

# Appendix 3 - early immersion and late immersion in the education system in Wales

**Early immersion** means introducing and using the Welsh language as the only language of teaching (with very few exceptions) in the foundation phase in Welsh-medium and bilingual non-maintained settings and schools. In the best practice, this means that the Welsh language is introduced purposefully to learners in specific language sessions, in addition to providing frequent opportunities for them to acquire and apply their Welsh language skills through rich experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

**Late immersion** means provision for learners who join Welsh-medium schools or Welsh streams in bilingual schools who have not experienced a full period of early immersion in the Welsh language. These learners can be complete newcomers to the Welsh language or be re-engaging with Welsh-medium provision. In the strongest cases, late immersion provision is an intensive and structured programme.

Following periods of acquiring the Welsh language through effective immersion approaches, most learners gain suitable confidence and proficiency in the Welsh language to gain full access to all areas of learning. However, practitioners continue to support learners to develop their Welsh language skills after their early or late immersion periods have ended, whatever their linguistic background. Many immersion approaches are equally as relevant when supporting learners to enrich the Welsh language as they are to acquiring the Welsh language. For example,

practitioners continue to introduce vocabulary and syntactical patterns as they develop learners' Welsh language skills across the areas of learning.