

Main findings

Leadership

1. Immersion education is the primary method used by nearly all local authorities to create new Welsh speakers and develop learners' Welsh language skills. Leaders in non-maintained settings, Welsh-medium primary schools, bilingual schools, and language immersion centres prioritise immersion education effectively. They provide rich experiences for learners in an inclusive and Welsh learning environment. In the strongest examples, leaders plan purposefully to provide opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language in the provision, at home and in the community.
2. Most leaders in local authorities plan suitable strategies to enable practitioners to use early immersion methods as an integral part of foundation phase provision. Around half of the local authorities support latecomers into Welsh-medium education in language immersion centres. In the best examples, the authorities fund and arrange transport for latecomers to attend these centres. As provision for latecomers is so inconsistent across Wales, not all learners are given the same opportunities to access Welsh-medium education at an early enough stage. Overall, many authorities provide suitable information about immersion education to parents/carers.
3. Many local authorities have appropriate arrangements to self-evaluate and improve early immersion and late immersion provision. In a few authorities, processes for evaluating and setting improvement aims are unclear. In the best practice, authorities and consortia provide valuable opportunities for practitioners to develop their understanding of immersion principles and approaches and share effective practice. However, professional learning opportunities do not have a consistent enough impact on improving provision to support learners to acquire Welsh language skills through the immersion process.

Provision

1. Nearly all practitioners support learners effectively by creating a supportive learning environment. Practitioners support learners to feel increasingly confident in trying to speak Welsh without fear of failure. In the strongest cases, they provide a variety of experiences that envelop learners in the

Welsh language. Where teaching is at its best, practitioners use a variety of techniques with a lively pace. They provide opportunities for learners to acquire vocabulary and practise syntactical patterns in whole class sessions, by responding to practitioners in small groups, and by talking in pairs.

2. Most practitioners nurture and develop learners' listening and speaking skills as a core part of language immersion provision. They support learners to acquire Welsh language skills by modelling polished language consistently and with clear pronunciation. However, a minority of practitioners do not introduce vocabulary and syntactical patterns purposefully enough to ensure continuity and progression when supporting learners to develop their speaking skills.
3. Many foundation phase practitioners develop learners' early reading skills effectively by introducing letters and the corresponding sounds in a fun and multisensory way. They stimulate the interest of young learners by reading stories and giving them access to a range of suitable materials. These practitioners provide valuable opportunities for learners 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, for example when learners read scripts.
4. Most practitioners provide beneficial writing activities as learners develop their skills. Practitioners develop learners' oral skills successfully which, in turn, has a positive effect on their writing skills. Practitioners ensure beneficial opportunities for learners to internalise the Welsh language before trying to write.
5. The most effective late immersion provision is offered through intensive programmes. This means that practitioners nurture learners' Welsh language skills in small groups for most of the time for an extended period. Most practitioners in language immersion centres provide highly successful immersion programmes that stimulate learners effectively. However, not all the resources that are used reflect and celebrate the diversity that exists in modern day Wales. On the whole, most learners are confident and proficient in their Welsh language skills at the end of the programmes.

Learning and attitudes to learning

1. Nearly all learners demonstrate positive attitudes to learning Welsh during the immersion education process. They take part in sessions enthusiastically and take pride in the progress they make in developing the

confidence to speak Welsh. Most enjoy speaking Welsh inside and outside the classroom, for example when taking part in playground games. By doing so, they become active speakers and succeed in applying their skills with increasing independence.

2. Most learners in non-maintained settings and schools acquire Welsh language skills successfully through the early immersion process. They nurture their speaking and listening skills by building quickly on an awareness of key vocabulary. Following regular immersion support, most learners begin to speak Welsh with adults and peers with increasing confidence. They develop reading skills capably, and in turn they develop their writing skills appropriately by recalling vocabulary and syntactical patterns. As a result, most learners develop their Welsh language skills well, and this supports them to make further progress across the areas of learning in key stage 2.
3. Most learners who complete intensive late immersion programmes attain a suitable level of proficiency to succeed in Welsh-medium education. Most learners in language immersion centres develop listening and speaking skills consistently well. They make sound progress in their reading skills and by the end of the intensive late immersion programmes many write extended pieces in Welsh by using familiar vocabulary. In those cases where support is provided to latecomers through alternative arrangements at school, a majority make appropriate progress.