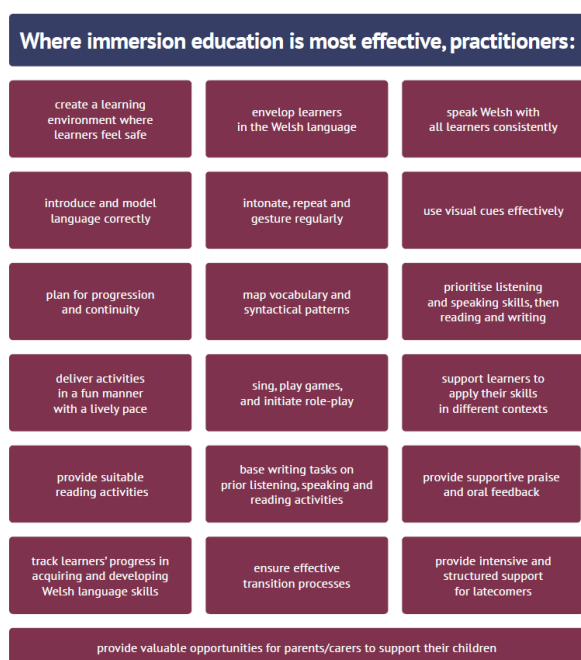


Provision

General approaches to immersion



The main features of effective language immersion are relevant to both early and late immersion provision. Although the context and age of learners are different, effective immersion education principles are consistent. For example, effective practitioners create a safe learning environment that envelops learners in the Welsh language. They prioritise listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in that order, with a clear emphasis placed on developing learners' oral skills. They introduce and model language correctly for learners, and intonate, repeat and gesture regularly to support them.

Learning environment

The learning environment is an important part of immersion education provision. Most practitioners create a homely atmosphere where learners feel comfortable

and ready to learn. In the best practice, they are welcoming and inclusive spaces where learners are willing to speak Welsh without the fear of failure very soon after they start in the provision. Practitioners create attractive spaces that engage learners' interest and encourage them to use their imagination as they gain confidence to speak Welsh.

Practitioners use visual cues effectively, such as pictures and posters that include letters and appropriate vocabulary. Many practitioners refer regularly to a range of vocabulary and syntactical patterns that are displayed attractively inside and outside the classroom in order to support learners. As a result, learners use this information effectively while developing their skills successfully.

Language medium

In nearly all Welsh-medium non-maintained settings and primary schools, and Welsh streams in bilingual schools, as part of early immersion provision, Welsh is the only language that is introduced formally in the foundation phase, although some schools begin to introduce some English at the end of this phase. Similarly, Welsh is the only language that is used formally as part of intense language programmes in language immersion centres. Speaking Welsh with all learners consistently is a central element of the immersion process. Many practitioners communicate by using very little English only where they need to ensure that a learner has understood an instruction or needs comfort.

A minority of practitioners use the 'sandwich' method in settings and schools at the beginning of learners' linguistic journey, particularly in the foundation phase. That is, they give an instruction in Welsh, then in English, then repeat it in Welsh once again. They reduce the use of English as soon as possible, doing so in a very short period of time. Overall, learners are immersed beneficially in the 'target language', namely Welsh.

Most practitioners model the Welsh language with suitable accuracy and clear pronunciation. They have a rich range of vocabulary and, in the strongest cases, converse naturally with learners and support them throughout the sessions. However, many leaders refer to difficulties in recruiting staff who are fluent and competent in the Welsh language, particularly in areas with relatively low numbers of Welsh speakers. In a few cases where practitioners' linguistic skills are weak, learning is not effective enough. For example, learners do not hear syntactical patterns being introduced correctly and consistently.

In language immersion centres, most practitioners model language correctly, with a great deal of purposeful repetition and regular opportunities for learners to hear and speak Welsh. When giving instructions, practitioners speak carefully and spend time pronouncing sounds clearly. They ask learners to guess the meaning of new vocabulary, such as 'cegin' ('kitchen'), before cooking, by using syntactical patterns with which learners are already familiar, such as "Mae'r ystafell ddosbarth yn edrych ychydig fel cegin heddiw - cegin - beth yw cegin?" ("The classroom looks a bit like a kitchen today - kitchen - what is a kitchen?"). They use a series of short, simple sentences with similar patterns skilfully, for example, when explaining: "Rydyn ni yn mynd i goginio cawl llyisiau" ("We're going to cook vegetable soup"), "Rydyn ni yn mynd i helpu" ("We're going to help"), "Rydyn ni yn mynd i roi cyfarwyddiadau" ("We're going to give instructions"). As a result, learners gain confidence quickly to emulate practitioners when speaking Welsh in different contexts.

Provision for skills

Most practitioners provide valuable listening activities as a basis to develop the remainder of learners' Welsh language skills. By doing so, learners internalise and acquire vocabulary effectively. For example, in the foundation phase learners come to understand vocabulary relating to the day's main events quickly by singing songs like 'Mae'n amser twtio nawr' ('It's time to tidy up'). This in turn nurtures their confidence to develop their speaking skills at a rapid pace.

Many practitioners plan valuable opportunities for learners to practise their listening and speaking skills in different contexts. For example, practitioners introduce language purposefully by singing, rapping, and introducing rhymes, and by providing 'circle time' or 'on the mat' sessions. In settings and nursery and reception classes, many make skilful use of these sessions to practise songs with a specific purpose, for example by providing an opportunity to count to ten or when introducing parts of the body. Many practitioners use this time effectively to read stories. A majority of practitioners ignite learners' imagination by discussing what is implicit in the pictures and encouraging them to join in with familiar parts. The most effective practitioners dramatise and gesture creatively when conveying the meaning of simple words and instructions.

In the best practice, practitioners use a variety of techniques to introduce vocabulary and syntactical patterns to learners. For example, practitioners ask learners to respond to a question by emulating their voice levels, by whispering, speaking, and then shouting in order to create excitement when practising the

language together. They provide effective sessions in small groups for learners to listen and respond individually. They sing, play games, and provide opportunities for them to role-play which, in turn, reinforces the same consistent patterns as they collaborate with partners or in small groups. Regular opportunities to practise vocabulary and syntactical patterns in different contexts is a strong feature of effective immersion education.

Many practitioners use visual resources effectively to develop learners' listening and speaking skills. For example, practitioners provide beneficial opportunities for learners to respond to questions such as 'Beth wyt ti'n hoffi?' ('What do you like?') by selecting vocabulary that is displayed alongside corresponding pictures and including them in a phrase or a full sentence. Many practitioners use toys skilfully to prompt learners, for example by moving 'teddy' to different places in order to become familiar with prepositions. Learning is at its best when there is a lively pace to sessions in order to engage and hold learners' interest, and when regular opportunities are provided for them to contribute themselves. In the few cases where the pace of sessions is too slow, and where practitioners use a more monotonous voice without succeeding in igniting curiosity, learners do not always respond and develop their Welsh language skills to the best of their ability.

Many practitioners in non-maintained settings and schools use specific schemes to foster learners' awareness of the sounds that different letters represent in order to acquire early reading skills. As part of early immersion provision, many provide regular opportunities for learners to identify a letter, listen to the sound of the letter, and learn gestures or movements to accompany it as a reminder. They encourage learners to emulate these movements and pronounce the sound correctly. Most practitioners in language immersion centres adopt a similar approach to support those learners who require additional assistance to develop early reading skills.

In the strongest practice, practitioners provide opportunities for learners to apply their learning in areas both inside and outside the classroom in order to provide opportunities for them to practise their early reading skills in different contexts. Many practitioners make purposeful use of labels to introduce extended and familiar vocabulary to learners and ensure that a range of suitable books are available to learners. During their time in the foundation phase, many practitioners provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to read increasingly challenging text. For example, they provide valuable opportunities for learners to read suitable fictional and factual books, poetry, and simple instructions. In schools where standards of reading are strong, practitioners

support learners to discuss the text effectively in order to introduce new vocabulary and syntactical patterns and confirm their understanding of what they have read.

In language immersion centres, practitioners provide regular opportunities for learners to read new vocabulary and syntactical patterns, for example as learners read scripts that accompany the week's sub-theme. There is a lack of suitable reading resources that are graded appropriately with stimulating content that corresponds to the learners' ages. In a few cases, this hinders learners' progress in reading once they return to school or where they do not have access to a language immersion centre.

In non-maintained settings and schools, most practitioners provide valuable opportunities for learners to develop early writing skills. For example, they provide a range of writing tools such as felt pens, chalk, and crayons for learners to develop fine motor skills. They identify opportunities for learners to begin to write simple words when they are ready to do so, for example words that relate to the theme. In schools and language immersion centres, most practitioners provide valuable opportunities for learners to begin to create simple sentences. Many practitioners use scaffolds effectively to model correct syntactical patterns. As learners progress, the most effective practitioners know when to reduce support through the use of scaffolds. As a result, practitioners provide learners with beneficial opportunities to develop their writing skills freely and independently.

Most practitioners provide beneficial opportunities for learners to write at increasing length as they gain confidence in the Welsh language, often beginning by emulating vocabulary and syntactical patterns from story books or scripts. This is an effective immersion method, as learners internalise the language before they begin writing. For example, they write a series of sentences about different animals by using sentences such as "Fflamingo ydw i, mae gen i goesau tenau hir a gwddf pinc" ("I am a flamingo, I have long thin legs and a pink neck"). Where appropriate, practitioners model writing with a scaffold and suggest other useful adjectives.

Many practitioners provide parents/carers with useful information in order for them to be able to support their children at home. For example, practitioners hold workshops to explain their approach of introducing early reading skills at the beginning of the foundation phase. In the strongest cases, practitioners provide valuable opportunities for parents/carers to support their children to acquire

Welsh language skills throughout the early immersion stage. For example, practitioners share simple video clips that show themselves explaining a specific mathematical method, or where staff read a bedtime story that learners can enjoy with a parent/carer or independently.

Applying skills in different contexts

Many practitioners prepare useful opportunities for learners to develop their listening and speaking skills in the different areas in the classroom and outdoors. In the best practice, practitioners talk alongside young learners and introduce vocabulary to them naturally. For example, they recreate a visit to a local farm by 'building a bus' when playing creatively in the outdoor area and take advantage of the opportunity to talk about what they have seen on the way to the farm. As learners progress through the foundation phase, the most effective practitioners encourage learners to apply specific vocabulary and syntactical patterns with increasing independence, for example as learners apply newly acquired language as they interact in a hair salon, a veterinary surgery and a nature hide.

Cameo - using the Welsh language outside lessons

Practitioners at Cylch Meithrin Pontrobert in Powys County Council encourage spontaneous play based on resources that inspire learners. During sessions, practitioners talk naturally with learners.

Practitioners use resources effectively by providing learners with cardboard tubes of different sizes. They facilitate learning skilfully by allowing learners to make decisions about what they would like to do with the tubes. Practitioners introduce language consistently so that learners' understanding and vocabulary develop as they experiment with the tubes. For example, practitioners draw the learners' attention to the properties of equipment, such as 'caled' ('hard') and 'meddal' ('soft') and discuss sounds by hitting the equipment with objects to create sounds with different pitches.

As the session continues, practitioners take advantage of opportunities to discuss new concepts and introduce vocabulary beneficially as learners

move and carry the tubes. For example, they discuss balancing with learners by using appropriate language. When learners decide to create park equipment with the tubes, such as a swing and a slide, practitioners identify opportunities to ask questions such as 'Wyt ti'n meddwl y bydd hwn yn dod lawr y llithren yn gyflym?' ('Do you think this will come down the slide quickly?') or 'Pa mor bell wyt ti'n meddwl eith hwn?' ('How far do you think this will go?').

Practitioners take advantage of every opportunity to develop learners' listening and speaking skills by introducing rich new vocabulary. As a result, they develop learners' Welsh speaking and listening skills highly effectively.

Later in the foundation phase, a majority of practitioners introduce new vocabulary and specific syntactical patterns purposefully. For example, they challenge learners to choose cards with pictures on them and respond to questions to practise 'gwelais i' ('I saw') and 'welais i ddim' ('I didn't see'). Practitioners use a voice recording device effectively so that learners hear instructions for tasks in independent learning activities. A majority provide valuable opportunities for learners to use headphones to listen to stories individually or in groups. As a result, learners hear the sounds of words being read by the voice of an adult who introduces new vocabulary and models correct Welsh syntactical patterns.

Most practitioners plan beneficial opportunities for learners to listen and speak in less formal situations, such as during snack time. This provides an opportunity for learners to ask for different fruit or discuss their favourite foods. A minority of practitioners in schools and language immersion centres lead play activities on the playground during play time. By leading fun games with learners of different ages joining in to play, learners are given valuable opportunities to speak Welsh. A few practitioners also plan purposeful opportunities for learners to speak Welsh over lunch, for example by posing a 'question of the day' such as 'Beth yw eich hoff raglen deledu?' ('What is your favourite television programme?') to promote discussion.

Many practitioners organise valuable opportunities for learners to hear and speak

Welsh in informal contexts. For example, they invite well-known characters from story books and television to come to talk and play games with learners or organise for actors to visit the provision to play the role of famous people who are associated with the theme. Many provide valuable immersion activities outside school hours to promote the use of the Welsh language, for example by holding 'adran yr Urdd' (Urdd youth club sessions) or working with Welsh language initiatives ('mentrau iaith'). As a result, learners enjoy speaking Welsh for a different purpose, such as taking part in sports activities, playing games and quizzes, and by practising to perform in festivals and eisteddfodau.

Cameo - enriching learners' Welsh experiences in English-medium schools

Ysgol Bro Helyg, which is the only Welsh-medium school in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, contributes to enriching learners' Welsh experiences in local English-medium schools through the expressive arts.

Many learners perform in a 'cân actol' presentation. This is a valuable opportunity for them to apply their Welsh oral skills in a fun manner. Where appropriate, the topic deepens learners' understanding of Welsh history and culture and creates a sense of pride in the Welsh language. For example, they perform a 'cân actol' that includes the history of Tryweryn and the 'Welsh Not.'

After gaining the confidence to perform successfully to the public, leaders provide an opportunity for learners to perform for other learners in local English-medium primary schools. Practitioners hold a workshop with learners in those English-medium schools to introduce relevant language so that they understand the content of the performance and discuss the Welsh language with them. Following the workshop, learners at Ysgol Bro Helyg perform to bring the knowledge and history to life for their peers. This has a positive effect on the listening and speaking skills of learners at both schools.

Most practitioners in language immersion centres make effective use of technology, for example by providing opportunities for learners to record video clips making use of green screen technology. Most practitioners in language immersion centres adapt resources creatively to obtain a suitable range. For example, they adapt games and create their own useful resources, such as language mats, as the resources are not available in Welsh originally. On the whole, there is a lack of resources to support teaching and learning as part of the late immersion process, including suitable multimedia resources. This hinders the ability of less confident practitioners to plan suitable activities for learners, particularly when they do not have access to a language immersion centre or specialist Welsh teachers.

Continuity and progression

Where provision to develop listening and speaking skills is at its best, practitioners plan purposefully to ensure continuity and progression for learners to acquire Welsh language skills. Practitioners identify the vocabulary and syntactical patterns necessary for learners to become confident communicators. They introduce these words and patterns consistently and plan opportunities to revisit and build on previous learning. A minority of non-maintained settings make effective use of resources that assist practitioners to support their own language skills whilst planning suitable progression for their learners.

A majority of practitioners map vocabulary and syntactical patterns purposefully across the age range and incorporate them skilfully in learners' experiences. A majority provide daily sessions to practise vocabulary and syntactical patterns and provide opportunities for them to apply them successfully across the areas of learning. In a majority of cases, practitioners use a beneficial agreed plan to introduce syntactical patterns that is provided by the local authorities or regional consortia. Where practice is less effective, practitioners introduce vocabulary and syntactical patterns at random and introduce language that accompanies the theme, without considering seamless progression in learners' language learning experiences. A majority of practitioners plan activities that are of interest to learners, but do not consider their Welsh language development purposefully enough. As a result, not all learners develop vocabulary and syntactical patterns in a timely enough manner in developing their Welsh language skills over time.

Many non-maintained settings and schools have informal arrangements to discuss learners' Welsh language skills as they transfer from one provider or class

to another. In the strongest cases, practitioners agree on common approaches to develop learners' linguistic skills. For example, non-maintained settings and nursery and reception classes in schools use songs about different times of the day consistently or introduce the sounds of letters of the alphabet by using the same technique. A few practitioners share very beneficial information with the teachers who teach learners the following academic year. For example, they refer specifically to the vocabulary and syntactical patterns that learners have acquired.

Assessment

When providing oral feedback to learners who are receiving early immersion provision, many practitioners give suitable praise when they first come to recognise and use vocabulary to build the confidence of learners. Practitioners repeat frequently and, where learners are beginning to respond in full sentences, they provide feedback by modelling the correct syntactical pattern sensitively after hearing the learner's attempt. Many use this technique skilfully, which is known as 'recasting', as described by Lyster and Ranta (1997, p.46-47). This is the process of re-forming a learner's response by omitting the mistake. As learners become increasingly confident in developing their Welsh language skills in the foundation phase, effective practitioners encourage learners to repeat the sentence correctly, in line with the learner's Welsh language development. They recognise the balance between praise and encouragement and set high expectations for learners. This develops learners' confidence effectively which, in turn, motivates them to speak Welsh spontaneously without the fear of making a mistake.

A majority of practitioners in non-maintained settings and schools use appropriate methods to track learners' progress in acquiring and developing their Welsh language skills. On the whole, practitioners use the information that is gathered suitably when planning activities across the areas of learning. However, they act on information that is often too vague to identify the next steps in learners' linguistic development. As a result, it is not always possible to track learners' Welsh language development effectively enough. For example, a minority of practitioners do not identify the successes and areas for improvement of learners and groups of learners, such as those who are more able, rigorously enough as they acquire vocabulary and syntactical patterns as part of the early immersion process.

Cameo - developing listening and speaking skills for learners from all linguistic backgrounds

Practitioners at Cylch Meithrin Penparc, in Ceredigion County Council, plan valuable opportunities for learners to practise listening and speaking skills.

Practitioners provide beneficial plenary sessions, which provide an opportunity for all learners to respond to questions together and sing together. They also divide them into different groups to give learners an opportunity to respond to questions individually, by giving careful consideration to learners' linguistic development from their starting points. For example, when discussing fruit, they introduce more challenging vocabulary to one group of confident speakers, such as 'berllan' ('orchard') and 'amryliw' ('multicoloured'). They also ask questions that stretch learners beneficially, such as 'beth yw mwy nag un afal?' ('what is more than one apple?'). Other practitioners support learners who are new to the Welsh language to foster simpler vocabulary. For example, by focusing on the names and colours of different fruit and introducing adjectives, such as 'bach' ('small') and 'mawr' ('big').

Practitioners provide valuable opportunities for learners to meet their linguistic needs. They plan purposefully and decide on vocabulary and syntactical patterns to introduce through their themes. They take advantage of various opportunities for learners to use and apply the language they have acquired by being immersed further in activities in different areas within the inclusive provision. They enrich learners' experiences through visits in the local community, for example going for a walk to a nearby orchard.

Nearly all school headteachers and language immersion centre leaders are strongly supportive of the success of intensive programmes in language immersion centres. Most track learners' progress through an informal approach, for example by observing sessions and talking to learners. Very recently, a few

centres have adopted a tracking system that is similar to the English as an additional language service, by using the '5 stage model of Welsh as an additional second language' to assess learners three times during the course. This is a suitable medium for practitioners to track learners' language acquisition from stage A, which is defined as 'new to Welsh' to stage E, which is defined as 'fluent'. This strengthens practitioners' understanding of the next steps for the learner. For example, it sets useful expectations such as that 'Stage D' speakers 'can answer specific closed questions in lessons'. However, methods for assessing the progress of latecomers throughout their school career are inconsistent.

Provision for groups of learners

On the whole, practitioners succeed in using the same language immersion methods for all learners, including those with additional learning needs. In the best practice, provision to support learners' Welsh language skills is discussed as part of the process of reviewing individual learners' needs, and the child contributes to the discussions. For example, practitioners organise Braille resources through the medium of Welsh for learners with visual impairments. Most learners with additional learning needs develop their Welsh language skills appropriately as part of the immersion process.

Nearly all practitioners provide suitable support for learners who speak very little, or no English at home. They do not adapt immersion education provision for learners who do not speak English as these learners usually develop their Welsh language skills suitably. Practitioners include them supportively in all activities and use the full range of valuable immersion approaches to promote their understanding of the Welsh language. However, a few local authorities organise support in separate sessions to target latecomers' English skills. There is very little evidence of practitioners who plan to develop multilingual skills beyond supporting learners who already speak an additional language at home.

Approaches to late immersion

Late immersion programmes are most successful when they are delivered intensively with a definite structure and progression, for example as learners are immersed in the Welsh language by specialist practitioners throughout the day for a period of a term or more. Usually this approach is delivered in language immersion centres. In a minority of language immersion centres, learners return to the home school for a small proportion of the week, such as one day. This provides support learners to integrate socially with their friends in the home school. Where learners attend a language immersion centre for the whole week, they make sustained and continuous progress in acquiring Welsh skills.

Most practitioners who are situated in language immersion centres provide a programme that is planned purposefully and delivers, reinforces, and builds on vocabulary and syntactical patterns in a structured way. Practitioners recognise that developing listening and speaking skills is the foundation for learners as they acquire Welsh language skills successfully in a short period.

Where latecomers do not have access to a language immersion centre, provision that is planned for them varies, even within individual local authorities. In these cases, support for the learners is provided in their new school. Most practitioners provide an appropriate range of activities to support latecomers. In the strongest cases, practitioners receive support and assistance from specialist practitioners from the local authority. In a very few cases where late immersion methods are effective in this context, learners follow an immersion programme that is provided for a substantial proportion of the weekly timetable. Generally, this provision does not support learners effectively enough as they are immersed in the Welsh language.

A very few local authorities support latecomers appropriately by providing them with peripatetic support. In the best practice, these support sessions provide suitable opportunities for learners to foster and develop suitable vocabulary and syntactical patterns. Practitioners engage learners' enthusiasm and maintain appropriate links with class teachers and provide them with supplementary learning resources. However, this provision is only provided for a limited proportion of the timetable. As a result, this hinders learners from making consistent progress, as the programme does not provide regular enough opportunities for them to receive intensive and structured Welsh language support.

Many practitioners in the language immersion centres follow specific late immersion programmes. Many of the programmes are similar to each other in

terms of content and structure, although practitioners often refine and interpret the programme differently. Many of these programmes introduce learners to an imaginary world with characters that stimulate them using visual materials and engaging stories. Most practitioners enrich learners' experiences with relevant activities and resources that reinforce vocabulary and syntactical patterns. However, not all programmes and resources reflect and celebrate the diversity that exists in modern day Wales.

When communicating with learners, many practitioners use movements and gestures regularly and purposefully to reinforce specific vocabulary and syntactical patterns as part of an effective immersion approach. For example, they point to their ears each time they use the word 'gwrandewch' ('listen'), roll their hands each time they say 'ar ôl' ('after') or simulate writing a note when saying the word 'ysgrifennu' ('writing'). In the most effective examples, practitioners provide practical and visual experiences to engage learners' interest and reinforce the week's specific linguistic elements, for example by visiting the local park. These purposeful experiences provide valuable opportunities for learners to apply vocabulary and syntactical patterns in real-life contexts.

Cameo - varying the approach to practising vocabulary and syntactical patterns

Practitioners at Maesincla Language Centre, in Gwynedd Council, use a number of approaches to practise and repeat vocabulary and syntactical patterns frequently. They vary activities in order to engage learners' interest. For example, practitioners provide opportunities to practise the language pattern 'Oes gen ti?' ('Have you got?') and the answers 'Oes, mae gen i' ('Yes, I have') or 'Nac oes, does gen i ddim' ('No, I have not'), in addition to vocabulary relating to the zoo.

Practitioners use different approaches to support the immersion process skilfully and move from one activity to another with an appropriate pace. For example, they begin by giving all learners an opportunity to ask a question and respond either individually or as a group. They support learners by displaying suitable vocabulary and syntactical patterns on a whiteboard.

Later in the session, practitioners provide valuable opportunities for learners to apply the same listening and speaking skills while playing board games, for example as a group plays a game with the aim of comparing cards with pictures of animals on them. This provides beneficial opportunities for learners to ask questions such as 'Oes gen ti eliffant?' ('Have you got an elephant?'), and the partner to respond appropriately. Learners rotate through a number of interesting activities that enable them to apply the same skills independently. For example, they practise scripts by imitating characters from the immersion programme, use computer software to match pictures and words, and search through a colourful dictionary for an animal that begins with each letter of the alphabet, and then write it down.

As learners engage in fun activities that reinforce the same vocabulary and patterns, they become increasingly confident speakers.

Most practitioners in language immersion centres provide valuable opportunities for learners to develop their Welsh language skills in other areas of learning. They provide a daily numeracy session, which is a valuable opportunity to introduce the main mathematical terms in Welsh, such as number, shapes, money, and time. Many reinforce learners' linguistic development by playing playground games and ball games. A majority deliver practical activities by providing opportunities for learners to discuss in Welsh, for example by planting watercress seeds.

Most practitioners in language immersion centres describe their own practice knowledgeably, for example by referring to the importance of modelling language consistently and introducing syntactical patterns purposefully. In the strongest cases, practitioners refer to international research that has a beneficial influence on their practice. However, many of these practitioners base their principles on what they have learned from experienced practitioners over time, rather than through purposeful professional learning opportunities.

In a very few local authorities, practitioners admit learners to language immersion centres as soon as they transfer to a Welsh-medium school. This provides a beneficial opportunity for latecomers to acquire Welsh language skills

immediately. In these cases, in a situation where the learner does not join the centre at the beginning of term, practitioners extend the period of provision for them. In most cases, where learners transfer to Welsh-medium education during the school term, they are required to wait until the beginning of the following term before they can access the language immersion centre. This means that the group that is already attending the centre can continue to receive uninterrupted intensive late immersion experiences.

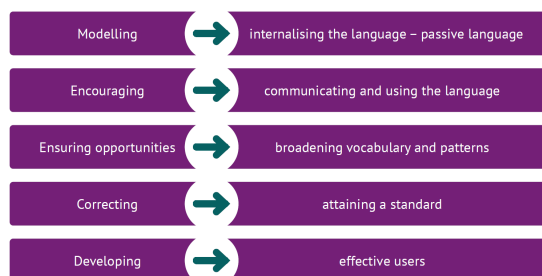
In cases where learners wait for a space in a language immersion centre, the support that is available to them varies. In a few local authorities, members of the Welsh advisory team visit the learner in the new school on a weekly basis to support them with intervention sessions or provide suitable activities for the school's practitioners. However, in the majority of authorities, there is no specific provision that has been planned purposefully for latecomers in these cases. As a result, class teachers adapt provision for latecomers, as appropriate. In a few situations, this leads to practitioners increasing the use of English in the classroom for a period of time to support new learners.

The majority of practitioners in language immersion centres provide valuable post-centre support for learners who have already attended the centre. In the best practice, this means that learners receive a weekly visit from a member of staff from the language immersion centre or the Welsh advisory team. They provide opportunities for learners to develop their Welsh language skills further by providing activities that reinforce learners' previous learning in different contexts. A few practitioners in schools provide purposeful opportunities for latecomers to join groups such as the 'Criw Cymraeg' when they return from the language immersion centre. As a result, learners continue to take pride in their new linguistic skills and regularly influence others to speak Welsh.

Cameo - cooperating as a team to support language immersion

Conwy County Borough Council supports immersion education through a combination of provision from the Welsh Advisory Team and Conwy Welsh Language Centre. Members of the team have experience of working as teachers at Conwy Welsh Language Centre and, as a result, they have experience and a sound understanding to support practitioners and latecomers.

They summarise the immersion education process by referring to a useful 'oracy strand':



Learners who are admitted to the local authority's Welsh-medium schools in the middle of the school term are supported by 'pre-centre' provision. Weekly sessions are held during the period before they attend Conwy Welsh Language Centre. Vocabulary and syntactical patterns are introduced beforehand, and practitioners from the home school support what has been introduced during the week.

Learners are supported by post-centre provision for a period of up to six weeks during the term after their intensive period at Conwy Welsh Language Centre. This is done through weekly face-to-face sessions or remotely through video-conferencing software. These activities ensure that learners have access to all areas of learning through the medium of Welsh.

The Welsh Advisory Team, which is part of the authority's education improvement service, leads and supports the education workforce by providing beneficial professional learning opportunities. They lead, share and/or model valuable immersion approaches with schoolteachers and assistants. For example, the Advisory Team works with the class teacher to provide opportunities to observe and emulate effective teaching and learning practices. As a result, teachers adapt their teaching methods to ensure that learners continue to make progress in their Welsh language skills.

School leaders apply for specific support from the Welsh Advisory Team to respond to individual circumstances. For example, they provide support to plan immersion activities based on a specific book to accompany the theme of the 'Celts'.

Through this regular co-operation and support, practitioners provide activities in rich experiences that support learners effectively.

On the whole, practitioners in language immersion centres develop learners' Welsh language skills successfully. They equip learners with vocabulary and syntactical patterns that support them beneficially as they apply their Welsh language skills across the areas of learning. The intensive immersion approach supports learners robustly and provides effective opportunities for them to gain the confidence to speak Welsh which, in turn, supports their reading and writing skills soundly. As a result of the positive experience of most learners in the language immersion centres, they succeed in developing their Welsh language skills and their overall learning skills capably as they continue their education through the medium of Welsh.