



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

A report on
The National Centre for Learning Welsh
College Road
Carmarthen
SA31 3EP

Date of inspection: January 2021

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

Context

On 1st August 2016, full responsibility for the Welsh for Adults sector was transferred to the National Centre for Learning Welsh (the Centre). The Centre is an arm's length body that is funded by Welsh Government and is based in its host institution, the University of Wales Trinity St David.

The Centre's current strategic aims are to:

- Develop an innovative programme of attractive and suitable courses for learners by making full use of the latest technology
- Develop innovative schemes to ensure opportunities and contexts in which learners can use their Welsh with confidence
- Establish a network of providers to offer a service of excellence
- Raise the profile of the sector and increase the numbers who start courses and continue to learn Welsh
- Establish and maintain procedures to support services

The Centre restructured Welsh for Adults provision across Wales by establishing 11 Learn Welsh providers. It provides funding to these Learn Welsh providers to offer Welsh for Adults provision within their communities. During 2018-2019, 13,260 unique learners enrolled on Learn Welsh courses, and 20,330 learning activities were held.

The Centre received additional funding from Welsh Government for the Work Welsh programme, which aims to strengthen employees' bilingual skills in the workplace. 1,329 individual employers have taken advantage of the scheme since its inception in 2017. Work Welsh learners have followed around 30,000 learning activities to date, with the numbers increasing year on year. There was a significant reduction in Work Welsh funding in 2020-21.

Estyn published a report on "A review of the work of the National Centre for Learning Welsh" in June 2017. The report and its recommendations can be found here:

[A review of the work of the National Centre for Learning Welsh 2017](#)

Summary

The Centre has a clear vision to transform the linguistic landscape of Wales by supporting learners to become users of the Welsh language within their communities, workplaces and networks, whatever their linguistic level. The Centre contributes effectively to the Welsh Government's aim of achieving a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Since its inception, the Centre has developed to become an influential, national voice for the sector. It has succeeded in creating a wide range of strategic partnerships with national organisations to extend the formal and informal learning offer. The Centre has taken advantage of these robust partnerships to provide a varied and exciting range of opportunities for learners to use their linguistic skills, whether socially, culturally or professionally. The Centre is increasingly becoming a focus for activities that are crucial to linguistic planning efforts across different target sectors.

In a short period of time, the Centre has succeeded in ensuring consistency in Learn Welsh provision across Wales. It has developed a digital platform as a convenient and accessible means for learners to search, enrol and pay for courses. The platform is used creatively by providing courses and a host of digital resources, in addition to providing a platform for practitioners in the sector to share good practice and undertake valuable continuous professional development. The Centre has created a national curriculum and course books for the first time in the sector's history. The Centre's senior leaders provide the sector with innovative and inspirational leadership. This was proven unequivocally in the sector's swift and effective response to the challenges of the pandemic, when most of the sector's provision transferred on-line within a matter of weeks. The Centre has developed a constructive and supportive working relationship with Learn Welsh providers, which enables them to conduct honest and challenging discussions, where necessary.

Leaders have a strong awareness of the sector's strengths and areas for improvement. The Centre and its host institution have robust monitoring and scrutiny procedures. The Centre plans purposefully and rigorously to provide courses at all levels while responding successfully to learners' needs and national priorities.

The learner voice is at the heart of the Centre's work and vision. The Centre's leaders forward plan very effectively and have provided robust and decisive leadership since its inception, while keeping learners' interests at the heart of all of its activity.

Recommendations

- R1 Share the methodology for successful teaching and second language acquisition with other relevant sectors to support the Welsh Government's aim of achieving a million active Welsh speakers by 2050
- R2 Continue to work with Learn Welsh providers to develop models of provision based on learners' availability
- R3 Realise the Workforce Development Plan through 'Academi' as a focus for training and professional development within the sector

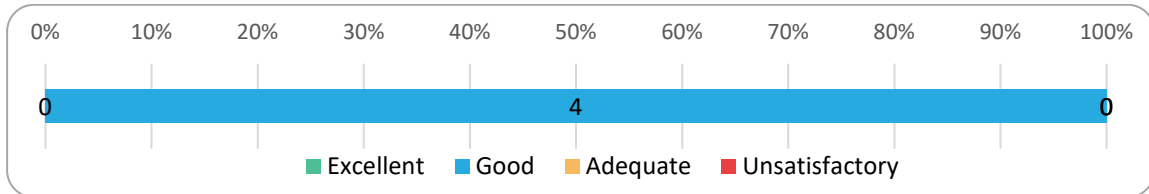
What happens next

Estyn will invite the provider to prepare a case study on its work in relation to how establishing a national body has provided a focus for the sector to expand its formal and informal provision by forging and maintaining strategic partnerships with a variety of bodies that succeed in turning learners into users of the Welsh language; in addition to another case study on how creating a digital platform has enabled the sector to ensure consistency in provision nationally, share good practice and respond successfully to the pandemic through distance learning programmes, to be disseminated on Estyn's website.

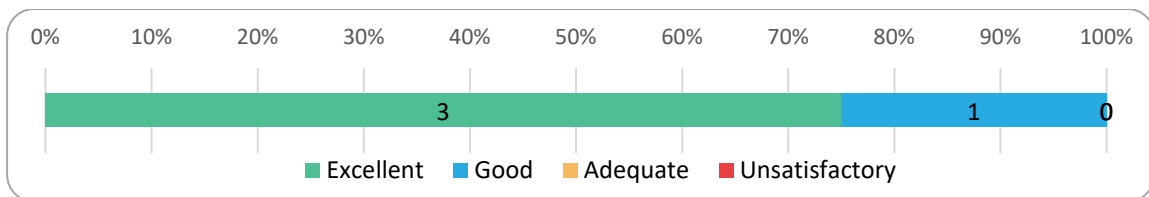
Main findings

Summary of the inspection outcomes of Learn Welsh providers

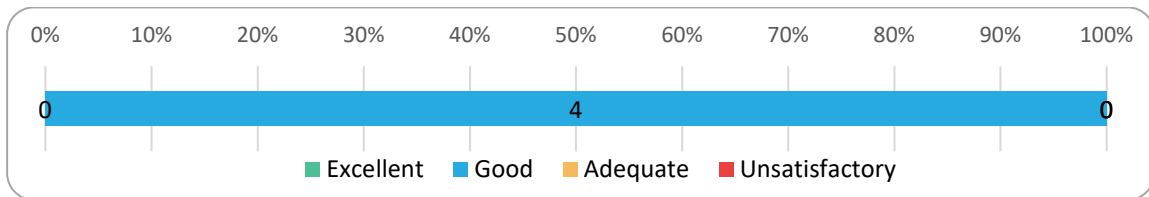
Standards



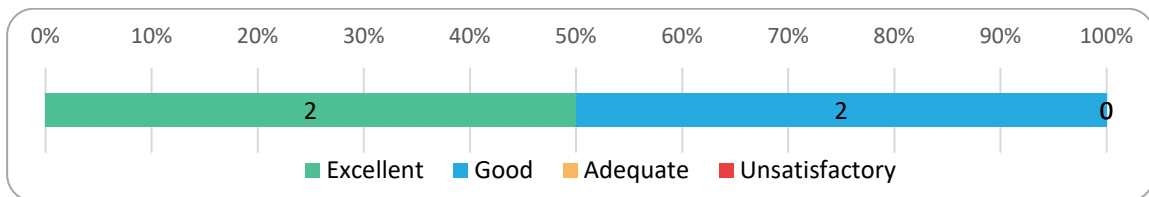
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning



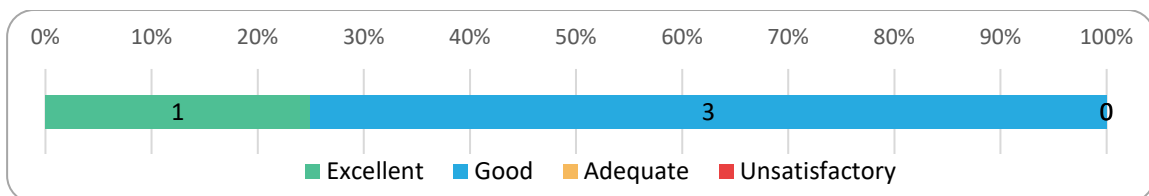
Teaching and learning experiences

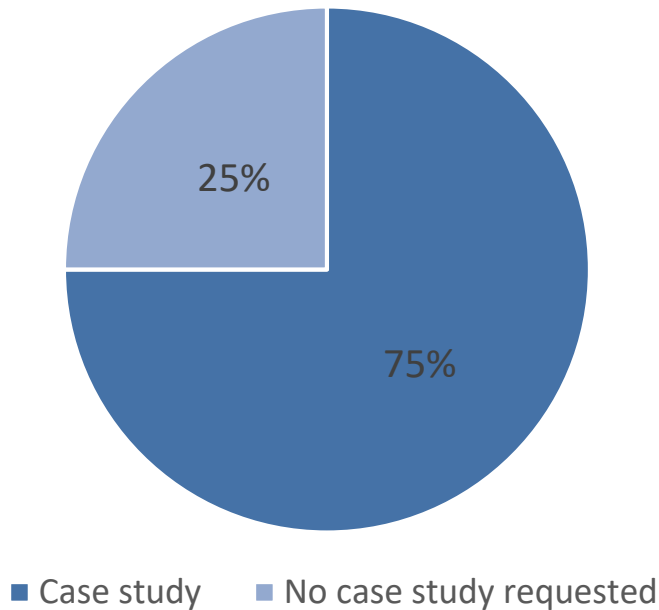


Care, support and guidance



Leadership and management





Between January 2018 and May 2020, four Learn Welsh providers across Wales were inspected. Each inspection area was judged to be good or better in all of the providers that were inspected.

Overall, learners' standards are good, and many make strong progress in line with their level. They develop a range of linguistic skills successfully, with the main emphasis on developing their oracy and confidence in speaking the Welsh language in useful and meaningful contexts. Learners at intermediate and advanced level make very purposeful progress in developing their speaking skills. They speak with increasing fluency and use an increasing range of tenses, verb forms and vocabulary. Most learners at proficiency level become fluent and articulate speakers and writers, and produce mature and sophisticated language that demonstrates eloquence and linguistic flexibility.

On the whole, learners acquire the Welsh language more quickly and effectively than pupils at the corresponding levels in English-medium secondary schools. Tutors focus clearly on improving standards of oracy which, in turn, leads to learners becoming increasingly confident in using Welsh, particularly in understanding and speaking the language. (The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 2018-19: Post-16 education and training p.60)

Most tutors make excellent use of Welsh when immersing learners in the language. Most forge highly positive working relationships with learners and plan lessons effectively to meet their needs. They vary activities skilfully during lessons, and ignite learners' enthusiasm when presenting and practising language. Most give learners constructive feedback to help them to improve their skills. Learn Welsh providers emphasise robustly that the process of learning Welsh begins in the classroom, and that it develops further by practising and using the language in informal activities. To this end, providers include a comprehensive range of formal and informal activities to practise the language.

Learners' very positive attitudes towards using their Welsh is a very strong feature. The 'Wellbeing and attitudes to learning' inspection area was judged to be excellent in three of the four providers. Most learners are ambitious and show strong motivation and infectious enthusiasm towards learning Welsh. They commit themselves to the process of acquiring the language determinedly, and are very clear about their reasons for learning the language. There are exceptional cases of learners travelling far to attend lessons. Overall, learners enjoy their learning greatly and contribute proactively to their learning. Learn Welsh providers are close-knit and caring communities, and learners support this ethos, and each other, by helping and encouraging their fellow learners sensitively to use and extend their Welsh language skills. Across the providers, many learners strive to take advantage of opportunities to put what they have learned in lessons into practice outside formal classes. As a result, they become part of the wider Welsh-speaking community. In the best examples, learners take responsibility for organising extra-curricular opportunities for themselves and others to take part in activities through the medium of Welsh.

Learn Welsh providers support learners' wellbeing by providing learners with purposeful and effective care, support and guidance. Providers succeed in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment, which encourages learners to practise their language skills without the fear of making mistakes. Most tutors know their learners well and succeed, with organisational support from the provider, to meet individual learners' educational and personal needs. Most tutors support learners effectively to set useful personal targets, evaluate progress and plan the next steps in their learning. This element has strengthened during the current inspection cycle.

Overall, leaders and managers have established a clear vision and purposeful strategic aims that are consistent with the plans of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. They focus effectively on how to improve provision in order to improve learners' experiences. They succeed in ensuring that learners are at the heart of all of their work and decisions. Leaders understand their strengths and areas for improvement appropriately, and provide useful professional learning opportunities for staff. In the best examples, Learn Welsh providers fulfil a key and core function in the strategic plans of their host organisations to promote the Welsh language in line with Welsh Government policies.

Planning provision

The Centre's strategic vision leads to purposeful planning to proactively meet the needs of learners, employers and the community, in addition to the aim of achieving the targets in the Welsh Government Welsh 2050: A million Welsh speakers strategy. Learners' needs are at the heart of all activity, and the strategic aim to "develop an innovative programme of attractive and suitable courses for learners by making full use of the latest technology", is realised successfully.

Central and local officers plan a wide and rich range of courses by following learning programme guidelines that respond consistently to learners' needs. By seeking learners' views through a national 'Have your Say' questionnaire, action is taken diligently to adapt and evolve provision in order to motivate and support learners to become active Welsh speakers. The Welsh Government grant is used skilfully to plan a comprehensive programme for mainstream learners, in co-operation with

Learn Welsh providers. The Centre also receives an additional grant for the Work Welsh programme, which aims to strengthen bilingual skills by teaching employees in the workplace. An innovation grant fund has been developed, which is effective in supporting other learners in the community, for example by providing a comprehensive programme for parents, and for asylum seekers and refugees to learn Welsh.

The Centre has developed a national curriculum and national course books, which ensure consistency for learners as they learn Welsh. This has enabled central officers to provide contemporary course books with a wide range of valuable resources online to support them, which promote teaching and learning effectively. These interactive resources, for example video and audio resources, are used as part of face-to-face and self-study learning provision, which broadens the positive experience of learners as they learn Welsh.

The valuable expertise, enthusiasm and experience of the central officers is critical in forward planning purposefully to provide a wide range of courses that meet the needs of learners at all levels. For example, taster courses are planned to give learners a taste of learning Welsh. Mainstream courses also promote new learners through entry level courses, and courses are provided at all levels on the linguistic continuum, up to proficiency courses that support learners who are confident in their linguistic skills. The comprehensive offer meets Welsh learners' needs very effectively.

The Work Welsh scheme provides a broad and comprehensive offer, which includes courses such as Using Work Welsh, Learn Welsh Health and Care Work, Learn Welsh Apprentice Work, Learn Welsh Business and a Learn Welsh Early Years Training Scheme. The Work Welsh scheme has taken advantage of digital innovations and has developed online self-study modules, many of which are tailored for different needs. In addition, new online self-study Work Welsh courses contribute effectively towards engaging different groups of learners. These courses contribute effectively towards meeting learners' needs, and respond purposefully to employees' aspirations in different key sectors in terms of the national target of achieving a million Welsh speakers.

The Centre's officers have developed a digital platform over time to become a convenient and accessible medium for learners to use, for example to search for a course that is suitable for their linguistic level, to enrol and to pay. This supports learners effectively as they select a learning programme when beginning to learn Welsh and when choosing a progression route. Recently, the Centre has experimented with registering learners nationally and working with providers to provide courses in their areas at times that are convenient for those learners. This is a definite step forward in the process of placing learners at the centre in structuring provision that is based primarily on learners' availability.

A detailed national marketing and communication strategy is implemented highly successfully, which engages and supports learners to learn Welsh. Through effective co-operation, the campaign to ensure a consistent image of 'DysguCymru.Cymru/LearnWelsh.Cymru' is part of the Centre's creative and proactive approach. Campaigns to promote learning Welsh, such as the Six Nations Championship and Dydd Miwsig Cymru (Welsh Language Music Day), succeed in

raising the profile and image of the language with a wider audience, which in turn has a positive effect on the number of learners who choose to learn Welsh.

Engagement with different groups of learners is planned skilfully. Activities to discuss Black Lives Matter are an example of the purposeful effort of officers and managers to provide up-to-date and varied activities that reach out to all learners locally, nationally and internationally.

The Centre's officers support course providers to plan activities that promote learners to use their Welsh outside formal activities, for example in Sadwrn Siarad activities, cooking sessions, virtual reading clubs and by attending concerts and arts events. The Siarad scheme is used successfully as learners practise using their Welsh with a partner and speak the language with increasing confidence.

The Centre's innovative co-operation with a wide range of national partners enriches learners' experience of learning Welsh, and immerses them in Welsh history and culture. These experiences engage and support learners in real-life activities in the local and national community and lead to motivating learners in an inclusive environment. For example, Learn Welsh Week, which is provided with the support of Radio Cymru, provides an opportunity for learners to communicate with fluent Welsh speakers and raises the profile of learning the language. As a result, this leads to providing a wider range of courses for new learners and those who want to continue to learn Welsh.

The use of technology to broaden access and improve learners' experiences is included increasingly successfully, for example in developing the digital platform. The Digital Framework outlines in detail the provision that is being developed to promote teaching and learning further, for example face-to-face and distance learning provision. Following the recent grant cut, central officers worked diligently and tirelessly to convert provision to be completely digital, including Work Welsh provision, in a very short period of time. This transition was innovative, with purposeful forward planning ensuring the provision continued to be provided by alternative means. Central officers provided Virtual Learning Guidelines in order to ensure national consistency in teaching and learning.

The Centre monitors that providers implement detailed safeguarding arrangements, which include a wide range of policies and procedures to keep learners safe. For example, wellbeing and pastoral policies are included in learner handbooks. Central officers support providers to cater suitably for learners with specific learning needs, such as dyslexia and physical disabilities, in a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers

The Centre has a clear ethos and mission, namely to transform the linguistic situation in Wales by creating active Welsh speakers; people who use their Welsh in their communities, workplaces and networks, whatever their linguistic level. This permeates through all its activities and the attitudes of its staff and Learn Welsh providers. Core inspections of Learn Welsh providers show that learners' standards and attitudes are consistently high across the sector, and that staff fulfil their roles with passion and conviction. The Centre's senior managers provide the sector with

inspirational leadership, which provides clear and effective strategic guidance. They also succeed in undertaking a wide range of activities and introduce innovative developments with their relatively few staff with useful operational support from the host organisation, the University of Wales Trinity St David. Strategic planning is an obvious strength and a firm foundation on which to act in order to achieve the Centre's objectives and aspirations. The Centre's vision is unambiguous and is in line with national policy objectives and priorities.

The Centre has succeeded in developing a constructive and productive working relationship with Learn Welsh providers and, by taking positive action, it has succeeded in ensuring consistent provision throughout the sector for the benefit of learners, for example standardising fees across all providers for the first time. Leaders have provided very beneficial guidance by creating an exciting and contemporary national curriculum and course books for the first time in the sector's history. The Centre also provides the sector with robust strategic and practical guidance through committees and groups relating to strategically-important themes.

An example of the Centre's excellent leadership is the sector's swift and effective response at the beginning of the pandemic. Due to its perseverance and decisive, purposeful forward planning, the Centre already possessed a digital platform. This was central in facilitating the moving of most of the sector's provision to online delivery within a matter of weeks. The Centre succeeded in achieving this with the enthusiastic and professional co-operation of the individual providers. By the beginning of May, 89 new blended classes had started across Wales, with almost 900 new learners. In addition, live lessons and sessions were held on social media, which attracted thousands of learners from across Wales and the world. As a result, and in spite of the pandemic, the Centre has succeeded in increasing the number of adults who are learning Welsh.

The Centre has taken a purposeful strategic step to establish itself as an official publisher of statistics in order to enable it to produce consistent national data for the first time in the sector, and use it effectively for planning purposes. National data shows that the number of individual learners and learning activities is increasing, including the number on intensive courses, with many learners completing their courses and continuing their learning. They attend well and make sound progress in their learning, and most believe that their learning helps them to achieve their aims as Welsh learners. The work to develop collation and data analysis systems is continuing appropriately, with the aim of investigating learners' achievement trends in order to improve the sector's provision for them.

The Centre's effective and creative marketing and communication strategy attracts new audiences of learners. Leaders focus purposefully on creating campaigns that are based on market research and very thorough analysis in order to attract new prospective learners.

The Centre works valuably with providers to ensure beneficial opportunities for learners to use their Welsh outside formal lessons. As a result, only a very few learners state that they do not practise their linguistic skills outside the classroom. This is central to the sector's vision of creating speakers who use the Welsh language, rather than passive learners. The Centre works effectively with providers

to ensure that a wide range of courses is available throughout Wales, and that there is appropriate provision for specific groups that meets learners' needs.

Work Welsh programmes are a notable example of creating opportunities creatively for specific groups of employees across various sectors. This scheme has attracted a significant number of employers and is an integral part of the Centre's vision, and that of its key partners, to transform the linguistic situation in Wales. The Centre has clear and effective procedures for commissioning, co-ordinating, supervising and monitoring contracted services or provision.

Another example of the Centre's innovative approach is its partnership with WJEC to pilot conducting Welsh for Adults examinations this year, despite the restrictions and implications of social distancing, by introducing remote supervision for the first time.

The Centre succeeds very effectively in creating a wide and rich range of partnerships to provide various opportunities for people to learn and use the Welsh language in meaningful contexts. It has established itself as an influential voice for the sector, which enables it to have a strategic influence on the work of various national partners. As a result, the Centre makes a valuable contribution to various initiatives to extend the use of the Welsh language, including language training for target sectors that are key in terms of linguistic planning for the future workforce. The Centre has also developed partnerships with independent providers, which expands provision for learners beneficially.

The National Centre's leaders operate robustly, when necessary, and make difficult decisions, for example through managing providers' performance and expenditure, in addition to their recent operational decision to divert funding appropriately.

The Centre has robust governance structures. The company board and advisory board provide useful support on constitutional and corporate issues, as well as advising beneficially on policy issues through challenging and constructive discussions. These discussions focus valuably on the Centre's main objectives.

Self-evaluation processes and planning for improvement

The Centre's leaders and managers have a strong awareness of the strengths and areas for improvement in the Welsh for Adults sector. As a result of robust self-evaluation, monitoring and quality assurance processes, leaders and managers have a full understanding of the quality of provision in the sector. A common quality framework, namely the 'National Quality Framework', has been developed, which is a powerful tool for ensuring consistency in the way in which everyone in the sector now self-evaluates and plans for improvement.

Evaluation is part of the Centre's continuous improvement cycle. The process is supported by relevant information about performance and evidence from performance reports, progress reports and data analyses provided to the appropriate committees and boards three times a year. Termly meetings are at the heart of the process, in order to measure progress and set priorities. Documents are live and operational, and evolve and develop based on incisive and thorough evaluation.

Engaging with key stakeholders and considering their views are an integral part of the Centre's evaluation and improvement-planning processes. They place a clear emphasis on seeking the views of learners, providers and partners. For example, after looking at trends in providers' quality frameworks, it was seen that setting meaningful targets in Using my Welsh documents was an area for development. Based on identifying one provider's good practice in an inspection, the Centre adapted provision by creating a digital scheme rather than using a hard copy booklet. By turning to a digital format, it was found to be easier to set meaningful targets for all levels, including referring learners to relevant resources to support them to use their Welsh. This adaptation has facilitated the process by which tutors across Wales track learners' progress. In addition, the Centre is also able to identify gaps in provision and identify good practice.

The Centre has a strong and constructive relationship with several influential partnerships. These robust partnerships support the Centre to realise its strategic objectives by contributing specifically to ensuring continuous improvements to the quality of provision for learners. These improvements include new types of courses by Mudiad Meithrin, and creating the comprehensive 'Amdani' series of reading books, which are graded by the Books Council of Wales. Schemes have also been developed jointly for the Welsh Learners' Village at the National Eisteddfod, 'AmGen', and the AmGen Welsh Learner award. Through all of these innovative and creative schemes, the Centre has succeeded in realising one of its core aims, namely to create opportunities for learners to practise their language and gain the confidence to speak it.

The learner's voice is at the heart of the Centre's day to day work and vision of putting the learner at the centre. Learner voice processes are used locally and nationally very effectively to evaluate provision. Learners are at the heart of the whole evaluation process, and learners' views are taken seriously. There are a host of examples of how provision has been adapted to respond to learners' views. For example, by responding to a learner's request to include a section summarising grammar in the back of course books. In order to add to opportunities for learners to take part in supporting activities, a high quality magazine was created to encourage learners to use the Welsh language over the summer.

The Centre supports the wellbeing and care of the workforce by providing a wellbeing and mental health programme with an external expert in the field. Participation in the programme, which includes coping with change, mental resilience and taking care of wellbeing while working from home, has been very high.

The Centre has a coherent and tight process for improvement planning. The Strategic Plan leads to producing an annual action plan at the same time as creating a financial action plan. There are specific examples of the Centre acting proactively and swiftly when priorities in the action plan change. A specific example of this was the creation of a digital learning plan at the beginning of the pandemic.

Leaders and managers ensure that priorities are supported effectively by allocating resources, and defining relevant and measurable actions for improvement. Plans include specific and realistic timescales, and allocate appropriate responsibility for achieving them. Priorities are also adapted in line with effective evaluation of the main factors that improve provision for learners. For example, the advisory board

challenged the Centre to consider alternative options for marketing Learn Welsh provision for adults following financial cuts. Other promotional methods were re-examined by turning to social media, which was very successful. The Centre is very effective in evaluating the effectiveness of expenditure and changing it to correspond with any current priorities. For example, it was found that converting course units to a blended learning format was heavy in terms of human resources, and investment in that work was extended in order to achieve the goal.

The Centre has effective performance management arrangements, in which resources are allocated to support training needs that correspond with the needs of the workforce.

The Centre has provided valuable support and guidance to individual providers as they responded effectively to the recommendations from Estyn inspections. This is achieved by creating clear and purposeful action plans. Actions, measurable targets, funding to support the actions, specific dates and appropriate monitoring methods are included. As a result, definite improvement has been seen in terms of the sector's response during the inspection cycle to areas for development that were identified in the recommendations for providers during core inspections.

Overall, the quality of providers' action plans is detailed and effective. The Centre's officers visit providers to ensure that actions have taken place, and the plan's progress is discussed in monitoring meetings. In order to ensure and encourage the sharing of good practice between providers, a quality committee has been established, which meets once a term. Here, there is an opportunity for providers to share good practice and agree on national structures and plans to ensure consistency and high standards. An example of the result of these discussions is the establishment of a consistent national observation scheme, which is followed by all providers.

Since the Centre was established, considerable steps have been taken to achieve its strategic aims in a short period of time. The sector's profile has been raised and a positive impression has been created of learning Welsh. Strong evidence of that is the fact that the numbers that have enrolled on Learn Welsh courses and learning activities have seen a very positive increase. As a result of establishing the National Centre for Learning Welsh, there is now consistency across the sector in terms of provision and processes. For the first time in the sector, the very ambitious aim of introducing an agreed curriculum for all learners in Wales has been achieved.

Professional learning

The National Centre for Learning Welsh is an organisation that provides a wide and central offer of professional learning experiences, which ensures that learners receive teaching of the highest standard wherever and however they follow their courses. Very inventive examples have been seen during recent times, as the sector moved to digital learning. While transforming the sector to online delivery, the Centre's staff organised weekly meetings in order to support the workforce. As a result, a community of tutors was developed across provider boundaries. The Centre produced a useful virtual learning guide, based on research and the recording of good practice. By working effectively with providers who had practical experience of online teaching, very beneficial online training was developed between the Centre

and providers. Tutors appreciate the professional learning support, and most noted that they had access to training and developmental opportunities in the workforce questionnaire.

Leaders succeed in creating a supportive culture and ethos to support the professional learning of all staff in the sector. This allows and supports all staff to commit actively to increasing their knowledge, understanding and professional skills.

Through coherent and clear performance management processes, the Centre's staff and Learn Welsh providers' staff, participate effectively in professional learning experiences, evaluation and performance management in order to help to improve their practice.

Leaders and managers address underperformance issues at individual and provider level rigorously and directly, where necessary, based on their strong understanding of their providers. This is done encouragingly and supportively by providing advice, guidance and specific training, while monitoring progress effectively.

Academi has been introduced, namely the national home on the Centre's online platform for the professional learning of those in the sector. By ensuring consistent training in one place, a key and significant step has been taken. For example, when the new course books for the agreed Learn Welsh curriculum were published, specific training was organised to support tutors to deliver the various courses. This is a notable example of coherent planning which has a direct influence on the learner's experience.

Through the Centre's robust knowledge of excellence within its providers, there are rich and valuable opportunities for the sector's staff to share good practice. A successful example of this was a very beneficial session in which everyone in the sector came together to share samples of observations across providers in order to moderate and ensure consistency.

Processes for identifying good practice occur at several tiers within the Centre. Excellence is identified in terms of effective management and teaching practices. Managers are invited to share practice in the management meeting in areas such as effective communication. Providers themselves identify their own areas of excellence and invite the relevant tutors to share good practice locally and nationally. This cascading of information supports the sector in aiming for excellence.

There is a close relationship between the Centre's officers and providers, which enable it to gain a clear picture of the main priorities in the sector. For example, by visiting lessons of all providers, first-hand evidence is gained of the strengths and areas for improvement in terms of provision. Based on these observation visits, training has been developed for tutors across Wales on language introduction techniques and reinforcing language through drilling. Through support meetings, local and national aspects that require attention are identified for the purpose of professional learning in the sector.

A notable strength is the Centre's method of identifying issues that have been identified as inspection recommendations, and establishing specific training to meet those needs. One example was the sector's quality officers co-operating, leading

and creating a specific guide in order to improve feedback when marking, which was identified as an area for development locally. In the latest national 'Have your Say' questionnaire, it was evident that most of the workforce is now more confident with regard to this aspect.

There are high levels of participation among staff in the sector in national professional development activities that are led by the Centre. Through regional and national forums and Academi, there is a wide and valuable offer that responds successfully to the findings that were identified in the 'Workforce Development Plan'. One inventive development on the Centre's digital platform is the Professional Learning Development training units, which will allow all members of staff in the sector to have a personal record on their unique 'my learning' portal, which provides evidence of their achievement and progress.

Useful work has been completed in developing the National Qualification for tutors. A new qualification has been created at levels 4 and 6, instead of the previous level 5 qualification. By doing so, the needs of tutors who are new to the field and those of experienced tutors will be met. The units have been developed for the level 6 qualification; however, it will not be possible to deliver the qualification in full in the near future due to budget cuts. However, up to three of the units will be converted into online units to form part of Academi.

Tutors' pride and enjoyment in working in the sector is an exceptional feature. Through the central developments that have been realised through the Centre's work, there is now a strong sense of one national team co-operating for the benefit of learners.

Use of resources

The Centre and provider managers plan purposefully and thoroughly when using grants to provide courses for learners at all levels.

The budget and action plan are discussed in various meetings, and clear and transparent processes are maintained to estimate and manage expenditure. For example, central officers organise monthly meetings with budget managers to discuss current expenditure when forward planning provision. Course providers' financial forecasts are discussed, and management account reports are presented to the company board as part of the monitoring process.

The Centre's officers support provider managers effectively to make decisions on expenditure and financial planning, which link purposefully to the strategic priorities and providers' plans for improvement. For example, the structure for planning local learning programmes is organised in detail in a planning template that is consistent across course providers. The learning plans set targets, outputs to achieve the work, timetables and finance, and form a consistent means of discussing the distributed budget. The Centre's senior managers and central officers, and members of the company board, scrutinise the planning application forms of course provider managers in detail, and approve and monitor them carefully. Aligning and ensuring consistency in fees and discounts for learners has ensured consistency for learners nationally.

Following a reduction of the Work Welsh scheme's budget during the pandemic, provision has been adapted purposefully to provide an effective online service in order to meet employers' needs in the absence of face-to-face courses. The positive increase in the number of learners in different organisations, for example health boards, attests that central officers invest time and funding effectively. They respond effectively to the demand from employers to support the workforce to learn Welsh during a challenging period.

The Centre balances its short-term needs carefully with learners' long-term needs and national priorities, as central officers support provider managers to adapt provision for learners in line with their needs and learning patterns. The digital transformation to adapt provision using distance and blended learning methods as an integral part of that provision is an effective example of this,

Officers support providers to use accessible venues, suitable accommodation and equipment that promotes teaching and learning, for example technology and internet connectivity, successfully. This is monitored effectively in the National Quality Framework, and is an opportunity to adapt provision, where appropriate, in line with learners' needs.

The Centre's leaders and managers are fully aware of providers' costs, programmes and current training activities, and review them by questioning whether they are cost-effective in regular meetings with course provider managers. For example, the regular meetings and monitoring reports lead to a wide range of information, which outlines and justifies expenditure, such as trends of spending over or under the annual delegated budget, in addition to scrutinising instances of surplus or deficit. A funding formula is used to place value on all learners and all learning activities, with the expectation that providers reach their targets as part of the process of monitoring and evaluating provision. Providers are also asked to submit information about their financial accounts every year, which reports on the expenditure of the grant that is received from the Centre. The Centre monitors carefully to ensure that providers' expenditure on activities other than learning is not higher than the contracted threshold, and takes appropriate steps to rectify any such situations.

Evidence base of the report

Before the inspection, inspectors:

- analysed the outcomes from the learners' questionnaire and considered the views of tutors and staff through their questionnaire responses
- scrutinised the inspection outcomes of Learn Welsh providers

During the inspection, inspectors:

- met the head of the provider, a representative of the management body/governing body, senior managers and middle managers (where appropriate)
- met with groups of learners
- met with Learn Welsh providers and key partners
- looked closely at the provider's self-evaluation processes
- considered the provider's improvement plans and looked at evidence to show how well the provider had moved forward with planned improvements
- scrutinised a range of the provider's documents, including information on learners' progress, records of meetings of staff and the managing/governing body, information on learners' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of learners, and records of staff training and professional development

After the inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- reviewed 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
- invited the provider to ensure that the report was factually correct

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the provider and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

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

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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