Welsh Second Language in the National Curriculum - the case of teaching Welsh in English-medium schools

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It is widely recognised within the educational community in Wales that the teaching and learning of Welsh second language, in many cases, is not effective and that limited time allocations make it difficult for most pupils to make good progress when following what is labelled a 'drip-feed' language programme (Baker, 1993: 57) in English-medium schools.

A number of reports over the last decade have raised concerns about levels of achievement in Welsh second language; one of the strategic objectives of the recently published Welsh Assembly Government's consultation document on developing a **Welsh-medium Education Strategy** is to raise standards in the teaching of Welsh second language so that *'those not opting for Welsh-medium education should [also] have better opportunities to develop Welsh-language skills which enrich their experience of living in a bilingual country'* (WAG, 2009: 12)

The Annual Reports of the Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales in recent years have constantly referred to the problematic area of Welsh second language. The 2004-2005 annual report summarised the situation thus:

> *'Iaith Pawb', the national action plan for a bilingual Wales, set a target for growth in the number of Welsh speakers. The national languages strategy sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's aim to increase the number of pupils who study foreign languages. However, the examination entries for Welsh as a second language and modern foreign languages continue to drop. The national policies in these areas are not having enough effect on pupils' choices. There has been no requirement to set targets for the take-up of Welsh and modern foreign languages in individual schools or local education authorities. Pupils do not see the importance of taking full GCSE courses in these subjects. There is a tension between the aims of the national language strategies to increase the take-up of Welsh and modern foreign languages and the policy of widening choice 14-19 so that pupils aged 14 to 19 have a wider choice of subjects and can follow the courses most suitable for them.*

(Estyn, 2006: 2)

The annual report for 2007-2008 points to further deterioration:

> *In English-medium primary and secondary schools, there are also many weaknesses in provision for Welsh . . . In secondary schools, the weak performance of Welsh second language continues from previous years, and it is worse now than it was in the past. We reported last year that almost half the work had some important shortcomings. This year, two-thirds of pupils' work in Welsh second language has important shortcomings. Teaching in Welsh second language is much worse than in other subjects . . . The weak performance of Welsh second language continues from previous years and has deteriorated this year.*

(Estyn, 2009: 11, 28)

In October 2007, Estyn published an evaluation of the GCSE Welsh second language short course (Estyn, 2007a) and came to the conclusion that *'there are fundamental shortcomings in the delivery of Welsh as a second language at key stage 4 and in the delivery of the short GCSE course in particular'* (Estyn, 2007a:15). It was reported that only a few pupils who follow the short GCSE Welsh second language course make good progress towards becoming fluent Welsh speakers, that there were not enough opportunities for pupils to hear and practise Welsh outside the formal Welsh lessons and that not enough time was allocated to the short course. In conclusion, Estyn was of the opinion that *'these shortcomings are an obstacle to meeting the target in Iaith Pawb of increasing by 2011 the proportion of Welsh speakers by five percentage points from the 2001 figure'* (Estyn, 2007a:15).

Since the Education Reform Act 1988 and the introduction of the National Curriculum, Welsh is taught as a first or second language to almost every pupil in Wales up to, and including, key stage 4, reflecting the compulsory situation of Welsh in the key stage 4 curriculum since September 1999 (99.1% of pupils in Years 7-11 in 2006-2007, see National Assembly for Wales, 2007: Tables 18 and 19). From the perspective of Welsh second language, the latest published statistics show that 79.1% of pupils in maintained primary schools were learning the language in 2006-2007 (National Assembly for Wales, 2007: Table 7). As for secondary schools, the Key Results state that *'15.4 per cent of pupils in year groups 7-11 (compulsory school age) in maintained secondary schools were taught Welsh as a first language . . . A further 83.7 per cent were taught Welsh as a second language'* (National Assembly for Wales, 2007: 4). In terms of numbers, therefore, there has been a significant increase in those learning the Welsh language – especially from the perspective of second language learning – since 1988.

Iaith Pawb (WAG, 2002a) recognised that the policy of teaching Welsh to all pupils is well-established – but noted that there were some issues that needed to be explored in more detail. Amongst them, it specifically stated that more should be done to raise the standards of pupils' experiences of Welsh as a second language (WAG, 2002a, 4.11, 4.19). This has been a recurrent theme in all the literature published on standards achieved by pupils in Welsh second language (especially amongst 11-16 year olds) since the publication of ***Iaith Pawb*** in 2002.

In the report to the National Assembly's Culture Committee and Education and Lifelong Learning Committee in 2002, attention was drawn to the fact that *'current trends show clear deterioration as pupils and students progress through the system'* (National Assembly for Wales, 2002, 15.14). When discussing 'Standards of acheviement in schools' in 2001-2002, the following conclusion was drawn by Estyn (2003: 105): *'Considering each key stage and the sixth form together, the smallest amount of good or very good work is in Welsh second language . . .'* . To date, particular reference has been constantly made by Estyn to the generally unsatisfactory standards achieved by pupils in Welsh second language, especially in key stages 3 and 4.

Back in April 2003, the evidence presented to the Assembly's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee by Estyn (2002), attention was drawn to particular issues in key stage 3 Welsh second language classes that were of grave concern: standards were unsatisfactory or poor in 12% of classes (a proportion which was a great deal higher than in any other subject in the National Curriculum); the proportion of key stage 3 classes with good or very good standards in Welsh

second language (37%) was amongst the lowest in the National Curriculum (Estyn, 2002: 7 and National Assembly for Wales, 2002: 15.27); the proportion of classes where the standard of teaching was good or very good (45%) was lower than any other in the National Curriculum, and the standard of teaching was unsatisfactory in 12% of the classes (Estyn, 2002: 7). Based on inspection reports in 2001-2002, it was deemed that there was still more unsatisfactory work in Welsh second language than in any other subject, especially in key stage 3 (Estyn, 2003:17).

By 2006, across all the foundation subjects, Welsh second language had the lowest percentage of pupils attaining level 5 or above in teacher assessments at the end of key stage 3 [49% compared with Art, which had the highest percentage, at 76%] (WAG, 2006: Chapter 1, Table 1.6). With reference to the differences between the attainment of boys and girls, it is significant that the greatest gap between them was in Welsh second language: whilst 59% of girls attained level 5 or higher, only 39% of boys succeeded in achieving this.

It is a statutory requirement that all pupils are taught Welsh to the end of key stage 4, either as a first or second language. Within the GCSE Welsh second language specification, there is a choice of two courses: the 'short' and the 'full' GCSE course, with the short course being equivalent to half a full GCSE qualification. Over the three year period between 2004 and 2006, there has been a decrease in the proportion of pupils entered for the full GCSE course (from around 12,000 in 2004 to just over 9,500 in 2006) and a corresponding increase in those entered for the short course. In 2006, for the first time, the number of pupils who were entered for the short course was higher than the number on the full course (Estyn, 2007a); percentages for 2008 were: full course 47%, short course 53% (WAG, 2009). Such was the concern of the Welsh Assembly Government for this increase in 2006 that Estyn was commissioned to *'provide advice on the implications of the significant increase over the last few years in the proportion of pupils being entered for the short GCSE course in key stage 4 rather than the full GCSE course'* (Estyn, 2007a: 1).

Back in 2002, Estyn (2002: 7) referred to the fact that, in 2001, as many as 37% of pupils had not sat any Welsh examination at the end of key stage 4, and it was clear then that this was a matter of concern for the Assembly's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee: it was felt to be encouraging underachievement and representing the only aspect of the curriculum where it appeared that a reduction in skills and standards was allowed to occur without anything being done about it (National Assembly for Wales, 2002: 15.22). In 2005-06, the percentage of candidates for both Welsh second language courses accounted for 50% of the 15 year old cohort, compared with Welsh first language candidates which accounted for 13% (WAG, 2006). Again, in the Annual Report for 2007-2008, it is stated that too many pupils fail to attain a recognised qualification in Welsh second language at the end of key stage 4: *'only 76% of those studying Welsh as a second language registered for examination in 2007'* (Estyn, 2009: 11). The whole issue of accreditation of Welsh second language needs careful consideration in order to evaluate whether the current assessment and accreditation procedures provide the required impetus for pupils to see the value and relevance of Welsh second language (WAG, 2009).

One of the areas which presents the greatest challenge in the teaching and learning of Welsh second language is disengagement amongst key stage 4 pupils. Clear concerns have been raised by the pupils themselves about the conditions for

learning Welsh, with these three contributory factors being cited as being pivotal in increasing their proficiency: the nature of the language provision in schools; language background (parents and family); and opportunities and motivation to use Welsh outside of the Welsh lesson and/or outside of school surroundings (National Assembly for Wales, 2002, 15.28).

Another key issue that became apparent in the evidence of secondary pupils to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee (National Assembly for Wales, 2002: 15.28) was that the lowest proficiency levels in Welsh were to be found amongst pupils who were studying Welsh as a second language without any other subject(s) being studied through the medium of Welsh. In this group, it appears that proficiency is at its lowest amongst those pupils with very little contact with the language outside of the clasroom. They suggested that their failure to speak (and, in some cases, understand) the language reflected an overemphasis on learning vocabulary and a lack of emphasis on learning communication skills in a more meaningful context (National Assembly for Wales, 2002:155-7). This issue was reiterated again in 2005-2006 where Estyn came to the conclusion that *'... not enough English-medium schools encourage pupils to practise using their Welsh in subjects other than Welsh or in after-school activities'* (Estyn, 2007b: iv, 62) and in 2006-2007 (Estyn, 2008: 70-72) and yet again in 2007-2008 (Estyn, 2009:11).

For a number of years, Estyn has reported that the quality of the experience on the short course – which, usually, means a one-hour lesson (or less) in Welsh second language every week – is often unsatisfactory (Estyn, 2002a; Estyn, 2007a; Estyn, 2007b; Estyn, 2009). In 2006, the percentage of those who gained an A*-C grade on the short course was 47% (with the majority of them (34%) gaining a C grade). These results compare unfavourably with the full course, where 69% of those presented gained an A*-C grade (WAG, 2006). The latest survey by Estyn (evaluating the short GCSE Welsh second language course) conducted in 17 secondary schools in different areas of Wales during the 2006 autumn term, concludes that only very few pupils who follow the short course make good progress towards becoming fluent Welsh speakers (Estyn, 2007a: 3). These findings, supported by school inspection findings, reflect the pattern that has emerged over several years: standards in Welsh second language in key stage 4 are lower than in any other subject with nearly 60% of lessons displaying shortcomings in pupils' achievements (Estyn, 2007a: 7).

Conclusion

It is evident from the above literature review that there are many shortcomings in the teaching and learning of Welsh second language in English-medium schools and that there is need for research into this particular area. WAG's **Welsh-medium Education Strategy** consultation document acknowledges that an enduring solution to these shortcomings involves extensive planning and preparation:

> *Changes are needed to bring about improved levels of skills, and pupils need to be provided with the necessary stimulus and motivation to aim for further progress. It is important also that the appropriate balance between written and oral communication skills is established. This involves possible changes to a range of associated areas, including the training needs of practitioners, teaching methodologies, and methods of accreditation.*

> (WAG, 2009: 69)

Such changes must be underpinned and informed by extensive research into current practice.

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Reasons for Teaching Welsh as a Second Language

Extracted and adapted from:

Colin Baker: *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (4th edition in 2006 and 3rd Edition in 2001). Clevedon / Bristol, Multilingual Matters. http://www.multilingual-matters.com/

The various overlapping purposes why children or adults may acquire a second or a third language can be clustered under five headings: ideological, international, individual, language value and language survival.

1.   Ideological Reasons

For language minority children, the aim of second language instruction may be **assimilationist** and subtractive. For example, the teaching of English as a second language in England often aims at rapidly integrating minority language groups into mainstream society. Assimilationist ideology tends to work for the dominance of the second language, even the repression of the home, minority language. In contrast, when children learn a minority language as their second language, maintenance and **preservation** of that minority language may be the societal aim.

A different societal reason for second language acquisition other than assimilationist or preservationist, is to obtain increased **harmony** between language groups through bilingualism. In Canada, French speaking children learning English, and English speaking children learning French may help parents and politicians produce a more dual language, integrated Canadian society.

2.   International Reasons

Apart from the political and social reasons for second language acquisition and learning, there are international reasons given by second language educationalists for second language learning. Second and third language learning is often encouraged for **economic and trade** reasons (e.g. in Singapore, Basque Country, Finland). The importance of international trade to developing nations, then facility with languages is seen as opening doors to economic activity. Selling to the Japanese, for example, may be almost impossible through English or German. Speaking Japanese and having a sympathetic understanding of Japanese culture, manners, values and thinking may be the essential foundation for economic activity. There is a growing realization that we need to develop more individuals with strong skills in a second language as a matter of long-range economic self-interest'

Second and third language learning is also encouraged for its value in **travel** across continents. For many mainland Europeans, for example, to speak two or three or four languages is not uncommon. Such language facility enables vacations to be spent in neighboring European countries or in North, Central or South America. In the attempted unification of Europe, traveling across frontiers is becoming more common, encouraging a person to acquire a repertoire of languages.

Third, languages provide **access to information** and hence power. Whether the information is in technical journals, on large computer databases, on the World Wide Web, on satellite television or in international e-mail lists, a repertoire of languages gives wider access to social, cultural, political, economic and educational information. For the business person and the bureaucrat, for the scholar and the sports person, access to multilingual international information opens doors to new knowledge, new skills and new understanding.

3.   Individual Reasons

There are *four* reasons frequently given why the individual child or adult should acquire or learn a second or third language. One reason is for **cultural awareness**. To break down national, ethnic and language stereotypes, one motive in second language learning has become **intercultural sensitivity and awareness**, to encourage sensitivity towards other cultures and creeds. While cultural awareness may be conveyed in the first language, the inseparability of culture and language means that such awareness may best be achieved through second language learning.

The second `individual' reason for second language learning has traditionally been for **cognitive development**. The learning of foreign languages has been for general educational and academic value. Just as history and geography, physics and chemistry, mathematics and music have traditionally been taught to increase intellectual fitness and stamina, so modern language learning has been defended as a way of sharpening the mind and **developing the intellect**. Given the memorization, analysis (e.g. of grammar and sentence structure) and the need to negotiate in communication, language learning has been regarded as a valuable academic activity in itself.

The third reason for an individual to acquire a language is for social, emotional and moral **personal development**, self-awareness, self-confidence, and social and ethical values. Such affective goals include the possibility of incipient bilinguals being able to create a larger number and more effective **relationships** with target language speakers. Bilinguals can potentially **build social bridges** with those who speak the second language. Self-confidence and **enhanced self-esteem** may result from being able to operate socially or vocationally with those who speak the second or third language. The addition of a second language skill can boost an individual's self-confidence as a learner, a liaisor and a linguist.

The fourth `individual' reason for acquiring a language is for **careers and employment**, opening up possibilities of a wider variety of careers, or gaining promotion in a career. Potential individual careers include becoming translators and interpreters, buying and selling goods and services, exchanging information with local, regional, national and international organizations, migrating across national frontiers to find work, gaining promotion in neighboring countries, becoming part of an international team

or company, as well as working from home or from the local village and using multilingual telecommunications to spread a product.

4.   Language Value Reasons

There are currently popular arguments why retaining **language diversity** is essential and why language planning is needed. (1) It is widely agreed that retaining ecological **diversity is essential**. Evolution has been aided by genetic diversity, with species genetically **adapting** in order to survive in different environments. Diversity contains the potential for adaptation. Uniformity holds dangers for the long-term survival of the species by providing inflexibility and inadaptability. The range of cross-fertilization becomes less as languages and cultures die and the testimony of human intellectual achievement is lessened. In the language of ecology, the strongest ecosystems are those that are the most diverse.

(2) **Languages express identity**. Identity concerns the shared characteristics of members of a group, community or region. Identity helps provide the security and status of a shared existence. Sometimes identity is via dress, religious beliefs, rituals, but language is almost always present in identity formation and identity display. Language is an index, symbol and marker of identity.

(3) **Languages are repositories of history**. Languages provide a link to the past, a means to reach an archive of knowledge, ideas and beliefs from our heritage. Every language is a living museum and library. The range, richness and wealth of cultures, homelands and histories are lost when a language dies. The Sicilian poet, Ignazio Buttitta (1972), expressed it thus:

Shackle a people, strip them bare, cover their mouths: they are still free.
Deprive them of work, their passports, food and sleep: they are still rich.
A people are poor and enslaved when they are robbed of the language inherited from their parents: it is lost forever.

However, the Latin language died, but some of its culture and the Roman influence continued although in a diminished form (Edwards, 2002; Adams, 2003). The stored knowledge and understandings in oral languages (without literacies) may die with the death of that language. Yet written text may store accumulated meanings after language death, although translations will often lose a degree of stored insight and nuance.

(4) **Languages contribute to the sum of present human knowledge**. Inside each language is a vision of the past, present and future. When a language dies, its vision of the world dies with it. If the world is a mosaic of visions, one part of that mosaic is lost. Language not only transmits visions of the past but also expressions of social relationships, individual friendships as well as community knowledge, a wealth of organizing experiences, rules about social relationships plus ideas about art, craft, science, poetry, song, life, death and language itself. A language contains a way of thinking and being, acting and doing. Different languages

contain different understandings of people as individuals and communities, different values and ways of expressing the purpose of life, different visions of past humanity, present priorities and our future existence.
If there are approximately 6000 living languages, then there are 6000 overlapping ways to describe the world. That variety provides a rich mosaic.

5.   Language Survival and Revitalisation Reasons

For Welsh to survive long-term and be revitalised in the short and medium term, language planning is essential. The bedrock of language planning is **acquisition planning**. The inter-generational transmission of a language (parents passing their language(s) onto their children) and **second language learning** in education is an essential but insufficient foundation for language survival and maintenance.

Acquisition planning is particularly concerned with language reproduction in the family but also about language production at school. In all minority languages, there are families who use the majority language with their children. If this occurs across successive generations, the language will rapidly decline. <u>All minority languages need a **supply line**, and if families fail to reproduce such languages in children, second language education has to attempt to make up the shortfall.</u>

Parents may believe that there are economic, employment or educational advantages of speaking a majority language (e.g. English) to their children and not the minority language. Or that the majority language has such high prestige in the neighborhood that parents feel the minority language has associations of poverty or powerlessness. Such attitudes can have an immediate effect on the fate of a language. A lack of **family language reproduction** is a principal and direct cause of Welsh language shift. In this scenario, a minority language can die within two or three generations unless education can produce language speakers who then find everyday purposes (e.g. economic, social, religious) for that language. **Language acquisition planning** is therefore partly about encouraging parents to raise their children bilingually. Where there is a shortfall in language maintenance in families, **education** becomes the principal means of producing more language speakers.

RAISING STANDARDS IN WELSH SECOND LANGUAGE AT AGES 5-16
PROJECT B

FIELDWORK: MAIN FINDINGS
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RESEARCH ISSUES
Aim: to examine the reasons why the standards of attainment in Welsh second language are low. Below are listed the main findings of the fieldwork carried out in Welsh second language

primary and secondary schools. These findings need to be discussed in greater detail at the meetings of the Steering Groups.

1. How effective are the Programmes of Study in promoting the development of language, and progression in speaking skills in particular ?

1.1 In general, there is evidence that the PoS contribute towards language development across the key stages, especially the Oracy PoS and the weighting given to it. More concern is expressed about the Reading and Writing PoS. Primary headteachers and secondary heads of department express a grave concern about the time that is needed to meet the requirements – especially as the pupils progress to KS2 and KS3.

Evidence from fieldwork

Requirements of PoS at KS1 and KS 2 in general
Acceptable: 60% of respondents
Too ambitious: 37%
Not ambitious enough: 3%
Comments: time devoted to Welsh is the key – too much to cover, especially at KS2; lack of acknowledgement of differing backgrounds.

Requirements of Oracy PoS at KS1
Acceptable: 92%
Too ambitious: 6%
Not ambitious enough: 2%
Comments: best part of the Order, easiest to deliver

Requirements of Reading PoS at KS1
Acceptable: 63%
Too ambitious: 35%
Not ambitious enough: 2%
Comments: lack of resources to meet requirements

Requirements of Writing PoS at KS1
Acceptable: 53%
Too ambitious: 43%
Not ambitious enough: 4%
Comments: too extensive, detracts from the emphasis on oracy

Requirements of Oracy PoS at KS2
Acceptable: 74%
Too ambitious: 21%
Not ambitious enough: 5%
Comments: too much to cover considering the time constraint, limited opportunity for use

Requirements of Reading PoS at KS2
Acceptable: 52%
Too ambitious: 46%
Not ambitious enough: 2%
Comments: lack of resources to meet requirements – especially material that is at the appropriate level (both content and readability)

Requirements of Writing PoS at KS2

Acceptable: 38%
Too ambitious: 62%
Comments: too extensive, too demanding in the time allocated

Requirements of PoS at KS3 in general
Acceptable: 57%
Too ambitious: 43%
Comments: demanding considering the time allocated to Welsh at KS3; PoS are based on the notion that there is progression from KS2-KS3, while in actual fact it is not possible to meet the requirements of KS3 due to the diversity of provision in primary schools; too ambitious compared to the MFL requirements

Requirements of Oracy PoS at KS3
Acceptable: 56%
Too ambitious: 44%
Comments: not realistic considering standards attained at KS2; 'datblygiad iaith'(language development) element too demanding

Requirements of Reading PoS at KS3
Acceptable: 45%
Too ambitious: 55%
Comments: lack of resources to meet requirements – especially material that is at the appropriate level (both content and readability)

Requirements of Writing PoS at KS3
Acceptable: 58%
Too ambitious: 42%
Comments: 'datblygiad iaith' element too demanding; not enough foundation work in the primary sector

Requirements of GCSE
Short Course: Acceptable: 22%   Too ambitious: 68%
Comments: too demanding in the time allocated

Full course: Acceptable: 54%   Too ambitious: 46%
Comments: new themes are more appropriate; too complicated and ambitious for predominantly English areas (south-east)

2.   How effective are the assessment arrangements ?
2.1   The notion of having statutory assessment of Welsh second language at KS1, 2, and 3 was raised and received a mixed reaction. At KS1 and 2, the majority were not in favour of statutory assessment (in favour: 39%; against:56%; uncertain: 5%). However, at secondary level, the majority felt that having statutory assessment at KS3 was very important in order to give the subject some status (in favour: 67%; against: 33%). 23% felt that WSL had no status because of this lack of statutory assessment.

2.2   At KS4, the GCSE short course was deemed unsuccessful by 68% of respondents, whilst the full course was felt to be effective by 54% of respondents. The majority of WSL teachers at KS4 (as well as pupils) were in favour of exploring the possibility of a more flexible assessment system at the end of KS4, with pupils

following a more modular type of course (75% of teachers and 64% of pupils in favour). There was also support for considering more vocational and entry level qualifications (79% of teachers and 67% of pupils in favour).

2.3   Weighting
The weighting given to the different components was welcomed in general, especially at KS1. At KS2, however, 45% of respondents felt that too much weighting is given to the reading and writing components (especially writing). At KS3, 52% felt that the weighting is appropriate, while 68% were satisfied with the KS4 weighting.

2.4   Continuum
The notion of developing a Welsh language continuum for the purposes of assessment was met with mixed reactions. Only 30% of Primary headteachers were in favour of exploring this issue (66% were against, while 4% were uncertain). At secondary level, headteachers' and WSL teachers' views were sought on this issue – again with mixed responses (Headteachers: In favour: 43% Against: 52% Uncertain: 6%; WSL secondary teachers: In favour: 21% Against: 74% Uncertain: 5%) It is obvious that there is a geographic divide on this issue: schools in 'Welsh' areas are more favourable to the idea, while schools in the south-east in particular are definitely against. Some interesting points were raised, however, e.g. (1) the possibility of developing a continuum based on the speaking and listening components, since the higher level skills involved in reading and writing are more difficult to bridge; (2) the possibility of bringing the two PoS together at KS3 or KS4; (3) the possibility of piloting the notion of a continuum with control groups over a longitudinal period.

2.5   Dual Assessment
Again, as with the notion of the continuum, the possibility of developing a dual assessment system that would assess pupils' progress along a linguistic continuum (indicating their level of attainment in Welsh and the corresponding level in WSL) was given a mixed welcome. 26% of Primary headteachers were in favour (with 67% against and 7% uncertain). 43% of Secondary heads were in favour of exploring this issue (with 46% against and 11% unsure); as many as 66% of WSL secondary teachers were against such a development.

2.6   The possibility of setting a 'bridging' question on the GCSE examination paper (assessed against Welsh first language and second language criteria) was welcomed by only 38% of respondents.

3. **How effective is the transition planning in ensuring progression and continuity from KS1 to KS2 and from KS2 to KS3 ?**

3.1 In the primary sector, 98% of respondents stated that they have a whole-school scheme of work for Welsh second language (12% stating that this has been prepared by the LEA) to promote progression and continuity. Also, 96% of primary school headteachers stated that they have a co-ordinator for WSL. A minority of respondents felt that a published scheme of work for WSL (with guidance on methodology for non-specialists) would lead to better progression from KS1 to KS2 – especially as the demands of the PoS at KS2 become more demanding.

3.2 Transition from KS2 to KS3 is much more problematic, with 68% of secondary respondents feeling that the provision for WSL in primary schools (especially at KS2) is so diverse that it is difficult (if not impossible) to meet the requirements of KS3 effectively.

4. **What impact does the time allocated to Welsh second language have on standards ?**

4.1 It is evident that this factor has a great bearing on standards and needs further consideration.

4.2 Primary sector
At KS1, the time allocated for WSL varies from 30 minutes a week (at its lowest) to 2½ hours (at its highest), with 90% of schools introducing Welsh within a designated slot for the 'second language lesson'. At KS2, the time allocated varies from 40 minutes a week (at its lowest) to 2½ hours, with 89% of schools again confining WSL to a designated 'second language slot'. (It was interesting to note that 52% of primary school parents were supportive of introducing aspects of the curriculum bilingually – as long as it was not at the expense of the development of English). 75% of Primary headteachers felt that the time allocated to WSL in their schools was not sufficient to meet the requirements of the PoS, especially the reading and writing elements at KS2 when the curriculum in general is 'overloaded' (20% felt that the demands of the primary curriculum at KS2 were too demanding and needed to be 'streamlined'), but that they couldn't afford more time for Welsh.

4.3 Secondary sector
Again, at KS3 the time allocated varies tremendously between 1 hour and 2 hours a week (with the 'fortnightly timetable' posing a number of problems). 71% of teachers at KS3 felt that it was not possible to meet the requirements of the PoS within this time. The majority of pupils' contact time with Welsh at KS3 is confined to the 'Welsh lesson': only 3% of the schools in the sample offer any provision through the medium of

Welsh/bilingually, 95% of the pupils interviewed stated that they do not study any other subject through the medium of Welsh, and 75% of them said that they would not wish to do so if they were given the choice.

4.4   At KS4, the time allocated to the GCSE short course varies from 30 minutes a week, i.e. 1 hour every fortnight (at its lowest) to 1½ hours a week (3 hours every fortnight) at its highest. There was great dissatisfaction with this situation amongst the teachers who responded, with 72% feeling it was impossible to do justice to the GCSE specification in such circumstances.

4.5   With reference to the full GCSE course, the time allocated varies from 1 hour a week to 3½ hours a week (7 hours on a fortnightly timetable); 59% of the respondents felt that it was possible to meet the requirements within the time allocated to them. Again, at KS4, pupil contact time with Welsh is limited to the 'Welsh lesson': only 2% of the schools in the sample offer any provision through the medium of Welsh or bilingually, and only 8% of pupils interviewed followed any subjects through the medium of Welsh (77% of children interviewed said they would not choose to do so).

4.6   At secondary school level in general, headteachers gave the following reasons for not developing Welsh-medium or bilingual provision (in WSL schools): no demand (81%), parental opposition (34%), and lack of staffing resources (60%). Of the parents approached on this issue, 11% would be in favour of their children following aspects of their work through the medium of Welsh, 40% were definitely against, and the rest were indifferent.

5.   **What impact do the human resources have on delivery and standards ?**
5.1   This, again, has a great bearing on the standards achieved, with the majority of respondents expressing that the requirements of the PoS are very challenging for non-language specialists – especially at KS2, where the problem seems to be at its worst. 96% of Primary headteachers who responded, said that it would be impossible to meet the requirements without the Athrawon Bro service.

5.2   At secondary level, there is more expertise but a number of staff who teach WSL are employed on a part-time basis which makes it difficult to recruit. Also, those who teach WSL teach a number of other subjects as well.

6. How effective are the INSET and other Continuing Professional Development opportunities in helping teachers to raise standards in Welsh second language ?

6.1 <u>Primary</u>
60% of respondents have sufficient opportunities to attend INSET activities, which are provided on 2 levels: (1) to improve the teachers' proficiency in Welsh; (2) to introduce methodology of second language teaching. 20% of the respondents would welcome more INSET courses on the methodological aspects.

6.2 <u>Secondary</u>
66% of respondents feel they have sufficient opportunities to attend courses (on 2 levels, as in the primary sector). 15% of them felt they needed more input on second language methodology.

6.3 With reference to the secondary WSL teachers, 2 further issues were raised:
(1) Since many of them teach a number of other subjects, it can be problematic for them to attend the Welsh INSET activities;
(2) many felt uneasy about attending courses when they know that no Welsh-speaking supply teacher is available to take the classes in their absence.

7. What impact do the material resources have on delivery and standards ?

7.1 Both at primary and secondary level it is clear that teachers feel the resources are inadequate; at secondary level, in particular, they invariably compare with MLF resources - and WSL materials always come out as 'inferior'.

7.2 Good use is made of any resources that are available; the majority of respondents referred to useful materials produced by the LEAs. A significant number (30%) said that they had to design and produce their own resources and that there was insufficient ICT-related materials available.

7.3 Secondary pupils interviewed also expressed an opinion on the resources used in WSL lessons and approx. 25% of them referred (unfavourably) to the continuous use of worksheets and photocopiable material.

7.4 <u>The following needs were identified across KS1,2, 3, and 4</u>:
• ICT-related resources, with special reference to interactive whiteboard materials
• Videos and tapes
• Reading material that is appropriate in its content for different ages (but taking account of readability levels); it was stated that too many 'childish' materials are produced

- A structured second language course (with tapes, CD-Roms etc), together with guidelines on methodology (<u>teaching</u> materials and <u>teacher</u> materials)
- Resources that are colourful, contemporary, and appealing.

8. How effective are the current methodologies and models of delivery in raising standards ?

8.1   From some of the above findings, it is evident that the main issues that need to be addressed here are:
- Teachers (especially non-specialists) need more guidance on second-language methodology
- The requirements of the PoS cannot be delivered effectively in the time allocated on the timetable, especially when the language is taught within the confines of specific 'slots' at KS1 and 2 and within the single WSL lesson at KS3 and 4.

8.2   Estyn are in a better position to comment on the quality and effectiveness of teaching, based on observation and visits to schools.

8.3   Pupils' views were sought on their experiences of WSL lessons at KS3 and 4: at KS3 28% of pupils commented on 'boring lessons and methods of delivery' with 23% making similar comments at KS4.

9. How effective is the model of teaching as used by the Athrawon Bro in the different counties across Wales ?   Are some ways of deploying them more effective than others ?

9.1   It is disappointing that only 25% of questionnaires sent to Athrawon Bro were returned, so it is difficult to come to definite conclusions. However, 96% of Primary headteachers stated that they are very dependent on the Athrawon Bro and that it would be impossible to deliver the WSL curriculum without them.

9.2   It is evident, from the Primary headteachers' responses, that the nature of support given by Athrawon Bro varies greatly across Wales: teaching alongside class teachers, demonstration lessons, providing advice and guidance, whole-class teaching, and monitoring children's progress.

10. What impact does the attitude of schools, teachers, advisors, family to Welsh have on pupils' attitude and attainment ?

10.1 The main findings were:
- Amount of time allocated to Welsh had a bearing on pupils' and teachers' perception of the status given to the subject by

the school management; it also had a bearing on pupils' motivation.

- Parents' and pupils' perception of Welsh as being vocationally useful varied greatly according to different parts of Wales – with the consequence that it influenced pupils' motivation (especially at KS3 and 4).
- Generally speaking, parents were fairly supportive of their children learning Welsh: in the Primary sector 9% were very supportive, 50% fairly supportive, and 41% not supportive; in the Secondary sector, the corresponding percentages were as follows: 22% very supportive, 57% fairly supportive, and 21% not suuportive. 10% of all parents saw no point at all in learning Welsh and would not be supportive of their children following a complusory course at GCSE. Another 10% of parents would welcome more information about the Welsh language in general and would be in favour of receiving guidelines on helping their children to develop the language. This highlights the possibility of exploring ways of working with relevant bodies/organisations to 'market' the language effectively amongst non-Welsh speaking parents.