

# Learning and attitudes to learning

## Early immersion (learning and attitudes to learning)

Nearly all learners involved early immersion provision enjoy learning Welsh and become engrossed in activities where immersion education is provided in non-maintained settings and primary schools. They begin by listening to Welsh being modelled by adults and responding appropriately to instructions with gestures to support them. Most learners begin to join in with adults and other children with increasing confidence, for example by singing short songs and saying nursery rhymes. They begin to emulate practitioners by using key vocabulary suitably. During their time in the foundation phase, most learners become increasingly confident speakers.

In most non maintained settings and schools, many foundation phase learners follow instructions and respond appropriately to questions in sessions. As they progress through the phase, many develop extensive vocabulary and build sentences confidently with the support of practitioners. As a result of the immersion process, they speak Welsh increasingly naturally with staff, although the syntax may not always be correct. A minority of learners speak Welsh with their peers regularly in the classroom. Nearly all learners acquire the skills necessary to succeed in Welsh-medium education in key stage 2.

Most learners develop listening and speaking skills effectively. In settings and schools where standards of listening and speaking are strong, learners respond to a variety of prompts in sessions that are planned purposefully to promote and develop listening and speaking skills. Understanding first comes where learners make sense of vocabulary while re-using it. For example, they take part in familiar games and activities, and sing and rap in different contexts. This develops their understanding which, in turn, supports them to become increasingly confident speakers.

As practitioners introduce and re-visit a range of correct syntactical patterns, most learners emulate them correctly, and apply and assimilate them with increasing accuracy over time. From an early age, they begin to respond suitably to simple instructions, for example, 'Ewch i eistedd wrth y bwrdd coch' ('Go and sit at the red table'). They listen to practitioners in group sessions and respond

appropriately, for example by suggesting the title of a suitable song when asked 'Pa gân hoffet ti ganu?' ('What song would you like to sing?'). They respond to questions from practitioners with increasing independence when playing in the areas of provision both inside and outside the classroom.

### **Cameo - using Welsh language skills in the different areas of provision**

At Ysgol Mornant, in Flintshire County Council, learners develop listening and speaking skills successfully from an early age while playing and responding to activities in the different areas of the foundation phase. For example, learners in the nursery class develop listening and speaking skills around the sand pit.

These learners search for dinosaurs and stones in the sand enthusiastically. This hands-on activity sparks the learners' imagination and provides many opportunities for practitioners to introduce language. Assistants question them effectively and reinforce vocabulary as learners sort the toys. As a result, they respond positively to questions such as 'I ba flwch mae'r garreg yma'n mynd?' ('Which box does this stone go into?') and offer simple adjectives such as 'bach' ('small') and 'mawr' ('big'). Learners recall vocabulary that relates to the theme appropriately, for example by offering the word 'sgerbwd' to help a friend who was using the word 'skeleton'.

During their time in the foundation phase, most learners grow in confidence to speak Welsh in a rich variety of learning contexts. They use a range of vocabulary that accompanies the theme increasingly well, for example to describe the meaning of the word 'ffrwydro' ('explode') when discussing fireworks. By Year 1, many learners respond enthusiastically in full sentences with regular support from practitioners.

Many learners grow in confidence when discussing with their friends,

practitioners, and visitors during the early immersion stage. For example, they develop confidence by practising and performing in concerts and eisteddfodau, or by attending clubs that promote the use of the Welsh language. A minority make linguistic errors in terms of the accuracy of language when responding to questions and expressing themselves. On the whole, they have the confidence to speak and discuss, and often correct themselves or their peers. However, a minority of learners do not develop to become fluent enough speakers as practitioners do not provide frequent enough opportunities to speak Welsh in informal situations. As a result, a minority of learners tend to translate vocabulary and syntactical patterns from English to Welsh before pronouncing them.

Most learners make consistent progress in developing their reading skills. They come to recognise the sounds of different letters correctly before combining the sounds to read simple words. They join in with group activities to reinforce this knowledge, for example by singing songs about individual letters enthusiastically and making movements that are associated with them. They practise these skills beneficially in individual activities. For example, they look and refer to the shape of a letter that is hidden in a picture, choose a magnet that corresponds to the letter, and then pronounce the sound correctly. As a result, they recognise letters with increasing confidence and develop early reading skills successfully.

During the foundation phase, many learners develop their reading skills consistently over a period that is commensurate with their age. In settings and schools where standards of reading are strong, learners enjoy looking at a range of attractive books from an early age and show an increasing interest in the text. By the end of the foundation phase, most explain relevant details from texts confidently, for example when re-telling a story. Many learners apply their reading skills for a purpose successfully, for example when reading words that describe different animals, such as 'cigysydd' ('carnivore') and 'llysieuydd' ('herbivore') to solve a riddle in the style of 'who am I?'.

Many learners' writing skills in the foundation phase are sound. In non-maintained settings and nursery classes, learners begin to develop writing skills by experimenting and mark-making and produce suitable pieces of early writing. As they move through the phase, many learners record events appropriately with scaffolds and support from practitioners. For example, they write instructions in the context of their theme work or create shopping lists. By the end of the foundation phase, many write consistently for different purposes and communicate clearly and expressively.

Many learners develop their speaking and writing skills effectively, and this link is a key part of the immersion process. In the best practice, providers give learners valuable opportunities to apply vocabulary and syntactical patterns in drama and writing activities. For example, learners use vocabulary such as ‘anhygoel’ (‘unbelievable’), syntactical patterns such as ‘tawelwch llethol’ (‘overwhelming silence’) and idioms such as ‘ar ben ei ddigon’ (“in clover”) highly effectively. However, in the few cases where standards of writing are weak, learners have difficulty internalising the language as there are not frequent enough opportunities for them to practise and develop their speaking skills. This hinders their ability to write freely and with independent confidence.

Overall, learners from different groups make consistent progress by being immersed in the Welsh language. Nearly all learners with additional learning needs make suitable progress in line with the targets in their individual development plans. Learners who speak English as an additional language also acquire Welsh language skills to the same degree as their peers who speak English as their first language. On the whole, learners from Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh-speaking homes make consistent progress. However, in a few cases where practitioners’ expectations of learners are too low, more able learners do not make enough progress in acquiring the Welsh language.

## **Late immersion (learning and attitudes to learning)**

Nearly all learners take part in late immersion sessions enthusiastically. By the end of the intensive programmes in language immersion centres, most learners develop their skills successfully and with a suitable level of proficiency. As a result, most learners succeed in gaining access to a wider curriculum as they develop their Welsh language skills further in their home school. Overall, learners who receive less intensive intervention make slower progress.

By the end of key stage 2, most latecomers who have completed a successful period of late immersion make the same progress as their peers. In a few cases, where more able latecomers make highly robust progress, their oral Welsh skills have developed to be stronger than those of their peers.

In language immersion centres, most learners listen attentively and respond appropriately to practitioners as they introduce language in various activities.

Most gain confidence quickly and are keen to speak without the fear of failure. As a result, they follow simple instructions, begin to ask specific questions, and give suitable answers very quickly as they are immersed in the Welsh language.

Nearly all learners respond enthusiastically in whole-class sessions that target vocabulary and syntactical patterns by responding with increasing accuracy. A few reinforce new vocabulary by making purposeful use of movements. For example, they cross their arms to reinforce their dislike of different foods and give a response such as 'Mae'n gas gen i tsili a garlleg' ('I hate chilli and garlic').

Many learners listen to partners and respond appropriately, for example when describing their personal features. Nearly all recall different syntax successfully when playing a group game that gives everyone an opportunity to contribute by responding to a chain of questions and answers. For example, by asking 'Pryd wyt ti'n cael dy ben-blwydd?' ('When is your birthday?') or 'Ble wyt ti'n byw?' ('Where do you live?'). Many respond simply to additional questions, such as 'Beth yw enwau'r cŵn?' ('What are the dogs' names?') by giving a simple response rather than a complete sentence. They make use of memory aids that are displayed appropriately, for example by turning to check 'colour' vocabulary before giving details of a pet's colour. As a result, most learners become increasingly confident in applying their Welsh language skills to ask and respond to questions in different contexts.

By around the middle of the intensive immersion programme, for example within six weeks, most learners recall and act short scripts from the programme's story books, or scenarios based on different locations in the community. For example, they act the part of patients calling the reception at a doctor's surgery. The receptionist checks the patient's personal details and then offers an appointment at a particular time. As a result of the humour involved in many of the scripts, learners engage fully with their roles. For example, following a visit to a zoo, they act the parts of children arguing while travelling back on the bus after discovering that one of the children has brought a penguin home with them, adding to their enthusiasm. More able learners add extra details to the scene skilfully by using extended vocabulary with the support of practitioners.

Most learners develop reading skills successfully during their time in language immersion centres, in line with their starting points. The few who need additional support to recognise the sounds that are associated with different letters make appropriate progress, and the remainder read in different contexts with increasing confidence. They read familiar questions from the whiteboard to help

them to respond appropriately during whole-class sessions, for example when discussing Welsh heroes.

Most learners use reading skills effectively when working in pairs. For example, they read adjectives on a whiteboard and match them with English vocabulary or identify specific words in a digital wordsearch. They use their reading skills purposefully to play games, such as reading the names of sports on a bingo sheet. These beneficial opportunities encourage them to work together whilst using Welsh effectively.

Most learners develop their writing skills effectively during daily writing sessions, which derive from the vocabulary and syntactical patterns that they have learned recently. Around the beginning of the programme, they write a few key words correctly, for example when adding the names of vegetables to a recipe by filling the gaps. During this time, learners attempt to write without worrying about spelling perfectly on the first attempt, as practitioners support them purposefully.

As many learners make progress in their writing skills, they produce a series of sentences with a common pattern successfully. These are often structured carefully with support from practitioners by providing a suitable scaffold. By the end of the immersion programme, less use is made of ready-made examples, and most learners write freely using familiar patterns. Many continue to appreciate memory aids to remind them how to begin sentences appropriately or to provide rich vocabulary. They enable many learners to write extended pieces skilfully. For example, they take the role of a girl from the imaginary village in the immersion programme and write a statement to the police describing having seen a thief hiding in a cave on the beach. More able learners take advantage of opportunities to write more freely, by using dictionaries and support from practitioners to enrich their vocabulary.

Most learners who complete programmes in language immersion centres apply their skills confidently in activities across the areas of learning after returning to their home school. Nearly all use their Welsh language skills effectively to speak, read and write in various areas of learning. For example, they write a newspaper article about the tale of the flooding of Cantre'r Gwaelod. Nearly all learners succeed in applying their Welsh language skills in numeracy lessons and draw on previous learning successfully to understand and use appropriate vocabulary. For example, they measure the area of objects in the classroom.

Most learners who receive late immersion support internally in schools, or through a peripatetic service provided by the local authority, make appropriate progress. In a very few cases, learners make sound progress over time, for example when sessions are provided for half a day every day over an extended period by a practitioner who has been trained to follow a particular immersion programme. However, the progress made by learners corresponds to how often they receive intensive input, and to what degree the sessions build on previous learning. As a result, they do not gain confidence as quickly as those who complete intensive programmes in language immersion centres.

In cases where learners are educated in the Welsh-medium school while waiting for a place in a language immersion centre, the majority make limited progress as the input is not intensive enough. For example, they come to understand key vocabulary in instructions and a few simple greetings. A minority take advantage of structured provision in specific pre-centre programmes that are organised by the local authority, which enables them to develop an awareness and use of the Welsh language.

Where a post-centre support service is available to learners who have completed an intensive immersion programme, most learners continue to make strong progress. They continue to develop Welsh language skills at the appropriate level as specialist practitioners and class teachers work together to ensure the most suitable provision for learners. Many learners recall previous learning successfully and speak confidently where structured post-centre sessions are available to them.

Most learners who complete an immersion programme at the end of Year 6 before transferring to Welsh-medium secondary schools acquire Welsh language skills effectively. They develop the confidence to speak Welsh and develop their skills appropriately which, in turn, supports them to access activities across the areas of learning with the support of practitioners in Year 7.

Where latecomers make less progress, practitioners have access to fewer suitable resources to support them. In these cases, a majority of learners do not develop their skills effectively enough, for example by playing a wide range of games purposefully to practise language patterns. Learners who make slower progress receive limited access to suitable reading books and useful multimedia materials. In some cases, learners also make less progress as there are no qualified practitioners with the ability to model the Welsh language and a

relevant understanding of immersion methods available to support them.

On the whole, different groups of learners make similar progress to their peers in acquiring Welsh language skills through late immersion education. Boys and girls make similar progress to each other. Most learners with additional learning needs who attend language immersion centres cope appropriately with the immersion process. Nearly all learners who speak English as an additional language develop their Welsh language skills just as effectively as their peers by following an immersion programme in language immersion centres.