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Introduction

This report is in response to a request in the cabinet secretary for education's annual remit letter to Estyn for 2017-2018. It reports on standards, provision and leadership in Welsh in key stage 2 and key stage 3 in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools. It considers a range of factors, such as the quality of teaching and assessment, formal and informal learning experiences and strategic leadership, including purposeful planning to raise standards and improve learners' outcomes in Welsh.

The intended audience for this report is the Welsh Government, headteachers and Welsh teachers in primary and secondary schools, local authority officers and regional consortia. The report's findings will help to inform the work of producing a new curriculum for Wales and a continuum of learning for Welsh. The report includes example of good practice that will encourage providers and practitioners to reflect on their current practices and evaluate them.

Background

Increasing the number of Welsh speakers and the number of people who use the Welsh language in their everyday lives is a priority for the Welsh Government.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act is concerned with improving Wales' social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing (National Assembly for Wales, 2015). To make sure that the public bodies listed in the act all work towards the same vision, seven wellbeing goals have been set. One of those goals is for 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language' (National Assembly for Wales, 2015, p.4).

Publishing a Welsh-medium Education Strategy (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010) and A Living Language: A Language for Living – Welsh language strategy 2012-17 (Welsh Government, 2012) supported the government's commitment to improving the quality of Welsh provision. Based on the principles of Qualified for Life (Welsh Government, 2014), Successful Futures (Donaldson, 2015) recognises the importance of the Welsh language in developing Wales 'as a bilingual nation with the strength and assurance to nurture both languages' (Donaldson, 2015, p.26).

The Welsh in education: Action plan 2017-21 (Welsh Government, 2017a) sets a direction for the Welsh Government to develop Welsh-medium education for the next four years, and Welsh continues to be a compulsory element of the curriculum for all learners until they are 16 years old. Education in Wales: Our national mission – Action Plan 2017-21 (Welsh Government, 2017b) identifies the intention to implement reforms to the education system in Wales, and 'developing Welsh-medium provision and improving the teaching and learning of Welsh for all learners are at the heart of these reforms' (Welsh Government, 2017a).

In all key stages, programmes of study identify expectations in terms of what should be taught to learners. At key stage 2, learners build on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the foundation phase. This progress is achieved through an integrated programme of oracy, reading and writing. Learners are presented with experiences and opportunities that interrelate the requirements of the Skills and Range sections of the programmes of study. Learners become confident, coherent and engaging speakers, working as individuals and as members of a group. The experiences presented to them include opportunities to take part in drama and role-play activities. They develop as active and responsive learners in a wide range of situations. Throughout the key stage, they experience a progressively wide range of demanding texts, for enjoyment and information, so that they can develop into fluent and effective readers. They become competent writers, writing clearly and coherently in a range of forms and for a range of purposes. They acquire a growing understanding of the need to adapt their language to suit purpose and audience. They work with increasing accuracy and become reflective and evaluative in relation to their own and others' achievements (Welsh Government, 2016).

At key stage 3, learners build on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired at key stage 2. This progress is achieved through an integrated programme of oracy, reading and writing. Learners are presented with experiences and opportunities that interrelate the requirements of the Skills and Range sections of the programmes of study. Oral activities ensure that learners' abilities as listeners, viewers and speakers are developed and extended. The experiences presented to them include opportunities to take part in drama and role-play activities. They read widely for pleasure and interest, developing an articulate and informed personal opinion about their reading. They respond to the content and style of texts, discussing a varied selection of literary, information and media texts. Learners write in a range of forms and styles. They adapt their language to suit purpose and audience using an appropriate level of formality. They work with increasing accuracy and become reflective and evaluative in relation to their own and others' achievements (Welsh Government, 2016).

Professor Donaldson's (2015) report, *Successful Futures*, recommends that the Welsh language should remain compulsory up to 16 years old and that schools should place a renewed focus on learning Welsh primarily as a means of communication, particularly oral communication and understanding.

Main findings

Standards

- 1 The standards of Welsh of most pupils in the primary schools and many pupils in the secondary schools that were visited as part of this review are good. On the whole, this is also true for the Welsh-medium or bilingual schools that have been inspected over the last two years. They talk, read and write well in Welsh, and many use their language skills confidently in different contexts across the curriculum.
- 2 Nearly all pupils listen attentively to their teachers. Most listen to their peers with understanding and with interest, and develop valuable discussion skills when working in pairs or groups. Many speak Welsh confidently and fluently, and their spoken language, on the whole, is accurate and natural. They express themselves clearly and usually adopt the appropriate language register. They express an opinion confidently and elaborate by giving valid reasons for their views.
- 3 Many pupils have the ability to use the Welsh language effectively in formal and informal situations. However, a few pupils do not develop their oracy skills to the best of their ability. They are reluctant to take part in discussion work and are not keen to contribute orally in public. A few primary school pupils and the majority of pupils in the secondary schools visited choose not to use the language naturally in social situations.
- 4 Strong oracy skills usually enable pupils to make rapid progress in terms of their reading and writing skills. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read confidently, fluently and with appropriate expression. They understand and recognise the features of a range of different texts in terms of language, structure, theme and presentation. Many pupils in key stage 3 respond enthusiastically to factual and literary texts, and develop a wide range of strong higher-order reading skills.
- 5 Many primary school pupils write meaningfully in a wide range of extended genres and adapt the style and content of their work for different purposes and audiences. Sentence structure is correct, on the whole, and most organise their work into paragraphs appropriately. By the end of key stage 3, many pupils develop strong, well-crafted writing skills. The majority of pupils use innate Welsh syntax purposefully and they have a secure grasp of spelling and punctuation as well as effective technical vocabulary.
- 6 A minority of pupils make basic language errors. These pupils' work is littered with common errors, for example spelling, lack of mutation and incorrect mutations following the definite article and misuse of noun gender and basic syntax. These common errors often occur in pupils' written work, as they do not succeed in recognising them in their spoken language.

Teaching and learning experiences

- 7 In most of the schools visited as part of this review, provision for Welsh-medium

provision is good, and is excellent in a minority. This is also the case for many of the schools that have been inspected during the last two years. The standard of Welsh teaching is at least good in most schools. Teaching includes excellent features in a minority of lessons.

- 8 Successful schools plan in detail and effectively to develop their pupils' oracy, reading and writing skills and ensure an appropriate inter-relationship between them. Due attention is given to elements of literacy and language accuracy. This contributes well to developing most pupils' skills. In a few schools, not enough emphasis is placed on developing pupils' oracy skills, and this has a detrimental effect on the development of other language skills.
- 9 The language centres visited in Gwynedd have very effective arrangements for pupils who join Welsh-medium or bilingual schools without much previous competence in the Welsh language. They provide opportunities for a new cohort of pupils to develop their Welsh language skills and provide a firm linguistic foundation for them to be able to participate fully in their bilingual education and take advantage of the experiences that are provided. Arrangements are not as good in most other local authorities.
- 10 Most Welsh teachers display many strong features. Most are good language models and place an appropriate emphasis on modelling correct language that is relevant to their themes. A few teachers and a minority of teaching assistants model incorrect language patterns to pupils occasionally, for example noun gender, mutations and common syntax. This often has a detrimental effect on pupils' language development.
- 11 The revised GCSE Welsh language course has had a strong influence on teaching methods in key stage 3 over the last two years. Revised schemes of work place an appropriate emphasis on encouraging pupils' independence so that they develop their reasoning skills effectively. Many departments provide innovative activities that prepare pupils for the GCSE Welsh literature course earlier than in the past.
- 12 Most Welsh teachers and departments assess their pupils' work thoroughly and, in most cases, they analyse strengths and areas for improvement usefully. Feedback on pupils' work, both orally and in writing, usually refers appropriately to developing their language skills. In a few cases, teachers' comments are not specific enough. They do not help pupils to improve their own work and, therefore, they do not have a positive effect on raising standards.

Leadership and management

- 13 Most headteachers of the primary, secondary and all-age schools visited have a clear vision for Welsh. The core of this vision is that all pupils make the best progress possible while developing their Welsh language skills and foster a strong sense of their Welsh identity. Standards in Welsh and promoting their pupils' sense of Welsh identity are priorities in the majority of schools' improvement plans.
- 14 The best leaders have high expectations of themselves, their staff and pupils, and they maintain a continuous focus on ensuring effective learning and teaching. They challenge and support their colleagues and provide whole-school guidance on expectations in lessons.

- 15 Consistent and detailed assessment procedures have been established in many schools, which ensure that they have an accurate picture of standards in Welsh. These schools analyse their pupils' attainment and achievement rigorously.
- 16 Based on monitoring and self-evaluation procedures, many schools plan strategically and purposefully to raise standards in Welsh. These schools' improvement plans convey clearly leaders' aspirations to deliver as many varied and rich experiences as possible to their pupils through the medium of Welsh. In the best cases, whole-school improvement plans and those of the Welsh curriculum area reflect each other to a great extent.
- 17 The majority of schools benefit from beneficial professional learning arrangements to strengthen Welsh provision further. In these cases, arrangements that allow for collaboration and sharing expertise have a positive effect on standards of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- 18 Many leaders have established a culture of continuous professional development in their schools. They understand that the whole school is responsible for its pupils' progress and insist that all members of staff, including teaching assistants, contribute towards improvement planning.
- 19 Most secondary Welsh departments benefit from a range of beneficial regional and national partnerships to share the latest developments and best practice in terms of learning and teaching in Welsh.
- 20 The majority of schools have appropriate transition arrangements between key stage 2 and key stage 3. However, transition arrangements in a minority of schools are not effective enough. In these cases, there is little curricular collaboration between schools for it to influence practices constructively in either school.
- 21 Not enough local authorities plan strategically to ensure that pupils are given an opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills in the most effective way.

Recommendations

Schools should:

- R1 Focus on developing pupils' oracy skills as a basis for developing their other skills, particularly writing
- R2 Introduce strategies to help pupils to eliminate the common language errors made by a minority of pupils both spoken and written
- R3 Ensure that experiences provided for pupils in key stage 3 build systematically on provision in key stage 2
- R4 Provide training to improve the language skills of teachers and teaching assistants
- R5 Plan purposefully to increase secondary school pupils' desire and confidence to use the Welsh language in informal situations

Local authorities and regional consortia should:

- R6 Ensure specialist support and assistance for schools to develop pupils' language skills
- R7 Ensure effective provision for pupils who wish to transfer from English-medium education to Welsh-medium education during key stages 2 and 3
- R8 Ensure that pupils who have been assessed in Welsh at the end of key stage 2 continue to develop their skills in the most effective way in key stage 3

Standards in Welsh, including pupils' attitudes towards the Welsh language

Key stage 2

- 22 Schools across Wales were visited for this report and, on the whole, most pupils' standards of Welsh in primary schools are good. By the end of their time at primary school, most pupils in the schools visited make purposeful progress in their Welsh literacy skills and apply their oracy, reading and writing skills confidently in different contexts across the curriculum. Most succeed in making sound progress and build on their prior learning effectively. This is also the case, in the main, for the schools that were inspected during the 2010-2017 inspection cycle.
- 23 Many of these pupils have high expectations of themselves and respond positively to teachers' expectations of them. In the best examples, pupils make very mature use of their language skills when responding to the challenges that are set.
- 24 Nearly all pupils show positive attitudes towards the Welsh language, whatever their linguistic background or that of the area in which the school is located. They enjoy their Welsh lessons and are enthusiastic about their work.
- 25 Most pupils communicate effectively through the medium of Welsh, both in the classrooms and around the school, and they take pride in the varied opportunities that they are given to use the language. They are proud of their Welsh identity and are aware of the advantages of developing their bilingual skills. Only a few pupils communicate with each other in English in the classroom and around the school when they are not under a teacher's supervision. These pupils do not develop their oracy skills to the best of their ability by using the Welsh language spontaneously in informal situations.
- 26 Nearly all pupils listen attentively to their teachers and succeed in acting effectively on what they are expected to achieve. Most also listen respectfully to their peers and develop valuable discussion skills when working in pairs or groups.
- 27 Most pupils display strong oracy skills when developing ideas and presenting information. Many speak Welsh confidently and fluently and, on the whole, their language is accurate and natural. Many express an opinion confidently and elaborate by giving valid reasons for their views. In situations where children are not given as many opportunities to practise their language informally and socially, this can impair the fluency of their expression.
- 28 The standards of oracy achieved by many pupils have a positive effect on their written work. This is particularly true in a minority of cases in which pupils' oral language is also rich in dialect. In a few schools, pupils' standards of oracy are excellent.
- 29 By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read confidently, fluently and with appropriate expression. They understand and recognise the features of a range of different texts

in terms of language, structure, theme and presentation. Many use linguistic/grammatical terms confidently, for example verbs, adverbs, alliteration, 'wow' words, conjunctions and openings.

- 30 In the best examples, pupils develop their higher order reading skills successfully in key stage 2. For example, they locate and synthesise different sources of information about the First World War effectively and use inference and deduction to draw conclusions.
- 31 Most pupils write meaningfully in a wide range of extended genres and adapt the style and content of their work for different purposes and audiences. Sentence structure is sound, on the whole, and most pupils divide their work into paragraphs appropriately. Many use a thesaurus or a dictionary purposefully to enrich their language.
- 32 Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd uses philosophy for children and process drama as a basis for its planning. As a result of using these strategies, most pupils' oracy and writing skills, from the nursery class to Year 6, are very good.

Case study 1: Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd

Information about the school

Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd is a designated Welsh-medium primary school, which is situated in the Ringland area of Newport. It provides education for pupils between three and 11 years old. There are 350 pupils on roll, including 50 nursery age children. The school has 15 classes. Approximately 1% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Welsh is the school's everyday language and the main medium of learning and teaching. Eighteen per cent (18%) of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost twenty per cent (20%) of pupils are on the school's additional learning needs register.

Context and background to practice

The school uses philosophy for children and process drama strategies as a basis for its planning. This stimulates and nurtures pupils who are able to think critically and discuss challenging topics maturely. The school prioritises oracy work, which stimulates written work very effectively.

Description of the activity/strategy

Teachers plan for their pupils' needs by choosing a prompt to create an emotional connection. That prompt can be a book, a moving image or music. Philosophy for children sessions ensure that the pupil's voice is the focal point and that pupils have time to reflect and challenge each other in a safe situation.

'Process drama' strategies are interwoven with philosophy for children strategies and are a basis for oracy work. Pupils get to the heart of characters or objects within a text. For example, the 'sound picture' drama strategy is used to create atmosphere and to identify with the characters of the residents of Tryweryn. As a result, pupils have a wide range of emotional experiences and rich language, which lead to effective extended and creative work.

Effect on provision and standards

Most pupils apply their literacy skills very effectively across the curriculum. This method of using emotions and gaining a deep awareness of a topic stimulates excellent writing across the curriculum in Welsh. Pupils often use their analytical findings to write as an object. In the reception class, children write from the perspective of a bucket and spade following an educational trip to the seaside. By Year 2, pupils develop their skills to describe their feelings, for example by writing as Grandma's memory box. As pupils reach the top of the school, there is evidence of the way in which philosophical discussions influence the intensity of writing as an object, for example writing from the perspective of a building in Syria before and during the war, or the school in Aberfan.

- 33 Many pupils understand what they need to do to develop and improve their work. They respond positively to teachers' oral and written feedback, for example to re-draft elements of their work.
- 34 By the end of key stage 2, many pupils have a sound understanding of grammatical elements and this is reflected in the accuracy of their written work, for example the soft mutation following a preposition and the concise form of the past tense of the verb.
- 35 Most pupils apply and assimilate their oracy and literacy skills successfully across the curriculum by the end of key stage 2. They respond enthusiastically to extended writing strategies to enrich their language through cross-curricular themes, for example the tales of the Mabinogi.
- 36 The majority of pupils have accurate and rich language; for example, they understand and use idioms appropriately when conversing and writing. However, a few pupils do not succeed in differentiating between formal and informal language. Unnecessary slang is also apparent in their spoken language at times.
- 37 A minority of pupils make basic language errors both orally and in writing. These pupils' work is littered with common errors, for example misspelling, lack of mutation and incorrect mutations following the definite article, and misuse of noun gender and basic syntax.
- 38 A few pupils' language resources do not always match the maturity of their ideas, and this does not allow them to express themselves clearly in Welsh, either orally or in writing. Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) achieve well under the guidance of teaching assistants.
- 39 Many higher ability pupils make good progress, although this varies over time. However, evidence of providing challenging tasks that provide appropriately for these pupils' needs is limited and, as a result, a few of the most able pupils do not achieve to the best of their ability.

Key stage 3

- 40 Many pupils enjoy their Welsh lessons, are very eager to learn and show high levels

of motivation and an obvious interest in their work. For example, pupils are increasingly confident when experimenting with new technology to present poems orally. Most show very positive attitudes towards the Welsh language and a strong sense of pride in being Welsh.

- 41 Many pupils in key stage 3 make sound progress and build on their previous learning effectively, for example when producing their own success criteria based on their awareness of stylistic features or specific forms of writing.
- 42 Many pupils make effective use of their language and literacy skills in Welsh lessons. For example, many develop as extended writers and show good insight when analysing stylistic techniques in poems, such as *Gail fu farw* by Nesta Wyn Jones and *Er Cof am Kelly* by Menna Elfyn. Many pupils communicate confidently verbally. They present extended oral responses and reason meaningfully. Progress in terms of the accuracy of oracy and written language is a prominent feature.
- 43 Pupils at Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth develop strong Welsh language skills, for example when working independently on a theme that is of particular interest to them in Year 8.

Case study 2: Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth

Information about the school

Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth is a designated Welsh-medium secondary school for pupils aged between 11 and 18 years. It is situated in Cefneithin, Carmarthenshire. There are 840 pupils on roll, with almost 160 in the sixth form. Ten per cent (10%) of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Twenty per cent (20%) of pupils are on the additional learning needs register. Sixty-three per cent (63%) of pupils speak Welsh at home.

Context and background to practice

Year 8 pupils at Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth develop their Welsh language skills by studying the Games and Sports theme during the autumn term. A challenge is set for each class to complete a class project within six lessons (six hours) based on a sports competition or championship of the pupils' choice. The aim of the task is to promote pupils' Welsh language skills by allowing pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning. The teacher's role is to facilitate learning and provide guidance and support during lessons.

Description of the activity/strategy

When presenting the challenge, the Welsh department outlines the pupils' role as individuals, pairs, groups and as a class. Ideas about the kind of tasks that can be included in the project are given, but there is an emphasis on promoting pupils' creativity so that they think of their own ideas. All pupils are expected to complete one extended task on which they will be assessed at the end of the unit. The work must be completed within set timescales.

The teacher guides the first part of the work and the class decides on the project's topic, for example the Olympic Games or the Rugby World Cup. Pupils are given time to plan as a group and to brainstorm ideas before the class decides on specific responsibilities. The remaining lessons are assigned for pupils to conduct research by using the school's resources, such as the library or ICT equipment. They write and improve their work before the final edit. They are also responsible for typesetting the final work to be presented.

During these lessons, teachers take a deliberate step back. This allows pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and develop their thinking skills, work with others, improve their learning and performance, and solve problems. Pupils work on tasks that are of interest to them and at a level that is appropriate for their ability. However, teachers monitor the work to ensure that tasks are challenging enough. Tasks include a wide range of written genres, for example factual information about individual champions, a persuasive task to encourage visitors to the country in which the competition is held, and a monologue from a supporter's perspective.

Effect on provision and standards

When undertaking this unit of work, pupils develop a range of subject skills and cross-curricular skills successfully. When reading, they select suitable sources, including online sources. They improve their dual literacy, as sources are often in English. They gather information, for example by skimming a website to decide on its usefulness, and scanning a webpage for specific facts.

All pupils improve their understanding of the features of different written genres and decide on the most appropriate forms for their task. They also use strategies to improve their own work and the work of others, and learn how to use computerised checking systems, and edit and re-draft work to improve its grammatical accuracy.

They develop their wider skills, such as their ability to work independently, solve problems, show creativity, be innovative, work to deadlines and use ICT confidently. Pupils succeed in evaluating their work successfully by being aware of what they have learnt and which areas could be improved.

After completing the task, pupils reflect on the work both orally and in writing. They consider what they have achieved, identify the learning strategies they have used and developed, and evaluate their individual contribution to the task. They also self-assess their ability to take responsibility for their own learning and express an opinion on their enjoyment. Nearly all pupils respond positively and refer to the task as one that they enjoyed. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to make their own decisions. They are also honest when responding to what they learnt from the experience. Some identify the importance of using the strengths of different individuals in the class to check and improve their work, or to experiment by using ICT more effectively.

- 44 Nearly all pupils listen attentively to teachers and are respectful when listening to each other's views. Many work together effectively in pairs and groups to broaden their understanding when discussing various subjects, and adopt the roles of different group members successfully.

- 45 Many pupils have a secure grasp of vocabulary and correct syntax, and they express themselves clearly orally. The majority show a high level of accuracy, rich vocabulary and natural elements of dialect when speaking at length publicly. A few pupils of higher ability speak very maturely. Their spoken language allows them to discuss a wide range of subjects incisively and intelligently.
- 46 A few pupils are reluctant to take part in pair/group work and are not keen to make an oral contribution publicly. The reasons for this are varied and complex, from lack of confidence to lack of motivation, and also including lack of guidance at times. These pupils do not extend their oracy skills as much as they could and, as a result, they do not make the expected progress.
- 47 Many pupils have the ability to use the Welsh language effectively in formal and informal situations. However, the majority choose not to use the language naturally in social situations. This is a challenge for most of the secondary schools visited.
- 48 Many pupils respond enthusiastically to factual and literary texts and develop a wide range of sound reading skills. They are able to gather, interpret and analyse information from a range of sources and use evidence to support their opinion, for example texts that relate to the effects of war on children's lives. This, in turn, leads to successful extended writing.
- 49 The majority of pupils have effective higher order reading skills. For example, they are able to read between the lines to find messages that are implied in a text. The majority of pupils in key stage 3 analyse and appreciate the content and style of unfamiliar poems very effectively.
- 50 Many pupils develop strong, well-crafted writing skills. They organise their work logically and paragraph correctly. They respond enthusiastically to the encouragement to write in a variety of styles, for different purposes and different audiences.
- 51 The majority of pupils use natural Welsh syntax purposefully and they have a secure grasp of spelling and punctuation of a high standard, in addition to effective technical vocabulary. They develop their skills by paying attention to the accuracy of language, for example concise and impersonal verb forms.
- 52 Common errors characterise the work of a minority of pupils because they are not aware of these errors in their spoken language. They make the same mistakes in their written work, for example by selecting incorrect vocabulary such as *poblogaid/poblogaeth*, *gwario/treulio amser*, and they do not apply the soft mutation after prepositions.
- 53 A few higher ability pupils write extended pieces that catch the reader's imagination. These pupils have a very firm grasp of natural register in Welsh, and their work includes many examples of powerful and idiomatic writing. Many pupils respond regularly to teachers' feedback to improve their work, for example by correcting common errors and/or developing their original ideas.

Teaching and learning experiences

Key stage 2

Provision

- 54 Nearly all of the primary and all-age schools that were visited have a range of effective strategies to ensure that Welsh is their everyday language. They promote a strong Welsh ethos and most pupils use the Welsh language confidently in formal and informal situations in school.
- 55 Most schools have adopted schemes, including the Welsh Language Charter for example, to encourage pupils to speak Welsh, learn about Wales and deepen their awareness and pride in their Welsh heritage. Teachers in nearly all schools provide numerous opportunities for pupils to speak Welsh in lessons and at other times. For example, one school encourages its pupils to press the language 'switch' when they arrive in the morning. The result is that they usually continue to speak Welsh throughout the day.
- 56 Provision for Welsh-medium education is good in most schools and excellent in a minority. These excellent features include the following:
- Curriculum organisation enables pupils to make and maintain good progress in Welsh
 - The school plans in detail to ensure development and continuity in their pupils' Welsh language skills
 - Learning activities reinforce pupils' language skills
 - The quality of teaching is at least good across the school; teachers are good language models and sufficient emphasis is placed on developing pupils' oracy skills
 - Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to develop their use of the Welsh language in a range of situations outside Welsh lessons
- 57 A few schools use curricular plans that have been prepared by their regional school support service. More often than not, schools adapt these or prepare schemes of work that are more relevant to the school. Most are of a high standard and provide a useful guide for teachers in terms of the range of skills that they need to develop year-on-year. The requirements of the literacy framework are mapped in detail in nearly all of the schools that were visited.
- 58 A few schools are too dependent on commercial schemes in terms of provision. These schools are not proactive, innovative or original enough in raising standards and they do not have a contemporary enough appeal to promote their pupils' sense of Welsh identity.
- 59 To develop their oracy skills, the best teachers fire pupils' imagination by creating engaging contexts for their lessons. By planning stimulating experiences in this way, pupils are led to use and develop language to express opinions naturally and with growing confidence. They are keen to participate in the lesson and contribute to it as the context is of interest to them.

- 60 Teachers at Ysgol Sant Baruc have planned specific tasks each term for all school year groups to ensure development in pupils' oracy skills in key stage 2. This can often mean putting pupils in an imaginary moral dilemma, for example discussing and making a decision about who should receive a heart transplant.

Case study 3: Ysgol Sant Baruc

Information about the school

Ysgol Gymraeg Sant Baruc is a designated Welsh-medium primary school, which is situated in Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan. There are 220 pupils between three and 11 years old on roll. Around 5% of pupils come from homes in which Welsh is the main language. Just under 10% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Approximately 5% of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 17% of pupils as being on the additional learning needs register.

Context and background to practice

Teachers at Ysgol Sant Baruc have committed to focusing on improving pupils' oracy skills as part of literacy lessons. They have planned specific tasks each term for every school year to ensure development in pupils' oracy skills in key stage 2.

Description of the activity/strategy

The school's Welsh language scheme places a clear emphasis on the accuracy of language. Most pupils only hear and speak Welsh at school. Teachers model a high standard of language and drill language daily in the classroom with short oracy exercises – 'Gramadeg Graenus'. A different language pattern or idiom is introduced to the whole school each week. Teachers are expected to correct pupils' language and praise language of a high standard.

Teachers plan oracy activities that include 'llwyfan llafar', namely tasks to present information individually and group discussion tasks. As the teacher models language, differentiated discussion cards help pupils to communicate with each other by using language of a high quality, in addition to electronic presentations. The teacher's high expectations contribute to pupils' standards of oracy.

The school works closely with the secondary school. The literacy leader and Year 6 teachers observe lessons jointly and share good practice with the secondary school. This ensures that the primary and secondary school teachers have consistent expectations and is valuable when trying to ensure effective transition arrangements between the two schools.

A portfolio is kept to moderate oracy skills across the school. This means that the school's staff are able to monitor pupils' language development and scrutinise common errors in speech. Common language errors form the basis for the language pattern of the week.

Effect on provision and standards

Nearly all pupils communicate confidently on a variety of themes. Nearly all pupils

use a variety of phrases and sentence patterns confidently when discussing a topic. Pupils' confidence in presenting information has improved. In 2017, all pupils achieved at least the expected level in oracy, and many achieved better than expected.

- 61 Most schools have specific strategies to develop their pupils' reading skills. For example, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James, Pontypridd operates the 'Taith Ddarllen Ryfeddol' (Wonderful Reading Journey) and ensures a variety of reading activities that increase in terms of challenge and require responses to texts through different methods. Many pupils respond very positively to this strategy, particularly boys and pupils of higher ability.
- 62 Extended writing strategies have a positive effect on many schools' pedagogy. The result of this is that most pupils write meaningfully in a wide variety of genres and adapt the style and content of their work for different purposes and audiences.
- 63 Many schools provide effective displays in the classrooms, which promote the use of pupils' Welsh literacy skills. In these cases, pupils are encouraged to use vocabulary and phrases regularly in their work. They are also an opportunity to draw attention to some of Wales' most famous writers, including our contemporary writers. Most schools now invite prominent authors to the school to enrich pupils' linguistic experiences.

Teaching and assessment

- 64 The teaching of Welsh in key stage 2 is at least good in many of the schools that were visited. The teaching includes excellent features in a minority of lessons.
- 65 In the schools where teaching is most successful, teachers plan in detail and effectively to develop their pupils' oracy, reading and writing skills, and ensure an appropriate relationship between them. This leads to developing sound skills among most pupils. In a few schools, there is not a specific enough focus on practising pupils' oracy skills and on the beneficial effect that this has on the accuracy of their writing.
- 66 In the best lessons, teachers have a very productive working relationship with their pupils. They have very high expectations of pupils and encourage them regularly to develop persistence and perseverance when undertaking extended tasks. They plan lessons carefully to include challenges that cater for the needs of the full range of pupils. Open-ended and probing questions are a notable feature of these lessons, where pupils are encouraged to think for themselves. Where planning focuses on building systematically on previous learning experiences, pupils have ownership of their learning. They explain how they contribute to themes and how they come to an agreement with their teachers about what aspects they will study next. Joint planning to develop independence at the top of key stage 2 is excellent in a few of the schools visited. In a few schools, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to lead and contribute to their own learning, or to choose learning pathways that are of specific interest to them. In these cases, teaching does not develop pupils' independence sufficiently. As a result, pupils of higher ability, in particular, are not stretched as much as they should be.

- 67 Most teachers are effective language models and place appropriate emphasis on modelling correct language that is relevant to their themes. For example, they draw attention skilfully to correct forms of the verb, they correct errors of mutation and feed vocabulary without disrupting the flow of the lesson. A few teachers, and a minority of teaching assistants, model incorrect language patterns to their pupils from time to time, for example noun gender, mutations and common syntax. A very few teachers are too willing to accept English vocabulary in Welsh lessons and they are not innovative enough in enriching their pupils' language.
- 68 Most teachers provide their pupils with regular and beneficial oral or written feedback. This allows pupils to know what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve their work, in terms of content and expression. In a few cases, teachers' comments are not specific enough. As a result, they are not an effective means for pupils to improve their own work and, therefore, they do not have a positive effect on raising standards, for example to improve punctuation and spelling over time.
- 69 Many teachers ask probing questions during lessons to encourage pupils to reflect on their work individually or in pairs or groups. This strategy is particularly effective when regular pauses are planned to receive pupils' responses and gauge progress in their understanding.
- 70 Teachers in most schools make effective use of success criteria as a way of encouraging pupils to improve their work. A minority of schools ask their pupils to write their own success criteria. In the best examples, this feature contributes usefully towards developing independent learners successfully.
- 71 Most schools use simple marking codes that are easy to implement and are understood by pupils. As a result, many pupils succeed in improving their own work. In a few cases, pupils do not correct their language errors accurately and the teacher does not correct this further. This results in the same errors occurring in subsequent work.
- 72 Nearly all schools have effective procedures that enable them to track pupils' progress in great detail. They succeed in identifying specific areas for improvement in their work and address them, as necessary. Outcomes often inform the areas for improvement in the school's improvement plans.
- 73 Most schools have a keen awareness and reliable and valid knowledge of pupils' attainment. They set challenging targets and plan carefully to try to ensure that individuals and groups achieve in line with their ability.

Key stage 3

Provision

- 74 Most secondary school Welsh departments lay firm foundations for developing pupils' literacy skills. As a result, many make purposeful progress in their Welsh subject and literacy skills. They are confident in using the Welsh language formally across the curriculum and in informal situations.

- 75 Most Welsh teachers in the secondary schools visited are committed to their work, and they work enthusiastically to transfer the richness of the Welsh language and culture to their pupils. In the majority of departments, a beneficial effort is made to place the subject in a contemporary context, for example by playing popular music and discussing recently published Welsh novels. This, in turn, nurtures pupils' curiosity towards the Welsh language and their enjoyment of it. It also contributes towards creating an ethos that promotes the Welsh language and culture and positive attitudes towards them.
- 76 Nearly all departments provide numerous opportunities for pupils to access a wide variety of activities in situations outside Welsh lessons, for example activities that are organised by the Urdd, local Welsh language initiatives and eisteddfodau.
- 77 There is infectious enthusiasm in terms of seeking to move the subject forward technologically in a few Welsh departments. Innovative use of ICT in these departments is an important part of developing Welsh pedagogy. It links effectively with these departments' clear focus on expanding the school's provision to provide more opportunities to speak the language informally through activities such as school radio stations.
- 78 There are numerous opportunities in most schools to develop appropriate elements of the literacy framework successfully. In the best examples, a few secondary schools outline their linguistic priorities each year and departments across the curriculum tailor their schemes of work purposefully to support their pupils' linguistic development.
- 79 Many Welsh departments have revised their schemes of work over the last two years. They have focused specifically on adapting schemes of learning in key stage 3 in preparation for the new GCSE course. The best departments have been successful in attempting to ensure that their revised schemes have a contemporary appeal and are stimulating for their pupils. This is to be welcomed in the context of the recent decline in the number of pupils who continue to study Welsh to A Level and beyond.
- 80 Revised schemes of work focus appropriately on language skills, in particular on improving standards of writing and refining pupils' grasp of language accuracy. They also place an emphasis on encouraging independence among pupils to develop their reasoning skills effectively.
- 81 The Welsh department at Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen has revised its schemes of work in key stage 3 purposefully. The room that is given to developing ICT skills as part of the revised schemes is a notable feature.

Case study 4: Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen

Information about the school

Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen is an 11-18 bilingual community comprehensive school in the village of Bethesda in Gwynedd. The school has five feeder primary schools. There are around 400 pupils on roll, 50 of whom are in the sixth form. Approximately 80% of pupils come from homes where at least one parent speaks Welsh.

Context and background to practice

The school has decided that it needs to lay a firm foundation in key stage 3 to prepare for the changes to the GCSE specifications. The Welsh department has adapted areas of study in key stage 3 into thematic units of work that follow “Trywydd y Testunau” (Text Trail). This allows pupils to identify the features of six non-literary texts in their reading and plan their written work to highlight those features. Specific aspects of the national literacy framework and the Welsh programme of study in key stage 3 are targeted in each extended task.

Description of the activity/strategy

By adapting the areas of study, teachers have begun to consider digital and interactive resources in the context of the features of the six non-literary texts and the way in which they can contribute towards planning tasks. The department has succeeded in satisfying a number of strands and specific elements of the digital competence framework when planning these extended tasks. The department is experimenting with a number of digital platforms and various apps for electronic tablets.

The department has created a website to link areas of study directly with the digital material on the Hwb+ website. Each year has its own website and resources, and members of the department keep the content up-to-date by adding to it and revising resources regularly. It includes many links to external interactive websites, and many activities have been created for specific classes and groups of learners through these resources.

Effect on provision and standards

Pupils at the school work together on tasks and develop their skills jointly. They create tasks in groups and evaluate the success of tasks together effectively. For example, by devising a discussion task and using ICT to raise awareness of the situation of refugees in Wales, pupils consider a real and current situation, which also has a specific audience.

- 82 When adapting their learning plans, many schools have increased the challenge that is provided for pupils in key stage 3. For example, many now include beneficial tasks in line with the national reading tests. While increasing challenge on the one hand, the best teachers also promote their pupils’ confidence and enjoyment, and remind them regularly that perseverance and persistence are important qualities for success.

- 83 Many departments provide innovative activities that prepare pupils for the GCSE Welsh literature examination earlier than in the past. For example, they analyse and appreciate a poem that they have not seen before and compare it with a familiar poem.
- 84 Many secondary school Welsh teachers have high expectations of their pupils, and many provide good opportunities for them to express their opinion about work so that they, in turn, can influence schemes of work. In a few lessons, experiences that are provided for pupils in key stage 3 do not build systematically enough on their experiences in key stage 2. In these cases, transition arrangements between the two key stages do not succeed in ensuring that pupils develop their Welsh skills to the best of their ability.
- 85 These lessons are often too teacher-centred and pupils are too passive. For example, a few teachers are too prepared to read texts themselves rather than ask pupils to read them aloud. In these lessons, pupils react to the directions they are given rather than working independently following an initial prompt. Tasks and activities are not challenging enough to hold all pupils' interest and ensure that they make good progress. Questioning is not incisive enough to extend pupils' understanding and skills further.
- 86 A few departments plan lessons that include too many short activities and too many printed resources, such as booklets or worksheets. On the whole, teachers do not adapt these lessons to meet pupils' specific needs. Teachers move too quickly through the activities rather than ensuring depth of understanding. As a result, pupils' responses are often limited and superficial.

Teaching and assessment

- 87 Most Welsh teachers show many features of strong teaching. All of these have a very positive effect on pupils' standards in Welsh:
- very good subject knowledge and modelling a wealth of language
 - structured and creative planning that ensures that activities build purposefully on previous learning
 - probing questions and exemplifying answers to raise pupils' expectations
 - prompting pupils sensitively when they make mistakes
 - maintaining positive working relationships and using humour appropriately
- 88 Most successful lessons ensure the inter-relationship of language skills and give due attention to elements of literacy and accuracy of language. Developing oracy skills is the basis of most of these lessons. In a few departments, there is a focus on drilling to consolidate grammatical patterns before starting on written work. However, a minority of schools do not work closely enough with their feeder primary schools to ensure consistency and a sound mutual understanding in terms of linguistic expectations and methodology to eliminate common errors that characterise a minority of pupils' work.
- 89 Gwynedd local authority has effective arrangements for pupils who are latecomers to Welsh-medium or bilingual schools and have little previous competence in the Welsh language.

Cameo: Gwynedd language centres – immersion education for pupils who are new to the Welsh language

There are four primary language centres and one secondary language centre in the county. All lay a firm foundation for pupils in the Welsh language for them to be able to participate fully in bilingual education experiences and take advantage of bilingualism skills. In 2017, the majority of pupils who received immersion education in the secondary centre and sat the Welsh (first language) examination gained a level 2 qualification in the language.

Teachers at the centres use highly effective methodologies to introduce language to their pupils. The main emphasis is placed on developing listening and speaking skills by drilling language with the whole class, individuals and groups of pupils. This methodology provides valuable opportunities for pupils to focus on language accuracy, hear and practise pronouncing vocabulary and language patterns, and gain confidence in a safe environment. There is very little use of English throughout the immersion courses as teachers sustain the target language (Welsh) so that it becomes established and normalised.

Time is allocated each day to develop pupils' reading under one-to-one guidance. Cross-curricular learning takes place when pupils are given opportunities to use the language they have learnt in the context of a subject. Pupils are encouraged regularly to use the language outside the classroom. The enthusiasm of the teachers who deliver the lessons at the language centres is infectious.

Staff at the language centres provide a valuable aftercare service by supporting pupils who attended the centres in their daily schools. The aftercare strategy set robust criteria and milestones, including raising awareness among the schools' staff of these pupils' linguistic needs.

- 90 Ysgol Glan Clwyd implements a strategy that includes the option for pupils at the end of Year 6, who would cope with learning a new language, to be 'immersed' and move from English-medium to Welsh-medium education. Pupils are taught in small classes and follow the same curriculum, but the work is tailored to the requirements of pupils who are attempting to acquire a new language.

Cameo: Ysgol Glan Clwyd's immersion scheme

In Years 7 and 8, pupils receive their education as an immersion class in all subjects, with the exception of physical education, English and technology. Three hours of Welsh lessons are provided each week.

Welsh lessons in Year 7 focus mainly on oral work, and the use of English decreases over time. Small classes (approximately ten pupils, on average, over the last five years) give pupils an opportunity to gain confidence before joining the mainstream in Year 9 or even sooner.

On average, pupils who are part of the immersion scheme have gained more A*-C grades in Welsh than other pupils over the last five years. Results in English and other subjects are also higher, on average, over the same period.

- 91 Provision in most Welsh departments ensures a variety of interesting reading texts. Many pupils respond positively to the books that they read, including the work of contemporary authors.
- 92 Most departments ensure that they provide valuable opportunities for pupils to practice writing in a wide range of forms and for different purposes. Many pupils deepen their understanding of the features of genres such as articles, monologues, dialogues, essays and poems. A further outcome is that the majority of pupils develop as effective writers themselves.
- 93 Most departments make effective use of structured language reference books that they have developed themselves to improve language accuracy and raise standards of literacy.
- 94 Most Welsh departments assess their pupils' work in detail and analyse strengths and specific areas for improvement. Feedback on pupils' work usually refers appropriately to developing their language skills. In a few cases, comments do not give pupils enough guidance and, therefore, they are unable to improve the quality of their work.
- 95 In many lessons, specific time is allowed at the beginning of the lesson either to correct common errors, practice grammatical patterns or improve a piece of work that needs attention. This period is called 'Gwella'r Gwallau' or 'Amser Ll'nau', for example, in different schools. Many pupils appreciate this practice and recognise that it has a positive effect on improving their original work.
- 96 The attention given to improving written work is an effective feature of many departments' work. Teachers often set questions or extended tasks for pupils as a core part of their assessment procedures. Most pupils respond positively to these challenges and succeed in making further progress.

- 97 Nearly all Welsh departments track their pupils' progress regularly and, as a result, create specific groups to respond to pupils' needs. Many departments make effective use of national test results for this purpose.
- 98 Most pupils know what their language targets are and, in the majority of schools, they themselves are responsible for setting their own targets or success criteria for extended writing tasks. In the most effective examples, teachers train pupils to use success criteria to assess their peers' work, for example to provide feedback on oracy work. In a few schools, assessment for learning tasks are ineffective, for example correcting peers' work wrongly or correcting the wrong features. In these cases, pupils do not have the necessary understanding to improve other pupils' work effectively.

Leadership and management

Strategic leadership

- 99 Most headteachers at the primary, secondary and all-age schools that were visited as part of this review have a clear vision for the Welsh language. The core of this vision is the deep conviction that all pupils should make the best possible progress in developing their Welsh skills and foster a strong sense of Welsh identity.
- 100 Standards in Welsh and promoting their pupils' Welsh identity are priorities in the majority of school improvement plans. For example, leaders at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Caerffili remind their staff frequently about their responsibility to encourage, support and promote the use of the Welsh language within the school.

Case study 5: Leadership at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Caerffili

Information about the provider/setting/school

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Caerffili is situated in the town of Caerphilly. There are approximately 400 pupils between three and 11 years old on roll. Pupils are taught in a part-time nursery and 12 classes from Reception to Year 6. Almost 11% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Only 4% of pupils speak Welsh at home. All of the school's pupils transfer to the local Welsh-medium comprehensive school.

Contact and background to practice

The school's motto is 'Hawl Plentyn ei iaith' (A Child's Language is their Right), and developing pupils' language skills is at the heart of its work. The school's vision is based on high expectations of everyone who is associated with the school, developing effective partnerships between all stakeholders, ensuring that the school is happy and welcoming and that everyone realises their full potential.

Description of the activity/strategy

The school has a clear management structure that ensures that the headteacher's vision is implemented at all levels by leaders who have high expectations of their teams. The school has robust performance management systems that ensure that everyone understands the school improvement plan and their role in raising standards. There is an annual focus on an element of literacy.

The Literacy Co-ordinator is the school's deputy headteacher and leader of the foundation phase, and is in a strong position to ensure that developing the Welsh language is a priority for the school. The local consortium has recognised the school's work and made it a good practice hub for all of the region's Welsh-medium primary schools. Schemes of work are evaluated annually. This ensures consistency in provision from the foundation phase to the end of key stage 2. Teachers' planning is evaluated regularly with a clear focus on standards of literacy in both languages.

The school ensures that there is a consistent focus on standards, provision and leadership of literacy in staff meetings. Teachers and support staff assess jointly in triads and discuss the features of oracy work, reading and writing, particularly when moderating and standardising. Regular feedback and dialogue, both verbal and in books, is expected between teaching staff and pupils.

The school runs a wide range of extra-curricular clubs with a focus on promoting standards of literacy, for example the 'Clwb Clecs' and the writing and art club that creates books for pupils in the foundation phase.

The literacy team produces an annual report to evaluate standards, provision and leadership in Welsh. The report is discussed with the governing body, including the governor who is responsible for literacy.

Effect on provision and standards

Nearly all pupils attain the expected level in Welsh from a very low baseline by the end of the foundation phase and key stage 2. The majority of pupils who have the ability to attain the higher levels in Welsh do so by the end of the foundation phase and key stage 2. The quality of provision is consistently good and elements of excellent practice are identified in the school's comprehensive self-evaluation procedures.

- 101 The best leaders have high expectations of themselves, their staff and their pupils, and they maintain a continuous focus on ensuring highly effective learning and teaching. They challenge and support their colleagues and provide whole-school guidance on expectations in lessons, for example extended activities that challenge pupils and pupils' understanding of the importance of feedback to develop and improve their work.
- 102 They also hold a deep conviction that pupils who achieve the highest standards enjoy developing their literacy skills. They ensure that providing stimulating and extended learning experiences for all pupils, whatever their ability, is a strategic priority.
- 103 Nearly all primary schools have a Welsh language co-ordinator. Most of these co-ordinators work effectively with the school's other leaders to implement plans that ensure that provision is effective and has a positive effect on pupils' standards.
- 104 In a minority of schools, beneficial arrangements are made to ensure that the Welsh language co-ordinator is given management time. At Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Casnewydd, for example, this allows the co-ordinator to identify linguistic shortcomings across key stage 2 and co-ordinate highly effective language improvement sessions across the key stage.

Cameo: Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Casnewydd

When monitoring books, teachers highlight common errors across the key stage, for example spelling, punctuation and grammatical structures. Based on this information, the language co-ordinator holds language improvement sessions twice a week for all pupils in key stage 2, based on these errors. Pupils are grouped to attend these sessions in line with their specific language needs, rather than their age.

The emphasis in these improvement sessions is on oracy work. They include short, sharp activities that, in turn, have a positive effect on the accuracy of pupils' expression, both spoken and written. Most pupils in key stage 2 come to understand grammatical rules and spelling patterns. These sessions challenge pupils, whatever their ability, and engage their interest.

Planning for improvement

- 105 Nearly all schools implement a thorough monitoring cycle that focuses mainly on lesson observations, scrutiny of books and seeking pupils' views on their learning experiences. Consistent and rigorous self-evaluation processes have been established in many schools, which ensure that they have an accurate picture of standards in Welsh. These schools analyse their pupils' attainment and achievement in detail. Valuable use is made of statistical information to identify pupils and groups of pupils who need a boost, for example in the accuracy of their writing or higher order reading skills. The best analyses recognise the school's performance in the context of other similar schools.
- 106 Based on monitoring and self-evaluation procedures, many schools plan strategically and purposefully to raise standards in Welsh. These schools' improvement plans convey clearly the aspiration to deliver as many varied and rich experiences as possible to their pupils through the medium of Welsh. In the best cases, whole-school improvement plans and those of the Welsh curriculum area reflect each other to a great extent.
- 107 Most schools' improvement plans include quantitative targets and sensible development steps that act as a firm foundation for raising standards in Welsh. Many schools give a clear priority to developing their pupils' literacy skills in their improvement plans. Priorities are often specific and vary from, for example, 'close the gap between the attainment of boys and girls at the end of key stage 2', to 'increase the number of pupils who attain higher than the expected levels – particularly boys'.
- 108 The leaders of these schools evaluate their improvement plans in detail and regularly, and revise their plans appropriately, where necessary. In many of the schools visited, purposeful planning and effective action on areas for improvement have had a beneficial effect on the standards of pupils' language skills. A few schools are too generous when coming to a judgement on the standards of learning

and teaching in Welsh. These schools do not evaluate their improvement plans in enough detail. In these cases, the school's monitoring documents are too superficial and are not incisive enough to address raising standards.

Professional learning

- 109 The majority of schools benefit from beneficial professional learning arrangements to further strengthen Welsh language provision. In these cases, structures that allow collaboration and sharing of expertise have a positive effect on standards of education and pupils' achievement. Regional support officers make a valuable contribution in delivering good practice and monitoring standards and provision.
- 110 Many leaders have established a culture of continuous professional development within their schools. They understand that the whole school is responsible for its pupils' progress and insist that all members of staff, including teaching assistants, contribute to improvement plans. For example, Ysgol Gymraeg Pwll Coch, Cardiff, has established a 'Literacy Hub' within the school. The 'Hub' includes the coordinators for language, ALN and more able and talented (MAT) pupils and a member of the senior leadership team. They place a clear focus on mapping and planning valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills. This has a very positive effect on the extended writing skills of pupils at this school.

Partnerships

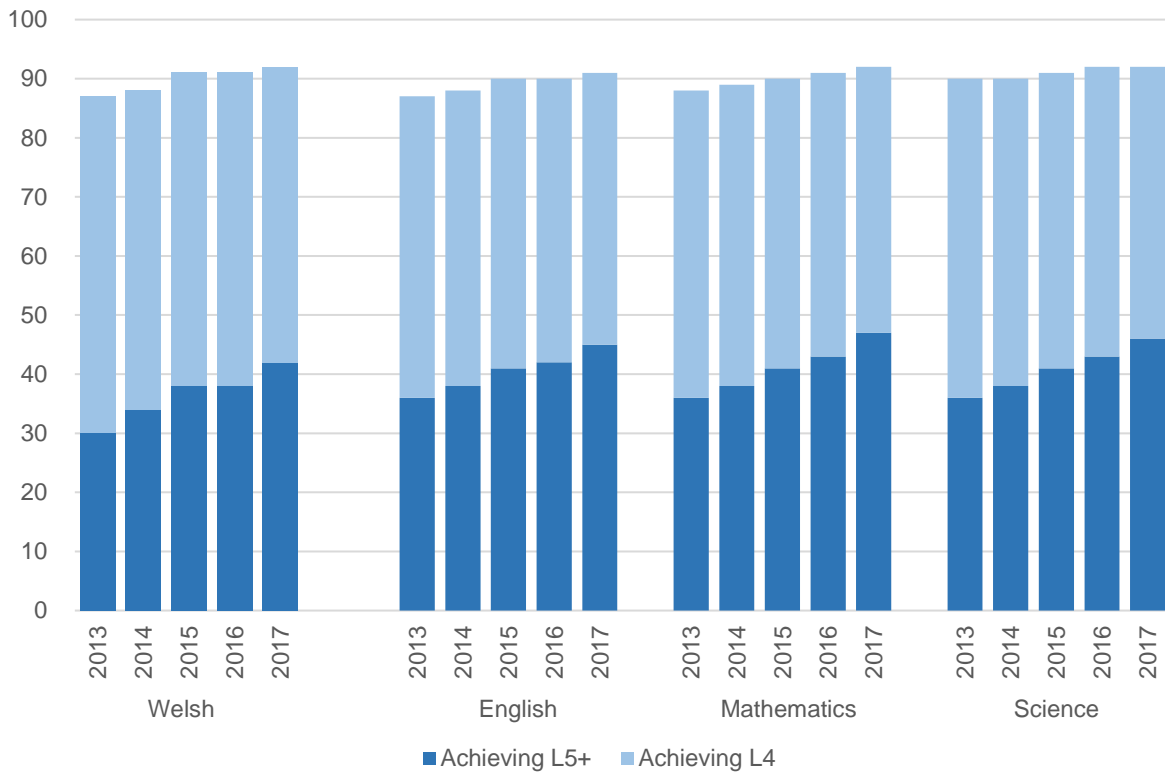
- 111 Most primary schools and secondary Welsh departments benefit from a range of beneficial regional and national partnerships to share good practice in terms of up-to-date Welsh pedagogy. In the best cases, cluster primary schools have effective arrangements to share good practice in terms of literacy. In a few secondary schools, Welsh, English and modern foreign language departments work together effectively to raise awareness of the links between the subjects in terms of literacy.
- 112 The majority of schools place an appropriate emphasis on strengthening the relationship with parents to raise their awareness of the development of their children's literacy skills. For example, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James, Pontypridd, prioritises different aspects, for example spelling, in the school improvement plan each year, and gives an opportunity for parents to attend classes to see specific strategies in action.
- 113 The majority of schools have appropriate arrangements to ensure linguistic continuity and progression between key stages 2 and 3. However, transition arrangements are not effective enough in a minority of schools. In these cases, activities are often limited to annual moderation meetings, and beneficial curricular collaboration between schools is limited.
- 114 Across Wales, despite the small increase in the proportion of pupils who are assessed in Welsh in Year 9, around 12% of learners who are in Welsh-medium education in Year 6 are not assessed in Welsh by the time they reach the end of key stage 3 (Welsh Government, 2017c). Not enough local authorities plan strategically to ensure that learners are given an opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills in the most effective way.

- 115 At Ysgol Bro Teifi, an all-age school visited, pupils' Welsh identity is an essential part of its behaviour policy. The school is enterprising and innovative in planning purposefully for the Welsh language. The Welsh language and cultural identity are the school's first strategic priority, and the Welsh department's improvement plan is a reflection of the whole-school improvement plan. One of those priorities is to improve the key stage 2 and key stage 3 curricula to ensure continuity and progression across both key stages. Thematic planning in Year 7 is innovative and provides beneficial opportunities to develop Welsh language skills across a number of subjects.
- 116 Nearly all of the primary schools visited have adopted the Welsh Language Charter to develop the Welsh language fully in formal and informal situations. Although this is not necessarily a new feature of most schools' work, this strategy is having a positive effect on increasing many pupils' awareness and understanding of the importance of communicating through the medium of Welsh, in addition to deepening their understanding of Welsh identity. Many schools continue to provide numerous opportunities for pupils to access a wide variety of activities in situations outside schools, for example the Urdd and local Welsh language initiatives.
- 117 Nearly all secondary schools also have rich links to deepen pupils' experiences of their linguistic and cultural heritage. However, the linguistic nature of most of the schools' catchment areas is mixed. Very few schools identify in their improvement plans that the challenge for them is to celebrate the different accents in their areas and develop the oracy skills of the most reluctant pupils so that they become confident speakers.

Appendix 1: Teachers' assessments in key stage 2 and key stage 3

Key stage 2

Figure 1: Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) and above (level 5+) in the core subjects at the end of key stage 2 (2013-2017)

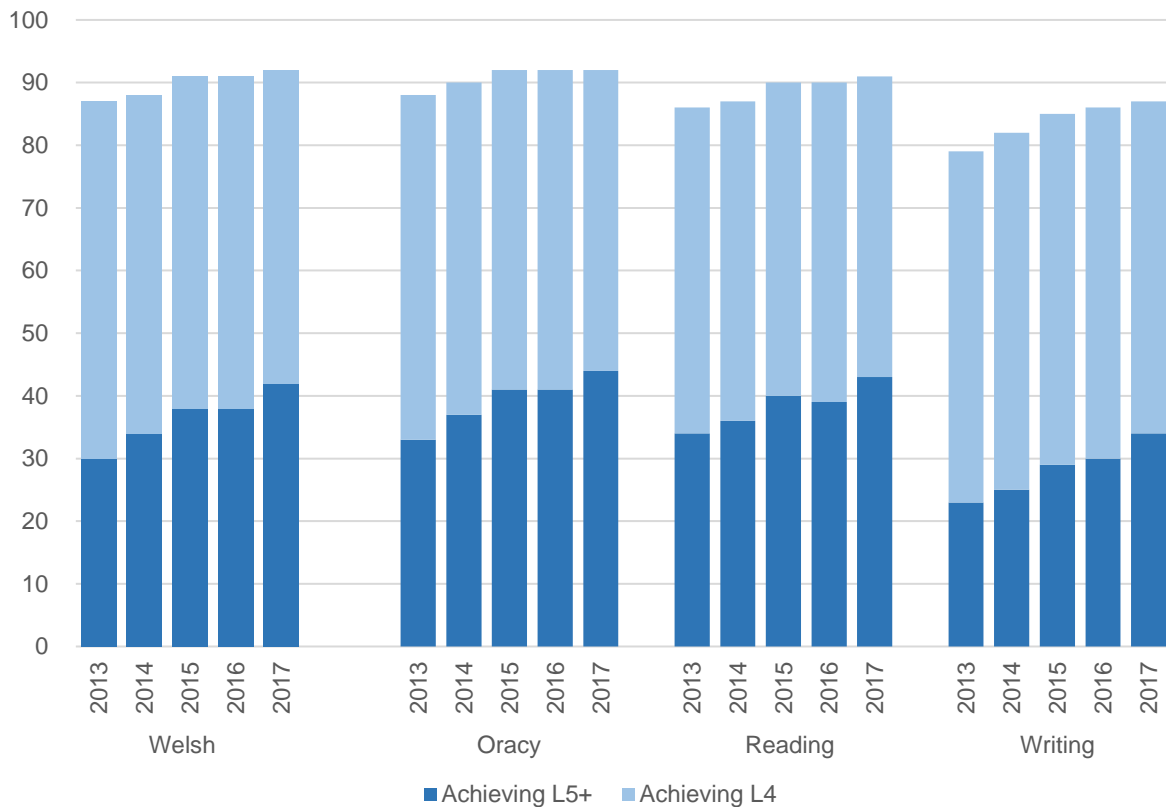


Source: Welsh Government (2017d)

Since 2013, there has been a year-on-year increase in the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected level (level 4 and above) in Welsh in key stage 2. During the same period, performance in Welsh has been similar to the performance in the other three core subjects.

Over the last five years, the proportion of pupils who achieve level 5 and above in Welsh has also increased year-on-year. Performance in Welsh at level 5 or above has been lower than in the other core subjects for the last five years. However, the gap has closed gradually during this period.

Figure 2: Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) and above (level 5+) in Welsh oracy, reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 (2013-2017)

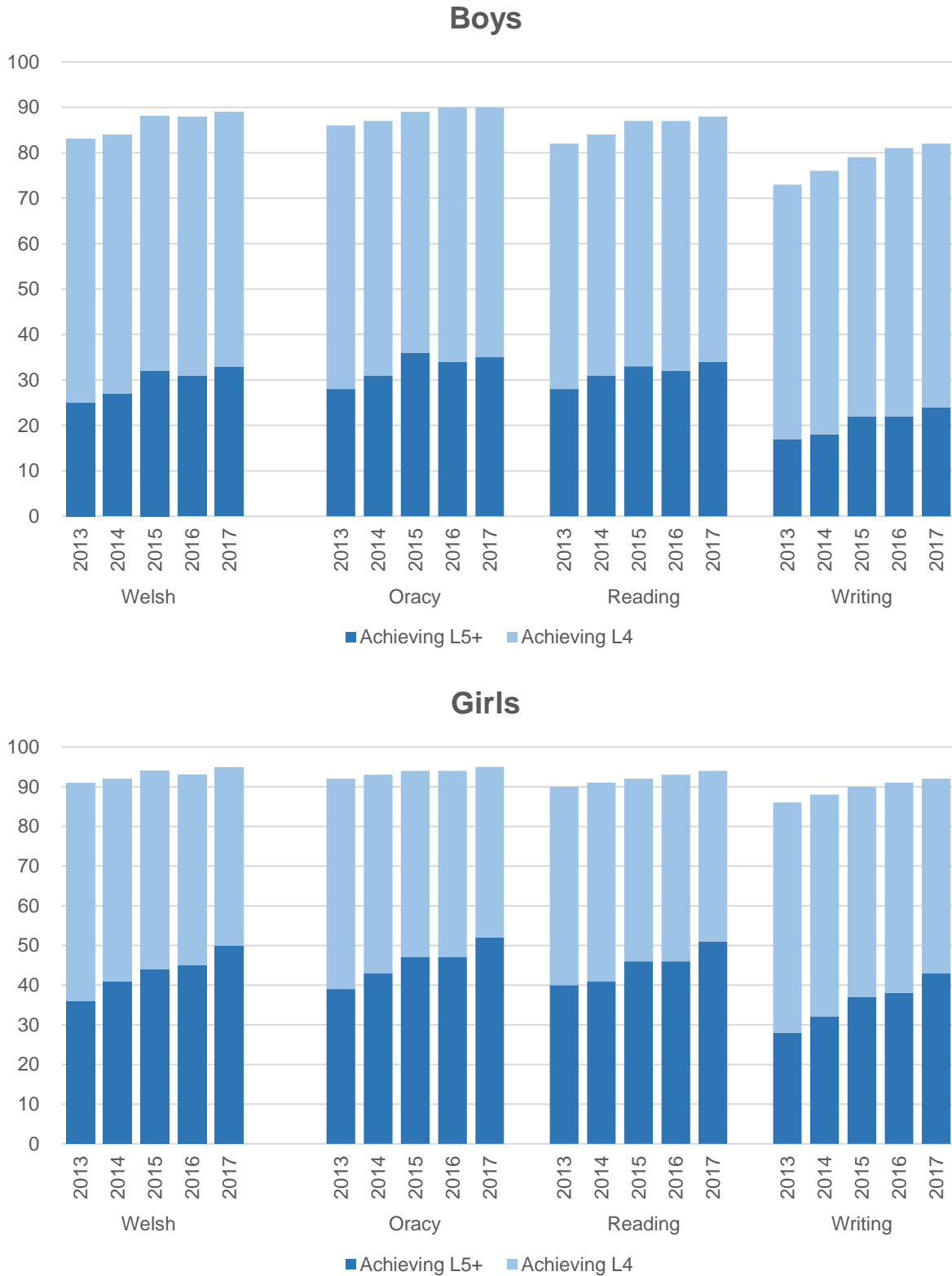


Source: Welsh Government (2017d)

There has been an increase in performance in all attainment targets at the expected level (level 4 and above) over the last five years. Performance in oracy is strongest; however, the greatest increase has been in the development of pupils' writing skills. The gap between performance in oracy and writing has almost halved during this period.

There has been an increase in performance in all attainment targets at level 5 or above over the last five years. There has been similar progress in all skills; however, performance in oracy and reading remains stronger than in writing. The gap between attainment in these skills has not closed during this period.

Figure 3: Percentages of boys and girls achieving the expected level (level 4) and above (level 5+) in Welsh oracy, reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 (2013-2017)



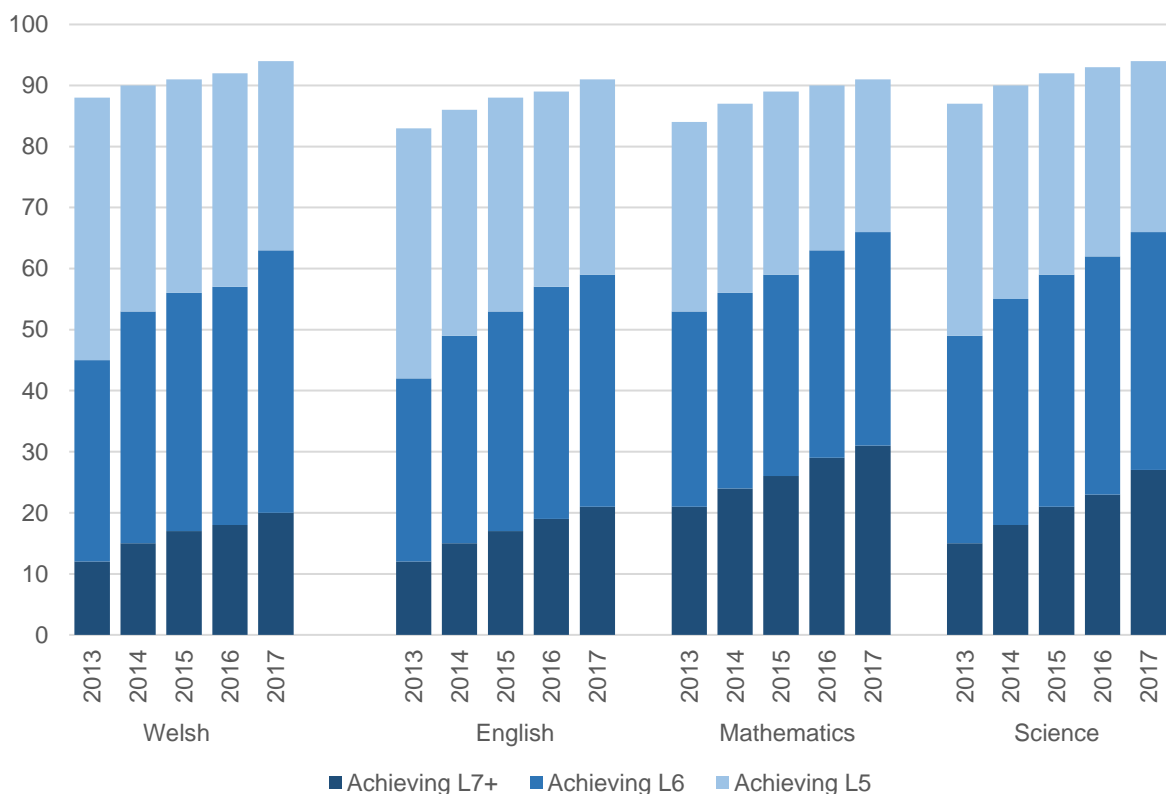
Source: Welsh Government (2017d)

Boys have made more progress than girls during the last five years and have succeeded in closing the attainment gap across the language skills. However, girls continue to perform better than boys in all attainment targets in Welsh during the period.

Girls have made almost twice as much progress at level 5 or above than boys during the last five years. As a result, the gap between the attainment of boys and girls at the higher levels has increased significantly over the last five years.

Key stage 3

Figure 4: Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 5) and higher levels (levels 6 and 7+) in the core subjects at the end of key stage 3 (2013-2017)

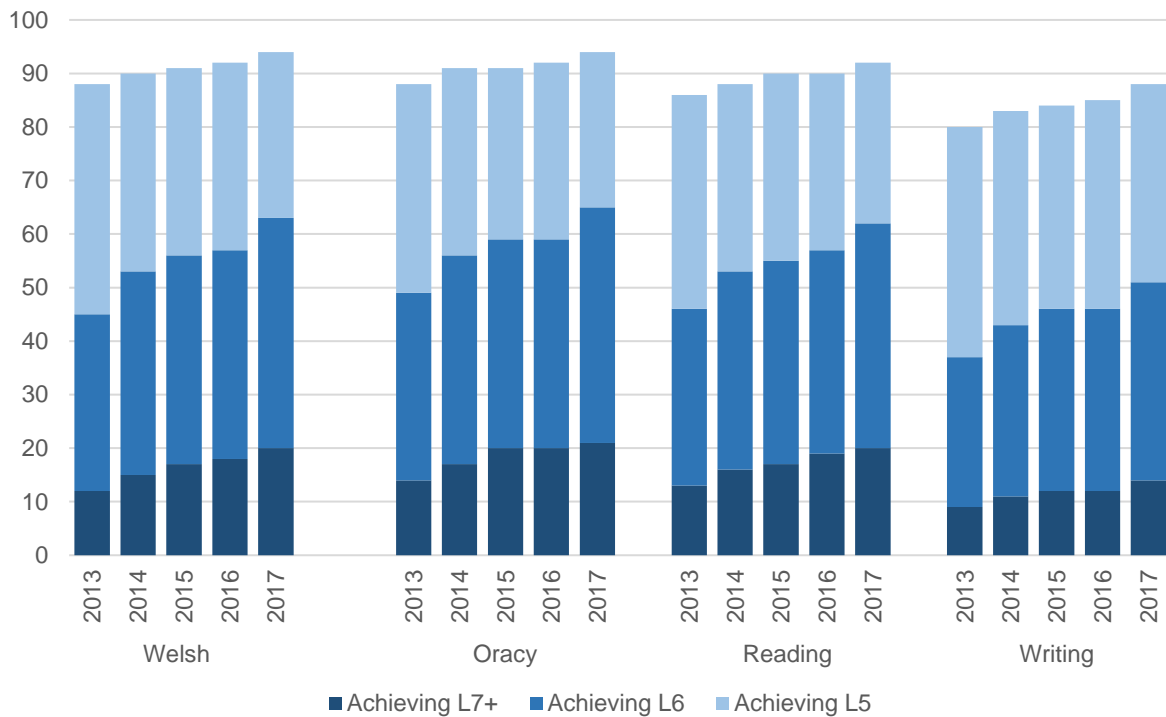


Source: Welsh Government (2017e)

Since 2013, there has been a year-on-year increase in the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected level (level 5 and above) in Welsh in key stage 3. During the same period, performance in Welsh has been higher than performance in mathematics and English, but similar to the performance in science.

Over the last five years, the proportion of pupils who achieve level 6 and above in Welsh has also increased year-on-year. Performance in Welsh at level 6 or above has been consistently higher than in English, but lower than in mathematics and science during the same period.

Figure 5: Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 5) and higher levels (levels 6 and 7+) in Welsh oracy, reading and writing at the end of key stage 3 (2013-2017)

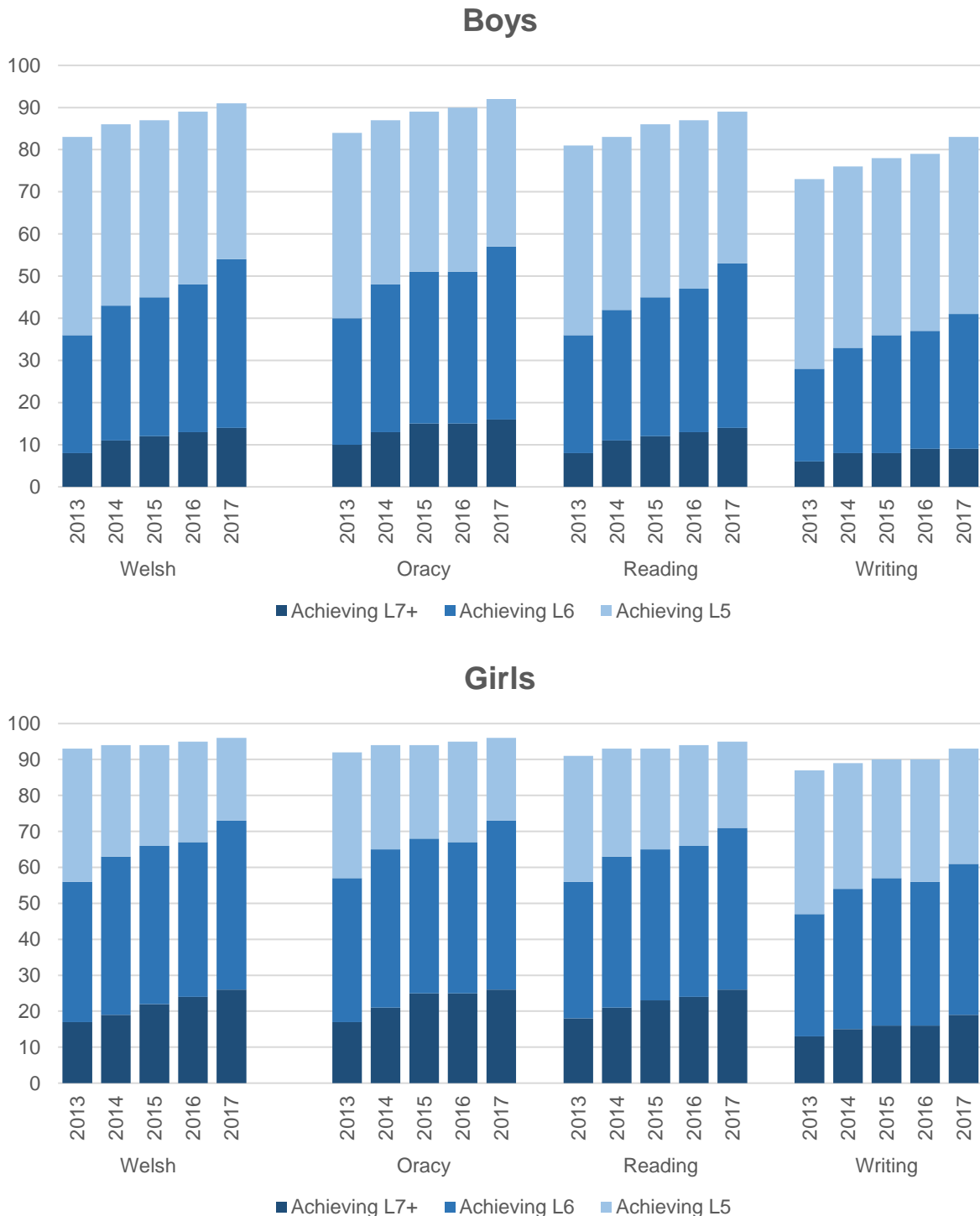


Source: Welsh Government (2017e)

There has been an increase in performance in all attainment targets at the expected level (level 5 and above) over the last five years. The largest increase was seen in the development of pupils' writing skills; however, performance in oracy continues to be strongest. The gap between performance in oracy and writing has closed during the period.

There has been an increase in performance in all attainment targets at levels 6 and 7 or above over the last five years. There has been a similar increase in all skills, and performance in oracy and reading continues to be stronger than in writing. The gap between attainment in these skills has not closed during this period.

Figure 6: Percentages of boys and girls achieving the expected level (level 5) and higher levels (levels 6 and 7+) in Welsh oracy, reading and writing at the end of key stage 3 (2013-2017)



Source: Welsh Government (2017e)

Boys have made more progress than girls in terms of developing their language skills during the last five years, and they have succeeded in halving the attainment gap across the attainment targets. However, girls continue to perform better than boys in all language skills in Welsh during this period, particularly in writing.

Boys have made strong progress at level 6 during the last five years and have closed the gap in all attainment targets except writing. Boys have also made progress, but on a smaller scale, at level 7 and above. However, girls have made stronger progress and the gap between performance at the highest levels has increased over the last five years.

Appendix 2: Evidence base

The findings and recommendations in this report draw on:

- visits to 20 providers, including primary schools, secondary schools, one all-age school and two language centres
- data from assessments at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 3

The sample of schools is as varied as possible and based mainly on the linguistic context, geographical location and socio-economic factors.

The visits included:

- interviews with senior leaders, subject leaders and pupils
- observing two lessons to evaluate standards and the quality of teaching in both key stages
- interviews with pupils, which included scrutinising their Welsh work and seeking their views on provision and the experiences that are provided by the school
- scrutinising school documentation, including reports and the most recent improvement plans of the schools and Welsh departments

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Ysgol Rhostryfan, Caernarfon
Ysgol I D Hooson, Rhosllannerchrugog
Gwynedd Primary Language Centre, Llanybi
Gwynedd Secondary Language Centre, Porthmadog
Ysgol Gymraeg Pwll Coch, Cardiff
Ysgol Gymraeg Sant Baruc, Barry
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James, Pontypridd
Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd
Ysgol Gymraeg Caerffili
Ysgol Bro Teifi, Llandysul
Ysgol y Preseli, Crymych
Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth, Cefneithin
Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, Pontypool
Ysgol Gyfun Llangejni
Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen, Bethesda
Ysgol Glan Clwyd, St Asaph
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr, Cardiff

Appendix 3: Questions for schools to consider as part of their self-evaluation

As a starting point for reviewing current practice in Welsh, schools are able to use the following questions as part of their self-evaluation

Standards

- 1 Do pupils make the best possible progress in Welsh?
- 2 Does pupils' attainment in Welsh compare favourably with the attainment of those in similar schools?
- 3 Do pupils continue to develop their Welsh language skills when transferring between different key stages?
- 4 Do pupils show positive attitudes and enjoyment when learning Welsh?

Provision

- 5 Do curriculum organisation and time allocation allow pupils to make and maintain good progress in Welsh?
- 6 Do we plan learning activities so that they reinforce pupils' language skills?
- 7 What is the quality of teaching? Do we place enough emphasis on oracy? Are our teachers good language models?
- 8 Is there continuity between and across key stages in terms of pupils' experiences in Welsh?
- 9 Are pupils given sufficient opportunities to develop their use of the Welsh language in a range of situations outside Welsh lessons?

Leadership

- 10 Does the school's ethos promote the Welsh language and culture and positive attitudes towards them well enough?
- 11 Do we have an accurate picture of what needs to be done to improve outcomes and provision in Welsh?
- 12 Are there enough staff who are able to teach Welsh effectively? Are our teachers qualified to teach Welsh?
- 13 Do we provide good quality support / professional learning for non-specialist Welsh teachers and other staff at the school?
- 14 Do we work well in partnership with other providers?
- 15 What is the quality of the collaboration between primary schools and pre-school groups, and between secondary schools and partner primary schools, to ensure consistency, continuity and progression in terms of Welsh language skills?
- 16 Do we take advantage of opportunities that are provided by other bodies and organisations?

Glossary

Additional learning needs	A pupil has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for additional learning provision.
Higher order reading skills	<p>When reading for different purposes, higher order reading skills usually include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reading closely to absorb information• skimming text quickly to get an overall impression• scanning to search for details• critical reading, such as assessing the strength of an opinion or argument• analytical reading to consider the writer's use of language• reading with awareness from the reader's perspective in contrast to the behaviour or perspective of a character in text• inferring and deducing• recognising that text does not always mean what it says, for example in terms of irony, bias and ambiguity• understanding different levels of meaning• appreciative reading, such as recognising the writer's skills in using ideas, techniques and effects• finding appropriate sources and recalling information• using a device such as marking text and taking notes• identifying key points, making comparisons and juxtaposing information and material from different sources• evaluating texts in terms of quality, effect and reliability
Moderation	Moderation occurs when pupils' work is assessed at the end of a key stage, and a 'best fit' judgement is made on an individual pupils' attainment level.
More able and talented	In Wales, the term 'more able and talented' refers to about 20% of pupils who require enriched and extended opportunities to develop their ability or talent in one or more areas (i.e. academic, practical, creative and artistic).
Six non-literary texts	<p>It is generally agreed that there are six kinds of non-literary texts, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report – this is used to re-tell events, such as autobiographies and diaries• Instruction – this is used to describe how something is done through a sequence of steps

- Non-chronological reports – these are used to describe characters; a situation or to give information, such as book or drama reviews
- Explanation – this is used to explain a process or how something works or cause and effect, such as an event and its subsequent effect
- Persuasion – this is used to persuade the reader to agree or argue the case for a point of view, including posters and advertisements
- Debate – this is used to present arguments and information from different points of view, such as the advantages and disadvantages of a newspaper article or television programme

Standardising

Standardising includes a process of using samples of one learner or different learners' work to enable teachers to agree on attainment levels by confirming a mutual understanding of a level's characteristics.

Numbers – quantities and proportions

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%

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