



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

**Report on**  
**Welsh Language Immersion Arrangements in**  
**Newport City Council**

**Civic Centre**  
**Newport**  
**NP20 4UR**

**Date of inspection: May 2024**

**by**

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and**  
**Training in Wales**

**This inspection was undertaken as part of trying out our new inspection arrangements. As a result, this report may be slightly different in format to other published reports for providers in the sector.**

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About Newport City Council

Name of provider	Newport City Council
Local authority	Newport City Council
Start date of inspection	07/05/2024
Additional information	
<p>There are four Welsh medium primary schools and one Welsh medium secondary school in Newport City Council. At the time of the inspection, there were two Welsh language immersion centres within the local authority; a primary centre based at Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Gwenlli and a secondary centre based at Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed.</p> <p>Welsh immersion provision was introduced in the local authority in April 2017. Initially, the local authority took a collaborative approach. This resulted in a pilot protocol being implemented from April 2017. The protocol confirmed that each of the three Welsh-medium primary schools would support immersion locally on a needs led basis. Following an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Welsh Medium Latecomer Immersion Protocol, it was decided to create a Welsh immersion class in one of the schools. A new temporary immersion class opened at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Teyrnnon in September 2019. Following the opening of the new Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Gwenlli school in September 2021, the immersion class relocated from Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Teyrnnon to Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Gwenlli. Both the school and the immersion centre will move to their permanent site in Pillgwenlly in April 2025.</p> <p>When Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed first opened in 2016, there were a few requests for admission from children who had not previously been in Welsh-medium education. To support this, the Council procured immersion support from a dedicated secondary immersion centre in Cardiff local authority. When Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed moved to its permanent site in 2018, Newport City Council allocated funding directly to the school to support local immersion arrangements. In September 2020, the school established its own specific immersion class as a way of building capacity, supporting pupil well being, and enhancing the reputation of the growing school.</p> <p>There were no pupils in the centres at the time of the inspection, although inspectors met with pupils in their schools who have recently left the centres. In addition, inspectors met with Welsh immersion centre staff, parents and the headteachers of the pupils' registered schools.</p>	

## Summary

Leaders within the local authority have a clear vision for Welsh immersion arrangements and engage all stakeholders fully in the development of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). They actively listen and respond to stakeholders, and, as a result, develop Welsh language immersion arrangements successfully in line with the WESP priorities. However, the promotion of the benefits of Welsh language immersion education more widely across the local authority is at an early stage of development.

Local authority leaders have developed a culture and inclusive ethos that supports the progress and well-being of pupils through effective distributed leadership responsibilities. Through this, the headteachers of the immersion centres are aware of the strengths and areas for development and ensure that staff have a range of purposeful professional learning to support their needs. However, local authority leaders do not collect feedback from stakeholders on the progress pupils make after they have left the centres to help them to refine the provision with a particular focus on the aftercare immersion support.

Teachers have developed a clear and progressive curriculum to support the language skills of pupils successfully. They have high expectations of pupils and support pupils enthusiastically to make progress in their Welsh language skills, support them well with their emotional and social needs and provide valuable support for the next steps in their learning through effective outreach support and resources. They plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in a range of interesting contexts both within the centres and in the local area. As a result, nearly all pupils in the immersion centres make sound progress from their starting points and acquire the Welsh language effectively. They are proud of their Welsh language development and engage enthusiastically in various contexts whilst developing their skills successfully.

## Recommendations

We have made 2 recommendations to help the local authority continue to improve:

- R1 Promote the benefits of Welsh language immersion education more widely
- R2 Use information from schools after pupils leave the centres to track the progress of these pupils and to evaluate and refine provision

## What happens next

Ar ôl cyhoeddi'r adroddiad arolygu, dylai'r awdurdod lleol ddiweddarau ei gynlluniau i fynd i'r afael â'r argymhellion ac ystyried y diffygion a nodwyd trwy'r broses arolygu. Dylai'r awdurdod lleol ddiweddarau ei gynlluniau cyn pen tri mis ar ôl cyhoeddi'r adroddiad arolygu.

Following the publication of the inspection report, the local authority should update its plans to address the recommendations and to take account of shortcomings identified through the inspection process. The local authority should update its plans within three months of the publication of the inspection report.

## Main evaluation

Local authority leaders have a clear vision for Welsh language immersion arrangements. They have developed and shared this vision alongside all stakeholders. In addition, they have established effective working relationships with various stakeholders. As a result, all stakeholders feel part of the strategic direction of the local authority.

### Spotlight: Effective working relationships with stakeholders

Leaders have developed effective working relationships with various stakeholders to develop the objectives of the Welsh Education strategic plan (WESP) successfully. For example, there are four subgroups (grow, embed, include and sustain) that meet termly to drive the vision and implementation of the WESP. All stakeholders are members of each sub-group and drive changes successfully in the local authority. For example, to facilitate and drive the vision for Welsh language education, the local authority in partnership with 'Flying Start' has developed an early years provision opposite the new Ysgol Nant Gwenlli site and the location of the Welsh immersion centre. In addition, through the developments of these subgroups, holiday clubs have been developed to ensure that Welsh language pupils have the same opportunities as other pupils.

Local authority leaders have developed a culture and inclusive ethos that supports the progress and well-being of pupils through effective distributed leadership responsibilities to the headteachers and governors of the schools where the centres are based. Governors provide beneficial support for the headteachers of both the primary and secondary centres in staff recruitment and development. In addition, the pupils from the secondary immersion class have reported to governors on the effectiveness of the provision and the aspects they would like to improve, such as more support with key vocabulary in certain subjects. As a result, the majority of pupils feel that leaders listen to their suggestions. The headteachers manage the centres in their own schools purposefully by ensuring that teaching and learning and pupil well-being are at the forefront of their work.

Local authority leaders have robust procedures to alleviate barriers to learning for pupils within the centres. For example, they provide free transport for pupils and ensure that the head of inclusion is an integral part of the Welsh Education Forum group. Leaders have a good understanding of pupil progress and the next steps in pupils' learning. This is shared successfully with schools and teachers. However, local authority leaders do not collect feedback from stakeholders on the progress pupils make after they have left the centres to help them to refine the provision with a particular focus on the aftercare immersion support.

Local authority leaders manage the admissions arrangements between schools and centres successfully by engaging purposefully with parents and developing active discussions between parents and headteachers to discuss the benefits of Welsh language immersion education. However, the promotion of the benefits of Welsh language immersion education more widely across the local authority is at an early stage of development.

Local authority leaders identify strengths and address areas for improvement robustly through developing successful partnerships with stakeholders. They listen to their views and develop actions accordingly in line with WESP priorities. There are robust systems in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the arrangements at all stages. For example, following self-evaluation processes, local authority leaders identified the need to establish an individual centre available to the cluster rather than immersion support in each school. Stakeholders identified that this would better support pupil progress and well-being by allowing pupils more opportunities to work with peers.

Headteachers have a good awareness of the strengths and areas for development of the Welsh language immersion arrangements in both the primary and secondary centres following robust self-evaluation processes. These processes are part of the self-evaluation procedures of each centre individually. They challenge areas for development purposefully and changes are made to ensure important improvements in teaching and learning. For example, in the primary centre, planning was amended to ensure skills progression in oracy, which led to improvements in the provision and a reduction in the over-reliance on worksheets.

Headteachers ensure that staff access a wide range of valuable professional learning opportunities. They promote a strong culture of teamwork and cohesion amongst staff across the centres and the wider staff of the school. This ensures that staff professional learning needs are linked to their performance management objectives purposefully, in addition to addressing the key national priorities of curriculum and additional learning needs reform.

Local authority leaders manage finances thoughtfully and allocate funds to support improvement effectively. With the support of the headteachers, they monitor the budget prudently and support learners and staff to ensure that they have high quality resources to best meet the needs of learners. For example, they ensure that staff have time to produce valuable teaching resources to support the development of the Welsh language in all cluster schools.

Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure and free from bullying and harassment whilst in the centres. Many report that they are very happy in the centres and that they have respect for the adults that support them to learn a new language. There is a strong safeguarding culture within the centres and there are clear processes in place to safeguard all pupils.

The centres are an inclusive and welcoming community. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to care for each other and on promoting the importance of good behaviour, courtesy and leading a healthy lifestyle. For example, the primary pupils use the class cafe to provide other pupils of the school with their daily healthy snack. In addition, the centres provide purposeful provision to develop pupils' physical skills through weekly activities. This has a positive impact on developing

pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle alongside promoting the development of the Welsh language in purposeful contexts.

Headteachers and staff report that nearly all pupils attend the immersion centres regularly. They feel happy and secure and report that they have daily check ins to support their well-being. For example, primary pupils have daily reflection time to discuss their feelings and emotions and the secondary pupils attend daily registration with the rest of their year group. This has a positive impact of their readiness to learn and their attitudes to learning.

There is suitable support for pupils with additional learning needs within the centres. There are purposeful transition arrangements in place to support all pupils, for example through enhanced provision, visits, and resources. Staff share information regularly with parents about their children's achievement and progress and there are effective procedures to ensure a happy transition to their host schools.

The Welsh immersion centres use effective guidance to support pupils in their next steps in their development. For example, in the secondary phase, teachers use whole-school strategies to support the pupils' writing skills across the curriculum. This has a positive impact on pupils' confidence and self-esteem whilst acquiring new linguistic skills.

Nearly all pupils in the immersion centres make sound progress from their starting points and acquire the Welsh language effectively. Over time, most pupils, including those pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and pupils who are adversely affected by poverty and disadvantage, gain confidence in their Welsh speaking skills. Staff have high expectations to immerse the pupils from all linguistic backgrounds and are energetic and enthusiastic when supporting the pupils to learn and make progress in their Welsh language skills.

In the primary phase, pupils develop their oracy skills well through a range of fun and purposeful activities. For example, pupils design an obstacle course for younger pupils and give them instructions using imperative verbs such as 'lonciwch, cerddwch a sefwch'. Most pupils build successfully on their oral skills and use them with increasing confidence in a variety of different situations, for example through role play activities and visits in the local area. In the secondary phase, pupils listen respectfully to their fellow pupils' contributions when expressing opinions and developing their ideas. They use sentence openers provided by their teachers effectively to develop their oral skills. Teachers, across both phases, use drama methods purposefully to develop and expand vocabulary in activities that promote pupils' imagination skilfully. This is an integral part of the provision, which challenges pupils to develop and improve their oral and collaboration skills.

Many pupils make sound progress in their reading skills. As they move through the school, many develop the confidence to read texts that are suitable for their stage of development with increasing independence. Pupils read novels and factual texts and, by doing so, take pleasure in reading. In the secondary phase, pupils develop their skills by reading more challenging texts and by responding to questions that develop their skills of inference, prediction, synthesising, and appreciation, for example by reading and interpreting a text about 'Gwyliaid Cochion Mawddwy'. Older pupils also develop their translanguaging skills successfully while completing tasks across the

curriculum. For example, they read text in one language and collate relevant information in another language confidently to write a pamphlet about the main attractions in Newport. These skills enable the pupils to develop as capable and ambitious learners that can use both languages confidently beyond the classroom. Most pupils understand the benefit of learning Welsh and talk confidently about the importance of being bilingual or multilingual.

Teachers plan the development of Welsh listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of all groups of learners progressively. The teaching of specific themes provides opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum. For example, within a unit of work on 'People that Help Us' learners develop their digital skills purposefully to create an animation of a dialogue in a doctor's surgery.

Pupils contribute their ideas successfully about how they would like to consolidate their learning and further develop their understanding of new vocabulary and syntactical patterns. For example, pupils use their creative skills in the outdoor area to formulate a portrait out of natural materials and talk confidently about specific features using newly acquired vocabulary and language patterns. These opportunities ensure that pupils see the curriculum as being relevant to them.

Teachers and headteachers at the centres monitor the pupils' progress robustly and use assessment in a purposeful and timely manner to inform the planning of their next steps. This information is used successfully to provide activities that enable learners to make further progress in their language and literacy skills.

Teachers and pupils report that nearly all pupils behave well in the immersion centres. Many pupils take on leadership roles in other classes so that they can further enhance their Welsh language skills, for example, by reading stories to the younger pupils. Nearly all pupils take part enthusiastically in a variety of Welsh days and weeks, for example St David's Day and Welsh Language Music Day. This extends most pupils' understanding of Welsh in everyday lives and that the language has value and status. Famous Welsh poets, authors and musicians are invited to the cluster to share their talents as part of the 'Rhyme and Raps' activity. This provides a real-life experience to inspire the pupils' understanding of the value of the Welsh language and culture. As a result, most pupils develop positive attitudes towards acquiring the Welsh language.

### **Additional information**

The provider's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers, staff, leaders and headteachers of pupils' registered schools through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- observe teaching and other activities, including evidence gathered through learning walks
- meet pupils (past and present) to discuss their work and to gain their views on various aspects of the provider's work
- meet with staff, leaders, managers, headteachers of pupils' registered schools and others to evaluate the impact of the provider's work
- look closely at self-evaluation processes
- consider the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)/ improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the local authority has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the management committee, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

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

- review 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 makes references 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 local authority and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

The report was produced in accordance with Section 38 of the Education Act 1997.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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**This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).**