who need financial support, for example contributions towards the cost of childcare, travel and technical equipment, and learners are informed about how to apply for this. Because of the discounts available, no mainstream learners are paying the full fee. In addition, a number of free courses are offered, such as Welsh at Home courses, reading clubs and Sadyrnau Siarad.

The provision has tight tracking systems to monitor attendance centrally. Staff work hard to ensure that learners attend lessons and continue with their learning. Tutors contact learners directly if they are absent from sessions to support them to complete the work that they have missed. The development officer provides purposeful mentoring sessions for learners who are at risk of leaving a course to support them to return to class. As a result, around a quarter of those learners have continued with their learning.

The provider offers valuable guidance and support to promote learners' well-being and personal development. The provider has allocated a development officer to be responsible for supporting learners who have identified that they have additional learning needs (ALN). Their role is to connect and discuss the needs with learners individually to support tutors to tailor provision for them.

There is strong provision for learners with more advanced skills through specific courses. For example, in the informal '*O'r gair i'r gerdd*' learning session, learners are

given an opportunity to analyse and discuss poetry and write poems themselves. Learners also write articles for a monthly column in the Cynon Valley local community newspaper, '*Clochdar*'.

Tutors ensure that most learners make effective use of the 'Using my Welsh' scheme that is provided by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Tutors and learners set targets to understand the requirements and support needed by learners to progress. The targets challenge learners to use the Welsh language outside the classroom regularly and are reviewed each term. Tutors are passionate about maintaining learners' interest by encouraging them to take advantage of various activities that are organised for them to ensure that learners have rich experiences when learning Welsh. This includes quizzes, Welsh gigs and Sadyrnau Siarad. In cases where learners feel that they lack the confidence to attend social events for the first time, the learner support officer makes arrangements to meet them at the setting.

Providers offer regular opportunities for learners to express their opinions formally and informally through questionnaires and learner panel discussions. The provider has established a robust plan to seek learners' views by inviting each class to elect a representative at the beginning of the course. Nearly all feel that the provider acts on learners' opinions; for example, following a request from learners, regular coffee mornings were organised in areas such as Aberdare and Mountain Ash, where they were not held previously.

The provider's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leading and improving

Senior leaders at Learn Welsh Glamorgan have established a clear vision for provision which aligns with the priorities of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The vision is based firmly on creating opportunities for learners from all backgrounds to learn the language, increasing the number of Welsh speakers and promoting awareness of the Welsh language and culture.

The provider plans strategically to meet the needs of learners, employers and the local community by offering a wide range of online and face-to-face courses at all levels across the region. This provides beneficial opportunities for learners to access classes that develop their skills effectively.

The provider has had to adapt to the fact that around half of its learners come from outside its geographical area. Leaders recognise the importance of holding face-to-face classes in communities across the region, while also responding to the wishes and practical needs of learners who prefer to learn online. Recently, the provider has responded to learners' wishes to bring intensive courses back to the university site. This has proved very popular among learners and has provided additional valuable opportunities for learners to acquire language in natural, face-to-face situations that would not be possible through online provision.

As a result of rising costs, the provider has had to cut back on the number of community venues it uses to hold courses. However, the provider strives to make

efficient use of the venues that are still being used to promote the Welsh language in communities across the region.

In addition to community provision, the provider also offers Welsh courses in the workplace and Work Welsh schemes to various organisations, in addition to higher education employees and staff at the local health board. The provider receives a specific Work Welsh grant to employ a tutor based at the health board, with the aim of ensuring beneficial opportunities for staff to develop their Welsh language skills so that they can use them in the workplace and with patients. The provider also runs Welsh at Home courses, which develop parents' confidence to use the Welsh language naturally with the family.

Through careful forward planning and effective pastoral care, the provider has increased the number of learners who attend courses significantly over the past three years. Many learners complete their courses and continue to learn on subsequent courses. A minority of eligible learners choose to sit the WJEC's Welsh for Adults examinations and nearly all are successful. Learners' progress and satisfaction are positive.

The provider facilitates opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language purposefully in different contexts through an effective range of activities and by promoting learners' participation in events outside formal lessons. The provider plans conscientiously to ensure that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to courses and to provide effective support for learners with additional learning needs.

Leaders manage the budget effectively and have thorough monitoring arrangements. Leaders scrutinise expenditure regularly to ensure that the service is sustainable and provides value for money. The core funding is used in line with the National Centre's guidance, namely that at least 85% of it is spent on teaching and learning.

The provider is based within the Faculty of Life Sciences and Education at the University of South Wales. There is a beneficial working relationship between the provider and the university, which provides effective support in areas such as human resources and finance. The university top-slices 15% of the provider's funding to pay for these central services.

A leader within the faculty acts as a line manager to the head of the provider and, together, they contribute purposefully to self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures. They work closely together when discussing the provider's role within the university's structure. They are also considering how to expand the provider's contribution within the university's strategic linguistic plans and training, although this work is continuing to develop.

The service's leaders ensure that there are appropriate levels of staff to deliver the range of lessons available at different levels. The provider, in co-operation with the National Centre, provides a useful range of resources, including digital equipment, for tutors to facilitate and enrich learning.

The provider has worked with the National Centre to address the recommendations of its previous inspection. As part of its quality assurance processes, leaders

consider a wide range of evidence to identify the provision's strengths and areas for development. The provider identifies its priorities clearly and divides them into sensible actions with a suitable timeline and milestones to measure progress over a specific period.

Performance monitoring and quality assurance procedures have been embedded firmly. Leaders observe tutors regularly and the quality officer, along with the quality committee, consider the professional development needs of tutors regularly, drawing on evidence from observations to identify training needs and then measure its effect.

Tutors take advantage of this process to develop professionally and share practices across the provision. For example, as a result of observations, a decision was made to organise training for tutors on providing learners with written feedback, which led to developing tutors' confidence and increasing learners' skills and accuracy. There are also beneficial opportunities for tutors to visit colleagues' classes to observe and share good practice. As a result, the provider has ensured high standards in terms of learners' progress and the pedagogy of its tutors.

Statutory compliance

The provider's arrangements for safeguarding learners are not a cause for concern.

Evidence base of the report

Before the inspection, inspectors:

- analysed the outcomes from the learner questionnaire and considered the views of tutors and staff through their questionnaire responses

During the inspection, inspectors:

- met the head of the provider, a representative of the managing body/governing body, senior and middle managers (where appropriate) and tutors to evaluate the impact of the provider's work
- engaged with learners to discuss their work and hear their views about various aspects of their provider
- met with groups of learners, such as representatives of learner voice groups
- visited a broad sample of classes and conducted learning walks to observe learners in lessons and informal learning activities
- looked closely at the provider's self-evaluation processes
- considered the provider's improvement plans and looked at evidence to show how well the provider had moved forward with planned improvements
- scrutinised a range of the provider's documents, including information on learner progress, records of meetings of staff and the managing/governing body, information on learners' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of learners, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- reviewed the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report refers to different quantities and proportions, e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 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% |

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the provider and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

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